

Joshua 07-11-30b

We resume our study now in Joshua chapter 24. Joshua is called a second time in a more public venue here at Shechem, specifically, for the elders of Israel, specifically their heads, specifically their judges and their officers. This is your civil and your military leadership, which pretty much covers everything in Israel at this phase of their history.

And Joshua said to all the people, thus says the Lord God of Israel, your fathers, and then notice including is in italics there, because it's kind of a weird sentence in Hebrew, at least for me, when you first look at it, it says your fathers, Tira, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor. And this is a Hebrewism, this is the way the Hebrew mind worked. When he says your fathers, he's talking about Tira and Abraham and Nahor.

And so including really kind of throws things off. He's talking about three fathers to begin with. Your fathers, this would be kind of like, if you could imagine somebody's speech and it's printed on a piece of paper and it's organized into sections, and each section has a little boldface heading.

Joshua says, thus says the Lord God of Israel. That's the title. Section one, your fathers.

Including is not there. Your fathers, let's talk about your fathers in the vernacular, in the colloquial words. Let's talk about your fathers.

Tira, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the river in old times. Back in the day. And they served other gods.

You can stop right there. Abraham served other gods. This reminds me of a principle, something that you can observe in the Bible related to other gods.

There are four ways that you serve a god. You remember their name. That's number one.

You take oaths in their name. That's number two. You serve them.

That's number three. And you bow down to them or pray to them, go to them for your answers and with your petitions. That's number four.

Now, this actually goes back to chapter 23, where in verse 7, Joshua is saying, Be courageous to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or the left. Remember, we spent a whole lesson practically on right hand or the left. What does that mean? You can err in a bad way and you can err in a good way.

You can screw up the good words of God, just like you can screw up in the area of the bad words, the evil words. But look at verse 7. Lest you go among these nations, these

who remain among you, and look, you shall not make mention of the name of their gods, number one, nor swear by them or cause anyone to swear by them, you shall not serve them nor bow down to them. Four different ways in which you can err related to these other gods.

This is important because it conditions everything in chapter 24. Everything in these two chapters is the choice. In the past, they had the choice, Will you trust God or do you want to go back to Egypt? Are you going to trust God and go into the land or are you going to die in the wilderness? Israel is not really tested in the area of other gods in the wilderness.

It's not like, Well, you know those teraphim just keep popping out of the woodwork and we've got to keep opening up the earth and swallowing people for serving other gods. It's not really an issue. They're kind of in isolation because they're learning their basic lessons.

They're like toddlers. Generally, you don't have to worry about your toddlers doing drugs or drinking and driving or the more sophisticated things. That's something you do later on when you're mature and you're exposed to the outside world.

When you've got a toddler in your house, they're not tempted to shoplift or cheat in school or plagiarize. Those are things that are beyond their realm. They're toddlers.

They're little kids. They're at home and their sins and their errors are very fundamental, basic. You either obey or you don't.

You do what I say or you get a spanking, kind of a thing. This is where Israel was in the wilderness. The other gods thing wasn't a big deal.

The word about that was delivered to them in Deuteronomy especially, but it wasn't a big deal. Now, where are they? They've grown up. They have entered the world of nations.

They're not slaves. They're not under Moses anymore. Joshua is soon to be gone.

Now, this is going to be a major source of testing for them because since they obviously have not driven out all of these Amorites, their gods are hanging around. Four different ways of fellowshiping with the nations. What is the danger of fellowship with the nations? What's the harm? What's the harm in talking to a few Hivites or maintaining a few of these other Ites in the land? It is specifically their gods, their worship.

They will lead you away. You will turn aside. You will go among these nations.

And he says specifically in verse 7, You shall not make mention of the name of their gods. This goes back to Exodus 23, verse 13. In all that I have said to you, be

circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth.

Don't treat these things like they are some sort of competition with God. Now, if you remember Exodus 23, this is Moses up on Sinai. This is the law coming down.

