

Rahab - A Trophy of God's Grace - Joshua 2, part 1

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, July 10th 2022

I. Introduction - This will be a supplement to my biographical sermon on Rahab

I think I will be taking two weeks on this chapter. Today I would like to focus on Rahab as an amazing trophy of God's grace. Here's the problem: I already preached through every verse of this passage when I covered her biography in the Women of Faith series.¹ I don't want to duplicate what I said there. So I decided that I am going to focus on some overarching ways in which Rahab is set forth as a role model in this chapter.

Every time the Scripture mentions Rahab the harlot, it elevates this woman as a *typical* example of God's grace. We tend to think of her as *atypical* because our pride does not want us being lumped in with dirty sinners like her. Many people tend to think that she got in by the skin of her teeth. But Scripture makes no more ado about her being saved than it does any other saved person. It is a miracle of God's grace that any of us can be called Christians. Isn't that what Jesus said? "With man this is impossible," with the word "this" referring to anyone's salvation. Earlier Jesus had said that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to be saved. And the shocked disciples said, "Who then can be saved?" Their thought was that if rich men can't be saved, then it is impossible for anyone to be saved. And Jesus agreed. He said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

The Reformed Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon once rebuked church members who thought they were too good to associate with the prostitutes who were getting saved and coming into the church. They looked down their noses at some of the rabble who were getting saved. And he said,

...if he [God] hath made thee anything, art thou not thereby taught that it is grace, free sovereign grace, which hath made thee to differ? Should any here, supposing themselves to be the children of God, imagine that there is some reason in them why they should have been chosen, let them know that as yet they are in the dark concerning the first principles of grace, and have not yet learned the gospel. If ever they had known the gospel, they would, on the other hand, confess that they were less than the least—the offscouring of all things—unworthy, ill-deserving, undeserving, and hell deserving, and ascribe it all to distinguishing grace, which has made them to differ; and to discriminating love which has chosen them out from the rest of the world. Great Christian, thou wouldst have been a great sinner if God had not made thee to differ. Oh! thou who art valiant for truth, thou wouldst have been as valiant for the devil if grace had not laid hold upon thee. A seat in heaven shall one day be thine; but a chain in hell would have been thine if

¹ <https://kaysercommentary.com/Sermons/Women%20of%20Faith/01%20Rahab.md>

grace had not changed thee. Thou canst now sing his love; but a licentious song might have been on thy lips, if grace had not washed thee in the blood of Jesus. Thou art now sanctified; thou art quickened, thou art justified; but what wouldst thou have been tonight if it had not been for the interposition of the divine hand? There is not a crime thou mightest not have committed; there is not a folly into which thou mightest not have run. Even murder itself thou mightest have committed if grace had not kept thee. Thou shalt be like the angels; but thou wouldst have been like the devil if thou hadst not been changed by grace. Therefore, never be proud; all thy garments thou hast from above; rags were thine only heritage. Be not proud, though thou hast a large estate, a wide domain of grace; thou hadst not once a single thing to call thine own, except thy sin and misery.²

And I say, "Amen!" and "Amen!" In fact, I could end the sermon there and be somewhat satisfied - except for the fact that our capacity for self-deception over pretended goodness is so great that it might take more preaching for all of us to be convinced of what Spurgeon said. The Scripture wants us to know that God delights in rejecting the wise, the put-together, and the powerful of this world and choosing instead the weak, the despised and the sin-stained of this world. And if in our own ministry we gravitate towards ministering to the wise, the powerful and the put together of this world, we are kind of doing the very opposite of God. Christ said, "**Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.**" (Matt. 21:31) And the "you" referring to the Pharisees who didn't recognize the sins that crowded their hearts and minds.

Yet even knowing that the Scripture says this, some Christians still have preferences of whom they would rather choose for church membership. Whose house would you have chosen the spies to go to if *you* were God? I am amazed at the number of books that either apologize for Rahab or else try to cover over the obvious depravity out of which she was saved. One commentator said that Rahab maybe used to be a harlot, but couldn't have been a harlot in this story. Another claimed that the Hebrew can mean innkeeper, and that Rahab was an innkeeper, not a harlot. But even if that was the case (which it is not; it is absolutely false; but even if that was the case in the Hebrew), the *New Testament* makes such an interpretation absolutely impossible because it twice describes Rahab with the Greek word *porne* from which we get pornography. It is always translated harlot or prostitute.

