

Sermon-Based Discussion

Advent: Women from Jesus' Past #2

A Hooker's Hope

Text: Matt 1:1-6a; Joshua 2, 3, 6

INTRODUCTION

Christmas is a season filled with hope. People have hopes for presents and holiday cheer and joyful times spent with family. People have hopes for a fresh start with the new year right around the corner. Christmas became a season of hope because it is a holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of the deep hope in all men for peace, joy, and significance. Rahab the prostitute's story shows us how Jesus can be the fulfillment of all our hopes for this Christmas season and beyond.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you usually look forward to during Christmas?

READ Joshua 2-3; 5:1; 6

2. James 2:20 says that "faith without deeds is useless." What are Rahab's deeds that show she truly has faith in God and what are the significances of these deeds?
3. What was Rahab hoping for? (hint: Josh 2:12 "kindness" is what the translators used for the Hebrew *hesed* – covenantal faithfulness, goodness, graciousness, steadfast love, mercy. Used of God: Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Ps 52:10, 103:17)
4. What was Rahab's reward for having the faith that she had? (Josh 6:25; Matt 1:4-6; Heb 11:1-30; James 2:18-26)

GOING DEEPER

Rahab had hopes for a better future and based on what we have learned so far those hopes were realized. What is Matthew saying about Jesus by highlighting Rahab in Jesus' genealogy?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

It is only by faith that Rahab's hopes were fulfilled. Her faith was not a passive, hidden faith. It was active. She sheltered the spies from the pursuing soldiers. She pleaded with God's representatives to take her in. She gathered her family into the safety of her home. She hung the symbol of her hope, the scarlet cord, in a brazen display of her trust in God alone and of her willingness to risk everything to have God. Whether you are a Christian or not, what does hanging *your* scarlet cord look like?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (James 2:18-26)