



New City Church: Sermon Discussion Notes

“Mothers of Jesus: Rahab” – Joshua 2:1-24, 6:21-25

Purpose: These discussion questions are designed to help you apply the sermon to your personal life, church life or your city’s life. You can use these for personal, family, or small group reflection. To review the sermon, go to www.newcitychurch.ca/sermons.

Introduction

Pray – Take a moment to pray, asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture.

Read – Joshua 2:1-24, 6:21-25

Sermon Summary – It is hard to read the narrative parts of the Bible without bias. When we meet characters in any story, we instinctively try to compare ourselves to them. This is not necessarily bad, but when we look at Rahab’s story, it is helpful to try to read it as it comes to us in Scripture. Resist the urge to judge her life-choices, or to justify her actions in the story. When we look at the text from the perspective of what God is doing through the characters in the story, we find that we see grace dripping from each verse.

We see that Rahab proves to be a woman of authentic faith: she knows what Israel has done in crossing the Red Sea and defeating other nations; she knows the LORD (Yahweh) was responsible for Israel’s successes and she trusts God to lead Israel to victory over her city of Jericho and to deliver her family from the coming wrath. Most remarkably we see the fruit of this faith in the grace Rahab shows her family. Women did not become prostitutes in the ancient world unless they had no other options. It was only if a woman had no family, or was abandoned by her family, that a woman would have to turn to prostitution. Since we know Rahab’s family was alive and well, the fact that she negotiated for their salvation, despite the fact that they left her to this lifestyle, means that Rahab was showing incredible grace in saving them. To risk her life to save her family is a sign of her faith that the spies and the LORD would do as they said.

When we look at the spies we find that far from despising Rahab (a social outcast and traitor to her country), they not only offer her protection for her protecting them, but, they offer her *hesed*. “Hesed” is the Hebrew word used throughout Scripture to refer to the kind of love God shows Israel, His covenant people. It is not just affection, but it is the loyal, unrelenting, seeking love of God. It is God’s love that will not stop chasing His people until they are safely with Him. So, when the spies hear Rahab’s testimony, they recognize a person of faith and they offer her and her family physical protection, but also seem to be offering her a place in the covenant community. It seems to amount to an adoption of Rahab and her family into the people of God (which Joshua 6:21-25 seems to affirm).

We see God all over this passage, showing Israel (and us) that the despised things of the world are welcome in His kingdom – faith is the only distinguishing feature of the covenant community to come. In this (and other stories we will cover in this series), we see

God preparing Israel and us for the coming of the despised Son of God – the One who is born in poverty, mocked for questionable parentage and blasphemy, and hung, naked, on a cross. If we cannot offer “hesed” to the people we despise in our culture, how will we ever welcome the One who was despised of God for our sake?

Questions

1. Review the passage (Josh 2, 6:21-25) How does this speak to your life?
 - What do you think about Rahab’s lying to the authorities that came to ask her about the spies? When (if ever) is it ok to lie? (see Heb 11:31, and James 2:25 for more).
 - Have you ever had trouble accepting help or criticism from someone because of how you perceived them?
2. What implications does Rahab’s story have for us as a church community?
 - What does “hesed” look like inside the church? How would a church, driven by “hesed love” care for each other, its leaders, other churches and the city? To help here is a definition of “hesed” from R.C. Sproul:

“There may be no more significant Old Testament description of how God relates to His people than this Hebrew word hesed. I argue that the best translation of this term would be “loyal love.” God loves His people genuinely, immutably, loyally. Both the love and the loyalty are, of course, tightly bound together. That is, just as one cannot love capriciously so one cannot be loyal without love. God is for His people, and will never cease to be for them.

Our calling is to reflect that reality. Our loyalty and our love, grounded in our loyal love toward Him who loved us loyally first, ought to be toward both what it is we believe, and those with whom we believe it. Too often we fail one way or another.”

3. How does this text speak to our city?
 - Who is the insider and outsider in Calgary? Your workplace? School? Etc.
 - How can New City be an agent of reconciliation and unity, connecting and even erasing these lines of distinction?

Concluding Question

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

Prayer

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

