

STRONG & COURAGEOUS: “A Better Question” - Rev. Jeremy Bates

Sermon Notes: October 12, 2025

Text: Joshua 5:13-15

Introduction

Are you asking the right questions? Sometimes the breakthrough we're waiting for doesn't come from finding better answers—it comes from asking better questions. On the eve of battle, standing between the miracle of the Jordan and the walls of Jericho, Joshua encounters a mysterious figure with a drawn sword. His question seems obvious: “Are you for me or against me?” But the answer changes everything. Whether you're facing your own “Jericho”—an overwhelming obstacle, a tough decision, or a battle that feels too big—this message will remind you that there's a Commander higher up the chain of command... and His presence is your true source of strength & courage.

Questions have the power to shift & shape our perspective; If you don't ask the right questions, you won't get the right answers.

Questions have the power to transform:

- confusion to clarity, curiosity to conviction
- uncover truth, deepen faith, invite spiritual and relational growth
- change how we think, how we feel, how we follow God

Between the Jordan River (past miracle) & Jericho (future obstacle)

- In the LULL: where you catch your breath, regain your footing, recoup your energy, find rest & renew your bearings

1) PUBLIC VICTORIES ARE WON IN PRIVATE

- In private we learn to submit to the Lord and receive direction from Him
- Jesus often retreated to private moments with the Father

2) GOD REFUSES OUR CATEGORIES

- Joshua wants to know how God fits into his plans, how God will integrate into his life, how He'll affect his agenda - God comes with his own agenda.
- “NEITHER”: I'm not for you or against you, I am above you!

3) GOD ALWAYS COMES TO US WHEN WE NEED HIM IN THE WAY WE NEED HIM

- Abraham the pilgrim - traveller Genesis 18
- Jacob the lying schemer - wrestler Genesis 32
- 3 men in the fiery furnace - the fourth man Daniel 3
- Joshua - the Commander in Chief
- The battle didn't rest on Joshua's brilliance but on God's authority
- Joshua's strength & courage didn't come from strategy but from surrender.
- Worship before Warfare



Life Group Discussion

Warm-Up:

Pastor Jer used the story of the invention of Post-It Notes this week to illustrate turning mistakes into something useful. Can you think of a time when something that seemed like a mistake in the moment turned out to be useful or a blessing?

Study & Discussion:

Read Joshua 5

1) What resonated with you from the sermon? What challenged or surprised you? What questions do you have?

2) Joshua stood between the Jordan (past miracle) and Jericho (future obstacle). Have you ever felt “stuck in the lull”? What has helped you regain faith and perspective in those in-between moments?

3) Pastor Jeremy said, *“If you don’t ask the right question, you won’t get the right answer.”* Can you think of a time when reframing your question gave you a new way to see your situation or God’s plan?

4) Jesus often withdrew to pray before big public moments. What spiritual disciplines help you “catch your breath” and reconnect with God privately? How could you make that more consistent in this season?

5) Joshua’s first response after meeting the Commander was worship, not war strategy. Why do you think worship is so powerful before facing battles?

6) Joshua was challenged to ask a better question: instead of asking “God, are You for me?” he asked “God, am I for You?”. If we applied this to our own lives, how might this change the way you make decisions, view challenges, or handle conflict?

PRAYER:

