

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

It probably surprised the people when Joshua declared, “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” (Josh 24:19). Joshua was saying, “Do you realize the sort of God you’re dealing with? Don’t you dare come to God thinking, ‘My life of sin makes Him sad, but he’ll always forgive me.’” You are not a God that can be trifled with, and I worship you in reverence and awe. Praise the LORD!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me about the crisis that threatened to divide the tribes on the east side of the Jordan from the tribes in Canaan. It began when Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned to their own territory with Joshua’s blessing. Before they crossed the Jordan, they built a large altar by the side of the river (cf. Deut 12:1–13). When the other tribes heard about it, they believed the worst of their brothers, and sent a delegation to confront them. The Transjordan tribes protested their innocence, for the altar was only meant to be a witness of the common faith shared by Israelites on both sides of the Jordan. This incident teaches me how important it is: (1) to investigate an alleged wrong before leaping to judgment, (2) to consider how my actions may be perceived by others and go out of my way to avoid the appearance of evil, and (3) to respond in humility and a desire for reconciliation when others misunderstand my actions. The years passed, and Joshua reached the age of 110. Knowing that his death was near, he called all the tribes together and challenged them to remain faithful and obedient to you. He warned them that just as all your good words had come true, so also your threats would come true if they disobeyed. He then gathered Israel together at Shechem and admonished them to renew their loyalty to your covenant. He deliberately questioned their expressions of faithfulness and commanded them to “put away the foreign gods which are in your midst” (Josh 24:23). His exhortations came from a heart of love for you, and Israel served you all the days of Joshua’s life. This shows me the power and influence of a dedicated leader!

Reflection

The Israelites loudly proclaimed their intention to serve you when all the time there were idols in their midst. Am I clutching an idol in my hand while pledging faithfulness to you?

Request

Father, I want to answer Joshua’s challenge and renew my commitment to serve you alone. Search me today and reveal anything that doesn’t belong in a heart that is dedicated to you.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for your many blessings. I deserved only judgment and wrath, yet you freely gave me all things through your Son, Jesus Christ!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[O Happy Day](#)” – Philip Doddridge.

Meditation Verse: Joshua 24:27.