Rahab was an Old Testament harlot who ended up being listed in both the genealogy of Jesus Christ and in the great chapter of faith in the New Testament. The reason? An authentic faith that changed her radically. In this teaching, Pastor Skip considered her portrait in a four-sided frame that shows her journey from prostitute to princess as she signifies her faith by hanging a scarlet cord outside her home.

I. Her Status—A Working Protector

- Rahab was a prostitute in a pagan culture but was transformed by God’s grace. She went from shame to fame, prostitute to princess, lady of the night to lady of the light. How did she go from harlot to heroine? She believed in God and helped God’s people.
- Joshua wanted to know about Jericho, so he sent two spies. Why two? Because with God, less is more. Why Jericho? It was the first city across the Jordan, and God had business with Rahab. God’s love is like a river flowing down a parched land to water one daisy.
- Although some commentators try to sanitize Rahab in calling her an innkeeper, the Bible calls her a harlot three times. The Greek word for “harlot” is πόρνη—a prostitute. Some are uncomfortable with God choosing a prostitute to be part of Jesus’ ancestry.
- Rahab is a picture of the grace which God has extended to all people (see Ephesians 2:11-13). God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise (see 1 Corinthians 1:27).
- After his conversion, John Newton wrote the hymn “Amazing Grace”. God transformed Newton; he went from slave trader to songwriter, but he always remembered that he had been a “wretch”, and that he was saved by God’s amazing grace. Rahab was dirty and stained, but she was loved by God.

Her Service—A Willing Protector

- Rahab was a willing protector; she hid the two spies in stalks of flax. A flax roof suggests that Rahab’s family may have come from an agricultural trade, growing and selling flax, which was used for making cords, among other things.
- Rahab’s house was on the periphery of the city, inside Jericho’s protective wall; because of where it was situated, people could see who entered and left. She showed that she had faith in God and acted on it by protecting the spies.
- As Hebrews 11:31 states: “By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”

Her Salvation—A Work in Progress

- Rahab was a work in progress. The text shows a three-step process of her progression:
  - First, she heard about God (vv. 10-11). Her customers undoubtedly shared stories about God and His deliverance of the slaves. Rahab understood the difficulty of putting her life on the line for the spies but believed God could also deliver her. Difficulties must always be measured by the capacity of the agent doing the work; nothing is too hard for God.
  - Second, she believed what she heard (v. 8). Notice the words “I know”; she personalized it—she had heard about God, but here she acknowledged Him as Lord. Faith is born in belief (see Romans 10:17). Rahab believed before she saw the wall of Jericho fall.
  - Third, she demonstrated what she believed (vv. 18-19). She acted on her belief by hanging the red cord out her window; it was an outward sign of her inward faith.
- This narrative is tied to the scarlet cord of redemption. Rahab’s scarlet cord meant that death would pass over her house and all who were in it.
- As Herbert Lockyer states, “Rahab’s sins had been scarlet, but the scarlet line, displayed as a token of her safety, typified the red blood of Jesus, whereby the worst of sinners can be saved from sin and hell.”
- By including her family, Rahab was saying it was not enough for her alone to be saved.

Her Significance—A Wonderful Paragon

- Rahab is the great-great-grandmother of King David. As part of David’s genealogy, she is in the family lineage of the Messiah. In God’s eyes, that makes her a princess. Rahab is a paragon, a model, of God’s wonderful grace which He has extended to anyone who would believe in Jesus.
- As Adrian Rogers said, “Nature may form us, and sin deform us, schools inform us, prisons reform us, the world conforms us, but only Christ can transform us.”
- Christians should not just be nicer people but transformed people.
- Rahab—like many biblical characters (Matthew the tax collector, and Paul, the former persecutor of the church)—shows us that none are so bad that God can’t save them, and none are so good that they don’t need to be saved.
- As John Newton said, there will be three surprises in heaven: who’s there, who’s not there, and that you’re there.

**Connect Up: When confronted with the topic of what makes Christianity unique, C. S. Lewis said, “Oh, that’s easy. It’s grace.” Grace is defined as unmerited favor. It is God showing mercy to people who don’t deserve it. How does grace shine through the story of Rahab? Think of how God showed His grace in the following areas:

- The spies came to her house,
- That she hid them, instead of sending them away,
- That she believed, showing faith,
- And that God recognized her faith in the New Testament

**Connect In:** Share stories of God’s grace in your life. Do you have a story like Rahab’s—from shame to fame? Why is grace important for both individuals and the church?

**Connect Out:** How would you explain grace to an unbeliever? How would you share how God’s grace comes in unexpected places and in unexpected people (such as Rahab)?