

# Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of May 3, 2020

## Heroes In Hard Times: Choosing Who You Will Serve

Pastor Temple, 10:30am

### Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events since you last met or about applying last week's message on *Give Me The Mountain*, Joshua 14:6-14?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

Opener Question: Do you think it is important to know history? Why or why not? What is the difference between history and His-story?

### Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture, Joshua 24:1-15. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

**<sup>1</sup>Joshua gathered together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem, summoning the elders, leaders, judges, and officers of Israel. When they stood in ranks before God, <sup>2</sup>Joshua addressed all the people: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: In times past your ancestors, down to Terah, father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and served other gods. <sup>3</sup>But I brought your father Abraham from the region beyond the River and led him through the entire land of Canaan. I made his descendants numerous, and gave him Isaac. <sup>4</sup>To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I assigned the mountain region of Seir to possess, while Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. <sup>5</sup>"Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and struck Egypt with the plagues and wonders that I wrought in her midst. Afterward I led you out. <sup>6</sup>And when I led your ancestors out of Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued your ancestors to the Red Sea with chariots and charioteers. When they cried out to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, upon whom he brought the sea so that it covered them. Your eyes saw what I did to Egypt. After you dwelt a long time in the wilderness, <sup>8</sup>I brought you into the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I delivered them into your power.**

**You took possession of their land, and I destroyed them at your approach. <sup>9</sup>Then Balak, son of Zippor, king of Moab, prepared to war against Israel. He summoned Balaam, son of Beor, to curse you, <sup>10</sup>but I would not listen to Balaam. Instead, he had to bless you, and I delivered you from his power. <sup>11</sup>Once you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho, the citizens of Jericho fought against you, but I delivered them also into your power. <sup>12</sup>And I sent the hornets ahead of you which drove them—the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites, and Jebusites—out of your way; it was not your sword or your bow. <sup>13</sup>I gave you a land you did not till and cities you did not build, to dwell in; you ate of vineyards and olive groves you did not plant. <sup>14</sup>"Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve him completely and sincerely. Cast out the gods your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. <sup>15</sup>If it is displeasing to you to serve the LORD, choose today whom you will serve, the gods your ancestors served beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose country you are dwelling. As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."**

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- Background info- Like Caleb, whom we studied last week, Joshua was of the Exodus generation and the other optimistic one in the original Israelite scout team for the promised land who was allowed by God to enter it after 40+ years of wandering in the wilderness. As the successor to Moses, Caleb had big shoes to fill as a leader. Likewise, the size of the task to lead the people in taking over the land from the enemy inhabitants was big. How do you see God's wisdom in Joshua in how he chose to begin this task in verses 1-2?
- Why do you think God chose Joshua for the job (Numbers 27:18)?
- What do you think is most significant about early history shared in verses 3-4?
- The more recent history of the people was shared by Joshua in verses 5-12. What are some of the themes woven into his speech? What lessons in leadership are found here as well?
- Verses 13-15 begin with a summary of God's gracious presence and provision and leads to a call to commitment. What options were they presented with in verse 15?
- In your own words, what is being asked of the people here?
- Do you think the people found this to be a compelling call to make a clear choice? Why or why not?
- Why is it important that this was a free choice and not a forced choice?

### **Other Related Readings (10 min)**

- Would a volunteer please read aloud Hebrews 4:6-15. In verses 6-11, the author of Hebrews writes of entering God's "rest" in much the same way the Old Testament speaks of God's people entering the promised land. Why is receiving the gospel and obedience to God a necessary step in experiencing God's rest?
- What is the suggested time frame in making such a choice here and in Joshua 24:15 too? Why?
- How is scripture described as a tool for discernment of obedience and disobedience (vs. 12-13)?
- How does scripture and obedience lead God's people to salvation (vs 14)?
- How do even the obedient still stand in need of God's grace (vs 15-16)?

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the scripture readings above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- We live in a commitment shy culture. When it comes to a choice to have faith in the Lord, what are some of the more common reasons you hear from the long-term "undecideds"?
- How is the choice not to make a choice or to postpone the choice still a choice? What are the consequences of either of these?
- What are the potential benefits of saying "yes" to a patient loving God who is waiting on his children to come to Him?
- Pastor Temple shared that, in the words of Bob Dylan, "you gotta serve somebody." Do you agree that everyone inevitably ends up serving somebody eventually?
- Pastor Temple also shared that in his opinion, it is only when we serve God and others that we find true joy in life. What are some examples of where you have found your deepest joys in life?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- Is there a time in your life when you made a clear commitment to God and to try to follow His ways by His grace as best you can? If so, who have you shared that choice with, directly or indirectly, in the past few weeks?
- A volunteer may lead the group in prayer about the concerns shared earlier in the meeting.