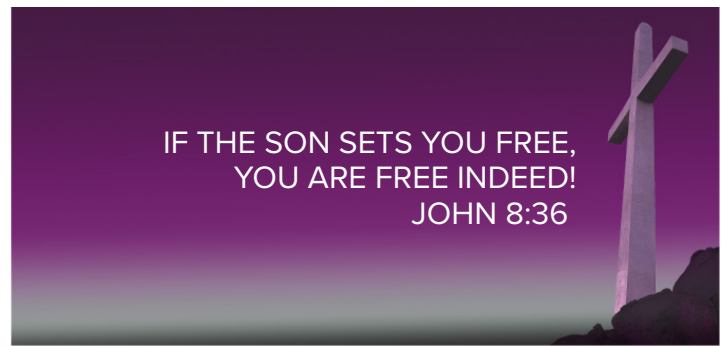


Jesus 101

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

"Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab." —Matthew 1:5

In a Honolulu coffee shop, at 3:30 A.M., Tony Campolo overheard a young lady, who was obviously a prostitute, telling a friend that the next day was her birthday, and that she'd never had a birthday party. Tony organized one. The following morning, everyone was waiting for Agnes when she came in at 3:30 A.M. She was overwhelmed! Tony prayed for her, and the man behind the counter asked him what church he belonged to. "I belong to a church that throws birthday parties for prostitutes at 3:30 A.M.," Tony replied. The man answered: "No, you don't! If a church like that existed, I'd join it!"*

Why in the world would Matthew add the name of a prostitute to the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:5)? Does God's grace reach out so flamboyantly into the darkness? The story of Rahab, the harlot, is told in the book of Joshua, chapters 2 and 6. Joshua had sent two spies to Jericho who, being afraid to stay outside, found Rahab and hid in the stalks of flax on the roof of her house. She lied to the king of Jericho about their whereabouts and gave the spies advice on how to escape. And she, of all people, uttered one of the most profound confessions about the God of Israel. It recounted God's acts in the past, and provided a prophecy for the future and a pronouncement about the true God: "I know that the LORD has given you the land. . . . For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt. . . . for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath" (Joshua 2:9-11). The spies gave her a guarantee that if she tied a scarlet cord to the window, whoever was in the house with her would be spared (verse 18). And, just like those who were delivered by the blood of the Passover lamb applied to the doorposts, she was spared. She joined Israel and became one of the ancestors of Jesus; she is mentioned in Matthew 1:5, and is mentioned later as a faith hero: "By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish" (Hebrews 11:31). We serve a God who emancipates everyone willing, whether a prostitute or a tax collector, a criminal or an addict and gives them a divine purpose for His glory!

* *Tony Campolo, Let Me Tell You a Story (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2000), 216.*

Talbot, Elizabeth *Jesus Wins!*, p. 358.