

**Famous Last Words**  
**Joshua 24**  
**Sermon Outline**

**Introduction:** What a person says at the end of his life is usually pretty revealing and can be very profound. Joshua's words are both.

**I) We must serve the Lord**

*v. 14-15*

**A) Serve the Lord**

Unwelcome notion to us

Some responses:

1) We all serve somebody or something

*v. 15: Choose this day whom you will serve*

2) Christianity won't 'work' if we approach it with the mindset that God is there to serve us

**B) Serve the Lord *in sincerity and in faithfulness (v. 14)***

1) Sincerely

*Put away the gods your fathers served...*

Hedging our bets with "God plus..."

2) Faithfully

*v. 27: The stone shall be a witness against us*

The thing about stones:

Why we gather for Word and sacrament every Sunday

**II) Why should we serve God?**

Because he loves us

**A) Joshua's 'historic prologue' (vv. 2-13)**

*v. 12: ...not by your sword or by your bow*

*v. 13: I gave you a land on which you had not labored...*

**B) Our histories: Why are you a Christian?**

*v. 12: God sent the hornet and drove [unbelief] out before you...*

**III) How do we serve God?**

With grateful dependence

*v. 19: ...You are not able to serve the LORD...He will not forgive your transgressions*

- Joshua sees with God's eyes  
We see what Joshua could not see
- Our stone of remembrance is the cross  
Impact of the cross on our service

### Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Do you find the notion of having to serve God unattractive? If so, why?
- 2) When Joshua tells Israel to 'choose whom you will serve' (v. 15) he assumes that he is speaking to people who are 'wired' to serve someone or something. If it isn't the LORD it will inevitably be someone or something else. Is his assumption correct? Reflect on the following: "The important question is never, 'Am I serving or am I free?' It is always, 'Who or what am I serving and does that service make me free?'"
- 3) Reflect on the following: "Christianity won't 'work' for you if you approach it with the mindset that God is there to serve you—to make you feel better, to give you a purpose, to fix your problems, etc."
- 4) When Joshua told Israel to 'put away the gods that your fathers served', he caught them hedging their bets. They believed in the LORD, but they wanted the added benefit of trusting in other gods as well—and therefore carried them with them. How are you a "God plus" person—genuinely serving God but also serving other forces and influences in your life.
- 5) Joshua set up a stone of witness after the renewal of the covenant, saying 'It shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God.' Stones last much longer than we do—and change much more slowly; for these reasons they are good reminders of promises we have made to God. How do weekly worship and communion serve as stones of witness?
- 6) Before Joshua challenges Israel to serve the Lord, he reminds them of their story (vv. 2-13). And he does so in the first person, assuming the voice of God himself ("I took your father Abraham...and led him...I sent Moses and Aaron...I plagued Egypt...etc."). Why does he tell the story? Why in the first person? What is the point of the story God tells (see especially vv. 12-13)?
- 7) If God were to tell you your story, what would he say to explain why and how you became a Christian? Reflect on your answer and spend a moment praying about it.
- 8) When in v. 19 Joshua said, 'You are not able to serve the LORD', he was speaking with divine insight—seeing what God saw. How has God dealt with the problem that Joshua articulates so vividly?