



Moments of Courage, Part 3

Discussion Guide

Face the Issue:

This week we wrapped up our series on Moments of Courage with the story of the fall of Jericho.

Although Jericho was not a large or hugely populated city, it was well fortified with a strong military presence. The Hebrews were so close to the land of milk and honey, they could taste it. But there seemed to be no way under, over, around, or through. From their perspective it looked hopeless.

Joshua had to be a nervous leader. He probably had doubts and sleepless nights as he questioned himself and wondered if he was doing the right thing. That's when God came to him in human form. Joshua knew that God would not show up for a casual visit. There had to be a reason. Joshua had the good sense to ask, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"

Describe a time in your life when you lost sleep over a dilemma.

Did God help you get over your fears and anxiety in that situation? If so, how?

How does God usually speak to you?

Into the Word:

Read Joshua 5:13–15. This is a passage that Jeremy shared with us.

Joshua was alone that night. He did not need a sermon, a speech, or a scolding. He needed someone to share this moment with him. Could it be that God became a man so He could walk alongside Joshua? Could it be that God took on human flesh so that his presence could be more than felt? So that he could walk and talk with Joshua, friend to friend, commander to commander?

There is a story of one of the major offensives of World War II, when Dwight Eisenhower was walking near the Rhine River. The night before the battle, Eisenhower came upon a soldier who seemed depressed and discouraged.

"How are you feeling?" the general asked.

"General," the young man replied, "I'm awful nervous."

"Well," Eisenhower said, "you and I are a good pair then, because I'm nervous too. Maybe if we just walk along together, we'll be good for each other."

No sermon, no speech, no scolding. Just one man coming alongside another.

God came alongside Joshua to remind him that he was not fighting this battle alone. He could not only be felt, He could be touched. He could not only be heard, He could be seen. God wasn't a thought, a concept, a principle. He was a living reality.

How does Joshua's experience encourage you?

Since God doesn't appear personally to most people, how can we experience His presence in our lives?

How can you represent God's presence to someone else?

Reread Joshua 5:14–15.

When God visited Joshua that night, it was for more than support and encouragement; it was for more than revealing the strategy; it was to see where Joshua stood. In other words, who was controlling Joshua? When God said, "As commander of the army of the LORD, I have now come," it was his way of saying, "Joshua, I didn't come to take sides with you. I came to take over! If you let me take command, you'll conquer Jericho and, ultimately, the entirety of Canaan. But if you refuse to put me in charge, you are going to lose."

Jeremy reminded us that God goes before us. This is true but we still have to follow. Many of our battles in life are really battles for control. Are we going to follow the God who has gone before us and promised us the victory if we give Him control or are we going to try and do things our way and hope that God takes our side?

What might have happened to Israel if Joshua hadn't given God the battle of Jericho?

What areas of your life do you need to give to God? What have you been asking him to take your side on that you simply need to allow him to rearrange?

Apply The Word

There are four ways that we can face the battles that challenge us in life:

- *Presumption.* We say, "The tragedies of life will never happen to me. I'm insulated. I'm protected. I'm careful." Presumption causes us to be blindsided.
- *Pride.* We say, "When the battles come, I'll make it through on my own. I don't need anyone else. I'm tough. I'm the captain of my fate." Pride causes us to fall.
- *Panic.* We say, "Oh, no. Not me. What will I do? I never expected this. I'm not ready. My life will crumble in. The enemy will defeat me." Panic causes us to retreat.
- *Presence.* We say, "God, I know I've got to fight. You've not taken me out of the skirmish. But I want you to lead the way. So by faith I'm putting you in charge. Will you take over?" Presence enables us to move forward in obedience.

Are you more likely to err on the side of presumption, pride, or panic? How can we move from each of those errors to presence?