Be circumspect. Have good judgment. Have discernment.

There are certain things you don't play with. You don't joke about. You don't invite the potential of problem.

Don't talk up. Don't say, well, maybe this Baal thing is worth... You know, Molech. I heard over the hill they are worshiping Molech.

Boy, their crops are growing like crazy. And their sheep and goats are having double and triple births. You know, Molech.

Don't even mention the name. Don't bring it up in conversation. Don't be talking about the possibility.

Don't mention their names. That's number one. To swear by them.

What is this? To swear by them. To take an oath in their name. What's the harm in... If I go down there and I want to buy a new couch or something, and I don't have the money on me, and I say, I swear by Jupiter.

I'll give you the money by next Tuesday. Well, the guy is going to say, swear by who? What? If I go down to the courtroom and they say, I promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, Bacchus. So help me, Juno.

So help me, Aphrodite. I mean, you get laughed out of the proceedings. Why, up until recently, why do I do hereby swear or affirm? You put your hand on a Bible and you say, so help me, God.

Why? What does that mean to take an oath in God's name? By the way, are you supposed to do that? If the Bible says don't take any oaths, do not swear by heaven, don't swear by the gold on the altar, remember that whole thing? Well, anyway, in our courtrooms, you used to put your hand on the Bible and say, so help me, God. So help me, God. Left hand on the Bible, right hand in the air.

So help me, God. Why? Look at this assembly in chapter 24. In the sight of God, before God, we have assembled.

We are aware of divine observation. I say what I say, I promise what I promise, I swear what I swear, recognizing and acknowledging that God is really there, is really watching, and will really take action should I break my oath. To swear an oath in the name of a God

is to assert, to imply that that God really exists and has the power to create consequences for breach of that oath.

That's why it's meaningless for me to say, well, You know, they used to say, by Jove. You know, Jove is a Roman god. You say, by Jove? Well, that's meaningless.

There is no Jove. But, you know, by Jove, I think she's got it. Well, that's meaningless.

Jove is a nothing. He's a nobody. He's a figment of somebody's imagination.

If you say, by God, now you'd better be careful. Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Nothing wrong with saying, so help me God.

Presidents do it. I do solemnly swear I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter, so help me God. That is an acknowledgment by people who believe in God that this is a solemn commitment that you are making, and you fully expect God to take note if you break that.

When you say, I do, do you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife? Sickness, health, better for worse, rich or poorer, so long as you both shall live? Do they say, so help me God, in there? Probably lend a little more dignity to the proceedings and maybe make people hesitate a little more before they split the blanket. But this is the idea. There is a fourfold entanglement or a fourfold relationship with God.

If it's a false God, you're getting entangled in false things. To mention the name of God or mention the name of a false God. Israel is commanded to mention God's name, to talk with their children about Him in the way, and they're rising up, and they're going out, and they're coming in on the door posts.

God is to be mentioned. He is a factor. He is a reality.

He is a part of the landscape of life, a large part, the most significant part, and not to be forgotten. Be thankful unto Him, it says in Psalm 100, and bless His name. Bless His name.

You can't bless His name without mentioning His name. We pray and invoke His name. We pray in Jesus' name for His sake.

When I was a little boy, my dad used to say, in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen. And they're complimentary.

They're two parts of the same thing. To mention His name, that's one. To swear by them is to invoke their oversight, their judgment, should that oath be violated.

Thirdly, to serve them. How do you serve a god? Well, in the ancient world, there were primarily two ways. One is by sacrifice.

I serve Molech, and that's why I'm running my newborn child into the fire here. Or I serve Ashtar, and that's why I'm going to go down and have a big time with the prostitute on the hill, the temple prostitute, this lame excuse for fornication in the guise and in the name of religion. Perversion, taking that which is sacred and that which is a part of God's plan and purpose for a couple, which reflects God and Israel and Christ and the church and all the things that are holy and good and productive and fruitful, perverting them, defiling them, distorting them, twisting them into licentiousness, into a gross mockery of what God has designed.

