



Joshua 2:1-24
The Faith of Rahab

NKJ Joshua 2:1 Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.

2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

3 So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

4 Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.

5 "And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them."

6 (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.)

7 Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

8 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof,

9 and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.

10 "For 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 the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

11 "And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

12 "Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token,

13 "and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

14 So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall.

16 And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way."

17 So the men said to her: "We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear,

18 "unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home.

19 "So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him.

20 "And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear."

21 Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

22 They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought them all along the way, but did not find them.

23 So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them.

24 And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

In Luke chapter 7, Jesus goes to the house of Simon, a Pharisee, for dinner, and during that dinner a woman comes in with an expensive alabaster flask of fragrant oil, she anoints his feet with her tears and the oil and dries them with her hair. It is a touching scene of devotion to the Lord of glory, and should have melted the hearts of any who saw it. But unfortunately, all that Simon and the other Pharisees present at that dinner are thinking is how disgusting it is that Jesus is allowing this woman, who was a notorious sinner, to even touch him. Instead of glorifying God that this woman, who was probably a prostitute, had come to faith, they are appalled.

This shouldn't surprise us, within the visible church there has often grown up an opinion, that notorious sinners, people like prostitutes, have no place in the church. The church it seems is for holy people. This is rather like saying that hospitals are for the well, and when the sick show up there, the doctors should shoo them away so that they didn't cause that environment to become non-sterile.

Well that might have been the opinion of Simon and his friends, but I certainly hope that that is not your opinion brothers and sisters, because everything in the bible militates against that. Jesus himself told the Pharisees that "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Luke 5:32) But one of the most amazing evidences for the fact that the church is intended to be made up of redeemed sinners is to be found in the human blood-line of the Redeemer of the Church himself.

The great Puritan preacher and co-pastor with Thomas Watson, Stephen Charnock said this *"The ancestry whereof Christ came, seems to imply this; God might have kept the stock, whence Christ descended according to the flesh, pure and free from being tainted with any notorious crimes; but we find sins of a crimson dye even among them. There are no women reckoned up in Christ's geneology, but such as in scripture are noted for looseness, Mat. 1:3. Tamar who played the harlot with Judah her father-in-law, Gen. 28. Rahab, Mat. 1:5, the harlot Or Jericho. Ruth, ver. 5, a Gentile and Moabitess the root of whose generation was Lot's son, by incest with his own daughter. Bathsheba, ver. 6, David's adulteress. He chose these repenting sinners, out of whose loins Christ was to come, that the greatest sinners might not be afraid to come to him."*

And sure enough, in verse 5 of chapter 1 of Matthew we read in the middle of the genealogy of Jesus:

Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,

This story then, here in Joshua 2 reminds us that the church was never meant at any point in the history of redemption to be only a place for the children of the Covenant, nice people raised in nice Christian homes, Christ's church has always been intended to be a place where great sinners, such as a Rahab or an Andy Webb might find redemption and be translated from their lost condition in the world to salvation amongst God's redeemed.

It is almost as though this particular redemption story was inserted in the Bible In order to make sure that we understand that God's sovereign grace is sufficient to add even great sinners to his church by giving us an example of the salvation of the most unlikely person in the most unlikely place.

Here we had the story of spies sent out by Joshua to find out what the military and social situation was on the other side of the Jordan, because you have to remember at this point Joshua doesn't know that God is going to bring the walls of Jericho straight down, he is probably expecting a long siege followed by the standard breaching of the wall and so on. So the spies sneak into Jericho the first difficult obstacle to their conquest of Canaan and then go to a place that would have been logical stopping place for travelers from a foreign land, the house of a prostitute. Now what a coincidence it was that they end up in the home of the only person in the entire city who would be favorably disposed towards them –

it reminds me of the story of an British airman shot down over Vichy France during the Second World War, he had walked and hidden for as long as he could and then finally feeling overwhelmed by exhaustion he had knocked on the door of house in one of the towns looking for help. The owners took him in and after feeding him asked how he had known to come there, who had told him they were part of the resistance. They were appalled to find out that he had picked the house by random, because as they told him, this was the only house in the entire street that wouldn't have immediately turned him in to the Nazis for the reward.

God had been there ahead of the spies and true to his promises to be with them in the conquest had prepared a hiding place for them by working in the heart of a prostitute named Rahab.

No one else in that city would have hidden the spies from the king, but you see God had already separated Rahab from the world.

Now often in looking at this story people get wrapped around the axle over Rahab's lie and make that the primary area of theological inquiry, but the fact that the text doesn't even mention it but puts the weight on Rahab's confession of faith tells us that this was not the most important part of the story. {used to be sure, now I am less sure} Now is it ever right to lie? No, one might rightly deceive an enemy in time of war, but to out and out lie and bear false witness, no. But as we have seen God can and does use even the evil that men do in order to effect his plans.

Heb. 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

Application:

Come out of Jericho – you have God's assurance that this is the only safe thing to do.

Was Rahab a traitor? NO! To deny the world is a great virtue

Rahab and her house are rescued from the *curse* <-> relationship with the curse we are under

Relationship between the destruction of Jericho and the world

It doesn't matter what your background was, Rahab was a Prostitute! And yet she becomes the ancestor of the most important family in Covenant history!

Some point at which every family here was not part of the covenant community

“They accepted this converted prostitute into the full fellowship of the covenant community and were even willing to die for her and her family”

Blood of the lamb on the door posts to demarcate between pagans and the Israelites, scarlet cord to demarcate between her and the canaanites – PASSOVER

Again and again,

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

The Day of Judgment is not afar off, in fact it's only over Jordan

We read of publicans and harlots entering into the kingdom of the Messiah, and being welcomed to all the privileged of that kingdom

Truly the great sinners are usually more aware of their sin. New York vs. Salt-Lake City.

This is what lively faith looks like! Rahab. Therefore you come out of Jericho

To you who are members of the church, remember that the church is supposed to be the place that adds the Rahabs, therefore be looking for the great sinners to join us...