



Out On a Limb Week 1 – Unlikely Rahab Spiritual Formation & Discussion Guide

We hope you'll use this guide to take the teaching from Sunday's service and reflect on it with a few friends or a group. If you have questions or want to talk more about how to take your next spiritual step, contact us at info@wschurch.org.

Scripture:

Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them. "I know the LORD has given you this land," she told them. "We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. For we have heard how the LORD made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed. No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.

Joshua 2:8-11

"It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies."

Hebrews 11:31

"Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road."

James 2:25

Reflection Questions:

- Are you an ancestry expert, or do you have little or no interest in genealogy work?
- What stood out to you from Sunday's service? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through the songs, the message, and being with others as part of the church? (The message's main points and scripture are listed below if it helps you think back.)

- Have you ever had an experience where you felt out of place? (Jake shared his story about junior high track.) How did it feel when people noticed you weren't what they expected?
- Have you ever struggled with what to do with the genealogy listings in the Bible? What's your reaction to learning more about this passage from Matthew 1?
- What is your initial reaction to Rahab being listed in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1?
- Read through Joshua 2, which tells the story of Rahab protecting the spies. What do you notice as you read it now?
 - What do you notice about God?
 - What do you notice about Rahab?
- Rahab and this story are mentioned several times throughout the Bible, including the New Testament, not just in the Matthew 1 genealogy. Why do you think this story continues to be remembered and referenced?
- Read Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25. Rahab had recognized God and expressed her faith in action. Jake said, "True faith can't stay hidden for long." How does this challenge you?
- What act of faith is God inviting you to today? What would it look like to do something today to respond courageously?
- Jake also shared, "our mess doesn't disqualify us from God's plan." God loves to redeem and rescue. "The fact that Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute is a reminder that no matter how unlikely you are to be a follower of Jesus, He will include you if you'll trust him." How does this comfort you today, especially in light of Rahab's story?
- Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-6 from the Message paraphrase. How do you react to this description of how God writes and uses our stories?
- Is there anything else from this teaching that you want to explore more?
- Take time to pray as you close your reflection or discussion, asking God to help you act on what he has asked you to do.

Advent - How can you stay connected to God in the midst of this season?

We have put together a list of Advent and Christmas resources, including Bible reading plans, devotionals, books, and video devotionals for families. Let this season be grounded in Jesus and his story by choosing one tool to use either on your own or with friends or family. Learn more at www.wschurch.org/advent.

Visit www.wschurch.org/resources to see additional tools and resources.

Message Main Points and Scripture:

- Matthew 1:1 – "This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham."
- Matthew 1:5 – "Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab)..."
- Romans 5:20 – "God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant."
- Joshua 2:1 - Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove. He instructed them, "Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho."
- Joshua 2:2 - So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night. But someone told the king of Jericho, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land."
- Joshua 2:3-7 - So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: "Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land." Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, "Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from. They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them." (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.)

So the king's men went looking for the spies along the road leading to the shallow crossings of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king's men had left, the gate of Jericho was shut.

- Joshua 2:8-11 - Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them. "I know the LORD has given you this land," she told them. "We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. For we have heard how the LORD made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed. No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.
- **She didn't fear God, she had faith in Him**
- Joshua 2:12-16 - "Now swear to me by the LORD that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families."
"We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety," the men agreed. "If you don't betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the LORD gives us the land." Then, since Rahab's house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window. "Escape to the hill country," she told them. "Hide there for three days from the men searching for you. Then, when they have returned, you can go on your way."
- Joshua 2:17-21 - Before they left, the men told her, "We will be bound by the oath we have taken only if you follow these instructions. When we come into the land, you must leave this scarlet rope hanging from the window through which you let us down. And all your family members—your father, mother, brothers, and all your relatives—must be here inside the house. If they go out into the street and are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on people inside this house, we will accept the responsibility for their death. If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in any way."
"I accept your terms," she replied. And she sent them on their way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window.
- **True faith can't stay hidden for long.**
- 2 Peter 3:9 – "He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent."
- Hebrews 11:31 – "It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies."
- James 2:25 – "Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road."
- 2 Corinthians 3:1-6 (Message) – "Does it sound like we're patting ourselves on the back, insisting on our credentials, asserting our authority? Well, we're not. Neither do we need letters of endorsement, either to you or from you. You yourselves are all the endorsement we need. Your very lives are a letter that anyone can read by just looking at you. Christ himself wrote it—not with ink, but with God's living Spirit; not chiseled into stone, but carved into human lives—and we publish it. We couldn't be more sure of ourselves in this—that you, written by Christ himself for God, are our letter of recommendation. We wouldn't think of writing this kind of letter about ourselves. Only God can write such a letter. His letter authorizes us to help carry out this new plan of action."
- **My mess can become God's message**