



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### October 16, 2022

**Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM**

#### After Moses: The Decision (Joshua 24:1-15)

Joshua was the successor to Moses and led the people to the occupation of the Promised Land. Joshua's version of the history tells us that the war was over. The land of Canaan was occupied. After centuries of struggles the time had finally come. The people were in Canaan. In Genesis 12 God called Abraham and told him to "go to the land where I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and will bless you. I will make your name respected, and you will be a blessing... All the families of the earth will be blessed because of you."

This promise made in Genesis 12 is the foundation of our faith and the beginning of our relationship with God. A few verses later Abraham stood in Shechem and God showed him the Promised Land.

In our passage today, Joshua is back at Shechem and he gathers the elders, leaders, and all of the people. He re-tells the story. He reminds them of the promise that God made to their father Abraham. He recalls the family, their faithfulness and their struggle. He tells the story of the people in servitude in Egypt. He reminds them that it was God who brought them out of slavery. It was God who thwarted Pharaoh. It was God who led them through the Wilderness, gave them Instruction, sustenance, and led them to victory time and again.

"It wasn't your sword or bow that did this. I gave you land on which you hadn't toiled and cities that you hadn't built. You settled in them and are enjoying produce from vineyards and olive groves you didn't plant," God reminds the people through Joshua.

Joshua leads the people through a ritual of communal remembering. He reminds them of all that God had done, and what God could continue to do. Then he presents a choice and makes a declaration.

"You can go back to Egypt. You can go back to Ur. You can serve other gods. You can rest on your laurels and think you did this great thing. Or you can serve God. As for me and my

house, we will serve the Lord." (my translation of Joshua 24:14-15) Then the people respond, "We will too."

And Joshua responds coldly, "No you won't."

Joshua knew that they wouldn't serve God alone. He knew them too well. He knew they would complain. He knew they would get comfortable and forget how they got there. He knew they would start believing in their own might instead of

trusting in God. He knew they wouldn't have the discipline to be the unique and peculiar people of Yahweh. Instead, they would drift into other pursuits. They would dabble with other gods. They would forget how they got there and allow themselves to wander. Joshua knew it.

*As for me  
and my house  
we will  
serve the Lord*  
JOSHUA 24:15

And he was right. The books of Judges—and even the rest of the Bible—lets us know

that the people will not serve the Lord alone. They will get complacent. They will forget the instructions to care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. Joshua was right, they won't serve the Lord alone. But that doesn't mean that serving the Lord isn't worth trying. It is easy to be hard on the Israelites, but we need to be honest with ourselves.

It is easy to make the declaration "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." It is much more difficult to live a life of service to the Lord. Living a life in service to the Lord takes discipline. It takes more than an hour on Sunday—on an hour on Saturday. A life of serving the Lord means generosity, recognizing that it all belongs to God anyway. A life of serving the Lord means working for justice, pursuing own peace and health, and building community.

Like the Israelites though, we will fail. We will get complacent, we will forget the instructions to care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. We won't serve the Lord alone. We will serve comfort, status, and consumption. But that doesn't mean that serving the Lord isn't worth trying. We stand and declare "We will serve the Lord," but we do so together, strengthened by the grace of Christ, and defiantly in the face of Joshua who responds, "No you won't."