

Title: Making Up Your Mind: Choosing God as Lord in the Tug of War of Life

Sermon Summary: This sermon addresses the internal struggle believers face when choosing to fully commit to God as Lord versus being pulled by worldly desires and fears. Using the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land as a framework, the pastor challenges the congregation to move beyond wavering faith and make a firm, unwavering decision to follow Christ. The message emphasizes that much of life's discouragement and instability comes from failing to definitively choose God as the ultimate authority. Through examples from Deuteronomy and Joshua, the sermon illustrates how God repeatedly calls His people to be "strong and courageous," not because circumstances are easy, but because He promises to never leave or forsake them. The pastor calls for a "welded together" acceptance of Christ—not just a temporary or convenient faith, but one that becomes unbreakable regardless of life's challenges.

Key Points:

- The constant tug of war in our minds comes from failing to definitively choose God as Lord of our lives
- We often pick and choose when to follow God based on convenience, emotions, or circumstances rather than commitment
- The Israelites' failure to enter the Promised Land initially resulted from fear and grumbling despite God's proven faithfulness
- God repeatedly commands Joshua (and us) to "be strong and very courageous" and to not be terrified or discouraged
- Making up our mind about who God is ends half the tug of war—the battle diminishes when we're firmly committed
- We cannot serve God wholeheartedly while constantly changing allegiances based on feelings or circumstances
- True faith requires being rooted and planted, not scattered and constantly changing direction
- God's faithfulness is demonstrated throughout Scripture, culminating in Christ's death and resurrection
- A "welded together" faith—one that cannot be separated—is stronger than

glued or bolted faith that comes apart under pressure

- Worship and service should flow from a settled decision that God is Lord, not from temporary emotional highs

#### Scripture Reference:

- Deuteronomy 1:26-32 (The Israelites' refusal to enter the Promised Land)
- Joshua 1:1-9 (God's command to Joshua to be strong and courageous)
- Romans 12 (Being transformed by the renewing of your mind, not conformed to the world)

#### Stories:

- The Israelites sending twelve spies into the Promised Land, with ten returning fearful of giants and only Joshua and Caleb trusting God
- The Israelites grumbling in their tents despite God leading them with a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day
- Moses not entering the Promised Land but appointing Joshua to lead
- The congregation's participation in packing food bags for Must Ministry to feed children during summer
- Personal story about the pastor's father dying and accepting God's timing
- Illustration of children raising hands to be picked up or to answer questions in school
- The pastor's marriage to Julie being strong because they both love God more than each other
- Humorous anecdote about the pastor's father saying "you're like a fart in a skillet" to describe being scattered and unfocused
- Reference to Paul surviving shipwreck and snakebite because God had a purpose for him in Rome