That's what false worship did. To serve that god is to engage in worship, in sacrifice, in obeisance, to include whatever the injunctions, the commands, the ordinances, the statutes, the laws of that god. Fourthly, to bow down to them.

You think, well, bow down, that just seems to be kind of an acknowledgment. I told the girls one time that when they're playing chess and they get beaten, that they should say, I bow to your superior intellect. I acknowledge it.

I recognize that you have beaten me here. They actually thought that was part of the rules of chess with some embarrassing results when they were playing outside of the family. I'm really sorry about that.

My humor didn't fly so well when they were off making this statement. Somebody said, what? But to bow down in the ancient world is specifically to invoke this god in prayer, to make supplication, to look to this god for solutions, for benefits, for answers in time of need, acknowledgement in time of prosperity, to treat them as a reality, as a benefactor, and so on. They're all related and they overlap, but this is a powerful set of actions.

And Joshua says, you will not mention their names. You will not swear by them. You will not serve them.

You will not bow down to them. Any one of those is going to lead to catastrophe, to all of the evil words that God has spoken, because those things belong to God. When it says, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, this is what it's talking about.

His is the name that you mention. His is the name that you invoke when you are making a solemn promise, when you give your word, when you make a statement and say, I will be there, I will do that. You can count on me.

God is my witness. This is another way people used to testify to this point of view, this mental attitude. I serve the Lord God.

What is the church-age believer's service to God? One of our memory verses, Romans 12, 1 and 2. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. This is serving God. This is your reasonable service, Paul says.

Holy, acceptable. The only way you can serve God is by ensuring that that which you bring is holy and acceptable. Don't be bringing God the lame and the blind, the defiled, the diseased, the broken.

This is why I, and this is a personal preference, and I apologize in advance if it hurts anybody's feelings, but this whole thing about brokenness that's being talked about in the Christian world, brokenness, it shouldn't even be a word. Broken is an adjective. My watch is broken.

My roommate from school only knows one phrase in Spanish, and it's, Cuidado, mi petina está quebrada. It means, Be careful, my skate is broken. My skate is broken.

Something is broken, that's an adjective. Brokenness is taking an adjective and making it a noun. It's like other strange words.

Like interface is a noun, and they want to make it a verb. Well, let's get together and interface. There's a funny commercial where there's a whole room full of people, some guy comes in, and all these people are laying down on the floor, and he says, What are you all doing? We're ideating.

You're taking the word idea and turning it into a verb. We're ideating. Well, he says, What are you going to do about this? He says, Well, we haven't ideated that yet.

Idiating is more like it. But the idea that we come to God in our brokenness, this is a Calvinist thing. I am depraved.

I am hopeless. It's only God's grace arbitrarily changing me, and I don't know why He loved me in eternity past, but I'm degraded, and I'm defiled, and I'm just this awful mess. No! What does the Apostle Paul say? In Christ we are a new creation.

Old things are passed away. All things are become new. Do not come limping up to God in your brokenness.

That is blasphemy. What does Hebrews chapter 10 say? Crawl thou into the throne room, dragging thy broken wing behind thee. It doesn't say that at all.

Enter boldly, your heart having been sprinkled before you came in, your body having been washed before you came in, because there is no excuse for being defiled. There is no excuse for being broken. Don't tolerate this satanic, perverse notion that, well, please be patient, God is not finished with me yet.

I am broken. We're going to share our brokenness, our woundedness. We'll sit around and examine each other's scars.

We are not a scarred and twisted and maimed bride of Christ. Do you think the body and bride of Christ is maimed and twisted and withered and screwed up? No. We had another memory verse.

That he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. That's our standard. That's our goal.

That's our presentation before God in Christ. God heals us. God completes us.

God perfects us. God sanctifies us. And this idea of brokenness is just the devil's own lie.

