

Keynotes from Clive Baines am Sermon on 8/3/2020

Whom will you serve?

Reading:- Joshua 24:14-28 key verse 14-15

Joshua 24:14-15 ¹⁴ “Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

- 1) The starting point is the great and unchanging nature of God. All around us, things change all the time but God is the same yesterday, today and forever. God speaks to his people through Joshua (**Ch24: 2** Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel) and reminds them of all he has done for them to bring them to where they are.
 - He starts with his choosing of Abraham: **v2-3** Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. ³ Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many.
 - The Lord goes all the way through their history, reminding them of their rescue from Egypt: **v6 – 7** “Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea. And the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. ⁷ And when they cried to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did in Egypt.
 - Finally he speaks of their arrival in the Promised Land **v 13** I gave you a land on which you had not laboured and cities that you had not built, and you

dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.'

- 2) Joshua's obedience before God, and his trust in the promise of something better to come meant that he was the one to lead the people into the Promised Land. Joshua calls on them to remember all that God has done for them and make the choice between the Lord and the gods of other nations, who the Israelites had served before. They had to set aside anything that came between them and God – he is holy and a jealous God who will not share his glory and his people with anyone else.
 - a) We too need to put off anything that comes between us and God. Like a gardener who digs the ground to rid it of weeds and prepare it for new growth, God is at work in our lives, digging our hard ground to make it fruitful and changing us to be more like him, as he plants the seeds of transformation.
 - b) God sent his Son to die for us that we might become his children, and be changed to reflect his image – that's how much he loves you. If you don't already know Jesus as your Saviour, that is your greatest need, then you too will be transformed, putting off the old sin nature and putting on the new robes of righteousness that he gives us in Jesus.
- 3) We cannot do this on our own. Only with God's help can we be faithful and obedient, and thus able to deal with the idols in our life.
 - a) However, we need the desire and determination to serve God, and to put away our idols. This might be our homes, our families, sport, entertainment, technology etc. We need to echo what Joshua said in **v15** - as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.
- 4) Who should take the lead in this? **24:1** Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they presented themselves before God.
 - a) Joshua is talking to men, with the Lord's authority. The charge was given to them to take the word that God had given them back to their communities

and families, to be obedient to God and serve only him. **v28** So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

- b) As men of God, they must lead their communities and families in obedience to God, and in doing so, wives and children will follow their lead and respect and honour God as they should. This is still the case today.