

Rahab Believes in God

(Joshua 2)

Introduction

How many of you watch TV? Do you listen to the commercials? Some people boast about their products and tell you that they are the best. Do you believe everything you hear?

Some things you hear are true and some are not true. How do you know the difference? How do people decide whether or not to believe something? First of all, you need to decide if the person you are listening to is trustworthy. Then you need to think about whether or not it makes sense. And, it helps to ask another person you trust what they think.

What are some things you think are important to believe? (God loves us and He died for our sins.) How did you decide to believe in these things? Sometimes we believe in something because of what other people have told us.

Today we're going to talk about our choice to believe in God and trust in Him.

Opening Prayer

Father, every day we are faced with choices. We need to learn how to have godly wisdom so that we don't believe in things that are not true. I pray that this morning You will open the eyes of our understanding so that we might be able to see with our hearts. Give us the ability to know what's true. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise! He is to be feared above all gods. The gods of other nations are mere idols, but the LORD made the heavens! (Psalms 96:4-5 NTL)

Lesson

The children of Israel (about two million people) were about to enter the Promised Land. They were on the East side of the Jordan River getting ready to make their crossing. They were headed to the city of Jericho about five miles west of the Jordan River.

Jericho was a beautiful city with springs of water and many palm trees. It was known as the "City of Palms" (Deuteronomy 34:3). Many people traveled to Jericho to buy and sell goods.

Now, Jericho was built like a fortress. It had huge double walls around it – making it one of the strongest of the walled cities. The walls were so thick and strong that houses were built right into the walls! The people of Jericho had their own army (6:2) and they trusted in the strong walls around their city.

The people of Jericho also worshipped idols instead of the true God. And, because they believed in false gods, God wanted the children of Israel to wipe them out.

Before the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River, Joshua secretly sent two spies to find out about the people and the city of Jericho.

The two spies crossed the Jordan River and sneaked into the city of Jericho. They soon found their way to a house built right into the wall – the house of a woman named Rahab. It didn't take long for the king to find out about the spies and where they were.

Joshua 2:2-3

But someone told the king of Jericho, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: "Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land."

Rahab knew that if the king of Jericho found out that she was helping the Israelites, she would probably be killed! I'm sure Rahab was scared.

Rahab knew the king would come looking for them, so she had to think quickly what to do. She decided to hide the spies on the flat roof of her house under some stalks of flax she was drying. She didn't want the soldiers to find them. It would be trouble for all of them! So, here's what she did...

Joshua 2:4-5

Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, "Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from. They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them."

The soldiers hurried out of the city and along the road to the Jordan River looking for the spies. As soon as the soldiers went out, the heavy gates to the city were shut. Why do you think Rahab chose to help the spies? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Joshua 2:8-9

Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them. "I know the LORD has given you this land," she told them. "We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror."

Rahab told the spies what people in Jericho had heard about the Israelites – how God divided the Red Sea so that they could cross and how He helped them defeat the powerful kings out in the wilderness on the other side of the Jordan River. Hearing of God's great power and care for the nation of Israel brought fear to the people of Jericho.

Rahab realized that the God of the Israelites was not like any of the idols the people of Jericho worshipped. She believed that He is all-powerful based on what others had told her about God.

Joshua 2:11

No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.

Because Rahab heard about the power of the one true God, she decided to put her faith in God to save her from her sins and chose to follow Him by helping the spies! When we tell others about what God has done in our lives, we can encourage them to choose to believe in Him and trust Him in all situations, just like Rahab did!

Rahab believed that the God of the Israelites would destroy Jericho. So, she begged the spies to spare her life and the lives of her family.

Joshua 2:12-13

"Now swear to me by the LORD that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families."

The spies realized that Rahab had risked her life to help them. So, they make a bargain with her.

Joshua 2:14

"We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety," the men agreed. "If you don't betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the LORD gives us the land."

The spies were saying, "May God strike us dead if we do not keep our promise."

Rahab agrees and then helps them escape.

Joshua 2:15

Then, since Rahab's house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window.

Rahab lowered the spies down the wall from her window by a rope.

Joshua 2:16

"Escape to the hill country," she told them. "Hide there for three days from the men searching for you. Then, when they have returned, you can go on your way."

Rahab told the spies to run for the mountains and hide for three days.

But, before leaving, the spies told Rahab to tie a red rope in her window so they would be able to tell which apartment was hers when they come back to fight the battle of Jericho.

[Teacher, explain that just as the red rope saved Rahab, the blood of Jesus saves us from the wrath of God.]

