

## Living with Boldness

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Then Joshua son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and entered the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab, and spent the night there. <sup>2</sup>The king of Jericho was told, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to search out the land." <sup>3</sup>Then the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come only to search out the whole land." <sup>4</sup>But the woman took the two men and hid them. Then she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they came from." <sup>5</sup>And when it was time to close the gate at dark, the men went out. Where the men went I do not know. Pursue them quickly, for you can overtake them." <sup>6</sup>She had, however, brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax that she had laid out on the roof. <sup>7</sup>So the men pursued them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. As soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut. <sup>8</sup>Before they went to sleep, she came up to them on the roof <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>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 that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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 <sup>13</sup>that you will spare my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." <sup>14</sup>The men said to her, "Our life for yours! If you do not tell this business of ours, then we will deal kindly and faithfully with you when the LORD gives us the land." <sup>15</sup>Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the outer side of the city wall and she resided within the wall itself. (Joshua 2:1-15)

### 1. Living with Boldness

In Philadelphia last week, an hour's long standoff left six officers shot. Once again, we learned that police have a dangerous job and often they are the ones who rush to a situation with boldness wherever they are needed.

The theme of the second day of VBS this year was "go beyond with boldness." The Bible story was from Queen Esther. Esther tells Mordecai

before she goes to the king to ask to save her people's life, "***I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.***" Esther is willing to sacrifice her life to save her people. Esther lives her life with boldness.

## 2. Rahab, a Prostitute

Today's scripture, Joshua chapter two, talks about the two secret agents who were chosen to cross the Jordan to get information about Jericho. Joshua wanted to know about the walled city of Jericho, its gates, fortified towers, military force, and the morale of the people before attacking. The two spies leave Shittim, seven miles east of the Jordan, and cross the river probably by swimming. They enter the house of Rahab, a prostitute. How did the spies choose her house? The Bible does not tell us the details. However, commentators suggest that Rahab was just an innkeeper or the landlady of a bed and breakfast. Rahab's house was built into the city wall so a quick escape was possible. Her house would have been a good place to gather information. The two spies probably went to Rahab's house when God led them to the house. God knew that Rahab would welcome them and save their lives.

When the two were at the house of Rahab, their presence in Jericho was detected and reported to the king of Jericho. The king sent his messengers to Rahab and asked about the Israelite spies. Rahab admits that the men came to her house, but says "***when it was time to close the gate at dark, the men went out. Where the men went I do not know. Pursue them quickly, for you can overtake them***" (verses 5). The truth is that Rahab hid the men beneath the stalks of flax, which had been placed on her flat roof for drying. Rahab lies in order to save the lives of the Israelites. She betrays her country to help the two Israelites. The writer of Hebrews commends her for her faith in God. "***By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace***" (Hebrews 11:31). Rahab lived her life boldly.

What made Rahab bold enough to put herself in a very risky situation? Joshua 2:8 and the following tell us why. After the king's messengers were gone, Rahab climbed to the roof and talked with the two spies in the darkness. She says that she believes the God of Israel had given the Israelites the land of Canaan. Rahab shares with the spies that the inhabitants of Jericho as well as the rest of Canaan are demoralized. Rahab says, "***As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you***" (verse 11). Then she declares her faith. "***The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below***" (verse 11). Although Rahab was a pagan, a Canaanite woman,

she knew what happened to the Israelites through God. Rahab's faith in God and her knowledge about the Lord's victories over powerful enemies made her a worshipper of the God of Israel. Rahab had a conviction that God was behind the scenes of the Israelites, and she has decided to help the two spies, risking her own life.

### 3. The Boldness of Peter and other Disciples

In today's New Testament lesson, we find two disciples who lived with boldness. After Peter and John healed a lame beggar at the temple gate, they shared about Jesus with the people in the temple. The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees were disturbed with what Peter and John were teaching about. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. Because of their message, Peter and John were arrested and put in jail. The following morning, the two disciples were brought in front of the Jewish Council. The Sadducees held a majority in the Sanhedrin Council.

The Council asked Peter and John by what power they healed the crippled man and by what authority they preached (3:12-26). Peter spoke boldly before the council, "***this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead***" (Acts 4:10). Since the people in the Council couldn't deny that the crippled man was healed through Peter and John, they just warned Peter and John to speak no longer to anyone in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "***which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judge! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard***" (Acts 4:19-20). Peter and John were full of zeal for Jesus and couldn't keep quiet. Their boldness was from their conviction that God is the one who raised Jesus. And they believed that God would see what they do and say.

After Peter and John were released, they shared with other believers what the chief priests and elders had said. Then all the believers prayed together. They praised God and then asked for His help. After they prayed, the people were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Their boldness was from the power of the Holy Spirit.

### 4. My Journey

When Christine and I were about to move to the U.S. for the first time, many people asked us why we were moving to the U.S. They could not understand our motivation and discouraged us from moving. The people thought we would be happier in Korea. They assured us that our life in the U.S. would be difficult and challenging. Of course, I worried about many things, but we were excited about our move. What made us excited about

moving? I would say that we believed that our move was what God wanted. Now thirty years later, we have seen God's plan unfold in our lives. What we learned is that we do not need to worry or fear even in big life situations because God has been with us and will continue to guide us.

## 5. Conclusion

Who do you think the bravest and boldest woman in the Bible is? Rahab would be a good candidate for me. To protect the Israelite spies, Rahab risked her life. Such an incredible action is from her faith in God. Although Rahab was an ordinary woman living in the land of Canaan, her name is found in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Do you know the relationship between Rahab and King David? Rahab is the great grandmother of King David (Matthew 1:5). God used a Canaanite woman to send Jesus to save us. Her boldness saved her life as well as the lives of her family when the Israelites occupied the land of the Canaanites.

What does the stories of Rahab tell us? We were sent to earth with a mission. God helps us to fulfill our mission. Fulfilling our mission often can seem impossible and challenging. We can worry or be afraid at times. But Paul reminds us of our relationship with God, ***"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all-how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"*** (Romans 8:31) Paul's confidence made him live his life without worry and fear.

## 6. Application

We taught our VBS children to live their lives with boldness. Do we live our lives with boldness? Let me share with you a story of Martin Luther, the great Christian reformer. Martin Luther was a very cheerful man, but he had terrible depression. His friends suggested that he go away for a change of air to see if he could get relief. Luther went away; but when he came home he was as miserable as before. One day his wife came downstairs dressed in black. "Who is dead?" Luther asked her. "God," she replied. Luther rebuked her, saying, "what do you mean, God is dead?" God cannot die." "Well," she replied, "the way you've been acting was like God had died!"

Did you know that Martin Luther wrote the hymn 110 in the Methodist Hymnal, "A mighty Fortress is Our God" based on psalm 46? Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Have we felt that God is dead? God never dies. He is always with us through the Holy Spirit. Have we been fearful or worried about our future? It is true that we do not know what is going to happen to us in the future. However, as long as we trust in the Lord, we can live our lives with boldness. Amen.