

I Declare War on Negativity
Message 2 of 6 in the series: "I Declare War"

A. We live in a sinful, fallen world which makes it easy to become cynical and negative.

"I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards... I collected great sums of silver and gold... I had everything a man could desire! Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure... But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere... people choose their own mad course, for they have no hope. There is nothing ahead but death anyway."

Ecclesiastes 2:4-11, 9:3 (NLT)

"...No one is righteous— not even one... No one does good, not a single one. Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with lies... Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. They rush to commit murder. Destruction and misery always follow them. They don't know where to find peace." Romans 3:10-17 (NLT)

B. Rahab gave us a great example of how to declare war on negativity and not lose hope.

"Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove. He instructed them, 'Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho.' So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night. But someone told the king of Jericho, 'Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.' So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: 'Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land.' Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, 'Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from. They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them.' (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.)" Joshua 2:1-6 (NLT)

1. Rahab was living in a wicked culture consumed by fear, but she put her hope in God even though she only knew Him by His reputation.

"Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them. 'I know the Lord has given you this land,' she told them. 'We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. For we have heard how the Lord made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed. No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the Lord your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.'" Joshua 2:8-11 (NLT)

Life Application: We can always find peace if we put our hope in God instead of our circumstances.

"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock." Isaiah 26:3-4 (NLT)

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." John 14:27 (NLT)

Life Application: We must choose whether we will live in worry and fear or hope and joy.

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:12 (NIV)

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)

2. Rahab put her hope in the promises of the spies.

"Now swear to me by the Lord that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families.' 'We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety,' the men agreed. 'If you don't betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the Lord gives us the land.' Then, since Rahab's house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window... Before they left, the men told her, 'We will be bound by the oath we have taken only if you follow these instructions. When we come into the land, you must leave this scarlet rope

hanging from the window through which you let us down. And all your family members—your father, mother, brothers, and all your relatives—must be here inside the house. If they go out into the street and are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on people inside this house, we will accept the responsibility for their death. If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in any way.’ ‘I accept your terms,’ she replied. And she sent them on their way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window.” Joshua 2:12-21 (NLT)

Note: The scarlet rope was Rahab’s only guarantee that she and her family would be saved. “Rope” = “tiqvah” (ancient Hebrew) = hope, expectation, to bind or to wait for.

Life Application: We can overcome fear and negativity by putting our hope in the promises of God.

“And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled.” Romans 15:4b (NLT)

3. Rahab’s hope in God not only kept her from negativity, but it also inspired her to rescue her entire family from God’s impending judgment.

“Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites charged straight into the town and captured it. They completely destroyed everything in it... The men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, and all the other relatives who were with her. They moved her whole family to a safe place near the camp of Israel.” Joshua 6:20b-21a, 23 (NLT)

Life Application: Our hope in Christ should not only keep us from negativity, but it should also motivate us to do all we can to rescue our friends and family from the coming judgment of God.

“But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along.”

2 Peter 3:10-12a (NLT)

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12 promises from God’s Word that can give us hope and peace in ANY circumstance:

1. God will provide for all of my needs. (Proverbs 3:9-10, Matthew 6:25-33, Philippians 4:19)
2. God is always with me. (Romans 8:35-38, Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5)
3. God will guide me along the best pathway for my life. (Psalm 32:8-9, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 30:21)
4. God has a plan and purpose for my life. (Psalm 139:1-6, Jeremiah 29:11, Ephesians 2:10)
5. God promises eternal life to all who trust in Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 4:13, Isaiah 26:19, John 3:16 & 5:24)
6. God enables me to forgive others. (Matthew 6:13-15, Roman 12:17-21, Colossians 3:13)
7. God is bigger than all my fears. (Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 27:1, Zephaniah 3:17)
8. God can use even the failures in my life for good. (Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
9. Jesus died on the cross to save me from the penalty of sin. (Romans 3:23, 5:8, & 6:23; 1 Peter 3:18)
10. The Holy Spirit is working in me to set me free from the controlling power of sin. (Romans 7:19-25, Philippians 2:13, 2 Corinthians 5:17)
11. In heaven, I will be set free from the very presence of sin. (Revelation 21:3-4, John 14:3)
12. I am more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus! (Romans 8:37-39)