

**Whom Have We Chosen?
Joshua 24:1-3,14-24
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I'm Steve McCoy... and I approved this message! I've waited all year to say that. Seriously though, we have all waited a long time for this election. Some in particular have waited for it to be over. Now that it is over, the President-elect and all of the newly elected or re-elected leaders have a responsibility to live up to those ideals that they have stood for and were elected. We too have a responsibility, to not only hold them accountable to their promises, but also to remain active and involved in our society. It becomes too easy for us after an election to fall back into a state of apathy and to blame others, particularly the people whom we voted, for even the smallest of problems. We refer to the "government" as this other entity right or wrongly in some manner, however, we must never forget that the government is also us. "We the people..." is not just a trite saying but it is a statement about who we are and whom we choose to lead.

Often times when I hear people talk about "the church" in the same way, I am struck as usually it comes with some negative comment about what they are not happy with. Even worse we here things like that church. When we say such things, we are really talking about ourselves. We are the church together, with all of our faults, a human frailties, with all of our successes and service we are the church together because we have chosen to follow Christ. In that following we have expectations that Christ will always live up to, but we also have responsibilities that we vow to live up too also. How will we choose to follow them?

Joshua, in our Old Testament reading this morning addresses this very topic with the Israelites. Joshua gives the people a choice, you can follow other gods, or you can follow Yaweh, the God of Abraham and Isaac, the God of Jacob, the

God of Moses who delivered them from slavery, was with them in the wilderness, and led them to the promised land. The problem was that throughout those ensuing forty years, they kept taking God for Granted. There were consequences for their lack of faithfulness, yet they never seemed to learn. They would complain against God to Moses and God would even accommodate them yet still they would turn away. At this point Joshua gives them an out. He says you must choose whom you are going to serve. He and his household will serve the Lord, but they can have their choice, and the people say in a sense, we choose God. Joshua even says are you sure, you've said that before and look what happened. But they insist, and so Joshua gives a great pronouncement: You are witnesses against yourselves. You've have chosen to follow God. Now live up to your end of the bargain. If not you know what is coming.

So many times, whether it is our government or our church, we have divided loyalties. Everyone demands the utmost. Political parties punish their own for not voting along the party platform even when they are following the lead of those who elected them. So the opposite happens and they ignore the people for the sake of party power. Whom have we chosen?

Ultimately what Joshua reminds us of, is that God is the ultimate authority whom we are called to choose. When we do so, there are great benefits and great rewards but also great responsibilities. When we choose God we are pledging our loyalty to trust in God in the midst of turmoil and tribulation. When we choose God we are pledging that we must stand up for the principles of justice and mercy, of righteousness and grace even when the powers of the world would seek to suppress them.

When we choose God we also realize that the nations of this world have come and gone, and will come and will go. That is what St. Augustine wrote about during the fall of Rome when he quote Paul from Romans 12 “ Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so

that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Joshua tells the Israelites exactly that. Choose this day whom you will serve. Every day we have a choice as to whom we can serve. The election of a new president always gives us new hopes and new possibilities. The peaceful transition of power is what makes this nation great. That is something we must never take for granted. Perhaps comedian Chris Rock put it best, when he said “no matter who you voted for, is there anything you couldn’t do on Wednesday because your guy didn’t get in.” On a serious note that is not the case in other parts of the world.

We in this country have chosen a new leader in Barack Obama. No matter how we voted we have a responsibility to support that decision which has helped our nation survive and thrive for over 2 and quarter centuries.. But we have a responsibility to remind him and all of our elected leaders that there is a great responsibility as well. We as Christians know that when we choose God the lord requires of us 3 things, to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God. Let us continue to pray for Gods grace and guidance every day as we make a choice about whom we serve.