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TEACHING SUMMARY

Before the crossing, Joshua secretly sent two spies to scout Jericho. They entered the city and lodged at the house of Rahab, a prostitute and innkeeper whose home was built into the outer city wall. In Jericho, the royal family, officials, and the wealthy lived safely behind an inner wall in the lush center. The poor, marginalized, and vulnerable—including prostitutes—lived on the exposed embankment between the walls. Rahab's home doubled as an inn where travelers came for food and lodging, and gossip flowed freely.

Word of the strangers reached the king quickly. Guards pounded on Rahab's door, demanding she surrender the Israelite spies scouting the land.

Rahab acted fast. She had already hidden the men on her roof under bundles of drying flax stalks. Facing the soldiers calmly, she admitted the visitors had come but spun a clever lie: "Yes, they were here, but I didn't know where they were from. When it grew dark and the gate was about to close, they slipped out. I have no idea where they went. Hurry—pursue them quickly, and you might overtake them."

The guards believed her and rushed out. The gate clanged shut behind them as they chased shadows toward the Jordan.

Once safe, Rahab climbed to the roof. In the darkness, she spoke to the hidden spies with a mix of fear and conviction. "I know the Lord has given you this land," she confessed. "We've heard how He dried up the Red Sea for you, and how you destroyed Sihon and Og east of the Jordan. Our hearts melted. No courage remains in any man, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below."

She made her bold request: "Since I showed you kindness by protecting you, swear by the Lord that you will deal kindly with my family. Spare my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all who belong to us when your army returns."

The spies gave their solemn promise: "Our lives for yours, even to death! If you keep our secret, when the Lord gives us the land, we will deal kindly and faithfully with you and your household."

They sealed the pact. Rahab lowered them by rope through a window. The men escaped into the hills, then returned to Joshua and reported everything. “Truly the Lord has given the whole land into our hands,” they said. “All the inhabitants melt away because of us.”

Forty years earlier, twelve spies had gone out publicly—one from each tribe. Their fearful report melted the people’s hearts, leading the nation to refuse entry. That generation died in the wilderness.

Now Joshua sent only two spies—secretly, focused on Jericho. The outcome was reversed. Faith strengthened the Israelites; fear gripped the enemy. For forty years Jericho had trembled at the reports of the Red Sea and the defeat of Sihon and Og. Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute living on the margins, heard those stories and believed.

She risked everything to hide the spies, confessed the Lord’s power, and asked for mercy in return. The scarlet cord she hung in her window became the sign of faith and the promise of deliverance.

Why send spies at all? They gained no military advantage and even alerted the enemy.

The reason was redemption.

