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Joshua 24
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Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think we forget some things? What things do you usually remember best?
 2. What first brought you to the Lord? If you don't know Him yet, what brought you here now?
 3. Have you experienced "wilderness" times in your life? When?
 4. What are idols that people could have in their life? Why are idols sometimes hard to see or find?
 5. When you hear "serving the Lord," what does that mean to you? What do you think Joshua meant when he said it?
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Teaching Notes:

Chapter 24 is Joshua's final address.

Joshua looks back before telling them to go forward.

**People forget things...some of us more than others...
...God knows this, we know this, so we set up reminders.**

Every **feast** God established was a chance to remember.

Communion was to help us remember the Lord's death.

In Joshua there are at least 7 stone memorials...

...to help them remember.

BUT...

Big idea: Knowing the past has little value without applying it to the future.

The stone memorials in Joshua were both successes and failures.

Things like crossing the river and the judgment of Ai.

Title: Remember But Go Forward.

1 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

Notice they are not at Shiloh...they are at Shechem.

Do you remember Shechem?

- Shechem is the place God promised Abraham the land.
- Shechem was the place Jacob built an altar.
- Shechem was where Dinah was defiled and Levi and Simeon slaughtered a town.
- Shechem is between Mount Ebal and Gerazim where Israel renewed their commitment to the Lord in the land.

Joshua took them back to the beginning...

...before he sends them forward to the future.

2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Your fathers, *including Terah*, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods.

1. Remember your past.

Where did God find you in the beginning?

What "gods" were you serving?

Don't forget where you came from because it keeps us humble...

...And helps us avoid the temptation of going back!

But then God shows up.

3 Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. **4** To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. **5** Also I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to what I did among them. Afterward I brought you out.

2. Remember your salvation.

Remember your salvation because He still is your Savior.

He still forgives and sets us free and gives us purpose.

...but not just back then, He does it now and in the future.

The gospel isn't just good news when you are saved.

The gospel is good news every day you are saved.

7b ...Then you dwelt in the wilderness a long time.

This is a reality...we all go through the wilderness.

This is the place of testing.

This is a time of preparation.

It is part of the process.

We don't like the wilderness, but we need it.

3. Remember what He brought you through.

We need to know God and the wilderness teaches us who God is.

In the wilderness, we find our limitations, our failures, our need.

...And then we find Him.

When we pass through the fire, He is there.

When we walk through the darkness, He is there.

When we are hungry, He provides.

When we are mourning, He comforts.

The lesson of the wilderness is...

...He is our God and we are His people.

Every prophet, every person, every one of us in His kingdom called to serve Him for His glory goes thru the wilderness because it is where we learn who we are and who He is.

Don't despise or question the wilderness, learn from it and thru faith and obedience let Him lead you out of it in His time.

11 Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you— *also* the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand. **13** I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'

You have decided to follow Jesus. He is the Lord.

You are a follower and disciple of Christ.

You are enjoying the blessing of living in the land.

You have tasted and seen that He is good.

4. Remember the victories.

Remember the wins. Celebrate the successes. See the growth.

Remember how far you have come and all He has done!

What's the next step?

14 "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!"

The next step, the next layer is deeper sanctification...

...the deeper process of becoming more like Christ.

These are the steps of discipleship that lead to maturity.

There is stuff they have dragged across with them.
And now is the time Joshua is calling them on it.

The same happens to us...

You think serving the Lord is going to be easy and joyful.
You are going to share the gospel and people thank you.
You are going to serve in kidlife and they love you.
You are going to pray with people and they appreciate you.

**Did you notice these expectations about serving Him...
...actually have to do with you not Him?**

God puts His holy finger on our heart and says...
...“That needs to go.”

5. Remember He wants what is best.

We need to remember He wants the best for us & the body.

So we keep laying down our idols.

We keep laying down our dreams and our plans.
We keep laying down our way everyday at the foot of the cross.

When He starts convicting, just keep repenting and laying it down.

15 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.”

Here it is...the line in the sand....the statement of division.

To serve someone means to live for someone else.
To follow someone else's commands and will and direction.

...We can't choose IF we will serve someone...
...but we can choose WHO we will serve.

With all you know and remember, who are you going to serve?
Choose for yourselves this day who you will serve and do it.

16 So the people answered and said: “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; **17** for the Lord our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. **18** And the Lord drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He *is* our God.”

This sounds good, but Joshua is not convinced.

19 But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve the Lord, for He *is* a holy God. He *is* a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. **20** If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.”

What is Joshua saying?

”God is holy, jealous, He will not forgive you, He will do you harm”.

God is not going to ignore your sin. He won't let it slide.

If you say you are going to follow Him, but don't...

...There is a judgment for your hypocrisy and rebellion.

6. Remember God's character.

21 And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the Lord!” **22** So Joshua said to the people, “You *are* witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him.” And they said, “*We are* witnesses!” **23** “Now therefore,” *he said*, “put away the foreign gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel.”

This is the proper response, but will require proper action.

If this is what you are saying...

...Put away your foreign gods which ARE AMONG you.

...they have idols right now.

25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. **26** Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that *was* by the sanctuary of the Lord. **27** And Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God.” **28** So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.

7. Remember it's all about Jesus.

Joshua's name in Greek is Jesus, it means God is salvation.

Jesus is the Word of God and fulfills the Law of God.

Jesus is the Rock. He is our sanctuary.

Jesus died on a tree to seal the new covenant.

He gives us His Spirit as a witness that we are children of God.

And now Jesus lets us depart to our own inheritance.

We have remembered, and now we must choose...