

Adult Unit I: From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People

Adults Title: God's Compassion for Rahab

Adults Topic: Joining Forces with Unlikely Allies

Lesson 4: September 27, 2026

Devotional Reading: Matthew 25:31-46

Adults Background Scriptures: Joshua 2; 6:16-25; Matthew 1:5;

James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31

Adults Print Passages: Joshua 2:8-13; 6:16-17

Home Daily Bible Reading

Sept 21	M	Joshua 2:1-7	Welcoming Strangers
Sept 22	T	James 2:18-26	Faith without Works Is Dead
Sept 23	W	Psalms 67	May the Nations Know God's Salvation
Sept 24	Th	Heb. 11:1-2, 29-31	Faith to Live By
Sept 25	F	Acts 10:34-48	God Shows No Partiality
Sept 26	Sa	Joshua 2:8-14	Rahab's Faith in Israel's God
Sept 27	Su	Joshua 6:6-17	Rahab Is Spared

EXALT!

Invocation – Teacher or learner

Celebration – "O Zion Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling" - #380 AME Zion Bicentennial Hymnal

Declaration – Joshua 2:8-13; 6:16-17 (Read together by class, by a volunteer or responsively)

⁸ Before they went to sleep, she came up to them on the roof ⁹ and said to the men, "I know that the Lord has given you the land and that dread of you has fallen on us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you. The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below. ¹² Now then, since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the Lord that you in turn will deal kindly with my family. Give me a sign of good faith ¹³ that you will spare my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them and deliver our lives from death."

¹⁶ And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets,

Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city.
17 The city and all that is in it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction.
Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live
because she hid the messengers we sent.

ENGAGE: (5-10 min.)



In return for her and her family's safety, the prostitute Rahab protected the spies Joshua sent and assisted the Israelites in their conquest of Jericho. 1. Under what conditions and states of mind do we fear and reject those we do not know? Is it because others are different from us in so many ways? Are there other reasons? 2. By the same token, what do you think draws us to those we do not know and even induces us to trust them? For instance, is it because we see how others can be of assistance to us?

3. In what ways are we as humans like one another and in what ways are we different? How do we overcome our differences and find common ground? What are the advantages of doing so?

EDUCATE: (10-15 min.)

Joshua 2:8-13: The biblical account of the time from Joshua to Nehemiah portrays a patriarchal, male-dominated culture in which women were seen as peripheral to society. Rahab is a Canaanite woman from Jericho who is historically identified as a "prostitute." It is possible that the Hebrew word *zona* could also be translated as "innkeeper," which fits with the context of this story in which she is portrayed as a landlady. Joshua reminds us that God's promises to Israel also anticipate the coming Messiah, who, according to Matthew 1:5, has the non-Jewish heroine Rahab in his family lineage. Rahab, who Joshua 2:1 describes as a prostitute, emerges as a model of faithfulness and a recipient of God's grace. Through God's grace, she has superior knowledge. Rahab knows what God wants Israel to know (3:10), that the promise of God is true. The cause of Rahab's knowledge, and the Canaanites' terror, was the news of

what God had already done for Israel in faithfulness to His promises. The mercy she requests for saving herself and her family presupposes the certainty of the promise of God. It is no less than deliverance from the coming wrath (compare 1 Thessalonians 1:10). God's use of Rahab speaks volumes with respect to the abundance of God's grace and mercy in his regard for all peoples in his creation.

Joshua 6:16-17: The "destruction" devoted to the Lord (Joshua 6:17) relates to God's anger over idolatry. There was a death penalty law in place for the sin of worshipping other gods. See other instances of this phrase in Exodus 22:20, Numbers 21:3, and Deuteronomy 2:34; 3:6. It should be noted that "The essential elements for a theological understanding of the conquest are indicated in this account of Jericho, the first city to be destroyed. The destruction of the Canaanites, no less than the crossing of the Jordan, is the powerful work of God in faithfulness to the covenant, (note the role of the ark of the covenant in chapters 6 and 3-4. The fearful judgment of God is working to bring about the promised deliverance of His people ..., an important biblical theme (e.g., Exodus 14:13-14; Revelation 19:1-2). Furthermore, that the grace of God is not restricted to Israel (Genesis 12:3) is evidenced by the experience of Rahab and her household (v. 25). God is not simply anti-Canaanite.... Judgment does not exclude grace. The mercy [Rahab] sought in 2:12 will be extended to her" (*The ESV Reformation Study Bible*). Rahab may be remembered as a woman of great intelligence, resourcefulness, and initiative. The aid she gives the spies indicates her savvy political awareness and bravery. Her curiosity and sensitivity to spiritual things draw her to Israel's God as the "God in heaven above and on earth below" (Joshua 2:11).

ELEVATE: (10 min.)

We can learn about how God works through unlikely means by studying the stories of God's acts of salvation so that we can recognize God's hand in the events of our lives. Consider and respond to the following:

1. Even though Rahab was very different than Joshua and God's people, God saw the goodness in Rahab and used Rahab's gifts for good. Rahab manifested God's radical welcome and hospitality.
2. God is not limited by our human biases. When the Holy One claims us to be God's own people, God also chooses us to serve others. The two always



go hand-in-hand. 3. The evidence of God's presence and work is all around us and in us; we must slow down enough to look and see it. When we fail to see each person as created in the image of God, it is easier to see the differences instead of the ways we are related because God created and claimed us. 4. God calls the Church to welcome all people, regardless of the labels society may place on them. 5. God's values and priorities are often different from those of the society. Our goal as God's people is to realign society's values and priorities to be consistent with God's.

iTHINK: (5-7 min.)

1. Read Matthew 1:5 and discuss what it means that of the four women named on Jesus' family tree, two of them were not Israelites (Rahab, a Canaanite and Ruth, a Moabite). Then, read Hebrews 11 and James 2:25-26, paying attention to the mention of Rahab. What does it say about God's acceptance and love that a Canaanite prostitute is honored as a model of faith? How is this different from the way people from other cultures are treated or represented in the rest of the Book of Joshua?
2. Read or listen to the first verse of the hymn "God Moves in a Mysterious Way" by William Cowper. How does God work in a mysterious way in the story of Rahab? How does Rahab contribute to God's work? How do the spies contribute to God's work?
3. Listen to or read the lyrics of the song "Go Wash In the Beautiful Stream" by Charles Albert Tindley and/or read the story of Naaman in 2 Kings 5:1-19. How did God work through unlikely means in this story? What people or events did God use in this story?
4. Ask the group to suggest other stories in the Bible that show God working through unlikely situations or people or ask them to list their favorite Bible stories and then examine each story for ways God is working and who or what God uses to do God's work.
5. Encourage participants to write a journal entry about what it might be like to be used by God for His work, just as He used Rahab. What might get in the way of God using us for His work? How can we overcome such obstacles?

Key Verse: The city and all in it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live because she hid the messengers we sent. Joshua 6:17