

# Being What You Are

by Billy Strachan

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*Billy Strachan emphasizes the importance of accepting our true nature while relying on Christ's power for transformation and victory over sin.*

**Duration:** 36:44

**Scripture:** Genesis 5:1

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Joshua and the spies sent to scout the land of Canaan. After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, God instructs Joshua to lead the Israelites into the promised land. The preacher emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's promises, even in the face of challenges and obstacles. He highlights the faith of Joshua and Caleb, who believed in God's ability to overcome any problems in the land. The sermon also mentions Rahab, a harlot who recognizes the power of God and seeks salvation for herself and her family. The spies make a covenant with Rahab, promising to spare her and her loved ones if she hangs a scarlet thread in her window as a sign. The sermon encourages listeners to have faith in God's faithfulness and to trust in His promises.

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## Transcript

Now, I, in your outline, the second example for a balanced faith. The second example for a balanced faith. Chapter 2 and verse 25.

Chapter 2 and verse 25. Likewise also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by work when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. But verse 25 is the one we want.

Likewise also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way? Now, she is a fascinating character, is Rahab. And she has her mention in the New Testament. You'll find, for example, that in Matthew's Gospel and the first chapter, that she's mentioned in the fifth verse.

Salmon begat booze of Rahab. Rahab. She's mentioned there.

She's also mentioned in Hebrews and the 11th chapter, on the chapter, the chapter on faith. In verse 31, by faith the harlot Rahab. Rahab perished not with them that believed not when she had received the

spies with peace.

Now, that in itself is interesting because we find that Rahab, who became a member of the household of faith, was always known throughout the entire Scriptures as a harlot. You're always are what you are. But you are now a member of the household of faith, so she is, as it were, a converted harlot.

But her nature is to be a harlot. The thief is a converted thief, but he will always be a thief that's converted. The liar is a converted liar, but will always be a liar that's converted.

The alcoholic can be a converted alcoholic, but will always be an alcoholic that's converted. And this is important because there has to be, in your experience, a willingness to accept yourself for what you are without pretense, which is what we've been pushing, knowing that that's what you are and why Jesus died for you, and never give yourself the slightest sort of hope that that has changed. Because if you give yourself the impression that now you've received Christ you are no longer what you are, you're in danger because that's the very moment when you'll do it again.

And always remember that you never change. If you think you change by a life of faith and a walk in God, what ends up happening is that you begin to think you are maturing. But you don't.

I don't. What we get is an imparted life that replaces what we are by faith. But we always are what we are.

And that's why after walking with Christ 30, 40 years, the person that suddenly stops yielding to the indwelling life of Christ finds himself doing what he did 31 years before. And he'll suddenly find himself shocked and wonder what's happened to his maturity. Nothing.

It's exactly where it was 31 years ago. Because he won't be any different. Neither will you be any different.

And you see, one of the things that the church tends to do is give you the impression that that all disappears. Christ didn't come to repair you. He came to replace you.

He doesn't patch up your system. He imparts a new life. Therefore, for as many days as the harlot doesn't commit harlotry, for as many days as this prostitute woman doesn't prostitute her body, it's not because she's maturing enough not to be a prostitute anymore.

It's because the life and the relationship she has to God is empowering her not to. But she can go out and do it again. Similarly with the basic problems that we face today.

The lesbian that gets converted is still a lesbian. But she's a converted lesbian. And those trains will always be in her right through her Christian experience until she's in the presence of the Master.

But the only thing that will prevent a girl like that from giving her body to another girl is when Jesus Christ is in such a control over her that she's not committing the acts of a lesbian. And the same with a homosexual. We seem to think that as soon as a man who is a homosexual gets converted, homosexuality should no longer be there.

But that's not true. He is a converted homosexual. And you can be a converted homosexual without committing homosexuality, but the rest of your life you'll still be one.

And the man or the church or the deacon or the pastor or the leader that tends to say to a young fellow who's been converted from the ways of homosexuality that now you've got Christ, you're no longer a

homosexual, you put that fellow in dire danger. Because he'll begin to think that by receiving Christ he changes basically in his nature. And therefore he will never need to say to himself again that he is a homosexual.

And that this kind of thing will never happen in my life again because ten to one it's going to. It's going to. Because you see, he's got to come to the place of knowing what he is.