But why the attempts to soften the obvious meaning of the word "harlot" in verse 1 anyway? I believe it is because people do not see *themselves* in Rahab. They do not see themselves as being as horrible and filthy as the Scripture insists that we are apart from grace. When they read David's belief that he has more sins than the hairs of his head, they think, "Surely that's got to be hyperbole." How many people shake their head at Paul when he says that he feels like the worst of sinners? They have a hard time believing that Paul

² C. H. Spurgeon, "The Fruitless Vine," in *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 3 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1857), 146.

could really mean that. But he did. In contrast, many of us are still trying to rescue some sense of self-worth and respect *compared to others*. If they once saw the true depth of the sin-stains that still linger in their heart, this story would be an incredible comfort to them. I see this as a story of God's trophy of grace. She is a trophy, not a second class citizen. And each one of you are trophies of God's grace. God chose several such people to be in the line that led to Christ. Rahab is the grandmother of David, and the ancestor of Christ.

In your outlines I called this an introduction, but it is actually one of the main points. But it also leads to the next three points in your sermon outline. The next one is that God was at work in the heart of hell.

II. God was at work in the heart of hell

Verse 1 says, **“Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, ‘Go, view the land, especially Jericho.’”** Perhaps next week we can analyze why Jericho was such a strategic site to capture. And there is a lot of war strategy (both military and spiritual). But there is also an irony in this verse that is missed if you have not read the history of Numbers. Notice where Joshua sends the spies from. It is from Acacia Grove. This is not accidental, and I want you to turn to Numbers 25 to find out why. The spies in Joshua 2 are starting the process of God's judgment on Canaan. But in Numbers 25 you will find that 40 years before, the Israelites were involved in exactly the same idolatry and prostitution that Canaan is now being judged for. Numbers 25:1-3. **“Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel”**. The sins of Canaan were the very thing that Israel was so prone to, yet Israel was saved, and Canaan was judged.

Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. We are not saved because of how good we are. Joshua later makes the point that the Israelites were all idolators in Egypt. They were saved out of idolatry and out of immorality too. They were saved despite their sin, not because of any goodness that they might have had. What made Israel saved and Canaan destroyed? - and we are talking here of corporate salvation. The only thing that made the difference was sovereign grace. That's it. There was nothing in them to warrant salvation. It was God's sovereign good pleasure alone. God chose one and rejected the other. On an individual basis, what made Rahab saved and the rest of Jericho judged? Sovereign grace. Romans 9 says that God can choose whom He wants, and whom He wants He hardens. And people bristle at that and say, “That's not fair!” Oh, yes it is perfectly fair for God to hate Esau and to reject everyone. What is astounding is that God chose to place His sovereign love on conniving, cheating, lying Jacob - and upon you and me. You see, God is not obligated to save anyone. That's the first lesson of Joshua 2 and of Romans 9.

But there is a further irony in Joshua 1:1. In the very place that Satan made Israel fall, God's grace is going to give a renewed victory. This is so cool. In the very sin of harlotry that almost destroyed Israel, God is going to demonstrate His grace by saving a harlot. There is no debauchery too low for God to be able to save a person from it, and there is no hell hole

too low for God to pull someone out. I have a relative who has come out recently as lesbian and another who is trans. It's discouraging, but we serve a God who can save to the uttermost. *That* is what I lay hold of.

Why do scholars consider Jericho to have been a hell hole in the first place? And why did God say that everything had to be destroyed? First, it was one of the chief cities of Canaan. If you have done any reading on the Canaanite culture you will understand that it was far more debased than our present culture has become. That's hard to imagine (as perverse as America has become), but it was far worse. The literature of the time shows slasher porn, bestiality, sadism, cruelty, murder - and especially child sacrifice. Archeological digs have revealed jars containing remains of older children and new born babies sacrificed to Baal. So, in a sense, *that* is beginning to be what America looks like. And pornography could be obtained anywhere. So, in a sense, *that* is the same. The temples of Baal and Ashtoreth his consort were filled with vile images. The literature translated goes into graphic detail of the extravagant orgies, delight in filth, necrophilia, and other sexual practices of the Canaanites. But here is where they were far worse - all Canaanites were required by their religion to participate in those temple prostitution rituals. That was a culture that was ripe for judgment.

