

sermon study summary

Choose This Day

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Typically, January and September are the times when people stop and reflect. Some ponder the deeper questions of life. What is my mission? What am I giving my life to? Ultimately what matters the most to God and me? What do I need to change in light of this? These are questions we need to periodically revisit, because the answers will influence your values, priorities, relationships and how you fill your calendar. For to me to live is what? Paul knew (Phil 1:21). Joshua knew (Joshua 24:15). If you were to ask someone close to you what they thought you lived for, what might they say? Try it, then meditate on their reply. We only have so much time on this earth and time passes swiftly (Ps 39:4-5). The sooner we begin to intentionally plan our days with the eye to whom we want to become rather than simply what we want to get done will move you onto the path of diligently serving the Lord and fixing our gaze upon Him (Joshua 24:14-15).

Prior to Joshua's grand declaration in 24:14-15, he spoke at length about who God was and what He had done for the Israelites (Joshua 24:3-13). He reminded the Israelites about His goodness, His grace and trustworthiness because Joshua knew that memories were short, and the Promised Land could easily tempt them to forget what God had done for them (Deut 6:11-12). To remember all that God did was to remind the Israelites (and us!!) that in whatever situations befell them, God could be trusted. God was faithful then. God is faithful now.

We are urged to 'remember' 352 times in Scripture. It is easy to get spiritual amnesia and turn to the temporary things of earth. Our daily reminders must come through God's Word; the teaching, study of, reflecting on and memorizing of it to keep His grace and provision foremost in our minds and hearts (Matt 6:11). Remember to celebrate who God is and what He has done.

How would our children, spiritual or natural, answer the question of 'For mom or dad to live is ...?' They look to you and your life for spiritual direction. To consistently pursue a God-centered life and home we need to intentionally impress our faith on our children (Deut 6:7). Joshua and Moses implore us to saturate our lives with the Lord. Whatever you want to be important to your children needs to be important to you: the Word of God, prayer, loving and serving others. The choice to follow Jesus belongs to your children, but you have the power and ability to lead and teach them about the God you know, love and who saves. This must be intentional. You are their primary influence. It is your choice.

Additionally, to pursue a God-centered life and home we must love and serve the Lord with all faithfulness (Joshua 24:14-15). Joshua bluntly asks who are you going to serve and give your life to? Your decision and your choices will reveal whom you serve and trust. Our faith in Christ is the core of our being. Everything else we do flows from that. Faith is not something squeezed into our calendar. You cannot pass on a value that you do not embrace, that isn't transforming you. Live the life you believe in, whether it be at work, school, mentoring, community group, or in other activities. Pray for ways to have spiritual conversations, serve and love others. We all have a spiritual house (Matt 7:24-27). How strong is yours and your trust in God? For you to live is ... what?

THE WORD (NIV)

Joshua 24:3-15

³ But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac, ⁴ and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau, but Jacob and his family went down to Egypt.

⁵ "Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there, and I brought you out. ⁶ When I brought your people out of Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and horsemen as far as the Red Sea. ⁷ But they cried to the Lord for help, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the wilderness for a long time.

⁸ "I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I gave them into your hands. I destroyed them from before you, and you took possession of their land. ⁹ When Balak son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against Israel, he sent for Balaam son of Beor to put a curse on you. ¹⁰ But I would not listen to Balaam, so he blessed you again and again, and I delivered you out of his hand.

¹¹ "Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands.

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sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Which times of the year do you most reflect on your life and activities? Do these reflections make a difference? Explain.
2. Outside of your relationships, what are you passionate about? Expand on your answer.

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Read *Joshua 24:3-13* and *Deuteronomy 6:11-12*. Considering Moses' warning in Deuteronomy, what did Joshua remind the Israelites about God? Why is it important to remember God's actions in the past and in your life?
4. Read *Joshua 24:14-15*. What do you feel when you read these verses? How often does Joshua use the word serve or worship? What is he implying? What do you think serving meant for the common Israelite and for us today?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Pastor Mike said, "Your calendar shouldn't be a list of things you want to be done. No, it should be a list of the things you want to become." Discuss *Psalms 39:4-5*. Does it change your priorities? How?
6. What is the passion of your community group? How can you serve the Lord and your community? Start small. Identify the needs you see around you. Pray and ask God how your group can be an instrument for God to bless the community.

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Ask someone you know well and trust to answer the question about yourself: For you to live is ... what? Graciously accept their answer and take it to the Lord, asking, "What are you saying to me about this?" and "What do you want me to do about it?"

THE WORD (NIV) cont'd

Joshua 24:3-15

¹² I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you—also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow. ¹³ So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.'

¹⁴ "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Deuteronomy 6:11-12

¹¹ houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹² be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Psalms 39:4-5

⁴ "Show me, Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is.

⁵ You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure.

This week's writers: Gene and Karen Gibbs, David McMillin, Alfred Samson and Jorel Quemuel