

Sunday 21 April 2024

Life Group Leaders' Notes

Series: Now Is The Time

Title: A Woman With A Bad Past Who Gave Her Family A Great Future

Key Text: Psalm 145:8-9

Each woman, as well as each man, has a great destiny. Today women are often devalued in the world, but the Bible puts the highest value on women.

Right back in Genesis 3:15 God said: 'And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; It will crush your head, and you will strike its heel.' God was saying that the seed of woman would crush the head of Satan. This is a promise that was fulfilled when Christ came into the world, born of a woman, to defeat Satan.

Mary, who was just a poor young woman, knew that she was highly favoured to give birth to the Messiah. Throughout the ministry of Jesus, we see that He gave high value to women and treated them with great kindness. As a result, many women followed Jesus and supported his ministry financially. Women were last to stay at the Cross and the first to the empty tomb. All through history women have been some of the strongest and most faithful followers of Jesus. You too can be a Christian who can make a big difference in the lives of many people, starting with your own family.

Rahab was a woman with a bad past who gave her family a great future (Joshua 2:2-6). The Bible says that she was a prostitute. Her life was not very pretty and she was socially worthless. But although her past was bad her future was bright, and she is mentioned as one of the great examples of faith in Hebrews 11.

She was a woman who was not from God's people. She was part of one of the people that the Lord had told the Israelites that they would conquer. In fact they were a people that was going to disappear, that was her destiny along with her people in Jericho. But her story's ending was totally different because of the decisions she made. So what led her to make completely out of the ordinary decisions? What led her to prefer God's people over her own people?

1. She feared God (Joshua 2:8-11; Proverbs 9:10; Proverbs 31:30)
2. She asked for the mercy of God (Joshua 2:12-16; Hebrews 4:16)
3. She chose to obey and trust God (Joshua 2:17-21; James 2:24-26; Hebrews 11:31)
4. She saved her whole family because of her obedience to God (Joshua 6:22-25)

Apply

1. She feared God (Joshua 2:8-11). This woman knew that God was real. She knew that the Israelites had seen God's awesome power at the Red Sea and when they destroyed other cities. Rahab and her people were so fearful that they were now coming towards Jericho. What really scared them was they understood that the God of the Israelites was 'God in heaven above and on the earth below.' Rahab had supreme respect and submission to Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, above the gods of her people. We too should have a proper respect for God (Proverbs 9:10; Proverbs 31:30). Rahab's destiny started to change from the moment she recognised the greatness and power of God. The new value that was coming to her life started when she valued God.

2. She asked for the mercy of God (Joshua 2:12-16). Rahab feared God but she also believed that she could receive kindness from these Israelite spies. She probably didn't receive a lot of kindness in her life, but she still hoped for kindness for herself and her family. She knew that her only hope was to plead for mercy and that's what the spies promised. This is a great picture of how we should come to God because He is a God of love and mercy. He is full of love who wants to forgive us of our sins and save us from destruction (Hebrews 4:16).

3. She chose to obey and trust God. Rahab decided to completely come on to God's side. She did what she had been told to do (Joshua 2:17-21). Her trust in God caused her to take action to obey God. Rahab's faith did not remain just a thought because that would be a dead faith; it would only be an illusion (James 2:24-26). Her faith was seen by her actions. She hid the spies. She made an agreement with them. She tied the red cord to the window. She didn't wait for the spies to go back and give their report. She didn't delay until she knew that the

Israelites were about to invade Jericho. She believed and acted immediately. And that's what we must do: we don't have to put a red cord in our windows, but we do have to believe that the red blood that Jesus shed at the cross can save us from our sins. We need to identify with Christ now. We need to start immediately to live a new life as a believer. Rahab, despite her terrible past, understood that this was her moment of decision and from that day on she lived accordingly. Her faith changed her value and that took her off the list of prostitutes and onto the list of Bible heroes (Hebrews 11:31). Many of us have heard the word of God and may have been coming to church for a long time. Maybe you have heard many promises from God but you have to come to the moment when you really believe them yourself and take action to follow Jesus and to live differently for Him. That is what Rahab experienced; her moment of decision arrived and so has yours.

4. She saved her whole family because of her obedience to God. In the moment when the walls of Jericho were falling and everyone around them were being killed, Rahab and all her family were rescued (Joshua 6:22-25). Because of Rahab's faith and actions, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters, and anyone closely connected to her were saved. Today not only can you be saved but you can be the one person who changes the future of all your family and friends. It doesn't matter if you had a bad background. When you believe in Jesus and obey Him, you will see God's goodness and mercy in your own life and in the lives of all your loved ones. What the Lord did for Rahab, He can do for you and your family. Just put your faith in Jesus. And do it today.