



PRIME TIME DAY 2007

FAITH COMMITMENT FOR A LIFETIME

Text: Joshua 24:1-3a; 14-25

“Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your heart to the Lord, the God of Israel.” (Joshua 24:23, NIV).

The Israelites’ spiritual journey reminds us of our own spiritual wanderings. Some of them were devoted followers of God wanting only His will and his holy Presence. They were the yeast working through their society to keep the spiritual, ethical, and moral behavior focused on the Living God. Those who marched with the liberal side of the journey felt that each country they entered should contribute to the educated potpourri of religious thinking and action of Israel. They imitated the thoughts, beliefs, behavior and philosophies of the conquered and capitulated to their pagan practices. However, the majority were the spiritually disinterested. If Jehovah blesses, that would be wonderful. If He didn’t bless...well they didn’t think he would anyway. It sounds like present day philosophy.

Joshua stood in defiance of anything that set a double standard or denied God’s dominance in the affairs of the people. This great leader had set the standard for decades. He was a man of integrity, character, and righteousness. He marched at Moses’ side bringing the people out of Egypt. He and Caleb were the two who stood with a positive outlook in the face of negativity by the other 10 spies checking out the Promised Land. He stood by God’s leadership when others revolted and gave leadership to the army when the walls of Jericho tumbled down.

John Huffman writing about Joshua said, “This is one of the classical biblical texts. With all the energy that this tough, godly, 110 year-old could muster he cried out, ‘It’s time to take a stand for God!’”¹

Standing for God equals a commitment to Him that will last for a lifetime through faith.

I. Faithful Commitment Equals a Covenant Relationship.

The Old Testament covenant began with Abraham. God gave a promise to make him a father of many people and to grow a holy nation. This covenant remained even through the captivity of His people and throughout their journey to the Promised Land. The covenant tightly tied the two together...God and Israel...Israel and God. God is still in that business for those who want to be faithfully committed to Him.

¹ Lloyd Ogilvie, editor, *The Communicator’s Commentary* (Waco: Word Books Publishing, 1986), 267-268.

The covenant now extends to those who accept Jesus Christ as Savior and who have become the new Israel...the Israel of faith. Those who want to make a covenant with God need...

1. to acknowledge their sinfulness
2. to believe the promise of God's forgiveness
3. to surrender to the truth of the Lordship of Christ
4. to take possession of their spiritual heritage through a relationship with God
5. to be obedient and faithful
6. to search for the holiness of God
7. to be honest in their involvement with the living Lord

The story is told that during a prayer meeting, a discouraged itinerant Bible teacher named Adelaide Pollard listened to the prayer of an elderly woman who prayed, "God, it really doesn't matter what you do with us, but just have your way with our lives."

Pollard had been unable to raise the funds needed to go to Africa for missionary service. At her home that night Adelaide could not shake the woman's sincere prayer. Before she retired for bed, she read from Jeremiah 18:3-4 that God is the potter and we are the clay. God began speaking to Pollard's heart. She picked up her pen and wrote a prayer in hymn form: "Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way! Thou art the potter I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still."

The best way to discover the terms of the covenant for life is faithfully committing ourselves to Him no matter what our age. Senior citizen Joshua called for commitment!

II. Faithful Commitment Equals Choosing to be on God's side.

- A. Faithful Commitment should be an easy choice when it comes to God.
- B. Faithful Commitment should be a decisive choice for God will.
- C. Faithful Commitment should lead to a putting away our mesmerizing idolatry of things.

John Huffman outlines this section of the text by calling it "The Choice" and states that making that choice leads one to a willingness to follow faithfully.

1. A willingness to quit straddling the fence.
2. A willingness to exert influence on others instead of being pushed around by them.
3. A willingness to decide for Christ.
4. A willingness to go public with one's faith.
5. A willingness to follow through with one's all.²

² Ogilvie, *ibid*, 272-274.

“The pain of a divided heart is the consequence of knowing what you should do while doing what you shouldn’t. The pain of a crucified heart is the result of doing what you should while rejecting what would seem to be gratifying. Both choices are painful but only one is therapeutic.”³

Choosing God can heal you of your sin...loneliness...estrangement...eternal punishment. It is your choice!

