

Sermon Series
The Superiority of Jesus Christ
June 12, 2022

Title: Rahab's Faith

Subject: Faith, Amorite, Sinner, Gentile, The Spies, a lie, God's Sovereignty, God's Mercy, Grace,

Theme Text: Hebrews 11:31 (ESV) ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

Theme Illustration: If we were to take a poll and vote for our favorite entry into the faith hall of fame, several entries would receive less recognition. Perhaps the most surprising to the casual student of the Bible is the inclusion of Israel, Samson, and perhaps Gideon. But the most surprising is the inclusion of Rahab the harlot. Yes, for the legalist this inclusion is almost a scandal on the order of the Lord's dealing with the woman caught in adultery in John 8. The text even admits that she was a profligate sinner. The Lord uses the means of real sinful human beings to accomplish His purposes. In this case, God saved her and granted her mercy and grace to save the Hebrew spies sent out to recon Jericho. It is amazing when we realize that the Lord granted her saving faith before she even knew there were spies so that she would be prepared when they arrived. Does this not reinforce this truth, **Psalm 33:11 (ESV) ¹¹ The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.**

Let us be reminded of the fruit or proof of her faith and her immediate reward.

Read: Joshua 2:15-18 (ESV) ¹⁵ Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall so that she lived in the wall. ¹⁶ And she said to them, "Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the

pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way.”¹⁷ The men said to her, “We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear.¹⁸ Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father’s household.

Introduction: In previous verses, the author has taken pains to demonstrate how the patriarchs were honored by God solely on the account of their faith. Now we come to an unexpected example of faith from an alien woman, belonging to an accursed race dating to the time of Noah, who was adopted into God’s covenant people. This demonstrates that God is no respecter of persons. No human being regardless of their exalted status is of no account before God unless they have faith. On the other hand, those who are counted worthless in the eyes of man are by faith promised a place in the presence of God.

Rahab was a Canaanite and thus by nature excluded from God’s people. She is for us a prototype of God’s inclusion of Gentiles into His royal family. Under the new covenant. Rahab and Ruth demonstrate God’s redemptive purpose was not confined to the Jews or a singular people alone.

Rahab’s salvation is an important demonstration of the sovereignty of God. She was not only Gentile but an Amorite woman, which in general was a people devoted to destruction. This is also a stellar example of God’s self-declaration in **Romans 9:18 (ESV)¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.** God singled her out for His redemptive purposes. We will hear no complaints from Rahab who most assuredly realized that God saved her to use as a means of the safe harbor for the spies.

We see the cleansing power of divine grace and sending her out for His saving grace. The unmerited favor of God shone forth like the midday sun. We also witness the working of God’s power in her regeneration. The Lord regenerates, whom He wills, the objects of His mercy and grace.

Rahab was a recipient of regeneration wrought entirely devoid of any additional means of grace that were given to the Jews. She had no scripture to read. She had no sacrifices, no tabernacle, no feast days, and no prophets to speak to her. Yet she was quickened to a new heart solely through the grace, mercy, and power of God. And as I said before, this woman is regenerated even before the spies came to her house. The Lord knows who is His. The same God who sent Ananias to the street called straight to deliver Saul from blindness and guided the spies to the house of Rahab.

Transition: I would like to examine three characteristics of Rahab's faith. Let's review:

1. The Nature of Her Faith: Hebrews 11:31 (ESV) ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

I have already spoken of some of the aspects concerning the nature of her faith. The question you might ask is that I thought faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ, Romans 10:17. In her case, faith was imparted by a sovereign act of the spirit of God, then it is nourished by the word. Rahab's words in Joshua 2:8 – 9 are a statement of her faith. How could she say that I know the Lord has given you this land? Quickened by the Spirit, faith was granted to her so that when she heard the reports of God's works that reached her ears, she responded. She took the reports that were coming to her as the words of God. Her response is validated by **James 2:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.** By receiving the spies, she made it clear that her heart was with the people of God. She welcomed them into our home and made provisions for their safety.

Her faith was singular among the residents of Jericho. To act on your faith is difficult when you are the only one believing. She stood alone. This faith set her apart from her pagan neighbors. Her faith was a sanctifying faith.

Transition: Let us now examine:

2. The Confession of Her Faith: Joshua 2:11 (ESV) ¹¹ And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

And declares that real faith results in a confession of faith. We see this in our text. Remember, her faith also resulted in her placing the scarlet cord in her window. She was publicly displaying her colors. It is the nature of true faith to declare itself before men. Our Lord placed importance on our confession, **Matthew 10:33 (ESV) ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.**

Her faith resulted in her boldness to ask the spies to grant her the safety of herself and her family. Her faith request demonstrated that she believed God would show her mercy. He who is merciful responded to her faith by saving her entire household. She believed when she was told our whole family must shelter with her in the same house which revealed the scarlet cord.

Transition: Lastly, we see:

3. The Imperfection of Her Faith: Joshua 2:4-5 (ESV) ⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, “True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. ⁵ And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.”

In our text, it is plain to see the imperfection of Rahab's faith. The king of Jericho inquired of Rahab as to where the spies went. Fearful of her and her family's safety she lied to him. She lied, pretending to be ignorant of the spy's whereabouts. We tend to give Rahab a pass on this lie because she's protecting her family.

The Lord is gracious to pass by many of the sins of His children, when He sees an upright heart and a desire to obey, **Psalms 130:3 (ESV) ³ If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?** This, of

course, is not given to us for our imitation but our peace and confession of sin. Rahab did believe what the spies told her was going to happen to the city and she complied with the spy's demand, despite the possible great danger to her and her family if what they told her did not come to pass. She believed the words of the spies were the words of the Lord. Her faith, however imperfect put her trust in God rather than in her own devices. To the eye of unbelief, she put herself at great personal risk. To the eye of faith, however, it's never wrong to place yourself in God's hands. Her reward is described in **Joshua 6:22-23 (ESV)** ²² **But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her."** ²³ **So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel.**

Her reward was deliverance from the wrath of God and of man and inclusion in the company of Israel.

Conclusion: Rahab and her whole family were spared in the burning of Jericho. This is a prototypical example of sinners who repent of their sins and place their trust in Jesus Christ. Jericho represents God's wrath on the world. The question is do you have a scarlet cord in your heart? As our text declares she now dwelt in the safety of God's people.

In Romans 11. The apostle Paul speaks of wild olive branches being grafted into a cultivated olive tree. The cultivated tree was Israel. The wild olive branches on the Gentiles. Rahab has been grafted into Israel and the people of God. We who have been thus grafted in. Take comfort in the account of Rahab. Our destiny is not determined by how we start, but by how we finish.

As we know, she became an honored woman, the mother of Boaz, David's grandmother. In Matthew one. She is recorded as an inset as an ancestor of the Savior. From the depth of sin and shame did sovereign grace deliver this woman to the height of honor and dignity. She did not live to see herself,

thus elevated in the holy Scriptures better rewards of honor and dignity are small in comparison to her final reward in the presence of Christ.