

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1** How did you start following Jesus and experiencing His grace? Have you ever felt like you were too bad for God to forgive? How does hearing about God's love challenge that idea?
- 2** Think about a time when you trusted God during a tough time. How did you feel His love then?
- 3** Is there someone you know who's finding it hard to believe in God's love? How can you show them there's hope?

WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!






SCAN QR

If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.

 www.facebook.com/wwcfcebu

CONTACT US

 (032) 254 8934
0916 276 1067
0942 174 4296

 www.wwcfcebu.org
 cebuwwcf@gmail.com

ADDRESS

369-L Juana Osmena Ext.,
Camputhaw, Cebu City 6000

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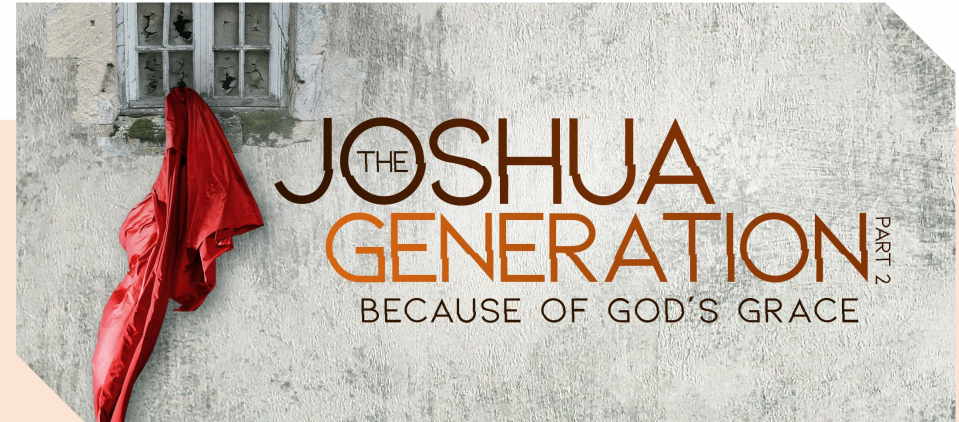
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SUNDAY WORD

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Joshua 2:1 - "Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there." (NIV)

Some stories in the Bible are surprising. This one is no exception. While we expect stories like David and Goliath, the story of Rahab the prostitute doesn't seem to fit the usual mold. It's hard to imagine what good or faith could come from someone in that profession. Rahab was part of what's often called the oldest job in the world. In the book of Joshua, she's called a prostitute three times (Joshua 2:1; 6:17; 6:25). Even in the New Testament, her occupation is mentioned twice in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25. We might wonder, why she has that kind of job? Had Rahab lost all hope for a better life? If she had, it would make sense, but God had different plans for her. God can turn shame into glory in just one amazing moment of redemption.

GOD CAN TURN SHAME INTO GLORY

The story of Rahab the Prostitute shouldn't be ignored. Rahab is often forgotten in the Old Testament and the Bible, but her story can inspire anyone, whether they believe in God or not. Rahab was known as a prostitute, which is why it's added to her name. But it was because of Rahab's faith that her life was changed by God. She showed great courage by helping the Israelite spies, and because of this, she and her family were spared when Jericho fell. It was Rahab's faith and kindness that made her part of Jesus' family tree. She's mentioned in the Hall of Fame of Faith in Hebrews 11. If you think about her being on that list, you realize how extraordinary her story is. The list includes names according to order like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. And then, Rahab.

Hebrews 11:31 - "By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient (NIV)." In one go, God changes everything we thought we knew. We usually think of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses as the "good guys," and people like Rahab as the "bad guys." We like to keep them separate. But God sees things differently. The Bible doesn't hide Rahab's past; it's part of her story forever. Choices have consequences, and just like we remember Peter denying Jesus and Judas betraying Him, we remember Rahab was a prostitute. Notice the past tense: WAS. That's what she used to be. But because of God's grace, she became a woman of faith.

In Joshua 2, Rahab faced at least four challenges: First, she was a woman. In her time, women were often treated badly. But God shows that everyone is welcome in His family, no matter who they are. Second, she was a Gentile, not part of God's special group. But despite this, she was accepted by God and His people because of her faith. Third, she was raised in a culture that worshiped false gods. She didn't know much about the God of the Israelites. She might not seem like someone who would help the Jewish spies, either. Fourth, she was a prostitute. Some people try to hide this fact, but Rahab sold herself for money. However, this shows how amazing God's grace is. It means that Even someone with a troubled past can be part of God's family. Rahab's story gives hope to anyone who feels broken and hopeless. If God could save her, He can save anyone.

