

8-24-25 Courage Over Fear: No More Fence-Riding: Choose This Day!

Week 15

Text: Joshua 24:14-27

Big Idea: In an age of half-hearted faith and “me-first” living, God is calling His people to make a clear and covenant-bound choice: Who will you serve?

Introduction: “From Chaos to Commitment”

When a church begins to grow, it’s beautiful... but also messy. People bring backgrounds, baggage, and preferences. Without clear expectations, the beauty of growth can quickly spiral into chaos.

We live in an age of radical individuality: “Don’t tell me what to do. Don’t hold me accountable.” The cry of culture is me first, while God calls His people to say Christ first.

The church does not exist to serve oneself or the preferences of people. People are supposed to serve the preferences of God. This means that the church cannot submit to the ideas of the world but must live by a higher standard and institute a code of accountability to keep people on task with the church’s mission.

But there’s hope. Because God doesn’t just gather a crowd—He forms a covenant community.

Joshua knew this. As Israel entered a new season—not war, but settlement—he drew a line in the sand. No more half-hearted allegiance. No more fence-riding. It was Decision Day.

In **Joshua 24**, after decades of battle and breakthrough, Joshua knew that to keep the Promised Land, they needed something more than conquest—they needed COMMITMENT. They needed to choose, to covenant, and to live as one holy people.

I. Communicating the Expectations (vv. 14–15)

- **Read Joshua 24:14-15.**

“Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.”

A. Faith Without Expectation Breeds Compromise

- Joshua made it clear: following the Lord requires forsaking everything else.
- No idols. No divided hearts. No fence-riding.
- Charles Spurgeon once said: “If God be God, serve Him; if Baal, then serve him. But do not halt between two opinions.”

- Fence-riding always ends in a fall, sore back sides and even some serious slivers.

B. Leadership That Leads by Example

- Joshua didn't just preach, he PLEDGED: **"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."**
- Leaders for the Lord don't sit back, they step up!
- Gulp, our household will follow our example.
- After communicating the expectations Joshua, as the spiritual leader, established himself as an example of how to live.
- He basically said, "Look, I am not only going to 'talk the talk,' but I am willing to 'walk the walk.'" **"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (v. 15).** "How about you?"

C. Commitment is a Choice, NOT a Feeling

- Joshua said, **"Choose this day."**
- No one slides into devotion; it's a daily decision.
- Commitment doesn't drift, it decides. (think of things we are committed to)
- Rick Warren: "The problem isn't that Christians don't want to serve—it's that we've let them join with no expectations."

Application:

What idols do you need to tear down—comfort, money, approval?

Are you leading your family like Joshua—or leaving them to drift?

Have you decided—or are you still undecided?

II. Entering a Covenant Agreement (vv. 24–27)

- **Read Joshua 24:24-27**

"The people said... 'The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!' ... Joshua made a covenant with the people that day..."

- **Verbal Commitment Must Become Visible Commitment**
- They didn't just say it; they sealed it in a covenant. (Marriage vows are sealed with a kiss)
- They didn't just "feel" committed—they entered a covenant.
- The definition of a covenant is "a contract or agreement between two parties." "A covenant . . . involved a life-or-death agreement between two parties.
- Adrian Rogers: "Faith that fizzles at the finish was faulty at the first."

B. Accountability Breeds Responsibility

- The covenant held them to a higher standard—no excuses, no partial obedience.
- Joshua wrote it down and raised a stone as witness.
- Why? Because words fade, but accountability anchors.
- Covenant commitment raises the standard: no excuses, no partial obedience.

C. Visible Witnesses Seal Spiritual Promises

- Joshua set up a stone as a physical reminder.
- Our commitments should be seen and remembered.
- The stone was a permanent reminder of their choice.
- What visible markers do you have of your covenant with Christ—baptism, membership, service, generosity?

Application:

Have your words of faith turned into a walk of faith?

Who's holding you accountable in your covenant with Christ?

What "witness stones" in your life remind you of your commitment?

