

## Taking A Stand Joshua 24

### Introduction

- It seems like everyday is a National Day of something
  - I went online to the National Day website (nationaldaycalendar.com)
  - According to the site there are over 150 “National Days” in September alone and over 1,500 “National Days” in the calendar year!
  - There are seven “National Days” in the two days left in September. Let me bring you up to speed...
    - Today
      - National Coffee Day
      - VFW Day
      - National Gold Star Mother’s Day
    - Tomorrow
      - National Chewing Gum Day
      - National Mud Pack Day
      - National Hot Mulled Cider Day
      - National Love People Day
- Sermon Series “All In: The Family of God”
  - Developing a foundation for our family around God’s Story
  - Today “Taking A Stand”- Joshua 24
    - Joshua 24:15 (ESV), “Choose this day whom you will serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
    - In many ways this was a National Day for Israel
      - They celebrated the fulfillment of God’s promise to lead them to the Promised Land
      - Now that they had arrived, Joshua calls the people to take a stand of faith that would not only direct their lives but future generations.
  - We each need to take a stand for our families
    - To declare God’s faithfulness and our commitment to serve God and God alone.
    - As a church we have done this as well
      - Sermon Series
      - Sunday Nights “Come to the Table”
      - In order to take a stand sometimes you have to do things differently to focus on something that is important.
- Background on Joshua 24
  - A few weeks ago we talked about Passover
    - Israel were slaves in Egypt
    - Cried out to God for deliverance

- God “Passed Over” Egypt protecting the households that spread the blood of the lamb over their doorposts, and passed judgement on the rest of the land of Egypt.
  - This led to the Israelites crossing the Red Sea after God used Moses to part the sea.
  - The Egyptians were engulfed by the sea as God closed up the separated waters after the Israelites had passed through.
- From the Red Sea to the Promised Land should have only been an 11 day journey, however it ended up taking the Israelites 40 years to get there!
  - Why?
    - Because of their lack of faith and disobedience to God
- But under Joshua’s leadership, the Israelites have witnessed God’s provision
  - Entered into the Promised Land
  - A New Beginning
  - Joshua 24 records Joshua’s final address as Israel’s leader

### Where Has God Brought You?

- Joshua 24:1
  - All the Tribes of Israel
    - Elders, heads, judges and officers
    - Presented themselves to the Lord
    - Leadership plays an important part in taking an effective stand (which we will talk about later)
  - Shechem-significant place
    - God’s promise to Abraham was made there (Genesis 12)
    - Jacob built an alter there after he returned to make amends with his brother Esau (Genesis 33)
  - Joshua then goes on to retell the story of how the Israelites have gotten to where they are today.
    - History mattered
    - The story was significant to recalling God’s promises and faithful acts in accordance to his promises
    - This is why I keep saying over and over again why we need to be passing on this story as the foundation of our family.
- Where has God brought you?
  - This question is significant to understanding how God’s story intersects with your story.
  - Share a Personal Story of receiving my diploma this week.
    - I have been working on a Doctor of Ministry degree since serving as your pastor
    - 5 year journey that really encompasses more if you consider all the education that I have been able to take advantage of.
    - I completed my degree work in May, however we all know that it’s really not official until you receive your diploma.

- Since June, I've been communicating with the school to receive a certificate that says, "I'm official!"
- After many conversations back and forth, finally this week I received my official diploma.
- The diploma was packaged in a cardboard envelope that specifically said, "Do Not Bend" on the front of the envelope.
- I found my diploma rolled up in my mailbox!
- There was a part of me that wanted to be furious, but then there was another part of me that felt relieved; the journey is finally over!
- Inside the envelope, the registrars office printed every class with every grade that I had taken as far back as the beginning of my Master's degree in 2008.
- Recalling that journey was important!
  - Blessed and relieved
  - I can also see how I've grown as a person and as a leader
  - I can see God's faithfulness to the call of ministry
- Where has God brought you?
  - It could be that you feel like you are in slavery
  - It could be that you feel like you are in the wilderness
  - It could be that you feel as though you have reached a destination point
  - Wherever you are in your journey it is important to recall where God has brought you.
    - It is important to recall God's promises.
    - It is important to recall God's story.
  - This is where Joshua begins his address to the Israelites.
    - **Joshua 24:13**
    - A journey of grace and mercy despite their sin

### Reflect and Respond

- **Joshua 24:14a**
  - Now therefore...
    - God has been faithful
    - Revealed his power
    - Provided
- **Joshua 24:14b**
  - Reflection requires a response
    - Israel's problem is that they have been influenced by other religions as they have lived throughout the land.
    - They have neglected, at times, what or who has gotten them where they are at.
    - Reflection is an opportunity to put things into perspective instead of responding to feeling or convenience.
  - Story about Family Devotions

- Sermon series is convicting
  - Preaching on something that is personal
  - What kind of example am I setting?
- Reflection regarding sermons
  - Need to do family devotions
  - Evenings at the Fallon house
    - Eat
    - Kids' practices
    - House chores
    - Get the kids to bed sometimes just so the noise will stop!
  - Probably not the best example!
- My kids' experience with God
  - Come to church, but mostly because it's dad's job
  - Church is part of their life because it's part of Amy and I's life
  - Is it really personal?
- Finally this week we started family devotions
  - Picked out a devotional book
  - I read the story
  - The kid's read the scripture verses
  - Answered questions that went along with the devotional
  - Kid's both chose to pray
- Reflection and Response- we need to take God's story and apply it to our lives.

### Take the Lead

- **Joshua 24:15**
  - Joshua takes the lead
  - His decision is not based on what the people decide to do
  - He doesn't take a vote or a poll
  - He does it because he knows God's faithfulness
- You have to take the lead to respond to the story of God!
  - Put away the gods
  - Choose who you will serve
  - "The word 'serve' occurs no fewer than 16 times in chapter 24 and an additional 4 times in chapters 22-23."<sup>1</sup>
    - Joshua leads by example by taking the lead in his family
    - By serving the people as he serves the Lord
- **Joshua 24:16-18**
  - The people follow Joshua's lead
  - They recall God's work
  - They recognize God's faithfulness

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<sup>1</sup> *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008.

- They commit to serving God
- BUT, there's a problem!
  - Joshua 24:19-20
    - God is holy and he is jealous
    - God isn't ok with the Israelites living their life the way they have
    - They have to reflect and respond-
    - More than just words-there has to be an action
    - God is holy and jealous is beyond moral grounds. It also implies justice and the extent of God's expectation to be number 1.<sup>2</sup> "There shall be no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3)
- So, the people respond
  - Joshua 24:21-23
    - Alright, if you are willing to accept the consequences then you are ready to reaffirm your faith
    - The covenant is renewed, but Joshua shows his leadership by putting a stone at the sanctuary as a memorial of this moment.
      - A mark of where they have come
      - Every time they see the stone it is a moment to reflect and reaffirm
      - Take the lead
- What happened as a result of Joshua's leadership?
  - Israel served the Lord
    - Joshua 24:31
    - Joshua left a legacy
    - Joshua's Leadership made a difference
  - God was faithful
    - Joshua 24:32
    - Fulfilled promises
  - Sin of the next generation
    - Judges 2:6-8
    - Forgot the story

### Conclusion

- Have you taken a stand?
- The impact of our decisions today create a legacy
- Where has God brought you?
- Reflect and Respond
- Take the Lead
- Take a Stand today

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<sup>2</sup> John Goldingay, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth For Everyone*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011. Pgs. 86-87.