

“The Decisions Before the Declaration”

A Sermon Manuscript on Joshua 24:15

Text: Joshua 24:15

“But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Introduction

When we read Joshua 24:15, we often focus on the declaration:

“As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

And rightly so—it is one of the most powerful statements in all of Scripture.

But that declaration did not appear suddenly.

Joshua did not wake up one morning and randomly decide to serve God.

That statement was built upon decades of previous decisions.

Because great spiritual declarations are usually the result of many hidden choices made long before the public moment.

Joshua’s final declaration in chapter 24 was shaped by decisions he had made throughout his life:

- Decisions in obscurity
- Decisions in battle
- Decisions under pressure
- Decisions when others compromised
- Decisions when faith was costly

Before Joshua could say:

“As for me and my house...”

He had already settled:

- Who he trusted
- Who he followed
- Who he feared
- Who he obeyed

The declaration in Joshua 24 was not emotional excitement.

It was the outcome of a lifetime of surrender.

Tonight, I want us to walk through the decisions that came before the declaration.

I. BEFORE THE DECLARATION, JOSHUA DECIDED WHO HE WOULD FOLLOW

The first time we really see Joshua emerge is in Exodus.

Moses goes up the mountain, and Joshua follows him part of the way.

Joshua made a decision early in life:

“I want to stay close to the presence of God.”

While others were distracted, Joshua stayed near the tent of meeting.

Exodus 33:11 says:

“...Joshua son of Nun, the young aide, did not leave the tent.”

What a decision.

Before Joshua ever led a nation, he learned how to linger in God’s presence.

Many want public authority without private devotion.

But Joshua’s strength in chapter 24 was born in hidden communion years earlier.

You do not suddenly become spiritually strong in public battles if you have neglected private fellowship with God.

The declaration:

“We will serve the Lord”

Was first formed in the quiet place.

II. BEFORE THE DECLARATION, JOSHUA DECIDED TO STAND WHEN OTHERS FEARED

In Numbers 13, twelve spies enter Canaan.

Ten return filled with fear.

Two return filled with faith:

Joshua and Caleb.

The majority said:

“We can’t.”

Joshua said:

“God can.”

Here is the reality:

The declaration in Joshua 24 was already being written in Numbers 13.

Because before Joshua publicly declared loyalty to God, he privately chose faith over fear.

Everyone else saw giants.

Joshua saw God.

Everyone else focused on obstacles.

Joshua focused on promises.

And sometimes serving God means standing against majority opinion.

The crowd said:

“Go back to Egypt.”

Joshua said:

“Move forward with God.”

The crowd panicked.

Joshua trusted.

Church, courage is not built overnight.

Joshua’s bold declaration in chapter 24 came from years of choosing faith when fear would have been easier.

III. BEFORE THE DECLARATION, JOSHUA DECIDED TO REMAIN FAITHFUL THROUGH DELAY

After the spies returned, Israel rebelled.

And because of their unbelief, the people wandered for forty years.

Think about this:

Joshua had to suffer through a delay caused by other people's disobedience.

Yet he remained faithful.

Forty years.

Waiting.

Walking.

Trusting.

Some people become bitter in the waiting season.

But Joshua remained consistent.

Before he could say:

"We will serve the Lord,"

He first had to decide:

"I will still serve Him even when His timing is slower than I expected."

Somebody needs to hear this today:

Delayed promises are not abandoned promises.

Joshua waited decades before stepping into leadership.

But the waiting season was preparing him.

God often develops character before He releases calling.

IV. BEFORE THE DECLARATION, JOSHUA DECIDED TO OBEY COMPLETELY

When Joshua became leader after Moses, God gave him this instruction in Joshua 1:8:

"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night..."

Joshua's leadership was rooted in obedience to God's Word.

And throughout the conquest of Canaan, Joshua repeatedly obeyed difficult instructions.

At Jericho:

- March silently
- Blow trumpets
- Trust God's strategy

It made no human sense.

But Joshua had already learned something:

Obedience does not require full understanding.

Many people want God to explain everything before they obey.

Joshua obeyed first.

That is why his declaration in chapter 24 carried weight.

Because his words were backed by a life of obedience.
Declarations without obedience become empty religion.

V. BEFORE THE DECLARATION, JOSHUA DECIDED THAT GOD'S PRESENCE MATTERED MORE THAN PERSONAL SUCCESS

One of the most powerful moments in Joshua's life happens before the battle of Jericho.

Joshua encounters the Commander of the Lord's army.

Joshua asks:

"Are you for us or for our enemies?"

And the answer is essentially:

"That is not the question."

Joshua falls on his face in worship.

Here is the lesson:

Joshua learned that the goal was not getting God onto Israel's side.

The goal was Israel staying on God's side.

Before chapter 24, Joshua had already decided:

"I care more about God's presence than personal victory."

That changes everything.

Because serving God is not about using Him to accomplish our plans.

It is about surrendering ourselves to His plans.

VI. THE DECLARATION WAS THE RESULT OF A LIFETIME OF DECISIONS

Now we arrive at Joshua 24.

Joshua is old.

The journey is nearly over.

And now his final declaration makes sense.

When Joshua says:

"As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord,"

He is not making an impulsive emotional statement.

He is summarizing an entire life.

He is saying:

- "I decided this years ago."
- "I settled this in the wilderness."
- "I settled this during battles."
- "I settled this in waiting."
- "I settled this when others doubted."
- "I settled this when obedience was hard."

Joshua's public declaration was built on private consistency.

And that is what gave it authority.

VII. EVERY FAMILY DECLARATION BEGINS WITH PERSONAL CONSECRATION

Notice Joshua does not say:

“As for my house...”

He says:

“As for ME and my house...”

Because spiritual leadership starts personally.

Your family will rarely go beyond the depth of your own surrender.

Joshua could lead his household because he had first led himself.

This generation desperately needs people who have settled their convictions before the pressure comes.

People whose faith is not dependent on trends.

Not dependent on culture.

Not dependent on convenience.

People who have already decided:

“I belong to God.”

Because when the decision is already settled, temptation loses power.

Conclusion

Joshua’s final declaration was not built in one moment.

It was built:

- In prayer tents
- In wilderness seasons
- In battles
- In waiting
- In obedience
- In surrender

Long before Joshua said:

“We will serve the Lord,”

He had already decided:

“I will follow Him no matter what.”

And now the old warrior stands before Israel and declares:

“Choose this day whom you will serve...”

Then with holy conviction he says:

“But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Not because it was easy.

Not because culture agreed.

Not because everyone else was faithful.

But because Joshua had already settled the issue years earlier.

Closing Appeal

Today, God is not merely asking for an emotional moment.
He is calling for settled decisions.

Decisions to:

- Stay close to His presence
- Choose faith over fear
- Remain faithful in delay
- Obey His Word
- Treasure His presence above success

And if those decisions are made consistently, one day you too will be able to stand with confidence and say:

“As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Amen.