*“Twelve Extraordinary Women – How God shaped women of the Bible and what He wants to do with you” --Reviewing our November 22nd, 2016 study*

**“RAHAB- A Horrible Life Redeemed”** --Chapter 3

***What’s the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of the life of Rahab? Is your focus immediately on the negative aspects of her life?***

Is it her despicable past, living as a “harlot- a gentile woman enslaved to the most diabolical kinds of passion?” (Joshua 2:1) (pg.53)

Is it her reputation as one who lied to the men who came to her house looking for the spies sent by the King? (Joshua 2:4-5)

 *Do you tend to focus on her sinful lifestyle and choices? Do you use Rahab’s life to cleverly rationalize and justify your own sinful choices? Do you tend to focus on people’s past sins, holding them against them?*

***OR is your focus immediately on the positive aspects of her life?***

Is it *her hospitality* to two Jewish spies who were sent by Joshua to spy out the promised land? (Joshua 2:1-7)

Is it *the mercy she extended* not only to her closest family members but to the spies as she “received the spies with peace”? (Hebrews 11:30-31)—“meaning that she not only hid them, but also implicitly embraced their cause…entrusting her whole future to their God.” (pg. 60)

Is it *her testimony* to the spies of her fear of God and “YHWH’s power?” (Joshua 2:8-11)

Is it *the reality that her faith and the fruit of her faith (trust, repentance and obedience)*, meant that “her whole life, her career, and her future would be [*forever*] changed by her surprise encounter with the two spies?” (Joshua 2:4-21) (pg. 54)

Is it *her patience* in waiting for the spies to return? (Joshua 2:21-Joshua 6:25)

Is it *her example* that true saving faith, **“LIVING FAITH”,** sacrifices everything: my hopes, my dreams, my ambitions, my goals, my reputation, my future stability, my own life ---to be true to God’s Word? (James 2:24-26)

*Do you focus on her righteous behaviour and choices?*  *Do you use Rahab’s life as an example of what it looks like to live a life of faith and obedience? Do you focus on people’s present standing with the Lord: His lavish love, His goodness, His kindness, His forgiveness, His grace and mercy working in their lives?*

In 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul wrote, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” Ladies, this must always be our goal as we study through these twelve extraordinary women of the Bible. Where they were faithful in listening obediently to the Lord God, we are to emulate them. Where they floundered and failed, we are to learn to: “**flee** – 1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Cor. 10:14; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22”, we are to learn to “**deny** – Matt.16:24; Mk. 8:34; Luke 9:23” we are to learn to “**abstain** – 1 Peter 2:11” and we are to learn to “**avoid** – 2 Tim. 2:16; Titus 3:9” the same sinful thoughts, attitudes and actions by the power of the Spirit of God who dwells in us.

*How then did Rahab ultimately become extraordinary?*

Pastor MacArthur says, “What made ‘this woman’ extraordinary was a memorable, life changing encounter with the God of the universe.”

***What’s the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of the life of Rahab? Is your focus immediately on the character of God and the promises of God? This must be our passion and pursuit!***

**RESPONSE** towards God and others: ***“BECOMING A WOMAN OF LIVING FAITH”***

**F** **God is to be feared and is trustworthy to save!** Joshua 4:24 “that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever.” The Lord was not only mighty to dry up the Red Sea and the waters of Jordan but He is mighty to save “even the worst of sinners” who “tremble before the power of God.” (Joshua 2:11) Praising you Lord because You remind me in Your Word that Your power should continually cause me to fear You above all else. Thank You that I can rest in Your peaceful presence and continue to put my trust in Your perpetual promises.

**A**  **Mercy and grace are always found in the midst of God’s judgment against sin!** Romans 8:28 “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Even though Jericho was a city “marked out for eternal destruction” I thank You Lord that it also became a city that was *marked out for eternal deliverance* for a harlot and her family. Thank you for Your electing love and for Rahab’s real-life example to me of Your merciful saving grace and for showing me how true-saving faith takes action! Thank you Lord that I can anchor myself to Your purposeful promises!

**I** **Worthy of emulation:** “The lesson of Rahab’s life is seen in the example of her remarkable conversion, because she reminds us of how dramatically **God’s grace can rebuild a sin-ravaged life**.” (pg.200) “Lord, like Rahab, may my heart be exclusively drawn to You. As she risked her life and reputation by turning her back on a way of life that did not honour You and as she walked away from all of it with her closest family members, help me and my family to daily do the same…no matter what the cost.”

**T** Genuine faith is purely devoted to God; one who walks with God, one who speaks for God, one who sacrifices all for God… Lord, help me to trust You to walk and talk in a manner worthy of my calling. Help me to demonstrate my faith in You by walking in joyful obedience motivated out of my love for You by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Thank You Lord for not only placing Rahab in the “great cloud of witnesses” in Heb. 11 “who testify of the saving power of faith” but that she “found a place in Your plan to bring Your Son into the world.” (Matthew 1:5)

**H**  “Rahab was redeemed not because of any meritorious works she did. She did not earn God’s favour by any good deeds…she is not given to us as an example of the power of human works. She is not a lesson in how to better ourselves through self-improvement. She is a reminder that **God, by His grace,** **can redeem even the most horrible life**.” What love! What grace! What mercy! What assurance! What comfort! What HOPE! (page 66-67) Thank You Lord that You are impartial to no one and that You are not reluctant to save sinners out of the bondage of sin! Thank You that we do not have to clean up our lives before we can experience Your free grace! (Ephesians 2:8-10)

*“****FAITH:*** *Faith is the most solid possible conviction or belief based upon divine assurance, not on empirical evidence. A degree or measure of faith is a gift of God to every person. In other words, every person has some ability to believe, and it is only when that ability is exercised by an act of the will that a person can experience the fruits that arise from having faith. Faith is activated in the human heart by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and the grace of Jesus Christ.” (pg. 34 workbook)*

**REJOICE** and **BE THANKFUL** that though there was a time when our hopeless lives were intentionally devoted to everything God hates we can be assured that we are continually being transformed by God’s merciful grace. (2 Cor. 3:17-18) We now have hope-fueled lives and hope-filled desires to become intentionally devoted to everything God loves! God’s irresistible grace was magnified when it moved into our sin-ravaged souls and changed our lives! Though our sin was the master of our lives and looked utterly irreversible, we can now say Hallelujah because we have a new Master and King, Jesus Christ our Lord whose extraordinary grace makes us to be extraordinary women!

Ladies, as God’s mercy has been extended to us, let’s imitate our gracious God and be merciful and extend His love, His compassion, His forgiveness and His truth to those who need the saving grace of the Gospel! May the Lord give us ongoing opportunities to say as the psalmist does,

***“Come and hear, all who fear God, And I will tell of what He has done for my soul.” (Psalm 66:16)***

Continuing to learn to walk by faith and not by sight,

Christyn