**Community Group Discussion Guide
Matthew 1:5 Rahab**

*Read Matthew 1:5*

*Set the Context…*

**Context:** While introducing the ancestors of Jesus, Matthew intentionally shows that the kingdom of God invades and redeems broken spaces. The genealogy is **legal**, proving that the messiah comes from David’s lineage (2 Samuel 7:12-16). It is **merciful**, as is includes immoral people. It is **worldwide**, as it includes gentiles. It is also **expansive**, as it includes women. In first century, Jewish culture genealogies typically traced ancestry through men. For Matthew to add women would have been unusual and would have drawn special attention from readers. Their inclusion highlights the expansive nature of the kingdom of God and the significant place that women have in the redemptive narrative of Christ (Galatians 3:28). Mentioned in Christ’s lineage are Tamar (Gen. 38:13-30), Ruth (Ruth 1:3), Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11), Mary (the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ), and Rahab (Josh. 2:1). Rahab is most known for receiving messengers from Israel in Jericho and protecting them from being discovered by her own countrymen. Like most of the people included in this list of names, Rahab comes from a past of brokenness, but her story is one of redemption, peace, and restoration through the promised messiah.

**Commentary**: Rahab was a gentile from the Canaanite people. She was also a prostitute by profession. “***And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there***.” (Joshua 2:1) Because the Canaanites were the marked enemies of God’s people and due to her promiscuous lifestyle, Rahab is about as far from righteousness as one could be. Prostitution was condemned among the people of Israel (Deut. 23:17-18). Sexual immorality such as fornication, homosexuality, pornography, and adultery are said to receive the judgment of God, and those who practice such things will be kept from entering the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). The Proverbs repeatedly warn to avoid the adulteress woman (Proverbs 6:24-26).

 In Joshua chapter 2, Joshua sent spies into Jericho to scope out the land for Israel, and those spies find lodging at the house of Rahab. The king of Jericho heard that these spies had come, so he sent messengers to Rahab, demanding that she reveal where they are and turn them over. But Rahab chooses to lie to the messengers, protecting the Israelite spies (Joshua 2:4-7). The interesting thing is the reason Rahab states for extending his kind gesture. “***Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof and said to the men, “I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath***” (Joshua 2:8-11). Rahab professes that a fear of and belief in the one true God of Israel is what compelled her to receive the spies. It was an appeal to mercy in hopes that, despite her past and her heritage, she would be spared by God and the invasion of the Israelites. “***Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father’s house, and give me a sure sign that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death***.” (Joshua 2:12-13)

 In response to her great faith, God shows Rahab mercy by sparing her and her family from destruction when the Jews conquer Jericho (Joshua 6:22-25). Though she had an immoral past, it took only faith in the name of the God of Israel for her restoration and even contribution to the kingdom of God. Rahab would marry into the Jewish nation, becoming the wife of Salmon. They would give birth to Boaz who was the great-grandfather of David, making her also part of the lineage of the Messiah, “***and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king***...,” (Matt. 1:5-6 ). Her name is also mentioned in heroic light as an example for us of saving faith in the gospel (Hebrews 11:31, James 2:25-26). Rahab’s story moves from one of ill repute to one of honor, because her faith in the God of mercy gave way to the Messiah who was crucified for her ill repute. Jesus is the fulfillment of the smaller salvation Rahab experienced at the fall of Jericho. His blood sanctifies her sexually broken past and offers a greater salvation to the entire world.

*Share main truths of the passage along with verses that teach them* and discuss how to apply to our daily lives …

**Key Points**:

* Rahab in the Genealogy (Matt. 1:5-6)
* Rahab’s sexual sin (*broken*) (Joshua 2:1, Deut. 23:17-18)
* Rahab’s great faith and rescue (*Redeemed*) (Joshua 2:4-7, 8-21; 6:25; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25-26)

**Discussion/ Application Questions:**

Matthew 1:5-6

1. What does the genealogy of Jesus show about the role of women in advancing the kingdom of God and making disciples?
2. Who are some women who have shaped your faith either directly or indirectly?
3. As a woman, how are you using your gifts to invest in others? What are ways you could better do this?
4. As a man, how can you encourage/empower women around you to use their gifts to edify the body of Christ?

Joshua 2:1, Deut. 23:17-18 (*Broken*)

1. What are some factors that contribute to the sexual brokenness of our culture?
2. Counselors trace most sexual sin to one of three idols – control, significance, or comfort. Which of these are triggers for sin in your life? Can you think of some biblical truths that speak directly to these?
3. What are some thing you do or could do to guard against sexual sin and temptation?
4. If you were counseling someone through sexual brokenness, how does the gospel confront adultery, pornography, fornication, and homosexuality while offering forgiveness and hope of restoration?
5. How does the truth of God’s word set us free from such brokenness? How is the way of Christ better than our own passions? (John 10:10)

Joshua 2:4-7, 8-21; 6:25; Heb. 11:31, James 2:25-26 (*Redeemed*)

1. Describe biblical faith. How can James say that Rahab was justified by welcoming the spies? (James 2:25-26)
2. How does Rahab being considered a hero of faith and significant part of the redemption story bring you hope in light of a broken past?
3. How are we growing in an awareness and fear of the God of Israel? How are we, like Rahab, deepening our faith in Christ?
4. How does God’s mercy to Rahab (and to you) compel your mercy towards people who have hurt you in the area of sexual sin?
5. How can this story equip and compel us to engage our city with the gospel? (check out [www.scarlethope.org](http://www.scarlethope.org) )

*Share a key take away or challenge for the week…*

*Pray together in light of Matthew 1:5*

**Prayer Guide:**

Pray for our church that the hope and light of Jesus would heal in areas where sexual sin has hurt people. Pray for marriages to be strengthened and restored. Pray that lust and pornography would have no lasting victory in our people.

Pray for our city that those in the adult entertainment industry and those trapped in sexual sin would experience the freedom of Christ. Pray for the Scarlet Hope ministry to have the favor of the Lord as they lovingly engage these hard spaces.

Pray for our world that God would bring justice and rescue to the millions affected by sex trafficking through all cultures. Pray that God would use the faith of those redeemed from a broken past to rescue others through mission.