

STRONG & COURAGEOUS: “I Still Choose” - Rev. Jeremy Bates

Sermon Notes: November 23, 2025

Text: Joshua 24:14,15

Introduction

Have you ever started something strong... but struggled to finish?

From fitness goals to financial promises to spiritual commitments - desire gets us started, but only commitment keeps us going. As we close out this series, we come to the closing chapter of Joshua's life, where at 110-years-old he stands before Israel and declares just as boldly as he ever has: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

“Desire gets you started; commitment keeps you going.”

Joshua 24: The danger is no longer walled cities and giants - the new danger is drifting from their commitment to God.

Do you have a vision for your life? The older I get, the better I want to become!

I STILL CHOOSE:

1) Resilience over Resignation: “I still choose”

- Resilience isn't minimizing issues and pretending everything is always fine - life comes with highs & lows, ups & downs
- Joshua had “bounce back” determination
- When Joshua got knocked down, he got on his knees
- The test of our faith isn't in how we respond to success, but to challenge, adversity, disappointment and defeat

2) Character over Convenience: “I'll do what's right and not what's easy.”

- Convenience & comfort are some of the biggest enemies of courage & commitment
- If God had called them to it, God would get them through it!
- Commitment is built on character
 - When it's easier to compromise, character keeps us committed
 - When it's easier to coast, character keeps us faithful
 - When it's easier to follow culture, character follows Christ!

3) Decisions over Desires: “My convictions lead and my emotions will follow.”

- Our desires are unstable: they won't sustain us in hard seasons and they don't always lead us toward God
- Decisions drive our destiny - desires are meant to follow our decisions

“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets, but now He has spoken to us through His Son.” - Hebrews 1:1



Life Group Discussion

Warm-Up:

"Choose this day...." that was Joshua's challenge to Israel, but for a moment, let's keep it light and fun! In this version of "would you rather" the leader will read two options, everyone must instantly raise one hand for choice A or two hands for B. No hesitating!

Choose this day:

- Coffee or Tea?
- Summer or Winter?
- Early bird or Night owl?
- Gravy on everything or Maple Syrup on everything?
- Routine every single day or Spontaneity every single day?
- A Rewind Button for life or a Fast Forward button for life?

Study & Discussion:

Read Joshua 24

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

2) Pastor Jer said that *"desire gets you started; commitment keeps you going."* Think about your faith journey; when have you leaned more to feelings/desires versus firm decisions? How can we shift from emotion-driven faith to decision-driven commitment?

3) How does comfort or convenience challenge your character?
Share a moment when doing the right thing was harder than doing the easy thing.

4) Joshua demonstrated resilience by getting back up every time life knocked him down—often by getting on his knees in prayer. Share about a time when you faced disappointment, defeat, or adversity in your faith. How did you respond? What would "bounce back" resilience look like in that situation?

5) Finishing Strong: Joshua said "I still choose" at 110 years old. When you think about the vision "the older I get, the better I want to become," what specific qualities do you want to grow in as you age? What might need to change now to cultivate those qualities?

PRAYER:

