



Sunday, February 16, 2020
Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Joshua 24

The book of Joshua concludes with one of the most poignant challenges in the Old Testament. There is no gray area. There is no room for fence-sitting. There is only serving the LORD or serving other gods. There is no middle ground.

This doesn't sit well with many. In fact, this is one reason why many people choose the wide road that leads to destruction. They want to yield just enough to get the benefits of salvation, but not so much that they lose total control of their lives. But God has never settled for second place (or sharing first place). In fact, in Isaiah He says, "I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols" (Is. 42:8).

This means that, as Christians, we must continually die to ourselves and yield total control of our lives to God. His word must come to dominate our thinking so that our hearts are changed and our whole lives are lived out in submission to Him. It also means we must be clear with people we are reaching out to that to come to Christ means nothing less than yielding total control to Him. This, of course, comes to us by grace alone as God grants us new hearts and grants us repentance that leads to a knowledge of the truth. And we know that our desire for God to have total control won't be fully realized until He returns. But our lives must still reflect an increasing submission to God and His word.

Context

As Pastor Don noted, this climactic moment is an ominous charge. In the life of the nation of Israel, this scene depicts the promise of a nation to be loyal to their God. Seemingly, the very next scene (the opening chapters of Judges) consists of them breaking that promise over and over. Such is the nature of mankind. But thanks be to God for His grace in sending Jesus and His Spirit to renew us so that we might live in obedience to Him!

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Joshua 24:1-28

“Choose Well”

1. Covenant Reflection (1-13)
 - God did it

 - He took His time!

2. Covenant Resolution (14-27)
 - Throw away your gods!

But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.

Discuss

- 1) When the LORD gave His final charge to Israel under Joshua's leadership, He recounted the great things He did to save them and bring them into the land as the basis for commanding their allegiance to Him. What great things has God done to save you? And how do those things motivate you to serve Him alone?

- 2) What are some ways that our culture tries to censor God? Or, what ways do we subject His word to our own rationale?

- 3) Look through the attached list produced by Tim Keller. What "other gods" are you most tempted to continue serving, even as you live out your life as a Christian?

- 4) How do you know if you are "yielding to God" in your day-to-day life?

- 5) How should a passage like this impact the way we talk to non-Christians about Christianity?

Identifying Idols in Your Heart (taken from Gospel in Life by Tim Keller)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I have power and influence over others.” (Power Idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I am loved and respected by _____.” (Approval Idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life.” (Comfort Idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of _____.” (Control Idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...people are dependent on me and need me.” (Helping Idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...someone is there to protect me and keep me safe.” (Dependence idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone.” (Independence idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I am highly productive and getting a lot done.” (Work idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work.” (Achievement idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I have certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions.” (Materialism idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I am adhering to my religion’s moral codes and accomplished in its activities.”
(Religion idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...This one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me.”
(Individual idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and am living by self-made morality.”
(Irreligion idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...my race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior.”
(Racial/cultural idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...A particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in.”
(Inner ring idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...my children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me.” (Family idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...Mr. or Ms. ‘Right’ is in love with me.” (Relationship idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I am hurting, in a problem: only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt.”
(Suffering idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...My political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power.”
(Ideology idolatry)

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...I have a particular kind of look or body image.”
(Image idolatry)