

**SERIES: OFF GRID**

**SERMON: YOUR HOME - A PLACE FOR GOD'S PRESENCE**

**11-12-23**

**OPENER:**

***Joshua 24:14-15. (NKJV) "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. Serve the Lord! <sup>15</sup> And 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, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."***

**This is toward the end of Joshua's life. Israel is already beginning to fall away from serving God. Some of them are beginning to worship the old gods of Egypt. Others are practicing the pagan worship of the land they have just conquered. Joshua gathers them together and reminds them of all that God has done for them, how the Lord has been faithful and delivered them time and time again and then says this to them.....**

**Make a decision. Choose who you are going to serve. If you are going to serve God, serve Him. If you are going to serve other gods then serve them. But.....  
"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."**

**Your home is where you have authority. You have ownership. Whether you rent or lease it is still where you can do what you please. You can live how you want to live, do what you want to do.**

**But what makes your home a home of value, should not be the amount of your mortgage, or what decor you choose, or the new rug you bought or the new couch that was just delivered, but that you have made your home a dwelling place for the Spirit of God.**

**"As for me and my house" .....**

- > Have you invited the Holy Spirit into your home?**
- > Do you pray together as a family, worship together, seek His presence together?**
- > Are you aware that He is that unseen guest at every dinner table?**
- > The willing help in every crisis?**
- > The mender of every family conflict ?**
- > The wise counsel for every family decision?**

**HE IS THE PEACE FOR YOUR CHILDREN IN THE DARK  
OF THE NIGHT.**

**HE IS THE MIGHTY HEALER WHEN SICKNESS COMES.**

**HE IS YOUR DELIVERER WHEN DEVASTATION IS ALL**

**AROUND YOU.  
AND HE HAS THE WORDS TO THE PRAYERS WHEN YOU  
CAN'T FIND THEM.**

**“As for me and my house”.....**

**WHATEVER ELSE MAY BE SAID ABOUT THE HOME, IT IS  
THE BOTTOM LINE OF LIFE.  
THE ANVIL UPON WHICH ATTITUDES AND CONVICTIONS  
ARE HAMMERED OUT.**

**THE HOME IS THE SINGLE MOST INFLUENTIAL FORCE IN OUR EARTHLY  
EXISTENCE.**

I'm sure you've heard it said that home is where life makes up its mind.  
Sometimes as parents and grandparents we forget how powerful our seemingly  
small actions can be.

**BOOK QUOTE:**

Listen to this from the book by Mary Korzan, “When You Thought I Wasn't  
Looking.”

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the  
refrigerator, and I wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I thought it  
was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me, and I  
knew that little things are special things.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I believed there  
is a God that I could always talk to.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me goodnight, and I felt loved.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes, and I  
learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared and I wanted to be  
everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked ... and wanted to say thanks for all  
the things I saw ... When you thought I wasn't looking.

**SO I SAY TODAY, MAKE A DECISION JUST LIKE JOSHUA WHO SAID, “AS FOR  
ME AND MY HOUSE WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.”**

**I WANT TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO MAKE FOUR DECISIONS TODAY CONCERNING  
YOUR HOME:**

**DECISION#1: BEGIN TO BUILD A GRACE-BASED FAMILY**

As Joshua recounts the story of the conquest of the Promised Land, he quotes  
the Lord who has a strong reminder to the people.....

***Joshua 24:11-13 Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands. <sup>12</sup> I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you—also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow. <sup>13</sup> So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.'***

Joshua wants the people never to forget that they owe everything to God. It's easy to see how that might happen. After all, the Israelite army had won battle after battle, often routing the enemy from the field. It would be natural to start thinking, "We're something special." But that thought is always deadly. Because once we become prideful we start looking to our own abilities and forget how much we need the Lord.

**JOSHUA KNEW THAT ONCE THE PEOPLE TOOK CREDIT FOR THEIR OWN VICTORIES, THEY WOULD SOON TURN AWAY FROM THE LORD ALTOGETHER.**

We ought to do with our families what Joshua does with the people of Israel.....