He wants us to be dragged in a twisted set of baggage around with us and never come into the fullness of Christ. As long as you're thinking about your brokenness, you're not thinking about the grace of God. You're thinking about the problem and not the solution.

You're living in the past and not the present. Do not mention their names. Do not take oaths in their names.

Do not serve them. We serve God with the spirit of holiness. We bring Him a sacrifice that is holy and acceptable, without blemish, because God has given us the grace to wash ourselves, to cleanse ourselves, to touch not the unclean thing.

When we help others, we pull them out of the fire, but we hate even the garment that's spotted by the flesh, because we are not spotted. We are not defiled. We're not in the fire.

We are whole and strong and in a position to discern those whom we can save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. You don't do that if you're a limp, twisted, withered, I'm in my brokenness. I'm going to see if I can share my brokenness with you.

That's just nonsense. It is debilitating. Just like we were talking about in the first lesson tonight, we are not in the business of launching crippled children into the world.

We don't want to cripple and hold back. This issue comes up in a lot of things. Elizabeth had a school assignment.

They showed this movie called Remember the Titans, and it's about that black coach that comes in, in a formerly all-white school, and they do this integration thing. It's in the days of busing and so on. That movie is about the story of how these people get past their racial issues to create a great football team that goes on to the state championship and so on.

But one of the things that Denzel Washington, as the black coach character, says, because the white coach who was formerly the head coach and is now his assistant, every time he gets on to somebody and chews them out or throws them out of the game because they're not doing their job, the white coach would go over and put his arm around their shoulder and try to encourage them. He says, you're being too harsh and so on. To me, the most interesting part of the whole movie is when Denzel Washington's character goes over to that coach and he says, look, every time you do that, you're crippling these guys, because you don't do it for the white players.

I chew out all players equally. When a black player fails, I chew him out. When a white player fails, I chew him out.

But every time I chew out a black player, you go and put your arm around them and start consoling them and saying, well, you did a good job, you just have to try a little harder. He said, you're crippling them. You're trying to help them and you're crippling them.

They've got to learn to stand on their own. They've got to learn to find the drive from the inside. And this is one of the things that we all have to watch out for, especially as parents, especially when we're in a position to be of benefit to someone who is in a disadvantaged or a weaker position.

We have to be careful that the help we provide does not weaken someone because they become dependent upon us. They can't stand on their own feet because we constantly lift them up. Taking care of old people.

You start to lose... One of these days, I'll be an old geezer, hopefully, if I don't check out sooner than that. And if my daughters end up having to take care of me and I say, well, Becca, could you bring my coffee? They should say, get up and get it yourself. Well, I can't reach the cup.

Well, the doctor said you can reach the cup and you need to reach the cup, so go reach the cup. Use it or lose it. And tough love says, I am not going to weaken you with charity.

I'm not going to weaken you by going soft and not maintaining a standard and not holding you to a high level, not demanding that you do your best. God demands that we do our best with what He has given us, and anything less cripples us. Don't mention their names.

Don't take O's in their name. Do not serve them. You offer yourself a sacrifice to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of creation, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't settle for other solutions. Who do you bow down to? Where do you go for your solutions? Well, you know, I've got a lot of talent, so I can bring myself up on my

bootstraps. I've got parents who will bail me out if I run out of money.

I'll just go to them. I'll move back in with them. I'll do this, that, and the other.

Well, I've always relied on the hospitality of strangers, you know, Blanche and a streetcar named Desire, if you know that. No, to bow down. Where do you go for your answers? Where do you go to get your petitions answered? What do you trust? Do you trust in your looks? Do you trust in your abilities? Do you trust in something in the near periphery? Do you trust in somebody you know? What do you look to? God says, you better be looking to me.

If you look to anything else, that is a false God. Here's an interesting fact. I didn't realize.

I ran across somewhere in my wanderings in preparation this week. The phrase, other gods, is only found certain places in the Bible. Those who hold to the J-E-P-D theory of sources in the Old Testament, Pentateuch in particular, say that it is Deuteronomistic.

