

Taking Inventory Joshua 24:14-27

Every year businesses across the world take inventory to check what they have; they evaluate the products, goods, items etc. At the beginning of each year people tend to make resolutions, which in a sense is the way they make inventory of what they would like to do in the New Year. A new year just began; it will bring to us its challenges and struggles. **Have you taken an inventory of your life? What you did and what you'd like to do?**

When it comes to reviewing, looking back at your life, I am reminded of the time Joshua reviewed Israel's history, right at the dawn of entering the Promised Land. They had made it to the land God promised to give them and they were about to go and enjoy it. It was necessary that people understood how they made it where they were at. (How did we get here?)

Joshua reviews Israel's history. (Jos.24:1-13) The LORD had Joshua review their past history. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs, Moses and Aaron.

God was always evident in their lives. (I sent.....I brought... I blessed you.....gave your enemies into your hands.

In their journeying, God was always there providing for them. Joshua challenged the people to think about the fact that the reason they made it to the land of the promise was because God cared for them, guided them, protected them all the way there. **God's presence was evident in Israel's history. Has God's presence been evident in your life?**

Joshua 24:14-27 Joshua's challenge to the people

-Commit yourself to fear God.

Scriptures teaches us that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. The word **fear** has a range of meanings. *Afraid, reverence, stand in awe, frighten, etc.* Moses had told the people in **Exodus 20:20** that the fear of God would keep them from sinning.

If we truly feared God, we would not do certain things. The reverence for God will keep you from doing stupid things in life. God is a God of love and grace and also justice; you don't want him to be against you. The Israelites learned this lesson along the way also. We have lost reverence and awe for God. People don't fear God. When Scripture talks about a person being God-fearing, this person trusts and obeys God's word. A God-fearing person strives to operate by God's standard. Joshua challenges the people to be God-fearing in their going and enjoying the land. **Will you be God-fearing this year?**

-Commit yourself to serve God faithfully.

The word for **serve** is *work, labor*. Your service to God should come out of your reverence for him. **You cannot serve God or worship God faithfully when He is competing with other "gods" in your life.**

Joshua challenged the people to get rid of the gods (idols) they have been worshiping. God's people wasn't just devoted to Yahweh, they were also devoted to other gods.

Traditional gods: those your ancestors worshiped, those you grew up worshiping. For 80 years, many of the people of Israel worshiped traditional gods, those they were introduced to by their parents, all the way from Egypt. 40 years wandering in the desert serving the LORD but also

servicing other gods. Now Joshua challenged them to put away those gods and faithfully serve God only.

The people had forgotten the commandments, (*you must not have other gods but me*). They were going to bring them to the Promised Land and Joshua told them that in order to faithfully serve or worship Yahweh, you must put away those gods you grew up worshipping.

This was going to be hard for them to do for they were worshipping idols since childhood. We may not realize we made some things gods and have been worshipping them for quite a while. They compete with the true God for our allegiance and devotion. We are ok worshipping both.

What is competing with God in our hearts? What else are you worshipping besides God?

Commit to faithfully serve God this year.

This is choice or decision you must make. *This is how Joshua spoke to the people. (v.15)* Joshua couldn't make that decision for the people. I can't make it for you either.

Choose this day whom you will serve. The traditional gods, those your ancestors worshiped or the gods of the land. (*Cultural gods: Canaanites deities, etc.*) For us, new age thinking, political correctness, relativism, humanism, etc.)

It's simple, you will either worship the gods of the past or those of the present. If you want to be a God-fearing person, you must choose to worship the LORD alone in the midst of so many appealing choices in this world. You must choose to serve God alone.

Joshua made the choice to only worship the LORD: *But as for me and my house we will serve the LORD.* I don't know what you are going to do, but I know what choice I am making; me and my family, we will serve the LORD.

The people chose to serve God faithfully (v.16-18)

After they were challenged by Joshua, and they reviewed their history it was Yahweh who has always been there: protecting them, providing, and fighting for them. *"We too will serve the LORD because he is our God."* (v.18,)

Joshua reminded them of the kind of commitment they were going to

take on. (v.19) You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God, He is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the LORD, he will turn against you.

People chose to commit themselves to serve only God (v.21, we will serve the LORD. V.24. we will serve the LORD

(v.23) Throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD the God of Israel.

This was the covenant, the pact, the new agreement Joshua made with the people that day. People truly committed themselves to faithfully serve God alone. (v.31) What kind of inventory will you make this year? Will you be a god-fearing person? ***Will you truly worship and serve God this New Year?*** You must choose to start with getting rid of those things competing with God in your life and turn your heart to serving him only. The people Joshua challenged did it and so can you.