**First: Review past blessings and to make a written record of God's faithfulness.**

We need to say to our children,

> "Sweetheart, do you remember when you were so sick and we prayed to God and you got better?"

> "Do you remember when Dad lost his job and we were afraid so we prayed and God gave Daddy a new job?"

> "Do you remember when we prayed for Uncle Joe to be saved and six months later he accepted Christ?"

**A GOOD MEMORY OF GOD'S BLESSINGS IS A  
GUARANTEE OF BACKSLIDING.**

***Psalms 145:4-7 (NIV) One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.***

***<sup>5</sup> They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—  
and I will meditate on your wonderful works. <sup>i</sup>***

***<sup>6</sup> They tell of the power of your awesome works—  
and I will proclaim your great deeds.***

***<sup>7</sup> They celebrate your abundant goodness  
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.***

Has God blessed you? Has God come through? Then write it down. Think often about it. Talk about it. Tell it to your children. Pass it along so that succeeding generations can tell the story after you are gone to heaven.

**Second: Practice generous giving.**

**WHEN WE GIVE GENEROUSLY WE TEACH OUR  
CHILDREN TO DO THE SAME.  
THEY LEARN THAT WE GIVE BECAUSE WE HAVE RECEIVED  
AND THAT GOD NEVER STOPS GIVING TO HIS CHILDREN.**

Finally: We need to be quick to forgive and slow to take offense.

*Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.*

**FORGIVENESS AND LOVE BEGINS IN OUR HOMES.**

**DECISION #2: TEACH YOUR FAMILY TO WORSHIP GOD**

*Joshua 24:14 "Now fear the Lord" .....*

When we think about the fear of the Lord, many people get the idea of cringing in terror. The biblical concept is much broader than that. Fearing the Lord means having such a deep respect for God that we want to please him in all we do.

"Fearing God" refers to "inner devotion" that causes us to honor God.

**HOW DO WE SHARE THIS HONOR OF GOD WITH  
OUR FAMILIES?  
WE NEED TO SHOW DEVOTION TO GOD IN OUR HOMES.**

**AND A DEVOTION TO GOD IS BETTER CAUGHT THEN TAUGHT.**

**WHEN PARENTS TRULY FEAR THE LORD THEIR CHILDREN WILL LEARN TO  
FEAR HIM TOO.**

**WHEN PARENTS TRULY LOVE THE LORD, IT WIL BE NATURAL FOR THE  
CHILDREN TO LOVE HIM TOO.**

**WHEN THEY SING AND WORSHIP, THEIR CHILDREN WILL LEARN THE WORDS.  
WHEN THEY PRAY, THEIR CHILDREN WILL QUIETLY  
PRAY WITH THEM.**

**SIDE NOTE:**

I want to speak to the dads, the husbands, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, and uncles. I am also speaking to young men, high school boys, college men, young single men, and older single men. Men of every age, it starts with you.

For too many years men have delegated spiritual leadership to the women while they went out into the world to make a living. We have laid a burden on women that God never intended them to bear all alone. God meant spiritual

leadership to be a shared burden, but the men must take the initiative if we want God's blessing in our homes.

**STORY:**

A famous painting by Norman Rockwell that appeared on the cover of Saturday Evening Post in 1959 that shows a family going off to church, led by the oldest sister followed by Mom who is followed by the younger sister. All three women are dressed for church. Following them is a young boy who appears to be going with some reluctance. Why the problem? At the center of the painting is dear old Dad slumped in a chair, in his pajamas, reading the paper. As junior walks by he casts a longing eye at his father. He's going to church, but clearly he'd rather be at home with his father.

**WHEN WILL WE LEARN AS PARENTS THAT OUR ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN OUR WORDS.**

**DECISION #3: TO BE OBEDIENT IN ALL THINGS**

***Joshua 24:14-15. (NKJV) "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. Serve the Lord!<sup>15</sup> And 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, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."***

The word "serve" is used five times in two these verses. This is obviously the burden on Joshua's heart. Nothing mattered but this, that the people would willingly choose to serve the Lord. He specifies exactly what that means when he adds "*in all faithfulness.*"

**EVERY AREA OF LIFE MUST BE SURRENDERED TO THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.  
"ALL FAITHFULNESS" MEANS THERE CAN BE NO 'HIDDEN ROOMS' THAT WE RESERVE FOR OURSELVES.**

**DECISION #4: MAKE AN ALTAR IN YOUR HOME**

Do you have an altar in your home? A place where you always go to spend time with the Lord? A place in which the atmosphere is pregnant with the glory of God so that all you have to do is sit there in order to feel His presence?

