

Rahab the Harlot

by Ken Baird

The sermon explores Rahab's faith and her significant role in God's plan, emphasizing grace and the assurance found in belief.

Duration: 36:01

Scripture: Exodus 12:13, Joshua 2:18, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:25, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Faith And Salvation", "Gods Promises"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Rahab and how her faith saved her and her family. He emphasizes the importance of having faith in God's promises and the assurance of safety that comes from the Lord. The preacher also uses examples from the Bible, such as the scarlet cord in Rahab's house and the scarlet cord in the Royal Navy, to illustrate the significance of the color red as a symbol of protection and salvation. He warns against calling God a liar and highlights the importance of believing in the testimony of God regarding His Son.

Transcript

I realized this morning that the radio message on KJAN picked up Joshua. I didn't know whether to go ahead with this lesson this morning or not. But I'll give you my word, that tape was prepared a year ago, and I had no idea that we were going to be talking about Joshua this morning.

But I think there is enough here in Rahab, and the title of the lesson, incidentally, is Assurance, to be sure, and there was some assurance in there, a place of safety. Joshua sent two spies to spy out the city of Jericho, the first city to be encountered on the west side of the Jordan River. The two spies, when they entered the city, they went straight to the house of Rahab, and there are some indications that she was an innkeeper.

Now, pardon me, the Berkeley translation has it, it does not call her a harlot, it refers to her, they went in and came to Rahab's house, an innkeeper, and lodged there. It was a lodging place. And the Berkeley translation, all throughout the translation, calls her an innkeeper.

But the word in the Hebrew and the reference to her in the New Testament and the Greek means harlot and nothing else. It doesn't mean anything else. I suppose that Berkeley translators didn't want this to be true of Rahab because she is in the direct line of our Lord Jesus Christ.

She is in the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I suppose they thought that wasn't proper. But let me remind you of something else.

Four women are mentioned, not one by name, but four women are mentioned in the genealogy of Matthew's Gospel. Tamar, Ruth, Rahab and Bathsheba, though not by name. She is mentioned as the wife of Uriah.

Bathsheba is mentioned. Now three of those four women were involved in the Scriptures and in morality. The fourth, Ruth, was a Moabite.

And she was barred from the tabernacle of the congregation. She should have been. She wasn't.

So the tenth generation, an Ammonite and a Moabite, were not permitted to come into the tabernacle of the congregation. Even to the tenth generation forever. That's Deuteronomy 23 and 3. Why are these four women mentioned? Did a male chauvinist write the Gospel of Matthew? Hardly.

They show the wondrous grace of God. God can triumph over something like that. And he does triumph over that.

Now Ruth, the Moabite, is the great-grandmother of David the king. Great, great, great, great or great. I've forgotten at the moment.

And not too far down the line was Rahab, in the line of David. Now I don't think we can seize upon this that God tolerates sin or condones it. Not for a moment.

But you go into the scriptural account and three of those four women were involved in Amorality. Now, lest you men get to thinking that you're something, men were involved too in some pretty notable characters. Judah, for instance.

David, for instance. This isn't very pleasant, is it? God, if God doesn't triumph over us and all our sins, nothing is going to be accomplished. He triumphs.

And what God cleanses we're not to call common or unclean. It makes us appreciate more and more the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now in the Old Testament, of course, the blood that covered over those sins made an atonement was just pointing forward to the blood of Christ that would save those people from their sins.

The Old Testament people. They were saved on credit. Now when you get saved on credit, or when you have credit, you get the benefit of the article before the price is paid.

They were saved on credit. They got the benefit of salvation before the price was paid. God saved them on credit.

But we look back to a finished, paid salvation. Oh, what assurance that should give to us. I marvel at the grace of God that these poor women are mentioned in the Matthew genealogy.

But they are. Let's don't try to dodge it. Let's just praise God from whom all blessings flow.

A triumph over the worst of it. The worst of it is in us. And the worst of it is through us.

Now, they came to the house. And the king of Jericho heard that they came. And immediately sent.

He sent a message. And he said to Rahab, those men are spies. And they were.

They were sent by Joshua to find out the city. And to get a line on it. And so they did.

They came in as spies. Now Rahab, when she realized this, or apparently realized it before the messengers of the king got there, or held them at the door, until she could hide these men. But she hid these men in the stalks of flax on the roof.

And they were hidden up there. That was a common thing, to spread stalks of flax on the roof. If you remember what the eastern home was like in those days, they had a parapet on the roof.

And Moses says you better put a parapet up there because if anybody falls off your roof, you're responsible. And there's a whole lesson in that. Build a parapet on your roof.

Make it hard for people to fall off. She hid them up there. And she got rid of the men of the king of Jericho by telling them that they had fled.

She lied. I'm not going to defend her. But two lives were in balance here.

I'd hate to be put in a spot, wouldn't you? I'd hate to be put in a spot. But she lied. She told them that they weren't there.

That they had fled. They'd gone out about the time of the shutting of the gate. And she says pursue after them and you'll find them.

