

The church's sub-theme for this quarter is "committed to Christ". "Commitment" is important to everyone because we will not be successful if we are not committed ourselves to the goals pursued.

Our church does hope that every believer is committed to Christ. We, being God's children, should be committed if we want to have a victorious life. What is "commitment"? We must surrender all we think to the Lord and let Him have the supremacy in our life; otherwise we cannot live a victorious life. A victorious life is one which has peace and joy in the Lord. This is a continuous fellowship with the Lord.

But how can today's believers be committed? When the Bible talks about "commitment", it refers to **a covenant with God**. Joshua 24 is the last page of Joshua's whole life, which is very touching. This chapter is his will as well as his appeal for commitment to the Israelites.

Throughout his life, Joshua served God with loyalty. He assisted Moses loyally before the latter died. From the Pentateuch, we can find that Joshua was very faithful to his leader. When the Israelites sinned by bowing down to the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai, Joshua did not follow his fellow Israelites but waited for Moses faithfully, who was to come down from Mount Sinai with the laws. God had used Joshua greatly after Moses' death because he was very faithful and devoted. Joshua's devotion to his duties was revealed not only in his whole life but also from his will in this chapter. Joshua worried that the Israelites would turn away from God, he therefore urged them earnestly that they should follow God and serve Jehovah faithfully.

We can see from Joshua 24 that:

I. **We should count what God has blessed and given us** (Joshua 24: 2-13; 17-18)

The more we count God's blessings, the more we would find that He has given us so many. When we have experienced His love and grace, we will be more motivated and more willing to be committed to God. Experiencing and responding to His love are the driving force of our life and all our ministries. Apostle Paul was so compelled by the Lord's love that he even was not ashamed of being "out of his mind" for Christ.

Today we must check our attitude towards God's ministries. Are we having continuous fellowship with the Lord? Are we compelled by the Lord's love? Are we serving Him energetically? Have we felt the love of Jesus who sacrificed Himself for us on the Calvary? Therefore, we must count what God has blessed and given us, so that we can be compelled by His love and committed our lives to Him.

II. **We must be willing to pay the cost for God**

1. **Throw away the foreign gods** (Joshua 24: 14, 23)

Joshua repeatedly urged the Israelites to throw away foreign gods and to serve Jehovah only. The Lord is a jealous God; he is jealous to sins. He does not like His people to worship other gods. For example, would a husband, who loves his wife very much, like to see that his wife has sexual relations with others? Today believers are just like a virgin pledged to be married to Jesus Christ. So how can we be associated with idols?

At that time the obstacle which hindered the Israelites from worshipping God solely was the idol Baal. Throughout the Old Testament period, the Israelites worshipped Baal so seriously that they called Jehovah "Baal". As they had mixed up God's holy name, God instructed Prophet Hosea to declare to the Israelites that "In that day...you will call me 'Ishi' (i.e. my husband); you will no longer call me 'Baal' (i.e. my master)." (Hosea 2:16)

Let us inspect if there are any idols in our heart, such as fame, status, degree, money, and family. Lord Jesus has reminded us that "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon (i.e. money)." (Matthew 6:24)

Today, has wealth or money become our idol, which hinders us from getting more spiritual blessing from God? Have you set wealth or money as the very first goal of your life? Paul did remind us clearly that "...greed (which is a form of idolatry)." (Colossians 3:5)

## **2. To serve the Lord with all faithfulness, and yield your hearts to Him (Joshua 24: 14, 23)**

*14 "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.*

*23 "Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel."*

My dear brothers and sisters, we will be compelled by God's love if we think more about His blessings, have a continuous fellowship with Him, and experience His love and grace. This continuous fellowship with God not only keeps us away from sins, but also helps us turn to God, so that we will serve and follow Him with all faithfulness. Dear brothers and sisters, please be reminded again, the purpose of our commitment is to serve God. Amen!