

“Label Makers”
An Unexpected Christmas, Part 3
December 13th & 16th, 2018

A Quick Review

Matthew begins his story of Jesus by looking at His **GENEALOGY** because he is writing to a **JEWISH** audience.

Matthew had to show Jesus' lineage was tied to Abraham which made Him a **JEW**, and that He was in the lineage of King David because the **MESSIAH** would come from David's family line

Matthew ties Jesus to the right people, but he also points out some **SEEDY** characters in Jesus' family history.

Matthew includes them because they are **PART** of the story, but more importantly they are the **POINT** of the story.

Matthew was writing to a very religious group of people who believed you came to God based on the **GOOD** things you had done and the **BAD** things you had not done.

The problem with basing my approach to God on my personal goodness & consistency in living a good life, I'm not going to have a **RELATIONSHIP** with God or be at **PEACE** with God.

Matthew's story (which has been true all along) is we have been invited to approach God on a relational level which is **NOT** based on what we've done but on what **GOD** has done for us Jesus is the Savior, not just of Jews or good people, but of **ALL** people of **ALL** time.

The Story of a Woman Named Rahab

Matthew 6:1-6 (NIV) “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: ² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴ Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,…”

Rahab had a **LABEL** – she was Rahab the harlot or prostitute

Joshua 2:1-7 (NIV) “Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. ‘Go, look over the land,’ he said, ‘especially Jericho.’ So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there. ² The king of Jericho was told, ‘Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.’ ³ So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: ‘Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.’ ⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, ‘Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from.’ ⁵ At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.’ ⁶ (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) ⁷ So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.”

Joshua 2:8-9 (NIV) “⁸ Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof ⁹ and said to them, ‘I know that the LORD has given you this land...’”

Rahab uses the **HIGHEST** name for God – “the existing one,” “I am” – He is **GOD** of all the gods

Joshua 2:9-11 (NIV) ⁹and said to them, 'I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you .¹⁰ We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. ¹¹When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below."

Joshua 2:12-14 (NIV) ¹²'Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign¹³ that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death.' ¹⁴'Our lives for your lives!' the men assured her. 'If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land.'"

Joshua 6:22-23 & 25 (NIV) ²²Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, 'Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her.'...They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel....²⁵ But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day."

God is a God of **MERCY** and of **GRACE** who would even spare a foreigner, an outsider, an enemy, and someone who by their very law should be judged & not allowed to live among them
The story of Rahab illustrates Matthew's entire story and the message of **JESUS**.

Rahab had no platform of **PERSONAL** righteousness to present before God.

God's law condemned her – God's **GRACE** spared her. Her lifestyle brought judgment – her faith brought **FORGIVENESS**.

John 8:10-11 (NIV) "Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' ¹¹'No one, sir,' she said. 'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin.'"

John 1:17 (NIV) "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Rahab had a **LABEL**, but don't we?

The message of Matthew...the message of Jesus...the point of Christmas is:

- God saves sinners while they are **STILL** sinners – not after they have **CLEANED** themselves up
- God's holiness doesn't get in the way of His **MERCY**, and His righteousness doesn't negate His **GRACE**
- God's forgiveness is broad enough to encompass everyone regardless of their **LABEL**

Do you need to **RETHINK** your approach to God?

The message of Christmas is **GOD** has done for you what you could not do for yourself, and you have been invited into a **RELATIONSHIP** with Jesus that is characterized by grace, mercy, and forgiveness

My Next Step Today Is...

- I believe God's grace is more powerful than my label. I am asking God to help me live my life in accordance with who God says I am
- I will spend some time this week rethinking how I approach God

Next Week: "Promise Keeper" – is the message of Christmas too good to be true? Invite a friend!!!