

“The LORD We Serve”

Joshua 24:14-15

Introduction:

Jesus was in the middle of his Sermon on the Mount, when he moved to the topics of money and materialism. He spoke about the cost of living, the importance of sound financial investments, “dressing like flowers and eating like birds” (Rich Mullins), and the sense of security that people gain from all of the above. And then in the middle of that conversation, Jesus said:

No one can serve two masters;
For either he will hate the one and love the other,
Or he will hold to the one and despise the other.
You cannot serve God and mammon. (money)
(Matthew 6:24 NASB)

While the immediate context has to do with money (materialism), the last sentence is actually one of those fill-in-the-blank kind of verses: “You can’t serve God and _____.” From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures state over and over again that it’s not possible to serve two

masters. The choices are God or _____. Anything or anyone else but God is not God - and you can't serve both.

MOVE #1

The text that's served as our theme for this year is one of those kinds of fill-in-the-blank verses, too. Take your Bible and let's read it together again:

"Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:14-15 NIV)

In verse 14, Joshua outlines the steps the people have to take if they're going to serve the LORD:

- Fear the LORD
- Serve Him with all faithfulness (sincerity and truth - NASB)
- Put away the gods
- Serve the LORD

Then, in verse 15, Joshua pushes his point and pushes the people to a decision: chose those gods or the LORD, but chose. Fill in the blank: “As for me and my house, we will serve _____.”

Tonight I want us to consider Who it is that Joshua called the people to serve, because that call is extended to us, too.

MOVE #2:

Now, this seemed like a good idea when I first began thinking about this message. I thought, “Hey no problem. We’ll just consider who the LORD is and then determine to serve him. How hard can that be?”

Then I started trying to pull the message together and ran up against all kinds of questions:

- How do you begin to adequately describe the LORD?
- Where do you start?
- What can you say that even begins to be sufficient?

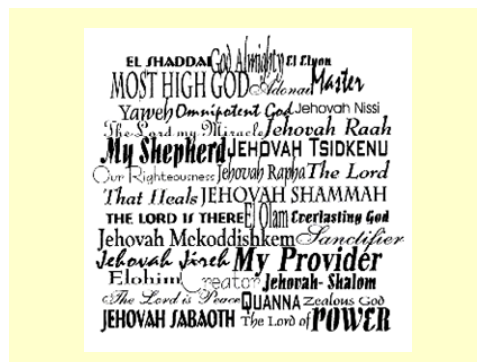
How can you do Him justice? Especially when you consider that:

- When Moses caught just a glimpse of the LORD's glory, Moses' face glowed for weeks afterward.
- When Jacob wrestled with the LORD, Jacob wound up with a name change and limp for the rest of his life.
- When Isaiah saw the LORD in the temple, Isaiah said he was undone, wound up with burnt lips, and said "Yes" to the first "Mission: Impossible."
- When Paul encountered the LORD on the way to Damascus, Paul fell off his horse, lost his sight, but found his life's mission.

How do you begin to adequately describe the LORD?

I think we start with His name.

MOVE #3



There are a number of names used for God in the OT.

There is:

EL
God

ELOHIM
God

ELSHADDAI
God All Sufficient

ELELYON
God Most High

EL-OLAM
Everlasting God

EL-BERITH
God of the Covenant

EL-GIBHOR
Mighty God

ELROI
God of Seeing

ADONAI
Lord

All of these names are used to identify God in the OT.
But none of them are the name used by Joshua in our text.
The name Joshua used looks like this:



The closest Hebrew translation is **YAHWEH.**

YAHWEH

In some older English versions it was translated Jehovah,
but now it is most often translated into English as **LORD**.

YAHWEH
LORD

Joshua used the word YAHWEH when he dared the people to chose which god they were going to serve. They could chose:

- One of the Egyptian gods or the God who is "The Self-Existent One"
- One of the gods of the Amorites or the God who is the "I AM WHO I AM"
- One of the gods from the other side of the River or the God who revealed Himself to Moses as "I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE"
- One the common, run of the mill gods of Canaan or the God whose name became too sacred to be uttered, or abbreviated

It is YAHWEH to whom Joshua is referring when he says,
"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."



While I was doing some research for this message, I came across the following quote:

“As to the meaning of the name, we are safer if we find the character of God from his works and from the descriptions of him in the Scripture . . .” (J.B.P. *TWOT*, Vol. 1, 211.)

The quote reminds me of a song from a few years back.

The chorus goes like this:

Lord I praise You
Because of who You are
And not because
Of all the mighty things You've done
Lord I worship You
Because of who You are
It's all the reason
That I need to voice my praise
Because of who You are

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Nice words, but they're incomplete. (In fact the verses of the song talk about what God has done, but then the chorus says something different.) The only way we know who the LORD is is through His actions, through the things He has done. We can sing "Lord I worship You because of who you are" only after we have sung, "To God be the glory, great things he has done."

In order for Joshua's challenge to stick, we have to do more than just know the meaning of the LORD'S name. He wants us to know Him, and the best way to know Him is by the things He has done and continues to do.

MOVE #4

I want to spend some time reviewing the OT names of the LORD that begin with YAHWEH, but I want us to do more than just identify the meaning of these names.

These names are in the Scripture because someone witnessed YAHWEH do something, they witnessed YAHWEH in action and told someone else about what He

had so. So, when we say the names that appear on the screen, I want you to stand if you have experienced the LORD this way in your life. Your standing will add to the long line of witnesses that have seen YAHWEH in action, and will say to others, “This is what YAHWEH is like.”

Repeat after me:

YAHWEH-YIREH
The Lord will Provide

YAHWEH-ROPHE
The Lord Who Heals

YAHWEH-NISSI
The Lord Our Banner

YAHWEH-
M'KADDESH
The Lord Who Sanctifies

YAHWEH-SHALOM
The Lord Our Peace



As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD!

Wait - there's more.

YAHWEH ELOHIM
LORD God

YAHWEH-
TSIDKENU
The Lord Our Righteousness

YAHWEH-ROHI
The Lord Our Shepherd

YAHWEH-
SHAMMAH
The Lord is There

YAHWEH-
SABAOTH
The Lord of Hosts



As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD!

And there's still more. There are other terms used to describe the LORD and His actions:

ABHIR
Mighty One

KADOSH
Holy One

SHAPHAT
Judge

KANNA
Jealous

PALET
Deliverer

MELEKH
King



As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD!

One last set of names. They are:

YESHA
Savior

GAOL
Redeemer

MAGEN
Shield

EYALUTH
Strength

TSADDIQ
Righteous One

ZUR
God our Rock



As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD!

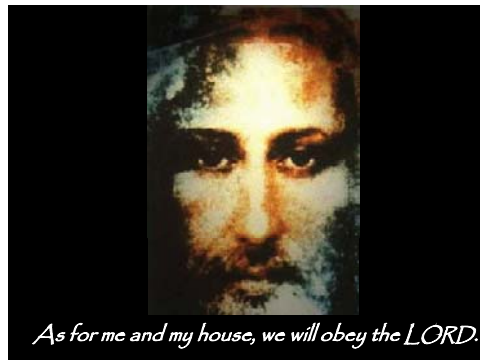
Which brings us back to place where we began, listening to the great patriarch Joshua share his final words with his people.

"Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness.

Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served

beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.



But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:14-15 NIV)

The question is: Who is the LORD that you'll serve?

[Sing: "How Great Is Our God"]

Source: <http://www.lldolphin.org/Names.html> 02/27/07