**REASONS WHY TO MAKE AN ALTAR IN YOUR HOME:**

**1) BECAUSE GOD WILL OPEN A PORTAL TO HEAVEN IN A PLACE THAT'S DEDICATED TO HIM.**

**God cares about land. He cares about places. When a place is dedicated to Him, you can feel the difference. He will actually open a gateway to and from Heaven over that place, and you'll have supernatural encounters with Him there.**

**Genesis chapter 28 describes one such instance, in which Jacob, after running for his life away from home and his brother Esau, happened to stop at a place that was special to God. He had a radical dream and actually saw angels ascending and descending between Heaven and earth in that place. Then he saw God Himself, and God spoke to him about his future.....**

***Genesis 28:16-17 (NIV) Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"***

**Personal.....**

**I believe there is an open portal to Heaven over my altar. It may be a small one, but you would not believe how pregnant the atmosphere is there. It's saturated with God's glory. And whenever I sit down there, even if I'm having the worst day ever, I can feel the presence of the Lord. The Holy Spirit ministers to me there, and His presence and work are powerfully manifest.**

## **2) BECAUSE HAVING A DEDICATED ALTAR IN A QUIET PLACE FEEDS YOUR SPIRIT'S NEED FOR SEPARATION AND SOLITUDE**

**Everybody needs time alone with God. We were made to commune with God. Each of us have a God-shaped hole, and only God can fill our innermost needs. We can't fill our deepest needs with fun, entertainment, emotional excitement, busyness, physical pleasure, relationships, or anything else.**

**Making an altar in your home gives you a dedicated place to separate from the chaos of life and commune facedown with God.**

## **3) BECAUSE HAVING AN ALTAR IN YOUR HOME HELPS YOU DEVELOP THE DAILY DISCIPLINE OF SPENDING TIME WITH GOD**

**When you are in the habit of spending time in that place, and knowing that that place is the spot you spend time with God, helps you spend more time with God!**

- Pick a place that's quiet and away from everything else. Make it a place where you're not staring at piles of laundry or at dishes that need to be washed. Make it a place where you can hide from your kids, your spouse, your phone, your computer, or anything else that screams for attention.**
- Clean it up.**

**Believe it or not, the Holy Spirit rests on order, not on chaos. You will feel a tangible difference if you will clean your spot out. Even if you have to start with a 2-foot by 3-foot spot on the floor. If that's all you can clean, do it anyway. Make your spot clean and orderly, no matter how tiny it is.**

- **Place your Bible study materials in your altar, so you can always find them.**

- **Make it beautiful.**

**Your spirit and soul crave beauty. God made you that way. When the beauty of your special spot feeds you, you will be able to connect with God more—because beauty comes from Him. So no matter where your altar is, start adding beauty where you can.**

### **CLOSING:**

**MORE THAN EVER WE NEED A GENERATION OF JOSHUAS WHO WILL MAKE THE CHOICE TO SERVE THE LORD.**

**MEN AND WOMEN THAT SAY, “ I DON'T CARE WHAT THE REST OF YOU DO! AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE - WE WILL SERVE THE LORD!”**

**We all have to say this sooner or later. It happens to us either at work, at school, in business, with our friends, our neighbors.**

**If you follow Christ, there will come a time when you must say, “Do what you want, and whatever you do I will still be your friend, but I'm going to serve the Lord.”**

**Joshua does not say, “My house without me,” which would be like that famous Norman Rockwell painting. And he doesn't say, “Me without my house,” He and his children join together in their pledge to the Lord.**

**How can a man be so certain about his family? I think Joshua could speak like this because he had taught them and he had provided a good example for his family to follow.**