III. Faithful Commitment is Continuing on the Journey.

Human leaders come upon life’s scene to aid us along life’s journey. Joshua was one of those men to the Israelites. As we read his story he becomes one to us as well. At the end of his life he calls the people to continue following God even when he is gone from this life.

He had given positive leadership, but it was time they moved on. Joshua’s impact would affect the future generations of Israelites.

Christians today will also affect the generations that will follow them as well. How?

- A. Christians will affect future accountability.
- B. Christians will affect future ambition.
- C. Christians will affect future blessings.
- D. Christians will affect future character.
- E. Christians will affect future influences.
- F. Christians will affect future courage.
- G. Christians will affect future call for purity.
- H. Christians will affect future doctrinal truth.

We should follow the Psalmist’s direction, “Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:4-5 RSV).

Conclusion:

We have a choice today to follow our God faithfully for a lifetime. One prime time adult I read about would get up regularly at his church’s prayer meeting and prayed, “Use me, O Lord, use me—in some advisory capacity!” Or we can be like General William Booth of the Salvation Army who said, “I told the Lord that he could have all that there is of William Booth.”

Choose today a commitment that has faith for a lifetime!

³ Albert Well, *Inspiring Quotations* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers., 1988). 25-26.



PRIME TIME DAY 2007

ORDER OF WORSHIP – CONTEMPORARY

Instrumental Prelude: “Faith” (Reuben Morgan, Hillsong Publishing)

Call to Worship: Psalm 121

Worship and Praise:

“The Solid Rock” Hymn Arrangement (Travis Cottrell Arranger, Word Music, 2002 “Hymns for Praise and Worship)

“Forever” (Chris Tomlin, 2001 worshiptogether.com songs)

“Take My Life” (Scott Underwood, 1994 Mercy Vineyard Publishing)

Prayer of the Community: Prime Time Member

Responsive Scripture Reading: “Faith” #451 (*Sing to the Lord*) based on Hebrews 11

Song of Response: “Take My Life” (Scott Underwood, 1994 Mercy Vineyard Publishing)

Passing of the Peace: Led by a Prime Time Adult

Drama Sketch (e.g., *Mustard Seed Faith*, Hicks, Cohagen; *Seeing is Believing*, Jill Richardson; *The Big Leap*, Jan Ewen): Prime Time actors or other church drama group

Testimony of Service: Prime Time Adult

Tithes and Offerings: Instrumental Offertory (Prime Time Adults)

Ministry in Music: “Enough” (Chris Tomlin, 2002 worshiptogether.com songs)

Good News: “Faith for a Lifetime”

Closing Prayer: Prime Time Adult

Benediction: Senior Pastor

Instrumental Postlude: “Faith” (Reuben Morgan, Hillsong Publishing)

Worship and praise songs can be found through the CCLI website www.ccli.com

Hymns and responsive readings taken from the *Sing to the Lord* hymnal, Lillenas Publishing

Drama Sketches can be downloaded at www.lillenasdrama.com



PRIME TIME DAY 2007

ORDER OF WORSHIP – TRADITIONAL

Instrumental Prelude: Hymn #436 “The Solid Rock” (*Sing to the Lord*)

Call to Worship: Psalm 121

Worship and Praise:

Hymn #689, “How Firm A Foundation” (*Sing to the Lord*)

Hymn #544, “Come, All Christians, Be Committed” (*Sing to the Lord*)

“Firm Foundation” (Nancy Gordon, Jamie Harvill - Integrity Music, 1994)

Prayer of the Community: Prime Time Member

Responsive Scripture Reading: “Faith” #451 (*Sing to the Lord*) based on Hebrews 11

Song of Response: “Find Us Faithful” Hymn #726 (*Sing to the Lord*)

Passing of the Peace: Led by a Prime Time Adult

Drama Sketch (e.g., *Mustard Seed Faith*, Hicks, Cohagen; *Seeing is Believing*, Jill Richardson; *The Big Leap*, Jan Ewen): Prime Time Actors or other church drama group

Testimony of Service: Prime Time Adult

Tithes and Offerings: Instrumental Offertory (Prime Time Adults)

Ministry in Music: “My Faith Has Found a Resting Place,” Hymn #435 (*Sing to the Lord*)

Good News: “Faith for a Lifetime”

Closing Prayer: Prime Time Adult

Benediction: Senior Pastor

Instrumental Postlude: “Find Us Faithful,” Hymn #726

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