I am a homosexual that's converted. I am now a converted homosexual the rest of my life to get into the kingdom. Sin manifests itself in me in that fantastic manner.

In one person, gluttony. In another person, a dirty mind. In another person, buying of too many clothes.

In another person, covetousness. In another person, drink. In another person, another thing.

But in my particular life it was manifest. Sin dominated and manifested itself as it were in this field for the girl in lesbianism, for the fellow in homosexuality. It's happening everywhere.

That's how sin dominated and mastered. And so the prevalent trait of sin in their life is that. But when they get converted they must never then look into the face of God saying, I'm no longer that.

Because now that I'm a Christian that's gone. That's fatal. They've got to learn to accept themselves as they are and come before the Lord daily and say, good morning, here is your converted homosexual.

And it will only be in the measure in which my faith in you allows you to live your life through me today that will prevent me from committing the acts that are bound up with my nature today. And I will go through this day in victory. But it will be your life through me not being that kind of person, hiding me for what I am because that's what I will be.

And remember that that's what Christ comes to do. He is our robe of righteousness. He covers what we are.

And the world never sees what you are. But you will always know what you are. But it's his life manifest by an active faith, practical aspect of faith.

And we'll have to look at some of the doings to overcome these things as we go through. But it's as the person relies upon Christ that he finds he's not doing the acts. And it's tragic if you're on a church where they seem to think that if a person like that gets converted, that should disappear, whereas the thief might steal again.

The drunkard might get drunk again. He might have a relapse. We'll forgive him and discipline him and restore him.

But if it's one of those two sins, they should be away altogether. And that's not in the book. It's not in the book.

You are what you are by nature. You will always be what you are by nature. And the only way that it will not manifest itself is as you are replaced by an active faith in Christ, by the life of Christ.

And so never pat yourself on the back if you feel that you haven't done wrong things for a long time. Just be thankful that Christ has had such a hold of you that that's why. But know also that it means you've got

to work by faith to maintain the relationship to Christ so that he can keep that up in you, because if he stops today by your disobedience and your cessation from walking by faith, that's the day that you'll do it all over again.

Now, if you grasp that, you'll save yourself the shock and the tears and the agony and the frustration that comes when a person struggles so hard not to and thinks that it's them keeping themselves from doing it when they finally end up doing it. They begin to get such tremendous guilt and things. But that was all self-induced because they'd convinced themselves that they were no longer like that.

You are what you are, and you have to learn to accept yourself for what you are, and that gives you a clearer picture of why Christ had to come and why you need him today to make sure that that doesn't burst out again. You see, he doesn't come to take sin away. He comes to break its dominion in your life.

We get the idea that when we come to Christ, sin is done away with. No, no, he breaks the dominion of sin. It no longer is your master, but it's still there.

And it's only as you have our faith, love, walk, obedience, belief, relationship in Jesus Christ that it will not dominate you today and burst out. But it's ready to burst out any time till you step into eternity, freed from this body of sin that has that particular trait in it. And you have to remember that.

Rahab was always a harlot. And the Holy Spirit, in compiling the great chapter of the household of faith in Hebrews 11, still refers to her after all those years as the harlot of faith. I like the way that Peter writes his epistle just shortly before he dies.

He doesn't start it by saying, Peter, the great evangelist, one who led thousands to Christ, three thousand in my first meeting in Jerusalem, incidentally, came to Christ. And I have now matured and become such a great apostle and man of God. I like the simplicity of the opening of his epistle.

Simon, Peter. Simon is what I am. Peter is what he has allowed me to be.

And he'd never forgotten all his life that he was Simon. Simon of whom Jesus said, Get thee behind me, Satan. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He had to be made Peter, the rock.

But Simon he was, and he never forgot it. All his life, I'm Simon, the one that denied him three times. Peter is what he's made me.

And that is important. Rahab was a harlot. Always a harlot.

A converted harlot. But she knew what she was. And she gets into the kingdom on the basis of what God was giving her by gift.

Not by ceasing to be what she was, and hiding it and pretending that it wasn't there anymore. Because that's fatal. And I can assure you that in my own personal ministry, outside of the lecture hall and helping fellows with moral problems, that I can never begin to do a remedial or rehabilitative work in them until they've at last faced me eye to eye and said, Yes, I am one.

