

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Which one of God’s promises to you do you find the hardest to believe?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.”

But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don’t even have a son? Since you’ve given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.”

Then the LORD said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.” Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!”

And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

Then the LORD told him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession.” **Genesis 15:1-7 NLT**

“Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.” **Galatians 3:6-7 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

God does punish sin – but extends grace to sinners.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

God’s promises are usually given through an individual, but they are intended to bless everyone. Can you imagine a world without Jesus and forgiven sinners working to love their neighbors?

If you have given your life to Jesus, YOU are one of the “descendants” this Scripture speaks about. What is God calling YOU to do today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I am grateful that despite my sin, you have extended grace to me and made me a descendant of Abraham through faith in Jesus. You are so kind and patient, not wanting anyone to be separated from you for eternity. Use me to help people be reconciled to you!

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you consider patience to be powerful? Why or why not?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?”

The LORD told him, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.

As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.” **Genesis 15:8-16 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

God promised Abraham that his Hebrew descendants would live in the land of Canaan.

The words “full measure” give good insight into God’s character. It is God’s desire that everyone have ample opportunity to repent and turn to him.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What do we learn about God’s character in this Scripture?

What do we learn about people in this Scripture?

Are you thankful for the circumstances that caused you to turn to God?

Have you always thought of God as patient with sinners?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for not giving us what we deserve when we deserve it. Thank you for showing great patience so that we can realize the brokenness of our sin and turn to you.

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Was there ever a time when you hid for your safety, or possibly even for your own life?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

God fulfilled his promises and led Abraham’s descendants, the Hebrews, out of the land of the oppressive Egyptians, through the wilderness, and to the edge of entering into the Promised Land. Moses had died, and his faithful younger apprentice, Joshua, took the lead.

Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove. He instructed them, “Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho.” So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night.

But someone told the king of Jericho, “Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.” So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: “Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land.”

Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, “Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn’t know where they were from. They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don’t know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them.” (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.) So the king’s men went looking for the spies along the road leading to the shallow crossings of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king’s men had left, the gate of Jericho was shut. **Joshua 2:1-7 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Tomorrow, we see Rahab describe her stunning faith. In today’s Scripture, we see Rahab make a courageous and dangerous decision to reject the explicit orders of her king and protect God’s people in exchange for God’s blessing on the lives of her and her family.

How important is it to do the right thing at the right time?

How important is it to have a clean conscience?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for your incredible protection in so many areas of my life—those I know about and those of which I am completely unaware. Help me always trust in you.

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

How has God redeemed your “family tree”?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them. “I know the LORD has given you this land,” she told them. “We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. For we have heard how the LORD made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt.

“And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed. No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.

“Now swear to me by the LORD that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families.”

“We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety,” the men agreed. “If you don’t betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the LORD gives us the land.” **Joshua 2:8-14 NLT**

Check out this excerpt from Matthew 1, the genealogy of Jesus on his mother’s side:

Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab). Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth). Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah). **Matthew 1:5-6 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why would an entire group of people 1) fear the Lord, and 2) still resist and fight God? Do you struggle with being hard-hearted or hard-headed? What helps you in these times?

Think for a moment about the amazing generations of people—their struggles and faith—that led up to King David. How have YOUR parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents influenced you? How are you influencing the next generation?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for giving me your power, presence, and patience as I struggle to live out my faith in the cutting edge of history!

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What “labels” have been put on you? How do you feel about them?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Then, since Rahab’s house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window. “Escape to the hill country,” she told them. “Hide there for three days from the men searching for you. Then, when they have returned, you can go on your way.”

Before they left, the men told her, “We will be bound by the oath we have taken only if you follow these instructions. When we come into the land, you must leave this scarlet rope hanging from the window through which you let us down. And all your family members—your father, mother, brothers, and all your relatives—must be here inside the house. If they go out into the street and are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on people inside this house, we will accept the responsibility for their death. If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in any way.” “I accept your terms,” she replied. And she sent them on their way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window.

The spies went up into the hill country and stayed there three days. The men who were chasing them searched everywhere along the road, but they finally returned without success. Then the two spies came down from the hill country, crossed the Jordan River, and reported to Joshua all that had happened to them. “The LORD has given us the whole land,” they said, “for all the people in the land are terrified of us.” **Joshua 2:15-24 NLT**

Then the Israelites burned the town and everything in it. Only the things made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron were kept for the treasury of the LORD’s house. So Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute and her relatives who were with her in the house, because she had hidden the spies Joshua sent to Jericho. And she lives among the Israelites to this day. **Joshua 6:24-25 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

The nomadic Israelites, with their history of being slaves—not soldiers—had no cities with walls to protect them from the ravenous and ruthless warring peoples who would have decimated them. God miraculously provided protection and provision for this large and vulnerable family. God also used this group to miraculously exact judgment on catastrophically evil groups of people.

How did God provide for, and protect, Rahab and her family—in addition to the Israelites?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you created us. You gave us life. You patiently showed us mercy when we sinned. You forgave us by paying for our sin through the blood of Jesus. There is no God like you!