

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – January 19, 2025

Theme: The impact of unsung heroes in the Bible **Topic:** Rahab: Salvation by Faith

Main Texts: Joshua 2:1-24; 6:22-25; James 2:25; Matthew 1:5-6

Key verse: Hebrews 11:31 *“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION:

Rahab’s story is a remarkable account of God’s sovereign grace and mercy – like that of Abraham, the friend of God, whose faith was ‘accounted to him for righteousness’ (Jas 2:23-25). Bible scholars, interpreters, and pastors have seemed embarrassed about the fact that Rahab was a harlot. Some have tried to say that she was merely an “innkeeper,” but Rahab is identified as a harlot in the Bible five times (Josh. 2:1, 6:17, 25, Jas. 2:25, Heb. 11:31). Trying to sanitize her past, misses a very important point that God seems to be making with the story of this incredible heroine of faith: God shows mercy and grace to save even the worst of sinners. Rahab was a sinner, as we all are. Jesus “did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matt. 9:13). We are not told why the spies chose Rahab’s place but as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that it was God’s providence that took them there.

1. (a) Why do you think the spies would have lodged at the house of Rahab, a prostitute (Josh. 2:1)? (b) Why did Rahab hide the spies and what does it tell you about her? Was she right to lie to the men who came looking for them? Is it acceptable for a Christian to lie for a good reason? Why/ why not? (See Exo. 20:16; Prov. 12:22; Col. 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:10)?

Rahab is one of four women listed in Jesus’ genealogy (Matt. 1:5.) Bathsheba and Tamar are two others whose impurity was recorded in the Bible while Ruth was a Moabite. All four would be looked at negatively because of their sins or nationality. Rahab put her life at risk and chose to side with God’s people by not exposing the spies. This was an act of great courage but involved her lying. The Bible records Rahab’s lie but it does not approve it. Lying is a sin, whether done with good intentions, in ignorance, or in extenuating circumstances, it is still a sin. Yet God approved of Rahab’s faith, expressed by her actions. All in Jericho had the same information as Rahab, yet only she showed faith in God. Rahab chose the God of Israel in defiance of her king and country at risk to her own life. God showed her mercy despite her shortcomings. Surely, God turns around lives, even the ones we think most unlikely or less deserving. We are all equally undeserving, even if we think we’ve led “good” lives.

2. (a) Read Josh. 2:8-11 What can we learn from Rahab’s statement? (b) What was the symbol of salvation for Rahab and her family (Josh. 2: 18, 21)? (c) What do we cling to for salvation today (1 Pet. 1:18-19). How does this answer align with your answer to 2(b) Also see Ex.12:13)?

Harlots were social and moral outcasts (Deut. 23:17-18, Pro. 6:26). It is quite likely that Rahab’s family was ashamed of her, even if she did support them financially. She could easily have negotiated a reward from the spies for herself – perhaps a new life in a different city where no one would know her past. Yet, her first thought was to save her father, mother, and the rest of her family. God honoured her faith and rewarded her with more than she could have asked or imagined making her not only an ancestor to kings but to the King of kings in his earthly guise. The Bible did not sanitize her past – God gave her such a dazzling future that her past pales by comparison. He promises all his faithful the same.

3. (a) Consider the concept of Inclusion and Diversity in the story of Rahab and compare it with Inclusion and Diversity in today’s world. (b) What do you consider to be the Rahab’s legacy? _____

Prayer: **Father, help me to be truthful in all circumstances and make courageous choices that honour you, despite the risks and challenges. Help me to know what I need to leave behind to remain committed to you. Amen.**