The Deuteronomist, the D in J-E-D-P, exclusively talks about other gods. And it is true that only in, you find this phrase quite extensively in the book of Deuteronomy, and you find it in Kings quite a lot. After that, when you go to the prophets, the major and minor prophets, only the prophet Jeremiah uses the phrase, other gods.

You're thinking, now wait a minute, you've got northern Israel, you've got the prophets up to the north, you've got the prophets in the south, and this is Israel falling off the wagon in terms of what they committed to here at Ebal and Gerizim, what they committed to again at Shechem with Joshua. But Hosea mentions it one time. I think it's Hosea 3.1 maybe.

It mentions the phrase, other gods. Other than that, only Jeremiah. But Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, out of that whole panoply of prophets, Hosea mentions the phrase, other gods, once.

Jeremiah is the only other guy. It occurs nowhere else. Now in the singular, sometimes God will say, I am God and there is no other God, but in terms of turning to other gods, Israel going and serving other gods, it is in the law of Moses, specifically and especially in Deuteronomy.

It is mentioned in Kings up through the time of Solomon. And once the kingdom divides, which of course you get down to the days of Jeremiah, and it's almost like a bracket. Right at the beginning with Solomon, down in Judah, in Jerusalem, you have a lot of, do not serve other gods.

The exhortations of David to Solomon, the exhortations of Solomon when he was dedicating the temple, and so on. It's all there. Then there is this big vacuum, and then

right at the end, Jeremiah is dozens of times talking about don't serve other gods.

That's right at the end of the kingdom of Judah. Northern kingdom just kind of gets written off. Say all of that to say this, you shall hold fast to the Lord, your God, as you have done to this day.

The Lord has driven these nations out. So down in chapter 24, I brought your fathers out of Egypt. You came to the sea.

The Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots. That's real well-known. A lot of these older Israelites may still remember that.

They were young children at the time. And he's going to say, your eyes have seen some of these things, you old timers. But in between that, he says, Terah, Abraham, Nahor dwelt on the other side of the river.

It's the other side of the Euphrates. In olden times, they served other gods. Other gods.

Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the river, led him through all the land of Canaan and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. To Isaac, I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau, I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.

Now, this is the main point. This is the thing I hope will stick in all of our minds. Abraham leaves Ur of the Chaldees along with Nahor, his father Terah, and so on.

Terah and Nahor shortstop, take possession of something outside the land, and they stay there, and they remain there for generations. Abraham comes on down to the land of promise. He doesn't get possession.

He wanders. He's treading up and down. Isaac treads up and down.

To Isaac, verse 4, I gave Jacob and Esau. Why is Esau even mentioned? He left out Ishmael. Ishmael and the other 17 sons of Abraham, they're just out of the picture.

Because Isaac, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Okay. Well, why does he mention Esau? In fact, why does he mention Nahor? I read one commentator saying, well, the reason he mentions Nahor is because Rebekah and Leah and Rachel are all from the Nahor side, and Joshua wants to cover all the bases of where their ancestors came from, so he's sort of backhandedly referring to Rebekah and Rachel and Leah by mentioning Nahor.

That isn't it at all. Although that might be helpful, that might be a good thing, but that's not the main point. Here's the main point.

You can settle. You can leave what you were supposed to leave, and you can move, and you can get a hold of something. But you dropped.

You fell short. Nahor and Terah could have stuck with Abraham and come all the way into the land, but they didn't. Who does this sound like? Esau could have gotten the birthright, but he sold it for a mess of pottage, and what did he get? I gave him the mountains of Seir.

Who got their possession first, Jacob or Esau? Who took possession first? Esau went to Seir long before Jacob went down to Egypt. He didn't get his possession. Terah and Nahor got a possession.

Lot got a possession. Esau got a possession. Settled for one in the hand.