Secondly, Rahab was a woman in a culture that debased women as sexual objects and abused women. She no doubt had her share of abuse from others. And my biography on Rahab gets into that and shows how rescuing women from prostitution is a very difficult, but very gratifying and God-glorifying ministry. It is a ministry that is near and dear to the heart of God.

Third, she and her house were probably poor. It may be part of the reason her family pimped her out. But most commentators simply point to the fact that she had flax on her roof to show the fact that she had to supplement her income.

But the fact that she was a prostitute in a culture that had no inhibitions or restraints of law made Rahab even more subject to abuse than other women.

And yet God saved her. He did not save her because she was more receptive to the Gospel than others. He did not save her because she deserved a break. There were many other abused women in that culture, and they were all destroyed. It was God's sovereign good pleasure alone that led the two spies to *her* house rather than to any other house. It was sovereign grace pure and simple.

This ought to give comfort to those of you who have come from very rough backgrounds. God saves us despite ourselves. He saves us out of our own personal hell holes. He saves us because of how good *He* is, not because of how good we are.

But this ought to also instruct us on where God's heart lies. Christ was not born into Herod's palace with a silver spoon in His mouth. He chose to be born into poverty, to identify with Nazareth, the hell hole of Israel because He wanted to give hope to people from such backgrounds. He chose to minister to tax collectors and prostitutes because such trophies of His grace diminish the pride of man and elevate the wonders of God's grace.

We too ought to be open to reaching anyone to Christ. Was there risk of disease for these men to come to this house? Yes. Knowing the disease-ridden nature of that culture there was huge risk of disease. It was one of the reasons why Jericho and everything in it (including animals) were burned. But they took that risk. Was there risk of the two spies being misinterpreted and slandered? Yes, there was. There were two of them to help avoid misinterpretation, but to this day some liberals have taken the last two words of verse 1 as referring to sexual intercourse.³ For example, one says, "Though the narrative does not say they slept "with her," the verb nevertheless may be understood as the first of several potential sexual innuendoes in this story."⁴ Hawk is more dogmatic. He says that both spies engaged "in forbidden activity with the very people who are to be destroyed."⁵ But that is absolutely false. Literally it says, "**So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lay down there.**" But if you look up at at verse 8 you will find out *where* they lay down. It wasn't in *her* bed. It was up on the roof. "**Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof... etc.**" Before they lay down she witnesses to them of her saving faith, and they witness to her of God's covenant. They took precautions, but misinterpretation is always possible.

So here's my next question: What kinds of risks are you willing to take for the sake of the Gospel? When you find trophies of God's grace like Rahab, it will all be worthwhile. Michael, Bill, and others are making opportunities for any of us to be spies going into Jericho and sharing the Gospel. Are we willing to go into lesser hell-holes to rescue people by God's grace?

III. God turned Rahab into a model of faith

The next two points will look at the kind of work that God did in her life. The next point is that God turned Rahab into a model of faith. And I find her faith to be enormously challenging to my own faith. Let me read you the description of her in Hebrews chapter 11. It says, "**By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.**" Hebrews puts the blame for judgment on the Canaanites. While it is true that they were never *offered* escape, it also says that *they did not*

³ Hubbard summarizes (and then disagrees with) this opinion. He says, "A reader might wonder with some amusement whether the two Israelite GIs may have combined "pleasure" with "business" by enjoying Rahab's sexual services.¹⁹ Hawk finds it strange that Israel's first act upon entering the land is to engage "in forbidden activity with the very people who are to be destroyed." Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *Joshua, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 114–115.

⁴ Carolyn J. Sharp, *Joshua*, ed. Leslie Andres and Samuel E. Balentine, *Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Incorporated, 2019), 108.

⁵ L. D. Hawk, *Every Promise Fulfilled: Contesting Plots in Joshua* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 62.

believe. So she must have known something that they disbelieved. In contrast it says that she believed before the spies came because she received them into her house with peace. In her heart she had already sided with them and with their God. She stands out to the writer of Hebrews as one of the foremost examples of Biblical faith. How in the world did that happen? Did God give her a vision? How did she come to faith? Let's look at some hints of her biblical faith in *this* passage. And we looked at a lot more in her biography. But I just want to give a high-level view today.

