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This week at Magdalen Road, we continued our series in Joshua as we encountered Rahab in Jericho. Joshua sends 2 spies in to scope out the land as he seeks to establish a plan to enable the whole nation to enter. There are a number of reasons we might be slightly 'twitchy' as we read the first few verses of this chapter. Here are 4

1. The last time they sent spies into the land (Numbers 13) things didn't go so well
2. Their location of Shittim (v1) doesn't have great memories for them from Numbers 25.
3. Jericho is a fortified city with walls and soldiers. Moses did not give any advice on how to conquer it. Throughout Numbers Jericho has loomed over them as a massive obstacle over them as they cross the Jordan.
4. The soldiers end up at a prostitute's house! They're supposed to be scoping the city but somehow find themselves in Rahab's company!

However, surprisingly, it's from Rahab (in v9) that we hear an extraordinary confession of faith. Here we see that...

+ Our God keeps his promises

v8-14 is the key central section in the passage. Here the writer slows down to 'real-time', urging us to pay attention and listen in. This is the bit we can't miss.

Here we read that God has gone before them and terrified the Canaanites who have heard of God's faithfulness to His people. Specifically she mentions the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) and the defeat of Og and Sihon (Numbers 21). Rahab has heard of God's actions in history, believed them and trusts God

because of them (see v11). Specifically her active faith is seen in her initially hiding and advising the spies, but also in obedience in planning to display the scarlet cord. Hebrews (11v31) and (James 2v25) both give Rahab as an example of active faith.

+ Our God is kind to his enemies

We also noted that God is kind to Rahab, which is a surprise as she, as a Canaanite prostitute, is an unlikely recipient of grace!

We said as she gathers her family together within her house for protection in the midst of the judgment of God (ch6) it parallels the Passover. The red cord even possibly paralleling the blood of the Lamb sacrificed in Exodus 12. The blood-guilt of Rahab's family falls upon themselves if they do not keep the covenant, but it falls upon the Israelites if they do. Because of this agreement they will be protected.

We noted also that God's grace is extraordinary as it extends even to including Rahab into Jesus' family tree in Matthew 1. Matthew seems to want us to see that Jesus had prostitute blood in his veins - the members of Jesus' family tree point to the kind of people whom Jesus came for.

Here are some questions to start off your group... As always adapt and tweak as needed.

- Why do you think we're meant to be a bit twitchy as the account starts?
- What are the key verses in this account? Why?
- What has Rahab heard about God? What is her response to this news? How might this fuel us to pray for friends etc? How does this account point to the urgency?
- What set Rahab apart from her contemporaries who had heard of the historical acts of God? What was her response?
- How does Rahab point us back to the Passover?
- How does Rahab point us ahead to Christ?
- Looking to Hebrews 11v31 and James 2v25 how does the NT use Rahab as an example of active faith?
- Why do you think Rahab is highlighted in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew?
- How does this passage encourage us? How does it challenge us?
- What do we learn of God's character?