

Outside the Box... Inside the Lines | Hard To Draw | *Joshua 2:1-12; 6:22-25*

www.ordinaryfaith.net/sermons/it-s-hard-to-draw-the-lines/

Bible Reading:

☐ Joshua 1:1-21, 6:22-25 ☐ Matthew 6:19-34 ☐ Matthew 5:1-12 ☐ Matthew 7:7-11 ☐ Matthew 18:21-35

The Worst Sinners make the best Saints! Often we assume that the Bible is filled with stories of extraordinary people who accomplished extraordinary things, but it's not. The Bible's history is actually populated with very ordinary people who, by God's grace, enjoyed truly wonderful adventures.

The only thing extraordinary about Rahab was how much trouble she was in. She was a prostitute living in a horrible city destined to be destroyed by Israel. Yet, by the end of the story, she and her family are saved. One decision set her on a new path and changed her life.

Joshua 6:25 (NLT) 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.

Drawing Lines Is Hard But Needs To Happen...

Matthew 6:33-34 (NLT) Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. 34 "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Drawing lines is about living a righteous life, not limiting people or circumstances. When we embrace that idea, we are able to set out on a new path. It's such an exciting idea, but it's also very difficult.

It's hard to admit when something isn't working. There must have been a day in Rahab's life that she realized that Jericho just wasn't working for her. We can identify with that sentiment. How many times do we have to come up empty before we finally realize that the world's promises are hollow? It's time to let it go. Sure, it's a sad day to realize that our hopes and dreams can never be met in the ways that we assumed. So be sad, but let it go. God gave us the Holy Spirit to comfort us in our sadness.

Matthew 5:4 (NLT) God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

John 14:16 (KJV) And I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;

It's hard to overcome fear. Can you imagine the fear that Rahab had to overcome in order to escape Jericho? It raises a question for us, "What do we fear?" Do we fear abandonment, guilt, embarrassment, accusation, anger, or maybe starting over? What are we to do with those voices of fear in our heads? God says that we need to experience His perfect love to overcome fear.

1 John 4:18 (NLT) Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

It's hard to forgive, too. Rahab left a red rope hanging from her window until Israel came and captured Jericho. Consider that rope as a bridge to her future and an escape from her past. We often believe that by forgiving someone we are opening ourselves up for more pain. It's not true.

When we forgive someone we "unhook" from them. We let that relationship of debt go and begin to heal.

Luke 6:37 (NLT) "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven."

Do the HARD Thing!

So how do we make that decision, set a new course, and change our lives? A few simple things can quickly establish a new trajectory.

Learn to Pray. Prayer is probably the most discussed and least practiced of Christian disciplines but it is so very powerful. Remember prayer is so much more than just asking God for blessing, comfort, or our own dreams. Prayer is talking to our Father. It's a conversation that never stops.

James 4:2 (NLT) Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it.

Matthew 7:7 (NLT) "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for."

Learn to Read and think about your Bible. No book equals the Bible. If we are not careful we will use all of our mental energy reading books about the Bible and never actually read it for ourselves. What informs our thoughts and beliefs? Only the Bible is trustworthy. (**2 Timothy 2:15**)

Learn to Grow. God has richly blessed us with resources, gifts, and talents. It is our job to develop them. We often think having talent is enough, but it is the skillful use of the talent that makes it powerful. So, we should learn to *skillfully* use what God has given us. (**1 Peter 4:11**)

Learn to Worship. A Christian who does not worship is not a "thing". The whole purpose of salvation is worship. (**Revelation 7:9**) Worship is comprised of remembrance, reflection, and praise. When we worship we enter into God's presence in a very significant way. Worship changes our perspective and somehow lifts us above our fears and weaknesses. Worship changes us.

Let some Safe people In. We need people. On difficult days, we tell ourselves that we don't need anyone, but we know it's not true. We need people in our lives who will respect our boundaries, be honest about our failings and encourage our steps.

Sure, setting a new course is difficult, but it's possible. Enjoy the journey.

Talk About It...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- *Review **Joshua 2:1-12; 6:22-25**. What encourages you about Rahab's story?*
- *Review **Matthew 6:33-34**. What does this verse have to do with boundaries? How do boundaries better enable us to live a righteous life?*
- *Do you experience fear when you have to tell someone "no"? What do you fear?*
- *Read **1 John 4:18**. What does it mean to experience God's perfect Love? (**Ephesians 3:14-21**)*
- *Which is the most and least enjoyable - prayer, Bible reading/reflection, worship, or using your God-given talents for God?*
- *What is a "Safe" person? How could we find "Safe" people? How can we spend time with them?*
- *Is there anything in today's topic that you would be excited to share with a friend?*

Additional Resources:

*Adapted from "Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No To Take Control of Your Life" Cloud, Townsend
Chapter 15 - Resistance To Boundaries*