





SERIES: What's Holding You Back?

Week 5: Rahab – An Unlikely Ally

<p>Connect</p>  <p>5 – 10 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When have you experienced the kindness of a stranger? <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Intergenerational option:</i> Play "Hunt the Thimble". Basic instructions and some good variation ideas here: www.activityvillage.co.uk/hunt-the-thimble (Other variations: <i>Singing Hunt the Thimble</i> and <i>Hot or Cold</i>. One person leaves the room and everybody else hides the object. <i>Singing:</i> The hiders sing louder when the searcher is close to the object and softer when they are farther away. <i>Hot or Cold:</i> The hiders tell the searcher what temperature they are based on proximity to the hidden object.
<p>Gratitude</p>  <p>10 – 15 min</p>	<p><i>Song suggestion:</i> Mighty to Save (Ben Fielding, Ruben Morgan) youtu.be/qG_bf6tO3RE Jesus Messiah (Chris Tomlin) youtu.be/XVGAK03Ers4</p> <p>Share the Lord's Supper together.</p>
<p>Discover</p>  <p>and</p> <p>Act</p>  <p>35 mins</p>	<p><u>Series Context</u></p> <p><i>What's holding you back? Most of us experience a lack of confidence or competence at different times or in different situations. But 2 Corinthians Chapter 3, verses 4-6 remind us that our confidence and our competence to be God's good news bearers comes from Jesus, not from ourselves.</i></p> <p><i>So what's holding you back?</i></p> <p><i>In this series we look at some less familiar characters from the Old Testament. We'll see how their stories can encourage us to have confidence in God and not hold back on what he wants to do in us and through us.</i></p> <p>THIS WEEK: Rahab – An Unlikely Ally (See attached teaching and discussion guide)</p>

For Kids Slot or family devotions:

Saddleback kids cartoon stories: "Rahab and the Spies (Joshua 2)", youtu.be/tWkbq50tH5A and

"The Walls of Jericho youtu.be/BAkwWE2UGLo (Just over 3 minutes each). Also, see Connect idea above.

Rahab: An Unlikely Ally

Joshua 2, 6:22-24

These notes are intended to be read aloud, pausing for Bible reading, discussion & prayer as you go.

1. Introduction

Today we are going to meet Rahab, a Canaanite woman. She lives in Jericho, probably the oldest continually inhabited city in the world, and is involved in the so-called “oldest profession in the world”, prostitution. Regardless, she’s a perceptive, well informed, courageous woman who becomes an unlikely hero of the faith for the Israelites, and for Christians today.

The following information is from Dr. Claude Mariottini, Professor of Old Testament at Northern Baptist Seminary, Illinois, USA. (<https://claudemariottini.com/2010/03/19/rahab-a-prostitute-or-an-innkeeper/>)

Some scholars believe that in addition to being a prostitute, that Rahab was also in the business of manufacturing linen and engaged in the art of dyeing, since the flat roof of her house was covered with stalks of flax put there to dry.

Rahab’s house was located on the wall of the city, probably near the town gate. The location of her house made it convenient for people to come into her house and easy for them to leave the city. Since traders and merchants would frequently pass through Jericho, they probably would patronize the house of Rahab and make it easy for her to be well informed of events outside of Jericho. This is the reason she was aware of the events in Egypt and what the Israelites had done in their journey toward the land of Canaan.

Rahab is introduced as a zōnāh, a word that means “prostitute” or “harlot.” And since she is also introduced as the head of the household, it is possible that Rahab may have been a madam. The spies went to Rahab’s house because they knew who she was, where she lived, and what her profession was. Thus, the arrival of strangers at the house of a prostitute would not raise much suspicion to the inhabitants of the city.

2. The Story, Part 1

Read Joshua 2: 1 – 24 or listen to the 3 minute NIV Dramatised Audio Bible version here: youtu.be/Kf6lvUErwQU or from BibleGateway under Bible/Audio Bibles here: www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/

- What stands out for you about how Rahab responded to the visiting Israelite spies?

3. The Story, Part 2

The spies get away, Rahab ties a scarlet cord in the window and hopes for the best -- that these guys will deliver on their promise to treat her and her family kindly and faithfully when the Lord delivers the land into their hands (Josh 2:14). To cut a long story short, Joshua leads the Israelites through the Jordan River to the border of Jericho. The city is tightly sealed up in expectation of the Israelites coming. The Lord tells Joshua to have his armed men march around the city for six days. On the seventh day they march around seven times with the priests blowing trumpets, and then with the blast on the trumpets and the shout of the people the walls come tumbling down.

Did the men keep their promise to Rahab? Let’s read Joshua 6:22-24 to find out. (*Read the passage.*)

Yay! They did! And Rahab went on to live among the Israelites. We don’t hear anything more of her in the Old Testament.

4. The story, Part 3

Although there is no further reference to Rahab in the Old Testament, she receives three significant acknowledgements in in the New Testament. She is honoured in the list of the faithful in Hebrews 11 (11:31). Her righteousness is affirmed in James 2:25, where the importance of being people of both faith and action is emphasised. But perhaps the most exciting reference is in Matthew 1:5 as part of the genealogy of Jesus. Rahab is one of the four foreign women mentioned in Jesus’ lineage. (The others are Tamar, Ruth and Bathsheba – Uriah’s widow who then married David. Mary is the only other woman mentioned.) Rahab was the wife of Salmon and mother of Boaz, who married Ruth.

4. Think About It

- What could have potentially held Rahab back from taking her place among the faithful followers of the one true God?
- What gave Rahab the courage and confidence to do what she did? Is there a lesson in that for us?

Back in Part 1 of the story Rahab acknowledged, “the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below” (Joshua 2:11). Her faith led and enabled her to turn away from her culture, her people, and her religion and to the Lord. Commitment to a true faith in God may necessitate setting priorities that are contrary to those of the world.

4. So.... What’s holding you back?

“Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:4-6)

In her book “Bad Girls of the Bible”, Liz Curtis Higgs says: “Take this and run with it, beloved: It isn’t who you *were* that matters God. It is who you *are* in him. And who you are *becoming* by the power of his Spirit. Like Rahab, toss out that scarlet thread and say with conviction, “Here I am, Lord. Save me!”

- What do you think of the Liz Curtis Higgs quote?
- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to move for anyone who feels they may be being held back by things such as:
 - Who you were in the past
 - Things you have been involved in (or still are) that aren’t honouring to God
 - Being caught up in the world’s priorities rather than God’s.
 - Anything else sparked by Rahab’s story.