Verse 4 says that she hid the spies. That was taking a huge risk from an earthly perspective, but she had already seen this God at work and knew that to side with the God of the Israelites was safer than to defy Him. She sided with God, not with her earthly king. She sided with God even with the possible risk of death from and/or the hatred of other Jerichoites. Have you evidenced faith by siding with God when God is not popular? It's a good question to ask. It's not enough to believe that God is powerful or even the most powerful. Verse 11 says the rest of the Canaanites also believed that the Israelite God was more powerful, but they lacked saving faith. Hebrews says they did not believe. Too many Christians think they have faith because they believe certain facts about God. But faith always takes sides. Faith is always willing to go against the current. Faith is always more concerned with what God thinks of you than of what the world might think of you. Do you have genuine faith of this saved harlot, or the false faith of the self-righteous Pharisees?

Another hint of her faith is seen in verses 8-9. **"Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men: 'I know that the LORD has given you the land'..."** As you read along you will notice that this woman has been a spy herself and/or that God revealed Himself to her some other way. We don't know how old she was, or how she got this information, but the Israelites have been in the nearby desert for 40 years, and she has taken the trouble to investigate who their God is. She evidences faith by saying, **"I know that the LORD has given you the land..."** LORD is in all capital letters. She is using the covenant name, Yehowah. That's amazing. How did she know that name? She has not only taken the trouble to investigate what information there is about this God, but she is convinced of its truth. She has confidence that God will win the battles simply because He said He will win the battles.

Do you have this kind of faith? The other Canaanites, though scared to death, still resisted, which means they had the vain hope that they had a chance. If you think there is even the slightest chance that God's word is in error, you do not have her saving faith. Romans 3:4 says, "let God be true but every man a liar." 1 John 5:10 says, "he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given." It's basically saying that if you don't believe certain portions of the Bible, you are calling God a liar, and how can you call God a liar and have saving faith? The subject of the inerrancy of the Bible is very important to faith. There are many people out there who claim to be Christians yet who also say that the Bible is mistaken on certain archeological facts, or on Creation, or on its position on women, or is mistaken on its position on economics. I'm sorry, but that means that they are no different than the Canaanites who believed *much* of what God had said, but not *all* of it. Do you have saving faith, or the counterfeit of the world? I have always believed it is incompatible with true faith to treat any portion of the Bible to be in error. That would be to call God a liar on some points. A belief in Biblical

inerrancy is an essential ingredient of true faith. There are very few things that members of our church have to believe, but inerrancy of Scripture is one of them.

A third hint of her faith is that she sees their helplessness before such a God of judgment. It takes faith to agree that there is no point in resisting God. Starting at the middle of verse 9: **"...and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 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."** All the Canaanites were fainthearted, but only Rahab submitted and gave an unconditional peace treaty. Actually, I take that back. As we will see later, God saved the Gibeonites for much the same reason and eventually incorporated them into Israel. And they proved to have solid faith. But faith is not necessarily present simply because your heart is melting with fear of hell or melting for fear of God's other judgments. Pagans often fear God. That doesn't save them. Faith goes beyond that. Faith capitulates to God; surrenders to God; submits to God. Do you have saving faith, or only a counterfeit? I'm deliberately using the character of Rahab's faith to challenge our own. Saving faith submits in unconditional surrender to God because saving faith believes God unequivocally.

Fourth, she shows faith by turning to God rather than despairing as the rest did. Verse 11: **"Now as soon as we heard these things, our heart melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you..."** Despair is the very opposite of faith. Too many Christians despair of victory over sin; they despair of whether they can find forgiveness. Perhaps they think they are too bad to be forgiven. But a person with true faith will not despair. No matter how bad the situation might be, he turns to God. Who else can he or she turn to? And God includes every kind of sinner in the Bible to give hope to sinners that they too can be forgiven. There is:

1. The murderer Moses.
2. The adulterer David.
3. There is Manasseh, the worst king in Israel, who engaged in idolatry, witchcraft, and child sacrifice, yet whom God saved in 2 Chronicles 33:1-13.
4. There is Zacchaeus, the fraudulent cheating tax collector.
5. There is Paul the persecutor of Christians.
6. There are people who engaged in incest, homosexuality, lying, and all of them were saved by grace alone.