And the minute they say, I am one, then we can begin. But when they're always justifying what they do or hiding what they are or blaming other people for the fact that they're doing it and never come right down to saying quite honestly, I am one. And it's me.

You can never help them. You can never help them. It's when the drug addict sits in my office, a Christian drug addict sits in my office and says, Well, I'm a drug addict.

And I say, Fine. Now you can wipe your tears away and unpack your bag for not sending you away. This is where you begin.

Not where you end. When at long last you've stopped hiding it and you've said, I am what I am. Good.

Now you'll see where Christ can come in and how he can take over and control you so that you're no longer an active drug addict but you will be a converted drug addict. You're no longer an active thief but you're always a converted thief. You're no longer an active curvaceous person but you're a converted curvaceous person.

And the dominant factor of sin in your life is brought under control so that it's no longer being manifest. So wherever it is in your own particular life, get around to admitting it. Not to us.

Not to even others. We're not asking for the emptying of the dirty linen basket all over the place. But some of you, you will find that you've never really begun to be real with God because you've never been prepared to get down on your knees and pray into the Father's face, Good morning.

Here is your converted harlot. Here is your converted thief. Come to talk to you, Father.

Here is your converted liar. Some of you have battled over this romancing nature of lies and little white lies and truths and giving one part of the picture and the other for years. You've tried to dominate it.

And if you just simply recognize that you are what you are, you're a downright liar. And just simply say, Good morning, Father. Here's your converted liar.

And if I don't tell one today, it'll be because you've lived in me today. And you're going to have to work at letting Christ be so manifest in your speech that day that your dominant factor will not evidence itself in your behavior that day. But never get to the place when you say you're no longer a liar because that's when you're going to end up telling the first one again.

And that will be your first lie. So, remember that. Rahab was always a harlot.

Now, in Joshua chapter 2, Joshua chapter 2, after 40 years, the Lord has finally said to Joshua, I want you to get in there and take the nation into the place of blessing, into the place of reality, into the place where they're going to be mightily used for victory. Now, they'd hung around for 40 years and not gone in. And Joshua remembered that when Moses sent spies in to have a look at the land, to taste and see that the Lord is good, to taste and see what he said you could enjoy was, in fact, a reality.

Moses sent in about 12 spies and 10 came back and gave an honest report of how great it was but then disheartened the people by saying that it had too many troubles, too many problems. And it was only Joshua and Caleb that came back and said, okay, so the thing's loaded with problems but that's God's business if he says he's given us it. Let's get in and enjoy it.

Well, now he's learned the lesson and he's been a little bit more cautious this time. He says, well, Moses himself sent 12 in and 10 came back and said no and everybody believed him and two said, yes, I'll send two. There's a 50-50 chance this time that we'll go because if one comes back and says no, at least the odds are helpful.

And so he sends two. And Joshua, the son of Nun, sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly saying, go view the land, even Jericho. And they went and came into an harlot's house named Rahab and lodged there.

Now, what would the diaconate think if they knew that those two fellas had gone into the house of a prostitute when they were on a mission for spying? And it was told the king of Jericho saying, behold, there came men in hither tonight of the children of Israel to search out the country. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab saying, bring forth the men that are come to thee which are entered into thine house for they be come to search out all the country. And the woman took the two men and hid them and said thus, there came men unto me but I wist not whence they were.

And it came to pass about the time of the shutting of the gate when it was dark that the men went out. Whither the men went I want not. Pursue after them quickly for ye shall overtake them.

But she had brought them up to the roof of the house and hid them with the stalks of flax which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords. And as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof. And she said unto the men, I know, there's the knowledge but it's not yet experienced. This is a woman, a harlot, who's not even of Jewry.

She's a Canaanite woman outside of the parlor of Israel. And she is using a most definite tone of language here. I know this is something that isn't a fanciful idea.

I'm not relying on my imagination. It's factual. I know that the Lord hath, past tense, given you the land and that your terror is, present tense, fallen upon us.

And that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. Now that must have been an awful shock to those two spies. Beg your pardon? I know God has given you the land.

Now dear, I don't know what school you go to in this city of Jericho but your grammar's all to pieces. You mean you know God's going to give us it when we come over? No, no, He has given it to you. Yes, but we're not in.

Well, that may be your trouble but we know that as far as we're concerned, as far as my heart's concerned, it's a done thing. It's already accomplished. God has given you the land.