Here it is. I've got it. I'm good to go.

That's why these individuals are mentioned. That doesn't really pertain to Ishmael. His people are Bedouin.

They're the transients. They're out in the shifting sands. The theme here is, when do you take possession? Do you stop and settle too early, too soon? You say, okay, well, that's a great thing.

I'm kind of glad to be out of Ur and so on. Here's a good land here in Haran. I'll settle here.

Okay, well, Edom's pretty good. I've got lots of room here. I'll take Edom.

Where the guy that is going to actually get the promise has to wait. Has to wait by faith and patience. Remember the New Testament? It is by faith and patience.

You've got to wait. You've got to wait. People say, wait for it, wait for it.

Don't settle. Don't take it too soon. Because the Pharisees, Jesus talked about them.

They pray on the street corners. People say, ooh, look at what a holy man. He says, you know what? They have their reward.

They've taken possession of a reward right there. The adulation of men. The respect of their mutual admiration society.

And that's it. There's nothing in the future. They didn't wait.

They didn't look ahead. They didn't think about the things of God. And they settled for something that just turns to ashes and disappears.

I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt according to what I did among them. Afterward I brought you out. I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea.

The Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. They cried out to the Lord. He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, brought the sea upon them, and covered them.

And your eyes saw what I did to Egypt. Your eyes saw it. Then you dwelt in the wilderness a long time.

And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, and they fought with you. Who is that? That's the two kings. That's Og, king of Bashan, Sihon up there in Gilead.

I destroyed them from before you. Then Balak, the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, sent and called Balaam, the son of Baor, to curse you. But I would not listen to Balaam.

Now Balaam is a prophet. Balaam is an oracle. Balaam has an inn.

But God says, that influence did not sway me. I have a bigger purpose. The prophet doesn't tell me what to do.

The oracle doesn't tell me what to do. I tell the prophet what to say. There is a flow of information here, and it's not from him to me.

It's from me to him. You remember that whole incident with Balaam. God told Balaam how the cow ate the cabbage.

Balaam didn't say, Oh God, curse Israel. God said, Oh well, you're an oracle. I guess I will.

God is not the genie of the lamp. He's not subject to the whims of human desire. I would not listen to Balaam.

Therefore he continued to bless you. So I delivered you out of his hand. This is interesting, because what kind of victory did they have over Sihon and Og? What sort of a victory was that? That was basically a military victory, right? Did they fight Balaam? What sort of attack did Balaam launch? This was a mystical attack.

This was a spiritual attack. Oh, get your God to curse you instead of bless you. And so this was an unseen conflict.

This was a hidden warfare, a more diabolical, I'll attack you with a curse. This is like the voodoo approach to getting rid of your enemies. I'll put the hex on you, put the hoodoo on you, and you won't be able to come in and dispossess me.

God says, No, it doesn't matter if they come at you with force of arms, if they come at you with their magic and their sorcery and their black arts. I protected you. I would not

listen.

I delivered you out of his hand. Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And it says the men of Jericho fought against you in verse 11.

But the word translated men there is Baal. The Baalim came. These are the lords.

These are the possessors. These are the big cheeses of Jericho. These are the best and brightest.

Baal with a capital B was the God in Canaan. Well, these were the Baalim. These were the gods of Jericho.

But it's referring to the human masters. But they're not called Melech. They're not called Tsar, princes.

These are the Baals, the lords. Women would call their husbands. Remember it says Sarah called Abraham Lord? That's Baal.

She called him, Sarah called Abraham Baal, basically. Baal, you are the lord of the house. You are the lord and master.

You are the authority. So these are the major figures of Jericho. They fought against you, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

But I delivered them into your hand. I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, also the two kings of the Amorites, but not with your sword or with your bow, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them.

Of course, this is after the possession phase, and they actually dwell there now. You eat of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant. What is our standing and our status as believers right now? Why do we have the privilege of prayer and of supplication and of blessing and of provision from God? Did we plant that vineyard? Is that recompense for our labors? Well, I went to Bible class five weeks in a row, so obviously God is going to bless me.