Fifth, she shows faith by identifying with the *only* God; the *exclusive* God of the Bible. Verse 9 - **"..that the LORD..."** That is "LORD" in all capital letters. The second half of verse 11 - **For the LORD your God...** As already mentioned, in both verses, the word for LORD is all capital letters, which is the covenant name, Yehowah. She does not talk about God in

general, or God as we understand him; or a higher power, whoever he may be, or the generic God of Alcoholics Anonymous, or the nondescript God of school prayers. She identifies with God *as He reveals Himself*. And when you do that, you are hated by Satan and all his hosts. Have you ever noticed that public prayers are tolerated if Jesus is not mentioned? On July 4 Joel was reminding me of a prayer that a black delegate said when we were serving at the County Convention. And much to the chagrin of some delegates, he was praying in no other name but the name of Jesus. And he kept emphasizing that. I believe God was blessed with that prayer. It nauseates me to hear public officials pray to God as we understand Him or to our higher power. Faith is willing to bear the shame of those who have alien gods and to confess only one savior and only one God – Yehowah. So here is my next question: Do you soften your talk about God to what is politically acceptable? Are you ashamed to confess Jesus Christ as Lord? Then you are failing to evidence the kind of faith that Rahab had. Listen to what Christ said about such shame. Mark 8:38 says, **“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”**

Sixth, she evidences no dichotomy in life. She doesn't trust God when in church and then switch to trust other things in the marketplace. She says, **“for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”** Hallelujah! She understands that the Hebrew God was totally different than all other limited gods. Unlike the Canaanite gods who each had their own small sphere of territory, she knows that God has no limitations, and she acknowledges God as Lord over everything.

There is a controversy in the modern church called the Carnal Christian Theory. And proponents of this theory say that you can receive Christ as Savior but reject Him as Lord, and still be saved. Another way of saying this is that you can include God in your decision for a free ticket to heaven but then exclude God from every portion of your journey to heaven. I'm sorry, but all such folks are unsaved. You either trust God for life and eternity or you have not trusted Him at all.

There are others who hold to a Radical Two Kingdom Theory that denies the authority of Scripture over economics, politics, business, or anything except for personal faith and church. That sure sounds suspiciously like a different religion than the religion of the bible. People may think that is too harsh of a judgment, but Hudson Taylor it said it so well, “Christ is either Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all.” You can't pick and choose if you are the slave and He is the master. True faith is a faith that has given all of our rights to God. It doesn't mean that we don't continue to sin, but it does mean that we acknowledge His Lordship. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says that you don't belong to yourself since you were bought with a price. Do you have the faith of Rahab, or have you excluded God's right to be Lord of parts of your life or perhaps parts of society? This is a pressing issue. I will say that Rahab is a better Christian than some Reformed people that I know who exclude God's Lordship from the state, education, and the rest of culture. Scripture says that He is Lord of all, and faith submits to that. It doesn't argue with that.

Now, I will grant that all of us have inconsistencies and God knows to what degree such men and women have true faith and are just inconsistent. But we should flee from any

system that self-consciously rejects the Bible from spheres of our life. That's a scary system to be in.

IV. God turned Rahab into a model of works

But the last point is that her faith led to good works. Not only did God work in the heart of hell, and secondly turn Rahab into a model of faith, but God also turned Rahab into a model of good works. Galatians 5:6 says that what really matters is whether we have a genuine "faith working through love." 1 Thessalonians 1:3 speaks of the "work of faith." Faith doesn't just justify us, it continues to work out a personal holiness (that we call sanctification). In 2 Thessalonians 1:11 Paul says the same thing as James when he speaks of "the work of faith with power." Yes, good works need God's grace and power, but genuine faith always receives such power to eventually result in good works. But let me read from James where James 2:21-25 uses two Old Testament illustrations to show that saving faith will always always always result in good works. In other words, you can't separate justification from sanctification. Or as James emphasizes, sanctification demonstrates that we are justified. In verse 21 James says, **"Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?"**

Before I get into Rahab's works, let me explain the issue of justification by works. There are four dimensions to our justification. Justification means to be declared "not guilty" and goes beyond that to declare that we are actually "perfectly righteous." Well, that is only possible if Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. So why did the Reformers speak of four dimensions to justification? Let me go over them.

