

Courageous Faith: Rahab – Study Guide

Overview

This week we began a 12-week series on Courageous Faith, starting with Rahab the prostitute from Joshua 2. Her story sits at a crucial moment in Israel's history—40 years after they failed to enter the Promised Land due to unbelief. Rahab, a Gentile prostitute living in doomed Jericho, displays remarkable faith in Yahweh and becomes part of Jesus' family line. Her story teaches us about visible faith, God's mercy in judgment, and the scarlet thread of redemption that runs from her window all the way to the cross.

Key Takeaways

1. **Past obedience echoes through generations** - Israel's faithfulness 40 years earlier was still bearing fruit in Rahab's confession of faith.
2. **God's judgment is not blind** - Even in the midst of judgment on Jericho, God was seeking out those who would follow Him.
3. **Faith, not ethnicity, is the door to salvation** - Rahab, a Gentile woman, confessed Yahweh more clearly than God's own people had a generation earlier.
4. **The scarlet cord connects to the cross** - The visible sign of salvation in Rahab's window points forward to the blood of Christ.
5. **Faith must be visible and public** - Rahab didn't believe privately; she acted on her faith in ways that put her at risk.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Story

1. **What strikes you most about Rahab's situation?** Consider her occupation, her ethnicity, her gender in that culture, and her location inside the walls of Jericho. Why is it significant that God chose someone like her?
2. **How does the context of Israel's failure 40 years earlier (Numbers 13-14) make Rahab's faith even more remarkable?** What does it say about God that a Canaanite prostitute had more faith than the Israelites who had seen God's miracles firsthand?
3. **Read Joshua 2:9-11 again. What specifically did Rahab say she had heard about God?** How did hearing these stories lead to her confession of faith? What does this teach us about the power of testimony?

The Scarlet Cord

4. **The sermon traced the "scarlet thread" from the Passover in Exodus through Rahab's cord to the cross of Christ.** How does seeing this connection deepen your understanding of God's redemptive plan throughout Scripture?
5. **The scarlet cord was visible, public, and required obedience.** In what ways is our faith in Christ meant to be similarly visible and public? What does "hanging a scarlet cord in your window" look like in 2026?
6. **The sermon stated: "The scarlet cord didn't stop judgment; it distinguished who would survive it."** How does this help us understand the cross? How does it challenge modern ideas that downplay judgment or hell?

Faith and Action

7. **Rahab's faith led to immediate action—hiding the spies and defying her own king.** When has your faith required you to take a risky or costly action? What happened?
8. **The two spies also had to exercise faith.** They promised Rahab safety, but then learned the walls would collapse with her house in them. Have you ever had to trust God when keeping your word seemed impossible? How did God come through?
9. **The sermon mentioned that "our faith should have a very visible response to our convictions."** What are some practical ways your faith has become (or could become) more visible to those around you—at work, in your neighborhood, with your family?

Personal Reflection

10. **Rahab's past didn't disqualify her from God's plan—in fact, she became part of Jesus' family line (Matthew 1:5).** How does her story encourage you regarding your own past or the pasts of people you're praying for?
11. **The sermon emphasized that "the most unlikely people often see [our faith] first."** Who are the "unlikely people" in your life who might be watching your faith? How might God be preparing their hearts through your faithful obedience?
12. **Rahab stayed in her house even when the walls were shaking and falling around her.** When have you had to "stay in the house"—to remain faithful even when circumstances were terrifying? What helped you persevere?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to put into practice this week:

Option 1: Make Your Faith Visible Identify one area where you've been keeping your faith private or hidden. Take one concrete step to make it more visible this week (start a conversation about faith, pray publicly before a meal, share your testimony, etc.).

Option 2: Share Your "Scarlet Cord" Share the story of how Jesus' blood has saved you with at least one person this week. It could be your full testimony or simply what Jesus has done for you recently.

Option 3: Pray for the "Rahabs" in Your Life Make a list of people you know who seem far from God—the "unlikely" ones. Commit to praying for them daily this week, asking God to reveal Himself to them just as He did to Rahab.

Option 4: Study the Scarlet Thread Do a personal Bible study tracing the theme of "scarlet" or "blood" through Scripture. Start with the passages mentioned: Exodus 12 (Passover), Leviticus 14, Numbers 19, Isaiah 1:18, and connect them to Hebrews 9:11-14 and Revelation 7:14.

Memory Verse

Joshua 2:11 - "For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below."

or

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."

Prayer Prompts

Close your time together by praying for:

- **Courage** to make our faith visible and public, even when it's risky
- **The "unlikely people"** in our lives who need to hear about Jesus
- **Gratitude** for God's mercy that reaches even the most unexpected people
- **Faith to obey** when God's instructions don't make sense to us
- **Those struggling with their past**, that they would know no sin disqualifies them from God's redemptive plan

Looking Ahead

Next week we'll explore another Bible character who displayed courageous faith. Come prepared to be surprised—you won't know who it is or who's teaching until you arrive!

Reminder: If possible, join us for the various Equip Groups offered this semester, including studies on Genesis 1-11, being a great neighbor, parenting, Re-Engage, and Real Woman.

Additional Resources

- Read the full account: Joshua 2 and Joshua 6:15-25
- Rahab in the New Testament: Matthew 1:5, Hebrews 11:31, James 2:25
- For further study on God's redemptive plan: Trace the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 and notice the unlikely women included