You just haven't moved in and appropriated it. That's your business. But I know it's yours.

And I know that all the big problems that have stopped you from coming in are fainting left, right, and center at the very thought that you're on the borders. There's no heart left in them. For we have heard in the past how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt.

Now how long ago was that? Forty years ago. For forty years, we have heard the message, acknowledged the message, believed the message, known the message. The facts are in our minds.

And what you did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side, Jordan, Zidon, and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things forty years ago, our hearts did melt forty years ago. Neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you forty years ago.

For the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath. And I have known that for forty years. It's been the talk of the whole country.

And you see, Israel were living in self-imposed poverty. They never acted on what God said was a fact. Get into the place, even if it looks difficult, and I take the consequences.

And they wouldn't go in, and as far as the difficulties were concerned, it was an accomplished deed that they just had never moved in and appropriated. And it's the same with so many of you. You just don't seem to conceive that the thing that you think is the Jericho in your life, the big fortress of difficulty that stops you from enjoying the Christian experience.

And you know what it is in your life. You know the dominating sin that shakes its fist at you every morning and says to you, you better perform today because I'll never let you enjoy this. And sin always shouts and shakes its fist loudest because its knees are knocking.

Because sin knows perfectly well if you dare to step out of your bedroom this morning with a walk of faith in Jesus Christ, it's defeated. It's defeated. And here is this harlot saying what she knows.

She knows that God is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now therefore I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord since I have showed you this kindness that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house and give me a true token and that you will save alive my father and my mother and my brethren and my sisters and all that they have and deliver our lives from death. We want to be saved.

We know a lot about your God but we want to be saved from the judgment that's coming. And the men answered her, our life for yours. If you utter not this our business and it shall be that when the Lord hath given us the land that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

Then she let them down by a cord through the window for her house was upon the town wall and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, get you to the mountain lest the pursuers meet you and hide yourselves there three days until the pursuers be returned and afterwards may ye go your way. And the men said unto her, we will be blameless of this our oath which thou hast made us swear.

Behold, when we come into the land thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by and thou shalt bring thy father and thy mother and thy brethren and all thy father's household home unto thee. And it shall be that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street his blood shall be upon his head and we will be guiltless. And whosoever shall be with thee in the house his blood shall be in our head if any man's hand be upon him.

And if thou utter this our business then we will be quit of thy north which thou hast made us to swear. And she said, according unto your words so be it. And she sent them away and they departed and she gathered the family around her and said, let me give you my testimony.

And she told them the wonderful good news that the judgment was coming and that there was one way to be saved through the judgment and that was this rope I have in my hand this scarlet rope if we tie it on the window and throw the end out of the window we shall be saved. Having said that and the family all nodding its assent and saying, yes, yes, I believe it, I believe it she then opened the cupboard and threw it in shut the door made tea and they went to bed. And they would have died.

And yet she would have died in belief. The whole household would have died in belief because she could sit there and preach her gospel her good news to her family. I've had Israelites in the house when? Tonight.

And they're coming. The judgment's coming. Within days they'll be here.

The city's going to be obliterated. Their God is for them. Judgment's coming.

We want to be saved. There's a good news of how to be saved. Sit and I shall preach the gospel, dear family.

Pay attention to my sermon. Judgment is sure. Judgment is coming.

Have you got it? Yes, we've got it. But there's a way of escape that we may avoid the judgment. What is it? We tie the rope on the window and throw it out.

How many believe? Come forward to the kitchen sink if you believe. And from all over the household they're making their decisions. Yes, yes, they have.

I believe. And she's adding up the hands. 25 converts, eh? Not as many as were in the house.

But it wouldn't have made any difference to them having received this tremendous gift of good news. They didn't earn it. They received their gift.

It would have been useless. And all that they believed would have been useless if they hadn't acted upon it and tied the cord to the window and flung it out. But you'll notice how anxious Rahab was, how much she believed when she did it immediately, verse 21.

And she had sent them away and they departed and she bound the scarlet line in the window. Immediately. She did it immediately.

And yet there were days before they came. But she was taking no chances. Immediately.

This is the day of salvation. Today is the day. This is what it means.

Act upon it today. Not tomorrow. Today.