Some people might say she shouldn't be in the Hall of Fame of Faith in Hebrews 11, but that just shows we don't understand God's grace very well. A woman who's done wrong things over and over might not seem like someone who could be saved, but looks can be deceiving. Not everyone who goes to church is as good as they seem, and not everyone who's done wrong is as far from God's love as we might think.

God has His people everywhere, even in the most unlikely places. God's grace is so marvelous that He will not only save notorious sinners, He will also save self-righteous church members. We may read this story and say there is grace "even" for people like Rahab. But the word "even" gives us away because it unconsciously puts us on a different level, as if our sins aren't as bad as hers.

But as Romans 3:22 says, "This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile (NIV)." No difference between young or old, rich or poor, slave or free, male or female, this culture vs. that culture, or this group vs. that group. As Romans 3:23 puts it: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (NIV)." All means all. We're all in the same boat, and the boat is going down. Jesus alone can save us from the pit of hell.

AN AMAZING CHANGE

Now, it was really difficult for Rahab to believe, and there could be many reasons why. She took a big risk by helping the spies by sending the soldiers in the wrong direction. But why did she do it? The Bible says in Joshua 2:9-13 that she and everyone in Jericho knew about the amazing things God had done for the Israelites. They had all heard the stories, but Rahab was the only one who believed that God was behind it all. Where did she get this understanding? I think it was from the Holy Spirit, who opened her heart to see the truth. Even though everyone had the same information, Rahab made the right choice to stand with God's people.

This shows that Rahab has truly changed. Now, she's worried about her whole family's safety, not just her own. She doesn't want to be the only one saved. She heard about God, believed it, and spoke about it. Her faith gave her the courage to act bravely, even when she was in danger. She hid the spies, lied to protect them, and helped them escape secretly. She stood up for God. She took her stand for the Lord.

In a moment of great crisis, she became a traitor to her own people and joined the people of God. If they found out, she'd be killed right away. We can talk about whether lying was right or wrong now, thousands of years later. But at that moment, Rahab didn't hesitate or think about it. She saved His people and made sure her whole family was safe. She risked everything in the process.

THE SCARLET CORD OF DELIVERANCE

Joshua 2:12-13 - "12 Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign 13 that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death (NIV)." Joshua 2:17-18 - "17 Now the men had said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us 18 unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. (NIV)

The spies agreed to spare her family in the coming attack on Jericho if she tied a scarlet cord to her window. Why red? In the chaos of the coming battle, the red cord would be easy to see. But there's more to it than that. The red cord reminds us of the blood from the Passover. The color wasn't by chance. The red cord guaranteed Rahab's safety from sure death. Right after the spies left, Rahab tied the red cord in her window for everyone to see. She didn't know when the attack would happen—maybe in a few days, maybe in weeks. But that didn't matter. When it came down to it, she believed the promise and took action. That simple red cord saved her life.

Take these words seriously. You may be a religious person. You may be very moral in the eyes of others. You are probably not a prostitute, and may not end up as Rahab. You may hear the gospel over and over and yet do nothing about it. You may believe the blood of Christ can forgive your sins, you may even be a church member, but until by faith you come to Christ, you cannot be saved. Rahab heard the word and personally responded by tying the scarlet cord to her window. You and I must do the same thing. It is not hearing that saves us, but hearing and believing to the point that you reach out and trust Christ as your Savior.

In Rahab's story, we learn a timeless message: No one is beyond the reach of God's grace. Even when facing judgment, God extends His hand to save a sinner who turns to Him in faith. Think of all the men Rahab had slept with. Think of all that sin. Think of her stained reputation. God says, "It doesn't matter!"

What's your sin? We all have sins we would rather not mention in public. As the saying goes, "Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future." Does your past make you feel unworthy? If so, then you're just the kind of person God's grace is for. If God can save Rahab, He can save anyone, and that includes you and me.

I'm not saying it's okay to sin. No. Paul explained this in Romans 6:1-2 - "1 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?" (NLT) Jesus died to set us free from sin, not to let us keep sinning. When Jesus died, He was freeing us from being controlled by sin, because sin is like being a slave. Sin is what keeps us away from God. It's harmful, and for those who haven't been saved, it leads to punishment.

Being saved means choosing sides with Jesus. How much did Rahab understand when she hid the spies and lied to the king? The answer is not much. She knew the God of Israel was the real God, and she wanted to be part of His people. After sending the spies away secretly, she hung a red cord from her window and told her family so they could be saved too.

What happened to Rahab after the fall of Jericho? Matthew 1 contains a genealogy that starts with Abraham and ends with Jesus. Matthew 1:1,5-6 "1 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham...5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David (NIV)." If you follow the genealogy, it means Rahab the former prostitute became the great-great-grandmother of King David. If you know Jesus, one day you will meet her in heaven. And there at last she will be no more Rahab the prostitute. She will forever be known as Rahab the child of God.