III. The Challenge of Covenant Living in a "Me-First" World

- **Read Joshua 24:24**

"We will serve the Lord!" (v. 24)

A. Our Culture Hates Accountability, But God Requires It

- The world says, "Live for yourself." God says, "Die to yourself."
- God wants to be the prominent part of your life, your center. Everything else revolves around Him.
- We live in an age of individuality, where people balk at accountability.
- That's why so many marriages fall apart, for example, because people refuse to be held accountable.
- A lack of accountability leads to unfaithfulness in finances, unfaithfulness in providing for the family, unfaithfulness in sharing responsibilities, and especially unfaithfulness in keeping the marriage bed undefiled.

B. Covenant Commitment is Counter-Cultural

- We're not consumers of church; we're covenant partners in Christ's mission.
- Church isn't about "what can I get?" but "how can I give?" "Who can I serve?"
- J.D. Greear: "The church is not a cruise ship for our comfort; it's a battleship for God's mission."

C. Half-Hearted Faith is NO Faith at All

- Jesus said, **“If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself...” (Luke 9:23).**
- True faith costs, but it’s worth everything.
- Francis Chan: “Lukewarm people call ‘radical’ what Jesus expected of all His followers.”

Application:

Are you consuming or contributing in your church?

Where are you resisting accountability?

Are you giving God leftovers—or your life?

IV. The Blessing of Covenant Community

- **Read Joshua 24:27**

“This stone shall be a witness to us...” (v. 27)

A. Covenant Protects the Community

- Clear expectations guard against chaos and division.
- To protect the unity of the church by acting in love toward other members, by refusing to gossip, by following and cooperating with leadership.
- To share in the responsibility of the church by praying for its spiritual and numerical growth, by inviting the unchurched and others to attend its services, and by warmly welcoming those who visit the services of the church.
- To serve in the ministry of the church by discovering their spiritual gifts and talents, by accepting training and equipping for ministry, and by developing a servant’s heart.
- To support the testimony of the church by attending it faithfully, by living a godly life, and by giving regularly to its support.

B. Covenant Prepares Us for Spiritual Growth

- Accountability is not punishment...it’s protection.
- It stretches us, roots us, and strengthens our witness.

C. Covenant Pleases the Lord

- Unity and holiness invite God’s presence and power.
- Dwight L. Moody: “I have never yet known the Spirit of God to work where the Lord’s people were divided.”

Application:

What step of commitment is God calling you to deepen today?

How can you strengthen the unity and witness of this church?

Conclusion

“No More Fence-Riding—Choose This Day!”

Today, you’ve heard the call: ‘Choose this day whom you will serve.’

Not tomorrow. Not next week. Not when it’s convenient. Today!

- Some of us have been coasting—half-in, half-out—playing with the world and pretending it’s okay.
- Some of us have let your commitment to Christ become casual, comfortable, and cold.
- And some of us have never fully surrendered your life to Jesus.

Today is not about joining a church. It’s about joining your life to Christ.

It’s about tearing down your idols, anything that steals your affection and loyalty—and saying, **“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!”**

God is calling you, no more excuses, no more games:

If you’re ready to make a fresh, clear, and total commitment to Jesus Christ, come forward.

If you’re ready to tear down the idols in your heart, come forward.

If you’re ready to lead your family in serving the Lord, come forward.

Let this be your witness stone moment, your declaration before God and His people:

“Lord, I choose You. I choose Your ways. I choose covenant commitment over cultural compromise.”

Prayer:

Father God,

We stand before You today, like Israel of old, faced with a choice. We renounce the idols of our culture, the distractions of our hearts, and the compromise of comfort.

We choose You, Lord, wholeheartedly, completely, and without reservation. Make us a people of covenant. Let our yes be yes. Let our lives bear witness to our confession. Let the world see not just a crowd, but a **committed** bride—Your Church, Your people, set apart and on mission.

We ask this in the mighty name of Jesus, our Bridegroom and our King. Amen