

Living Water Fellowship

14th Sunday after Pentecost – 3rd September 2023

Happy Father's Day!

COME TO JESUS

OPENING SONG: No Other Name

WELCOME & PRAYER:

GROW IN HIS GRACE

BIBLE READING: Joshua 24:1-15

¹ Then Joshua summoned all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, including their elders, leaders, judges, & officers. So they came & presented themselves to God.

² Joshua said to the people, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of Abraham & Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River, & they worshiped other gods. ³ But I took your ancestor Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates & led him into the land of Canaan. I gave him many descendants through his son Isaac. ⁴ To Isaac I gave Jacob & Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir, while Jacob & his children went down into Egypt.

⁵ "Then I sent Moses & Aaron, & I brought terrible plagues on Egypt; & afterward I brought you out as a free people. ⁶ But when your ancestors arrived at the Red Sea, the Egyptians chased after you with chariots & charioteers. ⁷ When your ancestors cried out to the Lord, I put darkness between you & the Egyptians. I brought the sea crashing down on the Egyptians, drowning them. With your very own eyes you saw what I did. Then you lived in the wilderness for many years.

⁸ "Finally, I brought you into the land of the Amorites on the east side of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I destroyed them before you. I gave you victory over them, & you took possession of their land. ⁹ Then Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, started a war against Israel. He summoned Balaam son of Beor to curse you, ¹⁰ but I would not listen to him. Instead, I made Balaam bless you, and so I rescued you from Balak. ¹¹ "When you crossed the Jordan River & came to Jericho, the men of Jericho fought against you, as did the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, & the Jebusites. But I gave you victory over them. ¹² I sent terror ahead of you to drive out the two kings of the Amorites. It was not your swords or bows that brought you victory. ¹³ I gave you land you had not worked on. I gave you towns you did not build—the towns where you are now living. I gave you vineyards & olive groves for food, though you did not plant them.

¹⁴ "So fear the Lord & serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River & in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone.

Group Bible Study/Discussion:

1. Read Joshua 24:1-24. What strikes you as you read? What questions come to mind?
2. Verses 1-13 summarize the specifics of God's commitment to us. What word do you use to describe that first step of God toward us in building a relationship with us?
3. Most of us think of "other gods" (vs 2) & see statues of Buddha or a copy of some other religious text. We think of the idolatry of other faiths. Luther was clear & correct that any other trust, security or hope outside of Christ was a "false god," an "idol." In your daily experience, to what "gods" do people you know cling or give their hope & devotion? When you see that in someone you love, how do you respond?
4. This covenant renewal ceremony occurs after the Promised Land has been conquered. Why do you think Joshua & God insist upon this renewal & remembering of God's faithfulness to them? What is at risk here?
5. Why is Joshua sceptical (vs 19) about the peoples' ability & heartfelt willingness to obey all that God has commanded of them? How would you feel if Pastor John was publically that dubious of your faith & faithfulness? How do the people respond here? Why is that important?
6. What strikes you in verse 23? It seems that as they've taken the land from its pagan inhabitants, they've adopted some bad habits from the dwellers in the land & perhaps have some "souvenir" idols they've taken as plunder. What's the danger in that? Why is "dabbling" in something often a gateway to bondage to that "something"? How do you avoid that in the first place?
7. In v 24, the "people" say they will "serve & obey" God alone. A literal translation would read, "listen to God's voice." Is there a subtle difference in meaning there? What do you think it means to "listen to God's voice"? When/if you listen to God's voice, what do you hear? What makes listening to God's voice clearer/easier, or less so? Why is that?
8. Read also Joshua 24:25-27. Joshua records what has transpired that day & dedicates a symbol of their commitment. What similar symbols do you use to remind you & hold you accountable to your commitment to Christ? What steps do you take to protect yourself against the temptations to compromise with the "other gods" of this world?
9. What commitments do you need to renew in your life? What effect might it have to renew that relationship or recommit in that situation? Have you ever thought of your personal life as your kingdom? How can you tell that you have truly surrendered your kingdom to God? How would those around you know?
10. Read Matthew 6:19-33; especially vs 24. What parallel do you see to Joshua 24? How does that play itself out in your life?

¹⁵ But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me & my family, we will serve the Lord.”

CHILDREN’S TIME:

SONG: Ancient of Days

BIBLE READING: Joshua 24:16-24

¹⁶ The people replied, “We would never abandon the Lord & serve other gods. ¹⁷ For the Lord our God is the one who rescued us & our ancestors from slavery in the land of Egypt. He performed mighty miracles before our very eyes. As we traveled through the wilderness among our enemies, he preserved us. ¹⁸ It was the Lord who drove out the Amorites & the other nations living here in the land. So we, too, will serve the Lord, for he alone is our God.” ¹⁹ Then Joshua warned the people, “You are not able to serve the Lord, for he is a holy & jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion & your sins. ²⁰ If you abandon the Lord & serve other gods, he will turn against you & destroy you, even though he has been so good to you.”

²¹ But the people answered Joshua, “No, we will serve the Lord!” ²² “You are a witness to your own decision,” Joshua said. “You have chosen to serve the Lord.” “Yes,” they replied, “we are witnesses to what we have said.” ²³ “All right then,” Joshua said, “destroy the idols among you, & turn your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.” ²⁴ The people said to Joshua, “We will serve the Lord our God. We will obey him alone.”

FAITH CHAT:

WHAT WOULD THE NEIGHBOURS SAY?

If I were to ask, “What would you say is most important to _____?”

What would you like them to say?

THE MESSAGE: *DYSFUNCTIONAL: DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES*

OFFERING SONG: Christ is Mine Forevermore

PRAYERS:

THE COMMUNION:

The Words of Institution & The Lord’s Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Worship during Communion:

VIDEO – ALL BECAUSE OF THE CROSS (Paul Baloche) - CCL Licence 384660

GO IN HIS POWER

THE BLESSING:

(Name), † child of God...

You too are called to serve the Lord!

Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SONG: May the Lord Bless You Today (AT 408)

SHOW HIS LOVE