

Day Eleven

Scripture:

Joshua 2:1-14, 21

Reflection:

Liz Curtis Higgs in *Bad Girls of the Bible*, says that Rahab was a bad girl in the first part of her life, but that this did not mean she had to stay that way. There is no doubt Rahab was a prostitute (Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25). It is true she may have owned a small inn or tavern in Jericho. This is where the Hebrew spies decided to hide. But, part of what would have been expected in such a place would have also involved prostitution.

God is willing to take people where He finds them, or, more accurately, where they find Him. Rahab had heard about the Hebrews and their God. From whatever she heard, she decided that the Hebrews were going to be victorious in taking the land of Canaan, including the ancient walled city of Jericho. So, she decided to risk arrest and death by her own neighbors in order to give aid to the Hebrew spies.

Rahab puts her faith in a God she hardly knows. She believes this God will guide an army she has not seen to be victorious in a battle that has not even started. Like all great acts of faith, her decision is filled with risk for her and her family. Faith often leads people to dangerous choices.

Christians have, since the earliest centuries of the church, seen the scarlet or red cord in the window as related to the Passover (with the red blood spread around the doorposts)

and to the cross of Jesus. In spite of what she saw in her city's massive walls and impressive military strength, she believed that the future belonged to those whose God was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The thief saw Jesus on the cross and still assumed a future time when that man would be the King. Rahab saw a fortified city of idolaters but decided to put her trust in a future time where the land of Canaan would be the land of Israel.

As we prepare for the coming of Christmas, we need to join those who do not let the world we see overwhelm our faith in the world we have yet to see.

Family

Some houses are built with what people call "safe rooms." In places where there is a high amount of crime, or where people think their home might be robbed, they may build a room where people can go and be safe. It has walls and doors and locks that are so strong, people inside the room will be safe, even if criminals are trying to hurt them. These strong rooms are the best places to hide and wait until the police can come and rescue the people.

If you saw bad people sneaking up to the house, where would do you think would be the safest place to go? (Let everyone talk about where they might go and why they think it would be a safe place.)

Of course, we are not expecting criminals to try and break into our house. But, what if a whole city was about to be attacked by an army? That's what it was like in Jericho. Everybody knew the Hebrews were going to attack the city. But, people were not worried. Jericho had tall stone walls and thousands of soldiers with swords and spears and

arrows. They trusted in their walls and their weapons and they felt safe.

But, Rahab knew the city was going to be conquered. She knew that God was on the side of the Hebrews. So, she decided to be on God's side and help some Jewish spies in return for them promising to make her home a safe place. They told her to put a red rope out of the window, so that all the Hebrew soldiers see it and know not to attack anyone in that house.

The Jesse Tree Ornament is a window with some red string to make us think of Rahab and the red-colored rope she put hanging from her window. People have always thought that red rope looked like the blood the Jews had put on their doors at Passover to make those homes safe places. They have also thought about how Jesus on the cross was giving His own blood so that we can have a safe place to hide. But, that safe place isn't in our rooms. It isn't in the church building. It is in our hearts, where Jesus lives with us. Jesus makes our hearts a safe place marked by His own blood which is shed for us.

Prayer:

Pray about having the kind of faith we see in Rahab, who trusted that God would give His people the final victory. Rahab was willing to risk her own life to protect the Hebrew spies. Ask God to help our faith be strong enough that we will be willing to risk our time, our resources, and even our own lives to help take care of God's people. Thank God for saving Rahab with a scarlet cord, an image that points back toward the Jewish Passover and forward toward Jesus, the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."