We reap the benefits of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The old saying back when I was a child, if I can remember it, was that He received what we deserve at the cross, and now we receive what He deserves at the Father's hand. He deserves approval and blessing and reward, and we receive it because we are in Christ.

He has enfolded us. He has entered us. He has become one with us.

We are in Him. He is in us. And we receive what He deserves because He received what

we deserve.

And we eat of vineyards and olive groves that we did not plant. We are going to enter into a land for which we did not labor. We will still fight a battle.

Joshua and the armies of Israel fought a battle, but ultimately it is not the sword and the bow that determined the outcome of that. It is God's grace. So, verse 14 is the big summation.

Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the river and in Egypt. This is harking back to the old mindset. You know, Abraham, everybody says Abraham is our father in Israel, right? But they don't think about the time when Abraham was in Ur and he was serving these other gods before he saw the light, before he responded to God and the call of God and was a man of faith.

And so Joshua appeals to that, and he says, put away these gods. Nobody's got the gods of Ur laying around. This is an attitude.

This is a remembrance. It's a recognition. If it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river or the gods of the Amorites.

This idea of selling short, of stopping off, also applies on the other side of the Jordan. We've talked about Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. They're also on the other side of the river, aren't they? They're going to be the first to disappear, to go away and to be absorbed by the nations or by their brethren.

What did they do? They saw the land. They said, hey, this is great for grazing crops, grazing animals and raising crops. Let's just stay here.

That's before they ever went in and fought the battle. Joshua says, look, don't go back to that mindset. It's sort of oblique here.

He doesn't want to insult Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, but it's pretty obvious. Other side of the river, capital R, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

And this is an interesting statement for Joshua to make because he's just said twice, I'm about to die. He doesn't say, as for me and my house, we have served the Lord, does he? He is sort of entering a status like Melchizedek, where his service is timeless. You don't get a guy that's in his late 80s or beyond and he says, well, this is what I'm going to do in the future.

These old guys don't even buy green bananas because you don't know if you're going to

be here when they ripen up. So it would be hugely optimistic for somebody to say, well, this is what I'm going to do down the road. But this is what Joshua says.

He says, I'm practically on my deathbed. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. What does that say about Joshua and his attitude and his viewpoint? What is Joshua expecting? I've got quite a lot ahead of me, even though I'm on my deathbed.

Does Joshua understand about coming back? He doesn't say, I have served the Lord. Do what I did. I have run my race.

I've fought the good fight. I've finished the course. There's laid up for me a crown of righteousness, etc.

Joshua says, I don't know about you, but starting here and going forward, me and my house, we will serve the Lord. It's an amazing statement for a guy on his deathbed. So the people answered and said, and remember, they had a responsive thing before.

This is Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. This is where the blessings and curses were read. This is where the big whitewash billboard was put up so many years before.

And they are reaffirming. Remember, the law is delivered at Sinai, and then you have Deuteronomy, Deuteronomas, second law, reiteration of the law under Moses. You've got a law and a reiteration of the law under Joshua as well.

It's a review. Hey, go back and say it again. Joshua has already had these elders once and told them, don't serve other gods, don't turn to the right hand or the left, and he's telling them again.

If it's worth saying once, it's worth saying twice. Commit, recommit. Make sure you have the principle.

People answered and said, far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods, of course, they're not even going to make it a generation before we're going to see this in judges. For the Lord our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight. Some of the older ones saw those.

Preserved us in all the way that we went among all the people through whom we passed. The Lord drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.

Well, sounds great. This is a good note upon which to end for tonight. We'll see next week that Joshua's got a reply.

Joshua doesn't seem to be convinced. I'm not sure why, but that's what we'll take a look at next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the clear pictures that present to us the opportunity and the challenge and the potential of our lives through Christ. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these truths on our hearts.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.