

December 16, 2012

An Unlikely Candidate

Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps. These talking points, questions and scriptures are designed to help you take the next step.

- What nicknames did you have growing up? Among your friends and family, do you have any infamous labels or titles (e.g., Conan the Barbarian, Alexander the Great, Buffy the Vampire Slayer)?
- What might be your present label? If you could give yourself a label, what would it be?

Some labels withstand the test of time. But your nickname in grade school? Probably not. Some labels are honoring. Others aren't as flattering. But is God able to do something through us regardless of what our labels, our pasts, or our reputations might suggest? You bet.

With your Bible or YouVersion read Joshua 2; 6:22-25

- Is there anything you find surprising about this story?
- In Joshua 6 the Israelites conquer Jericho and Rahab is protected. In what ways do you connect with Rahab's circumstances?
- Given Rahab's label, why is it so remarkable for her to be included in Jesus' ancestry?
- What excuses have you used to spurn God's grace? What is keeping you from moving in God's direction? Can you accept His label of forgiven, accepted, and loved?

- Christmas time brings many opportunities to be around others who we struggle with. What are some ways that you could see them as God sees them. What are some areas where you need to see yourself as God sees you?

Think it Over

On the one hand, Rahab does not deserve to be in Jesus' ancestry. Her reputation is questionable. Her profession is condemnable. She has no platform of personal righteousness. But her past is no match for God's grace. While her lifestyle should have brought judgement, her faith brought forgiveness. And God ended up using her life in his larger story. Rahab's life reminds us of who we are and what we need – a Savior from our sin. And the incredible news is, we are relentlessly invited into a relationship with the only one who can do anything about it – Jesus.

Talk It Over with God:

These prayer tips can guide your time alone with God each day. Praying with a friend or a small group might help you stick to it.

- Many of our stories, if all the details were told, would be appalling. The good news is that God know all the details and still reaches out to us. Stop and ponder His amazing grace - then spend time giving praise and thanks.
- Rahab demonstrates an incredible faith in God. This is the one thing in the Bible that amazes Jesus. Is your faith strong or wavering? Pray for faith like that of Rahab.
- Our labels as greedy, covetous, selfish, angry, or bitter can be turned in today for labels like forgiven, accepted, and loved. Pray through what your labels are and give them to God. Ask for Him to help you believe you are forgiven, accepted, and loved.
- Jesus' holiness never overshadowed His grace. He accepts even those of us with labels. God wants to give us the label, "Child of God." If you've never received Jesus as your Savior, why not today? If you have then celebrate this label as an act of worship.