# *Oikos* Sermon Outline Week 1

## Title: We Shall Serve the Lord

### Bible Verses: Joshua 24:14-15

### Key Take-Away: We do not do faith on our own.

### 30-Second Summary: The decision to follow Jesus is not only about who we are following, but also about what we are rejecting. Making that decision creates a relationship, not only with God but also with other people. Faith is not just about what we believe, but also who we belong to.

### Introduction:

Deciding to follow Jesus means making a choice between the idols that we create, or the God who created us. But the choice is rarely that stark or that obvious.

It is easier to think that following Jesus is something that we can do without really having to change things in our life. We are just adding another belief into the collection of beliefs and habits that make up our life.

This is what the Hebrew people wanted to do. They were struggling to let go of their old beliefs and to commit themselves entirely to God. They didn’t want to make the choice; they wanted both. When we think of Christianity as a belief system, we allow it to become one belief we hold amongst others. Joshua doesn’t let us do this.

### Context:

* The household, in Greek the *oikos*, is the principal social and political unit of the ancient world. It frequently included the extended family, slaves, servants and employees.
* The household provided social care, employment, economic security, and it was the place for faith practices to take place. In ancient cultures, the household would have its own patron gods, its own collection of practices and habits which defined what it meant to be part of that group. The household was the most important source of identity for people in the ancient near east.
* In a patriarchal and hierarchical culture, the household followed the lead of the senior man. Joshua, as head of his household, could make decisions for everyone else in that household. His sense of identity shaped their sense of identity. What Joshua rejected, they rejected. Whoever he was loyal to, they were loyal to.

### Main Thought:

* The Hebrew people, having left Egypt and preparing to enter the Promised Land, had to decide where their allegiance lay: was it with the gods of old, or with the God who had brought them out of slavery.
* Joshua reminds them that it is their choice – to follow God, or to follow idols. But Joshua, the leader of the people, says that he and his household will serve God. Not only was Joshua establishing his allegiance to God, but he was also challenging the other Hebrews to make their own decision too.
* Following Jesus is not about choosing one belief over another. It is deciding who we belong to, where our allegiance lays. It requires that we are totally and absolutely loyal and faithful to God.
* We are entering into a new relationship with God – but the new relationship with God alters our relationship with each other.
* God is the head of our household. This transforms our relationship with our friends, family, employment and economic situations. Every other relationship we have is subject to our new obedience to God – to our new household.
* In joining this new household, we enter a community of faith where we can look to God for guidance collectively. In our church communities and in this movement called The Salvation Army we can encourage one another and hold each other accountable.

### Challenge:

* Being a Christian is not just about what we believe; it is about who we belong to. We cannot still follow our old ways of living. We must begin something new, something different.
* By giving our allegiance to Christ, we enter into God’s household. We are obedient to God before anything else, and this affects our relationships with everything else.
* Are you still hanging on to beliefs and practices from the past?   
  Have you truly given everything that you are to God?   
  Are you holding anything back?   
  You have a choice to make: will you be part of God’s household and follow Jesus, or will you hang on to the things which detract from the way of Jesus?