



## Jericho: A people of Grace and Faith

**Date:** Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October

**Speaker:** Becky Stamps & Jon Solway

**Key Verses:** Joshua 9:3-21, Deuteronomy 29:10-15

### Talk Summary:

- This story is a great example of where the people of God try to do the right thing, using their experience and evidence, but don't ask God about it. We spoke about the dangers of doing this and how God wants to relate to us. As we learn to hear His voice, by spending time with him, in his word and with his people, we can more easily know when he's guiding us and avoid mistakes.
- We talked about the 'covenant' that Joshua makes with the Gibeonites. This kind of promise is like a marriage or adoption, an unbreakable promise that binds two people or groups in relationship forever. Both marriage and adoption are pictures of how God relates to us - we, like the Israelites are the covenant people of God if we choose to put our faith in him. This is what the Gibeonites do - they see the deliverance of God's people, how he helps set them free and give them victory and they decide they want to be part of his people as well. They want to be part of the covenant. Although they don't deserve it (having got the Israelites to agree through deception and 'cunning'), Joshua chooses to honour the agreement and they become part of the people of God.
- This is a moment where God accepts people who don't deserve it into his covenant people because of their faith. This is what we know in the New Testament as 'grace' - the active love of God for a people who don't deserve it. From reading Deuteronomy 29, we know that the 'cutters of wood and drawers of water' were always supposed to be part of God's people - along with all the men, women, children, refugees, 'foreigners' and others 'who are with us and who are not with us' (Deut. 29:15). Grace is not God's afterthought to make up for his people's mistaken inclusion of others - grace was always God's plan to invite everyone into his people if they put their faith in Jesus. we are to be a people of faith, who seek God's voice and who invite everyone we know who is outside the people of God into the heart of it - extending the same grace to the world around us that has been extended to us through the undeserved love of God in Jesus Christ.

## **Worship**

*Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.*

*(Small group worship resources can be found at [bvc.so/sgworship](http://bvc.so/sgworship))*

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

*If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:*

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

## **Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)**

### **Hearing God's voice**

- How easy do we find it to hear God's voice?
- Tell us about a time when you or someone you know was guided by God. What did that look like? How did they know it was God?
- Does anyone need guidance right now? Either generally or for a specific situation. Pray for those people, and seek God as a group together for them

### **Being a people of grace** (this might also work as your Witness section this week)

- What are some of the barriers in the way of our friends becoming part of the people of God/choosing faith in Jesus?
- How can the church be both genuinely welcoming and genuinely call people to the life of radical discipleship Jesus has for them?
- Go round the group and ask everyone to name one or two people who they would like to pray for. You can note these down so that you can all be praying for each others' friends, during and after the group
- Is there a way you could facilitate these friends connecting more with God and his people? Perhaps a fun event or outing where people's non-Christian friends can meet other Christians and see more of what the 'people of God' are like?

### **Witness - How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?**

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?