

As for Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord

As we were putting Christmas away, I could not help but notice the pine needles were bursting from the gutter. It was past time to take care of this, so after I collected the pine needles, I began to tidy up the front sidewalk. Embedded in the ground was a beautiful stone that years ago I placed carefully as close to the front door as I could so that all who came to our home would immediately see our goal. The stone has the words of Joshua 24:15 artistically carved into its surface: "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." Beside the Scripture is a sparkling bronze cross that glistens when the light hits it. When I had placed it in the ground, that was our desire and it is our desire now.

Since our recent rains a residue of mud, dirt and debris had all but covered the declaration carved in stone. As I was cleaning it off, I had forgotten the background was originally white and I had forgotten how the bronze cross glistened. The stone had all but camouflaged into its "dirty" environment. As I cleaned off the stone, I had these thoughts come to mind: many times our testimony becomes tarnished and non-descript as we have a tendency to slip back into the world our Lord has saved us from. No, it is not usually some traumatic moment; it is usually neglect, a lapse of devotion, a benign neglect of the essentials of our Christian experience. This time of the year is a good time to "clean up our act" and get serious about fully dedicating and devoting our life to Christ.

The entire verse reads, "*And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*" (Joshua 24:15). The circumstances surrounding this event came in the last chapter of the book of Joshua, just before the great leader died. He is giving the leadership of Israel a choice to either serve the Lord or not. He is telling them how great God has been in bringing them up from Egypt and delivering them from the heathen nations from Egypt to the Amorites. Joshua even asks, are you going to serve the false gods you left in Egypt or the new gods you have been introduced to on the other side of Jordan? We need to take note that just because they had crossed the Jordan (referred to as "the flood" in our text), did not mean that Israel was invulnerable from temptation to become idolatrous, much like their worldly neighbors. The Israelites made the right decision and said, "...*The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey*" (Joshua 24: 24) So Joshua made a covenant with the people of Israel that day. He signified it by raising up a great stone under an oak tree near the sanctuary of the Lord (Joshua 24:25-27). Although our stone is not a massive stone, it still represents to this family and all who see that we are in covenant with the Lord.

For the New Testament Christian, crossing the Jordan is a picture of the Spirit-filled Christian deciding to go all the way with God. We, like the Israelis of old need to know although we have been delivered from Egypt, there are still Amorites to contend with, therefore we are going to need to stay battle-ready,

clothed with the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). Today, I want us to examine four truths we should understand when making a decision to live the victorious Christian life based on Joshua 24:15.

1. The decision is not based on public opinion.

Joshua said, *“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD...”* meaning whatever your opinion is, it will not affect mine. Peer pressure has caused many a Christian to “cave in” spiritually. The Bible says, *“...neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure”* (I Timothy 5:22). Allow me to quote you a Bible verse with my personal paraphrase: *“Be not deceived (Don't kid yourself): evil communications (bad company and companions) corrupt good manners (destroy moral fabric)”* (I Corinthians 15:33). No matter what others do, we must do right! Many a person fills their heart and mind with false teaching diametrically opposed to biblical life. Paul gives a warning of this when he says, *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”* (Colossians 2:8). The ability to become spoiled by the wrong influence is real. We must guard what we learn as well as from whom we learn. The wording, *“...if it seem evil...”* is most awkward. How could we ever think that loving and living for the Lord could ever be evil? I submit to you, thinking evil of the Lord is acquired, not natural. Even a child has a natural propensity to love and serve the Lord Jesus; that's why entering the kingdom is likened to becoming a child (Mark 10:15). If someone has been poisoned by the rudiments (the basic induction to the world and its ways), it is not too late to say, I will follow God and not seek the approval of the God haters who dominate much of public opinion.

2. The decision should be made without procrastination.

Joshua said, *“...Choose you this day...”* We should pray about most everything. One thing we do not need to pray about is if I should obey the Lord. We need to do what the old Nike commercial says and “Just do it!” Procrastination causes our will to weaken. You never negotiate with the Devil. The Bible says, *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”* (James 4:7). The Word of God always encourages us to do right immediately (Hebrews 3:13; Isaiah 1:18; II Corinthians 6:2).

3. We cannot live straddling the fence.

Joshua went on to say, *“...whom ye will serve....”* Everybody serves God, people or things. *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”* (Romans 6:16).

We are not designed to be fence straddlers. On Mount Carmel at the showdown of the prophets the Bible tells us, *“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him”* (I Kings 18:21). Hanging on the spiritual horns of dilemma will stop you cold in your tracts. Elijah even said the people of God had halted, in other words they had stopped. In order to find traction in life we must make the decision to serve the Lord completely.

4. It is a personal decision that affects everyone with whom you associate.

Finally, Joshua said, “...*but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*” This man whose name means “Savior” did not give his family members an option. The Bible says, “*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body*” (Ephesians 5:23). The biblical principle is the husband is the head and savior of his home in the same way Christ is of His church. A leader who makes the right decisions has the ability to save his family from a lifetime of grief. I speak this word to our young couples, single parents and singles. If you don’t make this decision of dedication, you are allowing others and the world around you to make the decision for you. Charles Spurgeon, referring to his Puritan grandfather Job said, “There are times I can feel his broad brim over me to this day.” Well, my dad did not wear the broad brimmed Puritan hat, but I can say, I can feel the smaller brim of his early twentieth century fedora over me to this day. Our decisions have the ability to affect multiple generations.

-Pastor Pope-

© 2012 [Christchurch Baptist Fellowship](http://www.christchurchbaptist.org/), Houston, Texas, Johnny Pope Pastor
<http://www.christchurchbaptist.org/>