While it's called today. Now. And that's why as you listen you know you're sitting here saying in your hearts I know what my Jericho is.

I know what my biggest problem is. I'm beginning to understand and believe from the word that I'm hearing that I don't have to be dominated by things like that in my life. That I can enjoy victory from today then begin to enjoy it today.

Don't sit there saying won't it be great to get out of this school and go back home and start to live by faith. Start now. Immediately.

Immediately. And you begin to enjoy life immediately. Yes, but people will think I'm putting on a new spirituality.

They won't think it, they'll tell you. It doesn't matter tongues. You don't live for other people.

Saul did and that's why he died. He feared the people. And there will always be those hanging around to tell you it won't work.

There's always ten out of twelve will sit and dishearten you. You're just turning over a new leaf. You're trying a new thing today and it won't work.

You'd be better just playing the usual performance you've played in school up until now and when you get out try it. But don't make a fool of yourself here. Don't step out here as an individual and try to live by faith amongst this bunch because we'll put you to test and boy they will.

Secular people would never think of testing the faith of a Christian the way Christians test each other. And if you want to really see faith working try it here. You'll be battered to death by each other.

But boy if you pull through this place walking by faith it'll be a walkover when you get amongst the pagans. Very easy. If you can win your spurs in that Christian set up you'll be alright for the pagans.

And usually we think it's the other way around. Victory is what you manage to win out there then we'll put up with each other. Nonsense.

You can't get victory in your dormitory, in the dish pantry. There's no use sending you to Africa, South America, China to be a missionary. And boy you try it and they'll put it on you to see if it's real.

But that's alright. It'll work. Because God takes the consequences.

And every heart that ever says God, I'm being real from now on. No performance. I don't care what they say.

You take the consequences. He will. He will and no matter how much battering you take you'll get through.

Oh you might end up lonely. But he gives tremendous encouragement to withstand loneliness. You might be misunderstood but he's very good at giving people power to be misunderstood.

You might get a few slaps in the face but he's very good at developing a callus so that you can put up with it. And your jaw becomes quite firm. Either that or you'll just melt into the pot again and just be like all the defeatists.

And remember that it's the defeatists that will attempt to reduce your victory. Always. Because as long as we can all be defeated and say that the normal Christian life is defeat but we talk about victory and perform victory although we don't enjoy victory.

The minute somebody sticks their head up out of line and says yahoo I'm enjoying myself they'll all clobber it. They'll all clobber it down. You mustn't be up there.

Come down. Because if you go up there and stay up there that suddenly exposes us to all being defeatists and performers. And therefore we must always keep everybody on the same level of defeat and pretend that that level of defeat is victory.

Then we say that is what you can expect from the normal Christian life. So that the man that does stick his head up and we can't batter it down he's the exception. He isn't.

He's normal. It's the rest that are sub-normal. But it will always be the same.

Right through life. You go back to your church. You try living the Christian life in your church.

Try going back there and not putting on the performance anymore. Just being yourself under the control of Jesus Christ. And boy they won't be satisfied until they shove you out.

They'll find some justification to maintain that you become freakish. A fanatic. It's just caponryism.

Something along that line. And they'll do their utmost to destroy it. But you don't have to worry.

Rahab did it. She did it immediately. She took the cob, hung it out the window.

And when the troops came the problem was really fantastic. She had the house on the wall. And yet God's order to Joshua was when they come round that seventh time and shout the wall will collapse.

And he did collapse the wall. But there was one corner stood. And Rahab's house was on it.

And you can read in the 6th chapter verses 22 and 23 how they went in and brought her out and took her to safety. And she ended up being listed in the royal line in Matthew's gospel. The royal genealogy from Adam to Christ right in there in the middle of all those names is Rahab.

Rahab, a prostitute of faith. They not only knew what to do but did it. And that's why it says in the 25th verse likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers sent them out another way.

And lastly, J, the definite conclusion verse 26 Verse 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead so faith without works is dead also. And that word spirit there is better rendered breathing, breath. In other words you try holding your breath for the next five minutes until Dr. Hunter comes in and you'll find you've got a problem.

You'll die. You can't live physically without breathing fresh air. And the nature of faith is such that without works attached to what you believe mentally it's like not breathing for ten minutes.

You die. It's just totally inoperative. Belief is inoperative without action.

That is the nature of faith.

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