**Sermon Based Small Group: Joshua**

**Caught in the Middle: Joshua 2**

**Introduction**

* Have you ever been caught in the middle? Or, do you have a story like the osprey and the otter?

**Another Chiasm: Where’s the beef?**

* Why did Joshua send the spies? What part of your answer is speculation and what do you know? How did God use Joshua’s actions here?
* There is another chiasm here, an **X** or a sandwich. What is the purpose of a chiasm?
	+ “The bun” verses 1a and 22-24
	+ The top slice, condiments, verses 1b-7 and 15-21
	+ The meat, verses 8-14
	+ The meat or the center is always the main point. In the game within the game, this is the heart of the story. Joshua’s spies make a covenant.

**Rahab saw the might and power of God**

* Read verses 8-14 again. What did Rahab see? How would she know this information?
* Rahab received information over time. From this she developed faith. Talk about Rahab’s faith. Where did it come from? How did she act on it?
* Is the battle, or conflict, that Rahab is about to see between people or something else? This really becomes the crux of the story. Sometimes the tensions we face in life are much bigger than us. What can we learn from this prostitute?
* In this story the “God said’s” are ignored. God said, Do not make a covenant. But they did. On the other hand, people acted without our being told that God said to do it. God did not direct Joshua to send spies or the spies to go to Rahab. Ignoring God’s commands is a tough question to answer. But how did God work in circumstances here? Does He still do that?

**Rahab saw the majesty of God**

* Read verse 11 again. How were the people of Jericho reacting to the imminent invasion? Why? How did Rahab see this? Are the reactions different?
* Pastor Mel talked about our cultural narratives. He talked about everyone feeling that their cultural narrative is better, but that “all religions are equal… or... have some truth.” Is this something that comes up when you talk to people? It is a tricky discussion, isn’t it?
* How did Rahab respond to the whole cultural narrative? Pastor Mel said:
	+ She has come to the conclusion that there is a God above all cultural narratives ... who makes himself known ... with whom I will have to reckon.
	+ Do you think Rahab’s understanding was better than the spies?
	+ Read Genesis 15:16. Who are the Amorites?
	+ How does this help you to approach your response when this comes up over lunch?
* How does Rahab seek God’s mercy (verses 12, 13)? Kindness is a translation of a keyword, HESED,. It describes, “The loyal, faithful, rich, full, complete and restoring love of God. It is the key “covenant” word of God’s people.”
* The book of Joshua includes Holy War. When you think of Holy War is there something offensive about it?
	+ **God’s goal in “Holy War” is not to *destroy* everyone; it is to *rescue* everyone possible from the kingdom of darkness.**
	+ Is it a different perspective than you had before? Read 2 Peter 2:3-9. Is God fighting for us or against us?

**Stuck in the Middle**

* The real middle I am stuck in is a battle over the hearts and minds of all people, including myself. The real target in this battle is God, His will, His way, His ‘kingdom.’ All of us are stuck in the middle of that battle.
* Pastor Mel said, “Nobody, no matter how “moral” you think you are is inside of God’s redeeming love apart from hanging onto the ‘rope’ of Jesus’ holy love; and nobody, no matter how immoral you know you are is beyond reach of God’s redeeming love. The rope **is** there, God is reaching the rope that is red with the redeeming blood of Jesus ... to you.”
* Often we think of this bigger conflict simply from our perspective. How do we see the conflict when we see it that way? Rahab presents a different perspective. How was it different? How can that change our perspective? The story of redemption is very personal. But it is also much bigger than that. The challenge of this message is to see a bigger picture and determine how we will honor God in that.
* Consider the picture of Jesus the Divine Warrior. When Jesus fought, He healed. How is that a different picture of war? What was the final picture that we have of Jesus? How did Jesus conquer, by the sword or by the nails?
* What is the battle in a Holy War? Is it us and them? Or, is it between God and the Evil One?
	+ The reason we always feel like we’re in the middle is because we are, in a different, and more profound, more high stakes way than we realize.
	+ Why did Jesus come to earth to be a part of this battle? Read Colossians 1:13 and 2:15. Did He come to destroy or something else?
	+ Think about the flax and the ropes (there are 2 in the story). How do they tie this story to a much bigger story? Is the scarlet rope about mercy?

**Prayer**

* How do I work with the God Who is at work with me? That is the focus of our series in Joshua. Think of lessons that we learned today and pray that God would work these out in your life?