

Study Guide



Joshua 24– June 4, 2017 Choose Whom You Will Serve

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

As we walk through Joshua we are going to see how Joshua relates to our everyday battle of faithfulness. **Our aim and our prayer for this study is to gain the wisdom we need for the battle of faithfulness.** During our time in Joshua we will be adapting our study guide from [Crossway's book, Knowing the Bible: Joshua, A 12-Week Study](#) by Trent Hunter. We recommend you purchase this book and use it in your Community Groups and for personal study as we go through Joshua. We have copies of the book available in our bookstore.

For further study on this weeks study please check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

South Sudan & NOLA Baptist— For further information visit norrisferrychurch.org or contact Jared Clary (clary@norrisferrychurch.org)

Please see the list of local ministries under the "Walk" section below.

Calendar

June 10th— [Serve Shreveport](#)
June 11th— [Master Plan Meeting](#)
June 15th- July 20th— Women's Summer Study (Fervent)
July 11th-16th— [Fort Worth Mission Trip](#)

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[Cornerstone](#)":

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' name

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' name

Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong; in the Savior's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all

When Darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil
My anchor holds within the veil

Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong; in the Savior's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all
He is Lord
Lord of all

Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong; in the Savior's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all

Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong; in the Savior's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless stand before the throne.

In Joshua's final speech he sets the conquest of the land in the broader story of the nation, a story of the Lord's making. God called Abraham, he sent plagues on Egypt, and he parted waters at the Red Sea. So, too, the conquest was his work. Twice the Lord says, "I gave them into your hand" (Josh. 24:8,11). The message is plain: "It was not by your sword or by your bow. I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them" (vs. 12-13). **In Christ, God defeats Satan and death, the enemies that stand behind all others. But he does so not by the sword, for at his arrest Jesus told Peter to put his sword away (John 18:11). Rather, he does so by means of his cross (Heb. 2:14-17).** On the cross Jesus suffered the wrath both of God's enemies and of God himself as a sacrifice for sin.

Joshua indicates that Israel's story will get worse before it gets better. Exile is threatened (23:13-16) as a consequence of disobedience, and 24:19 essentially seals the Israelites fate: "You are not able to serve the Lord." This echoes Moses' words in Deuteronomy 31:29, where he predicted that the people would not actually obey, would go into exile, and would need God to regather them and give them new hearts (Deut. 30:1-6). They can commit to serve God all they want (Josh. 24:23-24), but Joshua agrees with Moses: their hearts will lead them astray (Deut. 31:21, 27). How can God's promises be realized when Israel's obedience is only partial at best? The Sinaitic covenant is no solution. **What is needed is a new covenant, as the prophets anticipate.** Jeremiah 31 speaks of the full forgiveness of sins, the law written on the heart, and perfect communion with God. Through his broken body and shed blood, Jesus brings this new covenant (Luke 22:19-20). **Through Christ, God removes his wrath from us, for "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13), and through Christ the Lord has blessed us, "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3).**

There is an urgency in Joshua's voice as he speaks to his people for the last time: "Choose this day whom you will serve" (Josh. 24:15). In his old age Joshua feels shortness of life and the urgency of serving the Lord. David felt that same urgency when he wrote, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Ps. 95:7), and the author of Hebrews, quoting David, calls the church to exercise the same kind of daily urgency together: **"Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12-13). Repentance and faith are necessary for salvation, and now is always the time to respond to God (2 Cor. 6:2).**

Discussion

1. In chapter 23 Joshua was speaking to the leaders of Israel. To whom is Joshua speaking in chapter 24 (vs. 1-2)?
2. In verses 2-12, Joshua reviews for the people the acts of God throughout their history, beginning with their ancestor, Abraham. Paying particular attention to the verbs in these verses, list all that Joshua records concerning God's work on Israel's behalf beginning with Abraham. Looking at this list of action verbs, what is your reaction to this history of Israel?
3. Paying special notice to verses 12-13, note what point the Lord is making in this speech to Israel. What should Israel be feeling at the conclusion of this brief review of her history?
4. In verses 14-15, Joshua commands the people to "fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness" and to "Put away" their false gods, choosing whom they will serve. Why do you think Joshua doesn't give these commands at the beginning of his speech?
5. Look at verses 14-15. How do Joshua's words to the people imply that they may still be dabbling with the gods of Egypt and Amorites and at the same time they are worshipping God who has rescued them? How does Joshua show a sense of urgency in what he is saying to the people about their choices? Must they choose between the God of Abraham and the gods of the people around them? Why can't they follow God AND the other gods (vs.19)?
6. Look at verses 16-22. What is the essence of this conversation between Joshua and the people of Israel? What do the people say about their intentions to serve God? What does Joshua say to them in return?
7. What is the significance of Joshua's statement to the people, "You are not able to serve the Lord, for he is a holy God."? Also read Deuteronomy 31: 22-29 where Moses says a very similar thing before his death.

8. How does the inevitability of Israel's failure to remain faithful point to the necessity of the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and fulfilled by Jesus (Romans 8:1-4)?

9. Read verses 21-23. Here the people try to convince Joshua that they will serve the Lord, and they are willing to be witnesses against themselves if they do not follow through with their declaration of loyalty to the Lord. Then how does Joshua challenge them in verse 23?

Application

1. Look at verse 31. Here it is recorded that the people of Israel continued to serve the Lord during the lifetime of Joshua and during the lifetimes of the elders who outlived Joshua. Read Judges 2:6-12 where it also makes this same point, but also observes that the next generation "who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel" abandoned the Lord and began to worship the idols of the people around them. What are some possible explanations regarding why this falling away occurred? What can we learn from these events of history?

2. We Christians have a greater leader than Joshua. Joshua in many ways is a foreshadowing of Jesus. Read Hebrews 4:8-16 which specifically refers to Joshua and to Jesus in terms of finding the true "Sabbath rest for the people of God". How do we find our true "Sabbath rest for the people of God" in Jesus?

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Joshua to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased
Young life
Heart of hope
First priority
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center
Community renewal
Grief counseling
Celebrate recovery
Samaritan counseling
Last call ministries
Golden age ministries
Rescue mission
Luke's lighthouse
FCA

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!