



## Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

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# Joshua, God Can Use Anybody

## Lesson #2

Joshua 2:1-24

God doesn't take the majority of His workers from the ranks of the wise, mighty or noble. First Corinthians 1:26 says, "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."

Continuing in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 27, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen."

Paul says to get His job done, God uses things which are foolish, things which are weak, things which are base, things which are despised.

## The Foolish

God is able to work through the non-intellectual things in this world. D. L. Moody was an uneducated and uncultured man. With no educational advantages, he established the Moody Press, Moody Bible Institute, the Moody radio stations, and the list goes on. He's an example that God's power is not resident in our wisdom. God uses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

## The Weak

Weary, feeble, powerless... Sometimes when we feel physically or spiritually weak, we're tempted to take a "time-out," thinking that God will use us again when we are stronger. In Judges 6, we're introduced to Gideon who was taking a "time-out." It was wartime, and Gideon was hiding when an angel of the Lord appeared to tell him that he would be the one to save Israel. Imagine Gideon's astonishment: "How can I save Israel? Lord, I come from a nobody family, and I'm the lowest nobody in my family. And you're going to use me?"

After God enlisted the nobody Gideon, He got a nobody army. Then God took those nobodies and won the battle! God takes us in our weak state and uses us so He alone can be glorified.

## The Base

Rahab was a young Canaanite prostitute and as such not a very likely candidate for a heroine of the faith. Jericho was one of the principal seats of idol worship, being especially devoted to Ashtaroth, the goddess of the moon. Here was centered all that was the vilest and most degrading in the religion of the Canaanites. Many Bible commentators, eager to remove the stigma of the designation "harlot" from one included in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:5), have described Rahab as a hostess or tavern keeper. But scriptural usage of the Hebrew word *zanah* (Leviticus 21:7-14; Deuteronomy 23:18; Judges 11:1; 1 Kings 3:16) and the authority of the apostles (Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25), establish the credibility for use of the word "harlot."

It is clear that Rahab was perceptive, intelligent and well informed. Rahab identified the spies for what they were, hid them, and had a plausible story ready with which to deceive the king's agents. Rahab didn't deny that she had entertained the men. She says that they left at dusk when it would be difficult for anyone to be sure of clearly seeing anything. The agents did not dare to risk stopping to search Rahab's house because, if they did, the spies might get away. Finally, the Canaanite prostitute gives the two Israelites excellent advice. She tells them to hide in the hills for three days before attempting to cross the Jordan.

Spiritually, Rahab was not in an ideal circumstance to come to faith in the one true God, the God of Israel. She was a citizen of a wicked city that was under God's condemnation. Rahab was part of a corrupt, depraved, pagan culture. She had not benefited from the godly

leadership of Moses or Joshua. However, Rahab had one asset—she had heard from the many men she came into contact with that the Israelites were to be feared. She heard the stories of their escape from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the wanderings in the wilderness, and their recent victory over the Amorites. She learned enough to reach the correct, saving conclusion: "For the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below" (Joshua 2:11). It is this change of heart, this faith—coupled with the actions prompted by faith—that saved her and her family.

It is often said that Rahab, while being a true historical person, also serves as a symbolic foreshadowing or "type" of the church and Gentile believers. She was, in fact, the first recorded Gentile convert. There are many ways in which Rahab depicts the church. First, she was part of a pagan world system, a prostitute, who by her conversion was enabled to become a legitimate bride. In like fashion, Israel was the first chosen people of God, but they were set aside temporarily so the Gentiles could be brought into the kingdom of God, and the church is now considered the bride of Christ (Romans 11; Ephesians 5:25-27). Second, Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was saved because of her faith in "God in heaven above and on the earth below" (Hebrews 11:31). Likewise, Christians are saved through faith in Jesus Christ. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

Third, although Rahab and Christians are saved by an act of grace through faith, true faith requires and is exemplified by action (James 2). Rahab had to put the scarlet cord out of the window. Christians must accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and then go on to live in a

manner that verifies that our faith is real. Fourth, Rahab could have indicated the location of her home in any number of ways. But the only way that she could be spared was to follow the directions given to her by the Israelite spies. The world tells us that there are many ways to God and salvation, all equally valid. But the Bible tells us, concerning Jesus Christ, that "salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Fifth, Rahab's faith enabled her to turn away from her culture, her people, and her religion and to the Lord. Commitment to a true faith in God may necessitate setting priorities that are contrary to those of the world, as we are exhorted to do in Romans 12:2.

Finally, once we come to Christ, our pasts no longer matter. The slate is wiped clean for all who believe and accept the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross on our behalf. Rahab was no longer viewed as an unclean prostitute, but as one worthy by grace to be part of the lineage of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just as she was grafted into the line of Christ, so we become children of God and partakers in His inheritance (Romans 11). We find in the life of Rahab the inspiring story of all sinners who have been saved by grace. In her story, we learn of the amazing grace of God that can save even the worst of sinners and bring them into an abundant life in Christ Jesus.

### Why does God delight in using nobodies as His nobility?

The first reason is found in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 29: "that no flesh should glory in His presence." When we get to heaven, not one of us will be able to say we got there on our own merit. We're saved simply by the grace of God. The second reason is found in verse 31, "He

who glories, let him glory in the Lord." If we operate in our own strength and not God's, we risk taking the glory and credit for ourselves. Scripture tells us that we must be weak and low enough in order for God to use us.

Adrian Rogers told a story about a woodpecker pecking on a tree. In the middle of his pecking, a bolt of lightning hit that tree, splitting it right down the middle. The woodpecker backed off, surveyed the situation, and flew away. Later that day he returned with nine other woodpeckers. Proudly he said, "There it is, gentlemen. Right there. That's what I did."

When we do that as men and women, God shuts off the lightning. When you try to take credit for what God is doing, God shuts off the lightning and you are left with what you can do alone.

God wants to take us down to the very depths of ourselves to teach us that if there is any power, it is the power that is in God, and not in us. God doesn't need to make us into performers or superstars in order to use us. Instead, He's looking for men and women who have hearts that say, "Lord, I'm a nobody. I'm nothing without You. Will You use me?" When God finds such a heart, something extraordinary happens -- that nobody is promoted to the ranks of God's nobility.

## Questions

To increase our Biblical knowledge, we must learn about the men that we intend to model ourselves after. The following are questions for you to find in your Bible or elsewhere concerning Joshua.

1. Who was Joshua's father?
2. What was Joshua's relationship with Moses?
3. How long did Joshua serve Moses?
4. What task was Joshua given where he proved faithful to God?
5. What was Joshua's original name?
6. What does Joshua's name mean?

## Application/Activity

I want you to have the courage to lead as Joshua did in our first lesson. That being said, your challenge is to "lead" others to Christ. Ask five people, over the next 7 days, to either join you for church service or our men's Bible study. While all five may turn you down, they deserve to be asked and given the opportunity to either turn you down or accept.

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