

Covenant Renewal

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1 Missions Prayer: This Sunday** Please join us by praying by for those that are serving cross culturally. Agape Room at 6:30 PM.
- B. **Slide2 Selah: This Sat** Feb 24th at 6pm in the Agape Room. This is a great opportunity for **musicians** to meet & connect with **other musicians**. Ages 15 & up.
- C. **Slide3 Prayer:** God, help me not to be impressed with **me**. Help me to continue to be impressed with **You**.

II. Slide4 Intro: Covenant Renewal

- A. The word **serve** is used **16 x's** in this chapter. **Serve the Lord**, becomes the theme in **this chapter**. [everybody serves somebody or some thing]
- B. Joshua wraps up w/“**The Usual Parts of a Covenant Renewal.**” (according to Extra-biblical Lit.)
 - 1. **A short preamble** (1). A long **historical prologue** (2-13). **And then the stipulation** between the **covenant** maker, and the people were supposed to keep the covenant (14-25). And a **writing** of the agreement (26).
 - 2. **That's exactly what happens in this chapter.**
 - a) “This is the account of *God's saving acts and election of Israel*, which has made devotion to other gods **absurd**.”

III. Slide5,6 **COVENANT RENEWAL (1-13) READ**

- A. (1) **Shechem** held many memories for Israel.
 - 1. God appeared to Abraham there (Gn.12:6,7). **Jacob** had a *family revival* there, on his way to Bethel (Gn.35:1-4). Shechem was near Mount Ebal where the people had rededicated themselves to the Lord after entering the land. (Joshua 8:30-35). *Warren Wiersbe*
 - 2. Being in **a special place** can sometimes make it easier for us to meet with God.

B. (2-13) These are the **Key Events** of their Past. [vs.2-4 in Pre-Canaan, in Canaan. 5-7 in Egypt. 8-10 in Wilderness. 11-13 in Promised land]

1. Rehearse and Remember the mercies of the Lord, His graces, and His goodness ... in your life also.

IV. Slide7,8 CHOOSE (14-28) READ the responsibilities of the Covenant

A. Slide9a (14,15) This is our declaration! *In sincerity & in Faithfulness* (w/all r heart/soul)

1. Good prayer: Lord, all there is of me, belong to all there is of You. So that all there is of You, might fill and control all there is of me.

B. Your coworkers might not follow the Lord, your neighbors might not follow the Lord. Maybe your parents didn't follow the Lord, but you can start a new legacy and say, *but for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

1. Brian, but I'm single? Yes, and if you are a family of one, you should declare this also.

C. Elijah asked something similar in 1 Kings 18:21 *How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!" But the people were completely silent.*

1. Slide9b The service of God is matter of voluntary choice, and it is His will that we should all seriously and solemnly make this choice.

D. (16-28) Next Joshua is challenging them, Are you sure that's what you want to do?

1. Ask: Why is Joshua pushing back? What is he getting at? Key lesson? (Can't do it in our own strength).
2. He wasn't saying you can't exercise faith, but he's saying, *there's no time for light commitment.*

E. Are we most like Joshua in the story or the children off Israel? (Joshua/Jesus)

1. Man, I am in! Till I'm not :([day by day everyday]
2. Just like what Jesus said in Luke 14:27, the cost of discipleship is to pick up your cross (death to self) daily (oh every day) and follow me.

F. Slide10 Jesus gave 3 Requirements for the Road ahead of us:

1. Lk.9:57 *As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."* 58 *And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."* (No Home in this World) 59 *To another he said, "Follow me."* But he said, *"Lord, let me first go and bury my father."* 60 *And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."* (No Delaying Discipleship) 61 *Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home."* 62 *Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."* (No Looking Back).

G. Slide11 Jesus in explaining *the cost of discipleship* said, *No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.* Luke 9:62

1. Ask: Hmm, wasn't 1/2 this chapter looking back? What's the difference? (Looking back to God's goodness vs. looking back to your former pleasures of sin).
2. Jesus ask him, Can you set your eyes in the right direction?
 - a) See, looking back is a **waste** of time, it **slows** you down, your path goes **crooked**. That blade must stay level & steady. Only by looking ahead, with eyes fixed on your **guiding marks**, can you get your job done.
 - b) So Jesus says, *fix your eyes ahead on Me, no turning back, no turning back.*

H. Slide12a **The cost?** Is just ... well, just everything.

1. And we have to answer without delay. It's a huge burden that we are **not strong enough for**, we are **not sufficient for**, it is **too great**.
2. Yes, grip the plow in your hand, **but** when you do, you will then feel the grip of **His** hands *on your hands*.

I. Slide12b It's not an **easy** path, it's not a **simple** one, **but** everything we need for that journey **is found in Jesus**.

1. You **didn't** hear me say, **It's all up to you: like in reading your Bible every day, praying every day, & fasting & witnessing** (those are all good & imp).

2. **But no.** It's all up to **Jesus**: So be fully satisfied in Christ, enjoy Jesus.
3. It is about **His** accomplishments. **Reject the idea that it's all about you.**

J. Whatever you feel that you've left behind, **or** that seemed too good to have passed up, **leave it back there.** What is *so good* that is tethering **you** to this life?

K. **Unbelievers**: you also can accept the invitation to *walk hand-in-hand with Jesus down this road.* Will you say **yes** this evening when **He** says, *follow me.* When **He** says, *will you put your hand on the plow,* when **He** says, *will you look forward to the kingdom of God and not in the rearview mirror of your personal kingdom on earth.* (I had a little Porsche 914 in college, **and** I bought a rearview mirror that went the whole length of the top of the windshield. *I think people do the same today*)

1. What is so appealing in your rearview mirror?
2. Or ask yourself, **Are you looking at the future in your rearview mirror???**

L. **Remember**, we never go alone, **Jesus** always walks down the path with us.

1. Receive it **and** walk it.

M. **This is amazing grace this is unfailing love.**

N. **Slide13 The yoke and the cross are twin symbols** of Christian experience:

1. **The cross** speaks of leaving the world for Christ.
2. **The yoke** speaks of learning in the world from Christ.
 - a) The one speaks of **sacrifice**; the other **service**.
 - b) The **disciple** must bear **both**. He cannot choose to take one **and** leave the other.

V. **Slide14 DEATH AND BURIAL (29-33) READ**

A. Then both the **national** leader, and the **spiritual** leader die.

B. **We hear what it says:** **not** that he was a **great leader**, **or** a **great general**, **or** that he was **chosen** to bring them into the land of Israel. (This is the *ultimate climax* of Gen.12:6, Abraham's promise of the land of Canaan)

1. **Slide15 Nope**, instead Joshua was simply **a servant of the Lord**.

2. I think that's what we want on our tombstones!

- C. **Last thoughts on Serving:** Did you know when **you** got saved, *Jesus has a new pair of eyes to see with, new ears to listen with, new hands to help with, and a new heart to love with.*
- D. **Also** remember, there is **no small service** to God, it all matters. **Some is visible,** some **invisible,** but all is **Valuable!**
- E. **Prayer:** *Lord, all there is of me belong to all there is of You. So that all there is of You might fill and control all there is of me.*
- F. **Keywords:** serve,