# TALKING POINTS

# Lessons of Faith from Joshua

Quarter 4, Lesson 2
"Surprised by Grace"

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**MEMORY VERSE:** "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace." Hebrews 11:31, NKJV

## LESSON STUDY INTRO

"This week, we will explore two of the most fascinating stories of the book of Joshua and discover their relevance to our faith today." Qtly, Sab, par 4

### 1. God always seeks to save the lost (Sun, Tue)

- The experiences of Rahab and the Gibeonites reveal that God's ultimate motive is redemption.
    - Both parties were outside the covenant nation of Israel and both even practiced dishonesty—a clear violation of God's law.
        - Nevertheless, God saved them.
- Let's not forget that the Hebrews were sinners, too!
    - Since the Exodus, Israel was almost constantly doubting, complaining, and even openly rebelling against God.
    - This is Paul's point in Romans 1 and 2, that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty before God (see Rom. 3:9,10).
- God's method of saving Rahab's household was even a type of Passover, a symbol of the same saving faith Israel had experienced (see Qtly, Tue, par 4, 5; also Peter and Cornelius in Ac. 10:34, 35; 15:11).

### 2. God is merciful beyond what we deserve (Mon, Wed, Thu)

- There are striking similarities between the Israel's first and second experiences at border of Canaan.
    - Both instances occur at the same location and spies are sent to bring back a report.
        - Israel's lack of faith in the first instance resulted in 40 years of wilderness wandering, yet God still gives them another chance.

- Rahab was a citizen of condemned Jericho, a practicing harlot, and quite willing to lie in a pinch—nevertheless God saved her and her household (Jos. 2; 6:17, 22-25).
    - The Bible record of Rahab's dishonesty is merely *descriptive*, not *prescriptive*. Scripture only affirms the positive aspects of Rahab's actions (Jos. 6:17; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25).
        - "In the middle of a decadent, corrupt culture and Rahab's own sinful lifestyle, God, in His grace, saw a spark of faith through which He could save her. God used what was good in Rahab—which was manifest faith in Him and in her choice to belong to His people—but never commended everything she did." Qtly, Mon, par 2
    - The same is true for the Gibeonites. Though they dealt deceptively with Joshua and the elders (Jos. 9), the Lord honored their willingness to join His people, even as servants (See Qtly, Wed, par 3).

[Rahab's] conversion was not an isolated case of God's mercy toward idolaters who acknowledged His divine authority. In the midst of the land a numerous people—the Gibeonites—renounced their heathenism and united with Israel, sharing in the blessings of the covenant. PK 369

- The stories of Rahab and the Gibeonites reminds us of Paul's declaration to the Athenians: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Ac. 17:30).

### 3. Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren (Fri)

- Perhaps the most remarkable part of Rahab's story is the fact that she is included in the family line of Jesus!
    - "Through her faith in God, the prostitute of Jericho, condemned to total destruction, becomes a significant link in the royal line of David and a progenitor of the Messiah. This is what God is able to accomplish through faith, even if it might be only the size of a mustard seed." Qtly, Fri, par 1 (see also Heb. 2:10, 11)

## CONCLUSION

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. PK 370 (Qtly, Fri, par 3)