The spies did as Rahab told them to do. They hid in the mountains for three days and then hurried back to Joshua to give their report.

Joshua 2:24

“The LORD has given us the whole land,” they said, “for all the people in the land are terrified of us.”

All the people of Jericho had heard about God’s amazing power. They knew what He had done for the Israelites. But only Rahab took the step of faith. She chose to believe and trust the God she had heard about. And we’ll see later how her faith would make a difference for her whole family.

Every day God’s power helps us, even when we don’t realize it! We can learn about God’s power through the Bible stories we hear. Once we know about God’s great power, we can choose to believe in Him and put our trust in Him about any situation we may face. Trusting in God means we obey His Word, depend on Him to help us do what is right and good.

If you are a believer in God, it’s important for you to tell others about the wonderful God we have so that they too might choose to place their faith in our God and be saved like Rahab.

Closing Prayer

Father, Rahab saw Your power and decided to put her faith in You to save her from her sins. Help us to see Your power as you answer our prayers and help us do right. I pray that You will give us the ability to

always put our faith in You no matter what situation we find ourselves in. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Red-Rope Reminders

Make red-rope reminders so we can remember that God keeps His promises.

Give each child three strips of red cloth. Tell children how many beads they can choose, and then show them how to tie the three cloth strips together at one end and how to braid them. Show them how to add beads to their red ropes anywhere they’d like – simply by slipping a bead onto the strip that’s in the middle of the braid. To finish, have each child tie a knot at the end of the braid.

Tell the children they can hang their red-rope reminder in their window as Rahab did, or hang it on their bed, or wear it as a headband. Each time you see it, remember that God keeps His promises.

Game Center

Use the following questions in a discussion or a review game of your choice:

1. What did Rahab know about God’s power? (See Joshua 2:8-11.) Why do you think she chose to believe in God and trust Him? How did she show she believed? (She hid the spies and helped them.)
2. How does God’s power help us today? (Answers our prayers. Gives us courage. Helps us do right.)
3. Why have you or people you know chosen to believe in God?

4. How can children your age show that they trust in God at school? At home? In the neighborhood?
5. When do you need to remember God's power and trust in Him to help you?
6. Discuss Rahab's lie with your class if appropriate to their age level. Was Rahab justified in lying to save the lives of the spies? Could God have saved the spies from detection without her lie? Does the fact that Rahab lied for a good cause make it right? (Notes from Life Application Bible: Although the Bible does not speak negatively about her life, it is clear that lying is sin. In Hebrews 11:31, however, Rahab is commended for her faith in God. Her lie is not mentioned. Several explanations have been offered: (1) God forgave Rahab's lie because of her faith; (2) Rahab was simply deceiving the enemy, a normal and acceptable practice in wartime; (3) because Rahab was not a Jew, she could not be held responsible for keeping the moral standards set forth in God's law; (4) Rahab broke a lesser principle – telling the truth – to uphold a higher principle – protecting God's people. There may have been another way to save the lives of the Israelite spies. But under the pressure of the moment, Rahab had to make a choice. Most of us will face dilemmas at one time or another. We may feel that there is no perfect solution to our problem. Fortunately, God does not demand that our judgment be perfect in all situations. He simply asks us to put our trust in him and to do the best we know how. Rahab did that and was commended for her faith.)
7. Discuss Rahab's occupation with your class if appropriate to their age. Why would the spies stop at the house of Rahab, a prostitute? (The Life Application Bible offers several explanations: (1) It was a good place to gather information and have no questions asked in return. (2) Rahab's house was in an ideal location for a quick escape because it was built into the city wall. (3) God directed the spies to Rahab's house because he knew her heart was open to him and that she would be instrumental in the

Israelite victory over Jericho. Whatever the case, God often uses people with simple faith to accomplish his great purposes, no matter what kind of past they have had or how insignificant they seem to be. Rahab didn't allow her past to keep her from the new role God had for her.)

Sword Drills

1. Read **Psalm 96:1-3**. What do these verses tell us about God and His power? How did Rahab learn about God and believe in Him in today's story? (She had heard of God's great actions.) What can you do this week to show your trust in God?
2. Read **Psalm 103:1-3**. Which words in these verses describe God? How do these verses say God helps us? How has God helped your family in the past? When do you need God's help now?
3. Read **Daniel 4:1-3**. When he sent the letter written in these verses, King Nebuchadnezzar had just seen God rescue Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from a fiery furnace. What amazing things have you learned about God?
4. Read **John 14:1**. What does this verse say we should do? What are some ways of showing trust in God?

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