First, we are justified meritoriously by Christ alone. In other words, He earned the righteousness, not us. And you see this over and over in the Scripture. Speaking of Jesus as God's righteous servant, Isaiah 53:11 says, "By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities." We are declared just meritoriously in the death of Christ according to Isaiah 53:11. Jesus merited or legally gave us the right to be declared just. And everything needed for our justification flows from His atonement. So that's the ground or basis for our justification.

Second, both Romans 5:1 and Acts 13:39 says that we are justified mediately by faith. The word "mediately" simply means that faith is the means that receives or lays hold of Christ's justification that has already been purchased. And the aorist passive indicates that it is a one time justification that happens to us, not something that we do, and Acts 13:39 says we are justified at that precise point in time from all things - that includes, past, present, and future sins. That justification is received by faith alone. So we are justified by *Christ* meritoriously. Second we are justified by *faith* mediately.

Third, the moment we put our faith in Christ, Romans 8:33 says that we are justified by God *judicially*. The word "judicially" means that there is a legal court room declaration of God. He is the one who makes the declaration of not-guilty and perfectly righteous. So we are justified meritoriously by Christ (in other words on the basis of what Christ has done), we

are justified mediately by faith (in other words, faith is the means that receives it), and we are justified judicially by God.

Fourth, James 2:21 says that in addition to Abraham's justification by faith alone years before, Abraham was *justified evidentially by works* since works is what gives evidence to other creatures that we *have* a saving faith that *has* laid claim to all Christ's work. When James 2:24 says, "You see than that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only," the word "only" is an adverb, not an adjective (which would be alone). In other words, James is simply stating that there is more than one kind of justification. James agrees that Abraham was justified at age 85 by faith alone, but then says that 40 years later he demonstrated that he was a truly justified man through his works. And James says that both Abraham and Rahab are excellent examples of both justification by faith alone *and* justification by works which *show* or *demonstrate* that we are saved. James is basically saying that if you have been saved and Christ now dwells in your heart, you are going to immediately start to act differently. And I just read some verses from Paul that says the same thing.

So what are some of these works in the life of Rahab? First, James says that receiving the spies and sending them out another way was evidence of a faith that works. In Joshua 1:12 Rahab words it that she had shown them kindness. The word for kindness is *chesed*, or covenant love. Wherever there is genuine faith there will be genuine love implanted in the heart by God. Galations 5:6 speaks of "**faith working through love.**" If you look up in a concordance the two words faith and love you will find that they are inseparable. And Scripture defines love as the keeping of His commandments. It is good works. Are you moved by God's grace to holiness of life? Are you moved to serve Him? Without works, James says that you have a dead faith; a worthless faith. She was not saved *by* her good works. Joshua makes that crystal clear. She was a sinner who had nothing to merit God's salvation. God doesn't say clean up your act and then I will save you. That is legalism. God approaches the lost sinner, gives her faith, immediately justifies her, and then proves that she justified by sanctifying her. God seeks the lost to save them. God is interested in sinners, not self-righteous people. Rahab was a sinner before she was justified and she was a saint (who still sinned) after her justification. What matters is who Jesus Christ is, and what He has done for the sinner. Will I humble myself and trust in Christ alone to save me? But beyond that, is my unconditional surrender to Him sincere? If it is, then there will be changes in my life. There will be growth. You are not going to be holding out on Him.

But I think Hebrews and James both make clear that her concealing the truth from the authorities was also good works and was not a violation of the ninth commandment. How did she let the men go out another way? First, by concealing the truth from the authorities, second, by hiding the men (another form of concealing truth) and then thirdly, by letting the men down in a way that would hide the truth of their presence yet again from the authorities. Every step of that process was concealing the truth from those who would misuse the truth. Now that may seem shocking to you, but it is true nonetheless. Her concealing of the truth is just as praised as was that of the midwives in Egypt who concealed the truth from Pharaoh when he told them to kill the babies as soon as they were born. Here's what Exodus says happened when they refused. "**So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, 'Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?' And the midwives said to Pharaoh, 'Because the Hebrew women**

are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them.' Therefore God dealt well with the midwives..." It was because they sided with God by hiding the truth from God's enemies that God blessed them. Concealing the truth is different than lying. I've made that error in my teaching in the past, but Peter Allison has a wonderful paper that corrected my thinking. Concealing the truth is different than lying. God never lies and neither should we. But He does conceal the truth from those who will misuse the truth.