But after the men had gone, after she by this ruse had gone, and she went up to the roof of her house and she knew that these men were spies now. I don't know whether they had told her then or not. Yes, they had because she hid them, of course.

She says in verse 9, She said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land and that your terror is fallen upon us and that all inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egypt and what he did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sion and Og, whom he utterly destroyed. Pardon me.

And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt. Neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you. For the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath.

Now therefore I pray you, clear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house and give me a true token. Now she told these men something that was of military value. She said we are frightened to death of you for we have heard how your God has undertaken for you and brought you to this point.

They had heard about the Red Sea, she mentioned that, dried up the water of the Red Sea and how they had conquered the kings of the Amorites, Sion and Og, and of all the miraculous things that God had done, this was common knowledge in Jericho. She realized, she realized that she was going to be dealing with the God of Israel, which is the true God. Now she called him the Lord, no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost, and she immediately wanted to take her place on the Lord's side.

She realized that God had given the land of Canaan to the Israelites. That was common knowledge. And she wanted to be on the right side.

She believed in the God of Israel. Now she took her place. She took her place with the Israelites because she realized that God had spoken.

There's a lesson in that. Here's something that I like. For her faith, because of her faith in God, because she believed that God meant what he said and said what he meant when he was going to give the children of Israel the land of Canaan, that faith got her enshrined, if I may use those words, in God's Westminster Abbey of Faith, the 11th chapter of Hebrews.

This woman, and she's called a heart up there, this woman Rahab is mentioned in the 11th chapter of Hebrews as one of the worthies of faith. It shows us the value of faith in the eyes of God. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. There is absolutely nothing that we can do to please God more than simply believe him. I feel sorry for any unsaved person who knows about the fact that he can be saved because Christ died for him, because God loved him and Christ died for all his sins and yet that person is not saved.

Do you know that he's calling God a liar? That's a serious thing. There was a time in the western history of the United States that if you called a man a liar, the guns began to blaze. It's a serious thing to call a man a liar.

Think what it must mean to call God a liar. I'd like to recur you to the 5th chapter of 1 John. Verse 9. If we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater.

For this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his son. He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believes not the record that God gave of his son.

This is the record that God has given to us eternal life. This life is an eternal life. He that hath the Son hath life.

He that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that she hath eternal life, that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. I wonder if the unsaved realize that they're calling God a liar.

Would you want to call God a liar? Well, now I've kind of slipped up on you. I've kind of slipped up on you. This is a little mean, but I've got a kind of a mean streak in me.

Have you ever had any unbelief? Oh, let's go on. Hasn't God told us, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee? Hasn't God told us that? Have you ever listened to Satan when he'd say, God's forgotten all about you? You're not important anymore? Now, Satan is the liar, isn't he? He's the father of it. He was the liar from the beginning.

Now we're on Scripture ground. But why should we delete his lies when we can believe the truth of God? Now, I know there are times. I know there are times when it would seem that God had forsaken us.

And now there may be times. Let's face this problem. There may be times when God leaves us to our own devices so that we can find out we can't fend for ourselves.

We can't undertake our own cause. Now, under those circumstances, it might seem that God had forsaken us. But that's not the case.

God has just left us flounder a little bit until he can really rescue us and we'll know where the help came from. Now, this is Christian living. God does try us.

And he tries our faith. He tried Abraham's faith. He told Abraham, Go offer that son of yours, that lovely son, Isaac, your holy begotten Isaac, go and offer him up on an altar that I'll show you in the land of Moriah.

He tried him. God tried the righteous. That's scriptural.

He just wants to see how firm your faith is. He wants you to see how firm your faith is. But, not to believe that Jesus Christ died for me, not to believe that I'm saved when I put my trust in it, is to call God a liar.

And I do not want that responsibility. Do you? Are you saved? I believe God. When he tells me that my sins have been paid for, I believe it.

I'm resting on it. And oh, the peace that comes with simply believing God. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteous.

All right. Rahab believed God. And because of this, she is in the 11th chapter of Hebrews.

And right after her, we might turn to the 11th chapter of Hebrews, where we see the heroes and heroines of faith. Hebrews chapter 11. We have wonderful instances of the faith of the people of God in the Old Testament.

And then we began to group them together. But Rahab is the last that is mentioned singly. I want you to notice that.

Verse 31. By faith, the heart of Rahab perished not with them that believed not when she had received the spies with peace. Why? Because she believed, obviously.

And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon. Now we're beginning to lump them together. Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthah and of David also and Samuel and of the prophet.

Two through faith of these kingdoms brought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, gave the ages of swords. Out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in flight, fight, turned to fight the armies of the Asians and so on. Now, I want you to notice that Rahab is the last one that is mentioned that is given individual notice.

The others are linked together after that. God has given us, God by his Spirit has given us in the 11th chapter of Hebrews enough instances of faith to let us see how it works. Working faith.

And then he runs out of time. The apostle runs out of time in writing this. The apostle Paul, I believe.

