

LESSON 3: RAHAB THE PROSTITUTE

Biblical Passages: Joshua 2:1–24; 6:17

A rags to riches story is a story in which a person rises from poverty and obscurity to wealth and fame. One example of a rags to riches story is the story of Howard Schultz. Even if you don't know the name, you have certainly heard of his company and you probably shop there at least once a week. Schultz is the CEO of Starbucks, which has over 21,000 stores in 65 countries. But before becoming the CEO of one of the most recognized and profitable brands in the world, Howard Schultz grew up poor in the projects in Brooklyn. There are countless other examples of rags to riches stories, but the reason these stories capture our attention is because of the ways in which people defied the odds and accomplished incredible feats despite their difficult circumstances.

Read Joshua 2:1-24 and 6:17, 22-25. Vance Havner, 20th century revivalist and longtime friend of Billy Graham, once said, “God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume.” We see the truth of Havner’s words laid out before us in these verses, particularly in the life of Rahab. Think about all of the “good” citizens who probably lived in Jericho. Think of all the people in the city who were decent citizens. They didn’t steal and they helped the elderly cross the street. And now consider this: God chose to use a prostitute. Out of everyone in Jericho, God selected the prostitute Rahab to hide His spies. Why do you suppose that is? In answering this question, there are two things we must consider. First, God enjoys using small things to disrupt big things, foolish things to confound smart things, weak things to overpower strong things. In the words of Vance Havner, God uses broken things. Second, Rahab had faith. We are told that the reputation of God and His people had made its way to Jericho before the Israelites had arrived, and according to Rahab the reputation struck fear in the hearts of the people in the city. However, we are only told of one person in the city whose fear gave way to faith: Rahab. Because of God’s grace—because of His willingness to use broken people to accomplish great things—and because of Rahab’s faith, she has gone down in history as one of the all-time greatest rags to riches stories.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS

1. In the opening verses of today’s passage, we find the spies obeying Joshua’s command to go and spy on the city of Jericho. This was a dangerous task, but the spies trusted Joshua’s godly leadership and so they obeyed. Do you have a godly leader in your life like Joshua, someone you can trust? If not, what steps might you be able to take in order to fill that empty chair in your life?
2. Rahab caught God’s vision for her city. Because of her faith, she understood that the walls of Jericho would fall. What might God’s plan be for your city, and what role might He want you to play in that plan?
3. The spies returned from their dangerous mission with the confidence that God would deliver victory to the Israelites. Why were they so confident? How can you adopt this kind of confidence and apply it to your own day-to-day life?
4. The city of Jericho was destined for destruction. However, because of God’s grace, Rahab and her family were spared. What does this tell us about God’s character?