



READ: Selections from Joshua 2:1-21 (NIV)

Joshua, the son of Nun, sent two spies from Shittim. He sent them in secret. He said to them, "Go and look over the land. Most of all, check out Jericho." So they went to Jericho. They stayed at the house of a prostitute. Her name was Rahab... Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and 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. 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. When 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.

"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 sign 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." "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."

Now the men had said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house... But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear." "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say."

So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

ENTER THE STORY:

Rahab lived in the city of Jericho, a very strong city with two big walls surrounding it, both very thick and very high, but she had a secret. She had heard about ALL of the things God had done to Egypt when he rescued the Israelites from slavery, and she wanted to leave Jericho and join God's family. When Joshua sent the two spies into her city, she helped them hide from the king, and she made a deal with them. They agreed to save her and her family on one condition; she had to hang a scarlet "cord" outside her window. It was the *ONLY HOPE* she had to be saved!

The word for hope in Hebrew is "tiqvah" (tick-vah), and it means "a cord or attachment." This is where we get "Scarlet Cord." It is connected to a word that means "to wait or look for," but here's the cool part...it can also mean "to tie or bind two things together." *Do you see it?*

The "cord" that Rahab hung out of her window is really her "hope!"

When she put that scarlet cord out of her window, Rahab was binding herself to the Israelites and placing her *HOPE* in Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, to save her and her family! And God did save her and her family!

After Israel defeated Jericho, Rahab joined them and married a prince named Salmon. Because of her *FAITH*, Rahab went from being a nobody to being a princess in the royal family! God blessed Rahab and Salmon with a baby boy named Boaz. Boaz would grow up and have a son named Obed, who would have a son named Jesse, who would grow have a son named David - who would grow up to be the *GREATEST* king of Israel.

Just like that, we are back to Jesse's tree. Do you remember what God promised would come out of the stump of Jesses's tree? A Shoot that would be our *FOREVER KING*! A very special someone who would bless the whole world.

- *Do you know who this special someone is? It's Jesus!*
- This Christmas, we are reminded that our hope is in a tiny little baby. That baby is *OUR* Scarlet Cord. He is God in the
- flesh, and all who bind themselves to him will not be disappointed. Our expectation is that those of us who have
- waited a long time for him will one day be rewarded!
- This hope is an anchor to our soul that we have a God who loves us, who will never leave us or forsake us, who will watch
- over us and give us strength to endure, and who, one day, will bring us safely home into His presence.
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- **PRAY:** *Jesus, you are our Scarlet Cord and our only hope. We choose to bind ourselves to you and while we anticipate*
- *and celebrate the arrival of the very first time you came, we wait with great expectation that you will return again to*
- *rescue us and bring us home to be with you forever. Amen.*