



SMALL GROUP WEEKLY
DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN *of the Bible*



Week 3
21 - 27 August 2022

CELEBRATING WOMAN OF FAITH, GRACE, HOSPITALITY & HOPE!

Celebrating woman of faith, grace, hospitality and hope!

Has there been a woman of great influence in your life? How lucky you are if you have had a Christian role model to emulate! They become our inspiration as we listen to their journey's and see God's presence played out in their lives.

As Christians we refer to scripture as a source of information that guides our daily living and gives purpose to our existence. The Bible gives us many inspirational characters: at times we search for those historical figures who can inspire us positively and affirm our faith in our spiritual journey. These people and their human stories give us a reason to live a quality life centered on God's values and inspire us to adopt life giving characteristics for our own lives. Some of these people have been so influential that many people are (even today) named after them.

There are many women we can learn and explore in scripture but for the purpose of our August series, which is commemorated as women's month we chose only four namely: MARY, HANNAH, RAHAB and SARAH. You will discover (perhaps for the first time) the unmistakable chronology of God's redemptive work in history through their lives. These women were not ancillary to his plan were at the center of it.

Join us every week as we explore each woman character and learn life lessons from their lives. May these Biblical women reawaken our courage, offer us hope, inspire our vision, and teach us values that we can embody in order to transform ourselves and society. Knowing that, like us, it was not their natural abilities that made these women extraordinary but the power of the one true God whom they worshipped and served.

CONTENT:

Weekly Sunday sermon Bible readings, worship song, reflection, small group questions and family time
Daily Bible readings, a memory verse and a prayer for individual contemplation

- Week 1: Sunday 7 August MARY – Blessed among woman.
- Week 2: Sunday 14 August HANNAH – A portrait of feminine grace.
- Week 3: Sunday 21 August RAHAB – A horrible life redeemed.**
- Week 4: Sunday 28 August SARAH – hoping against hope.

WEEK 3

Rahab: A horrible life redeemed

If you were reading the biblical account of Rahab at face value without knowing that she is part of Jesus lineage, you would never think that her life will be redeemed. She is one of the most unsavory characters imaginable. She is referred to as a prostitute in Joshua 2 verse 2. Rahab lived her life which was greatly influenced by a pagan culture which was at the brink of judgment. Investigating how Rahab's horrible was redeemed can be a life-giving journey and experience.

WORSHIP SONG:



Avalanche – Hillsong United

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJ2_Gg6ka-k

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION WRITTEN BY: THABANG JANUARY

The story of Rahab in the Bible has long been one of the most interesting stories in the Bible, her story of redemption and salvation, along with her courage, wisdom, and faith are striking examples of what God can do in the lives of ordinary people. It's a living testament of the power of our God, and how He can use even the messiest of histories for an incredible purpose. Rahab was a Canaanite woman living in Jericho, the Bible tells us that she was a prostitute. We are told that she lived on her own in a home built into the walls of the city. These are the only real details given of her story before her encounter with the Israelite spies.

Rahab took a chance and hid these men on her roof and then sent the soldiers in a different direction. If the soldiers had found them, she and possibly even her family would have been in serious trouble. But somewhere along the line God had been working on her heart so that when these men arrived, she would be ready and willing to step into the role God had for her. Rahab was redeemed not because of any meritorious works she did. She did not earn God's favor by any good deeds. Remember, even though what she did was right, hiding the spies, was morally tainted because of the way she handled it. She lied. But she is not given to us as an example of the power of human works. She is not a lesson on how to better ourselves through self-improvement. She is a reminder that God by His grace can redeem even the most horrible of lives.

BIBLE READINGS

Psalm 35: 1-6

Joshua 2:1-6, 12-16

Matthew 1: 5-6

Joshua 2:1-6

New International Version – UK

Rahab and the spies

2 Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. 'Go, look over the land,' he said, 'especially Jericho.' So, they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there. 2 The king of Jericho was told, 'Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.' 3 So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: 'Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.' 4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, 'Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from.' 5 At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.' 6 (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) 12 'Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign 13 that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them – and that you will save us from death.' 14 'Our lives for your lives!' the men assured her. 'If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land.' 15 So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. 16 She said to them, 'Go to the hills so that the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there for three days until they return, and then go on your way.'

Life Application

By earthly standards, Rahab would not deserve God's redemption because we are people of work and earn; works and rewards approach. Her life does not grant her any chance of redemption. But God's Kingdom is always upside down. Grace is a gift from God, and we do not do anything to earn it. Are you struggling with a past that makes you think you are less important? A horrible past that makes you think God can't use you for anything? A past that other people keep referring to even if you have moved on? Are you held back by your past decisions, failures, mistakes? God redeemed Rahab. God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ to redeem you and set you free. God loves you. Forget the former things, you have been set free by Jesus.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What does this story tell us of God's character?
2. August is Women's Month, and Women of our country are faced with lots of challenges. Does this story remind Women that God loves them? Please motivate your answer.
3. Have you ever looked at your past and thought you are unworthy to be used by God for his mission and ministry? Please expand on your answer.
4. Which part of this story speaks to you the most? Please elaborate further.

DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

DAY	VERSE	PRAYER
MONDAY	<u>Lamentations 3:58</u> "You, Lord, took up my case; you redeemed my life."	Dear God, thank you for reminding me that the battle is yours, all I need to do is to trust in you and worship you. Amen.
TUESDAY	<u>Romans 12:2</u> "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."	Loving and Gracious God, please forgive me for conforming to the patterns of this world, give me strength to turn away from them and be renewed by your Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name. Amen
WEDNESDAY	<u>Deuteronomy 33:29</u> "Blessed are you, Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you, and you will tread on their heights."	Loving and everlasting God, thank you for saving us your people through your Son Jesus Christ. Thank you for being our shield and covering us always; these we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.
THURSDAY	<u>Ephesians 2:8-9</u> "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."	Thank you, Jesus, for saving me from condemnation and eternal death. Thank you for the gift of your salvation. Amen.
FRIDAY	<u>Psalms 107:2</u> "Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story – those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,"	Dear Lord, I will tell the world the story of my salvation for as long as I live. Amen.
SATURDAY	<u>Isaiah 29:22</u> "Therefore, this is what the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, says to the descendants of Jacob: 'No longer will Jacob be ashamed; no longer will their faces grow pale.'"	Dear Heavenly Father. You took away all my shame and replace it with joy that can only be found in you, thank you. Amen



BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN'S PASTOR
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Pray daily: Set up family time for prayer and devotions and stick to this arrangement. All devotions should always begin by with a prayer. Ask a family member to pray or one of the children.

Activity/Family Moment:

Rahab's story

Play: eye spy.

A parent should tell the story of Rabah, you can be as creative as you like. You can tell the story around a braai or with your children's teddies and toys. You could make it as interactive as you like.

This story is not boring, it's the beginning of a story that's thrilling, exciting and suspenseful. You can imagine it becoming a block buster!

Rahab does not have a wonderful life; her community are not good people and she does not believe their gods but rather she believes in our God! She's also really special because she would become a great great great great greeeat granny of Jesus!

So, what can we learn from Rahab?

- As we know Rahab's life was not an easy one, she had made mistakes, just like us, but God still saved her! We also make mistakes and bad decisions and God still saves us
- Rahab shows us actions speak louder than words. Rahab protects 2 spies that she did not know at all. She told a lie to the king's guards about these spies, but that lie ended up saving the spies lives as well as hers and her families!
- She is brave and she is loyal to God. She believed what she heard about God and she placed her faith in God. God was able to use her. God is able to use you too!