

From Prostitute to Princess Rahab – Joshua 2: 1-21

What a moment it must have been when the walls of Jericho fell, what a noise, what a spectacle! As the dust began to settle, all that remained of the wall was one strip, where Rahab and her family lived. One family spared, on account of the faith of a woman who was one of the very worst sinners from an utterly immoral and depraved city. Rahab the prostitute lived when thousands of others didn't. Her life was just as corrupt as any other in Jericho, she had no doubt been both the cause, and victim, of great suffering throughout her life but here we have a watershed moment, the old life crushed under the mortar and up from the dust a new life emerges.

I) Faith is Received

The journey of faith begins with God finding us in our wretchedness, in the pit, in the mud, in the mess and deceit of sin. Rahab was a 'gentile (non-Jew) prostitute', for the Pharisee, the religious moralist it's hard to imagine one 'less likely' to receive the affection of God, than a woman like Rahab, BUT the gospel is especially for 'Rahabs— what a mystery! Especially and necessarily for Rahabs, for there can be no salvation without a conviction of sin, this is one of the very first signs that faith has come to a person. As Spurgeon put *"the new life as it enters the heart causes intense inward pain as one of its first effects"*.

Rahab wasn't out looking for God, she wasn't scouring the lands beyond Jericho for faith, no, she received a knock on her door and unlike every previous occasion, when men came to her house to abuse and use her, this time, she welcomed messengers from God. This was a life-changing moment and reveals how faith is received, that it comes to us as a gift, *"I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me"* (Isaiah 65:1).

Q. Why do you think we are told that Rahab was a prostitute? Why was a prostitute chosen from among the Canaanites for salvation? How does Rahab's story reveal the grace of God to us?

II) Faith Requires Obedience

Verses 18-19 contain the instruction Rahab received from the spies that she was required to obey in order to escape the imminent destruction of Jericho, *"...you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window"*. This was such a simple instruction and yet it was loaded with symbolism and meaning. This scene is intentionally reminiscent of the Passover night, when the blood was washed on the doors of every Israelite home. Once more the text draws us forward in time by 1400 years to consider The Lamb of God and the blood he shed on the cross. We are again reminded that it is only on account of His sacrifice and being cleansed by His blood that we have any hope on the Day of Judgment. This is a theme that recurs as we work through the Bible and especially in this series on the Hall of Faith but let us never grow too familiar with the power of this message no matter how acquainted with it we may be.

Q. What does it mean for us to 'hang a scarlet cord from the window'? (To live our lives trusting in Christ's atoning (sacrificial) work for us) – *"Amazing love! How can it be, that thou, my God, shouldst die for me"* – Was a line written by Charles Wesley in the Hymn 'And Can it be' – do you spend time reflecting on God's incredible act of love? In what ways does our faith in Christ's death and resurrection result in living obediently? (Trusting God and His word – killing sin – seeking after Him)

III) Faith Redeems a Life of Sin

Rahab became an established member of the Israelite community. Matthew 1 reveals to us what became of Rahab. She married a man called Salmon and had a son called Boaz. Boaz was a Godly man, who showed women respect and provided for those who were in need. We find that Rahab is a distant ancestor of Jesus, her life is a wonderful example of how faith in Christ results in redemption as God more than restores that which was lost.

Q. In what ways does the story of Rahab give us hope in our lives or those around us? Do you have examples of lives/families transformed on account of faith in Christ? How does this story give us hope for this city and motivate our mission as a church?