This has puzzled many Christians. But it ought not. God's word defines when the ninth commandment is violated just like he does the sixth. It is not up to us to arbitrarily define the ten commandments. We must look to His case law applications. Otherwise we might think that "thou shalt not kill" means don't butcher animals, or that it forbids capital punishment, or self-defense, or all war. But it doesn't. And other Scriptures define the rest of the ten commandments.

The same is true of "thou shalt not bear false witness against your neighbor." That is the normal course of things, but during time of attack or war, concealing the truth is not only permissible, but it is mandated by God. You don't send delegates to a city you are going to war against and tell them every strategy you are going to use against them. You conceal that truth. It was good works for Corrie ten Boom to not tell the authorities where the refugees were that she was hiding. If you have lights going on and off when you are absent from your house, you are in a sense concealing the truth of your absence from burglars who would misuse the truth. And actually, for Corrie ten Boom to fail to conceal the truth would have involved her in breaking the sixth commandment which mandates the preservation of life. God commanded spies to conceal the truth. They wouldn't be very good spies if they didn't do that. God commanded armies to conceal the truth in some of their tactics.

Here is my application. We must define good works the way the Bible does, or we elevate our mind above the Scriptures. We cannot take one statement and absolutize it above all others. Some have done this with the prolife movement and have said that to be prolife you must be against capital punishment. Well, I only want to be prolife in the way that God defines prolife. I stand up for the life of the unborn, *but not of the murderer*. We must be ever so careful to have *the genuine good works of Scripture* rather than the substitute good works of fundamentalism that adds all kinds of rules and regulations of don't drink, don't smoke, don't wear makeup or jewelry, etc. When I grew up, some of the churches we attended taught that all drinking of wine was sin. But that confused me because Jesus drank wine. Wouldn't that make Jesus a sinner? And I couldn't come to that conclusion. One of the churches we attended when I was young said that it was sinful for a man to have a beard. But that is to make Jesus a sinner because He had a beard. Do you see where I am going? We must not add to Scripture or we fail to follow Rahab as a model of genuine good works. Just as there can be fake faith, there can be fake good works.

There are other examples of good works in this chapter, but because I dealt with her adequately in my biography of her, let end with just one more. Notice her love for her lost family and her commitment to her new spiritual brothers and sisters. Verse 12 says, **"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 fathers house, and give me a true token, and spare**

my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." Not only was she willing to join a new spiritual family, she wanted to take the rest of her earthly family with her - despite the fact that they had no doubt abused her sexually. Genuine faith moves us to evangelism. What kind of concern do you have for the salvation and welfare of your loved ones? Our whole church should pray for the salvation of the lost loved ones of our members. We should bear your sorrow and pain with you. And we should have faith that God's ordinary means of salvation is through the family. Israel was clearly an example of that, but so was this trophy of God's grace. The saving of sinners from the world is extraordinary, but the salvation of households with them, is not. It is the way God ordinarily functions.

And you can see many examples of this in the New Testament: the household of Cornelius, and of Gaius, and of Crispus, and of the ruler of the synagogue, and Lydia and the Philippian jailer. Paul told the Philippian jailer: "**believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household**". Do you have the heart of God? If you are not concerned about the salvation of your relatives and your family, then you are missing out on God's heart. You may be saved, but you need to cry out to God to pour out more of His grace and compassion in you. Rahab is a model of good works by longing for the salvation of her household.

But she is also a model of good works by loving her new family of Israel - God's people. She has switched her loyalties from the world to the church. Do you love God's church? 1 John says that we do not have the love of God within us if we do not love the brethren.

And we will stop there. But I hope you have been challenged and encouraged by the life of Rahab once again. When you see men and women like Rahab being saved out of the mud, being transformed and sanctified it challenges us in our growth. It is my hope and prayer that this church will experience many, many testimonies of Rahabs saved in a similar manner as we come in contact with them wherever we may be. May it be so, Lord Jesus! Amen.