As a matter of fact, he does the same thing in the 9th chapter of Hebrews. This is interesting, but not too earth-shaking. But I'm going to give it to you anyway.

In the 9th chapter of Hebrews, he goes into details about the tabernacle and then he stops talking. He says, of which things we're not going to talk about. He gets so far and then he quits.

And he says, we're not going to talk about them because we've got something more important to talk about. Now, in this 11th chapter of Hebrews, the Spirit of God carries us along. Until he just feels that we've had enough illustrations from the Old Testament to see that faith is a workable, viable thing.

And it works. But the significant thing to me is that Rahab is the last one that gets individual attention. Isn't that nice? How would you like to be in the 11th chapter of Hebrews? I'd value it if I were there.

I would even value it if I... In verse 32, where I didn't even get individual attention, where I was lumped together with a lot of other people, I'd be happy if my name was even there. But she gets individual attention. She believed that Israel was going to dwell in that land.

She believed that God was going to give it to them. And she took her place. She took sides.

She nailed her colors to the mat. She said, that's the boat I want to be in. So she takes action.

Now, not only does the 11th chapter of Hebrews mention Rahab, but James. James the Apostle. And I'll tell you, James the Apostle was a pragmatist.

If you'll excuse the use of that word. But he was. He was a practical person.

And do you know he mentioned him? Let's turn to James chapter 2. Now, I don't want to lionize Rahab, but I just want to show you how God looked at faith and how we can honor God by our faith as well. We read John, verse 23, And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. And he was called a friend of God.

You see then how that by works the man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messenger and had sent them out another way? For if the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Now don't you think Abraham is in pretty good company here? I mean, Rahab.

That's all my point. She's in good company. She's mentioned along with Abraham.

And we know Abraham was a man of faith. Now don't you think the spirit of God could assign another illustration besides Rahab? He could have, but he didn't. Here she is.

Now she's in good company. She's mentioned with Abraham as exercising faith in God. Now, what this I think should do to you and to me is make us realize how we can still honor God by faith.

By believing Him. If we really want to please God, all we have to do is just believe Him and act on it. And she acted on it.

Believe me, she did. Now, these men, when they came up back in Joshua 2 now, when she came up to the ropes, she confesses to them, verse 11, as soon as we heard these things, our heart did melt. Neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you.

Now this is an indictment. Alright, I want you to think about what Rahab said here. She says, as soon as we heard these things, our heart did melt.

Who? All the people of Jericho. Neither did there remain any more courage in any man, that's pretty inclusive, because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath. Now I'll ask you a question.

Why didn't the whole city of Jericho surrender and said, look, we believe God too. Do you know, they chose to fight it out. And it didn't get them anything.

They lost the battle. You don't fight against God and win. She indicted the whole city of Jericho.

And she made that remark. They were responsible. Don't you think? They were responsible.

They knew they were fighting. You know, I've been thinking a lot about people that are going to hell. I feel sorry that one of my great burdens of my soul is for any people that are close to me, relatives especially, that are going to hell.

But do you know? They know what they're doing. Do they know what they're doing? They don't realize what they're doing, but they're fighting against God. Now, the other nations in the land of Canaan, they had the same privilege.

Ray had indicted the whole land of Canaan for these remarks. This is a serious thing. It's a serious thing to fight against the living God.

Don't do it. Not even as a Christian. Submit.

And by faith, believe Him that He loves us. All right. She wanted to make a deal.

Bless her heart. She thought of her family, first of all. She said, verse 12, Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that you will show kindness unto my father's house and give me a true token, that you will save alive my father and my mother and my brother and my sisters with all they have and deliver our lives from death.

And then answered her, I'll lie for years if ye utter this our business, and it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, we will deal timely 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. Maybe she was off her side.

That's why she was out there, maybe. I don't know. She said unto them, Get ye to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you, and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned, and afterward may ye go your way.

And then said unto her, We will be blameless of this, I know, that thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread, that's the poor translation, of course, scarlet cord in the window, which thou didst let us down by, and thou shalt bring thy father and thy mother and thy brethren into thy father's house, home unto thee. Now, the thread was scarlet.

Paul mentioned that this morning as we were singing to the children. The thread was scarlet, it was red. This house was protected by a red cord hanging out of the window.

It reminds us of the 12th chapter of Exodus where the houses of the children of Israel were protected by the red blood sprinkled on the doorposts and on the lintel of the house. They were protected by that red blood. And the destroying angel, when he came to the land of Israel that night, God promised, when he sees the blood, he'll pass over you.

When I see the blood, I will pass over you. The destroying angel. He would not suffer the destroying angel to go in.

God was looking for blood. He was not looking for good work. He was not looking for church membership.

He was not looking for fascism or the ordinances. He was looking for blood. And this cord that was tied in the window was red.

That house was sheltered by a red cord. They tell the story years ago in England in the Royal Navy, when the Navy of England was composed of sailing vessels. They had the best rope in all of England.

But that rope was highly prized and it was stolen. It was stolen until the Royal Navy could hardly keep up, keep rope on their ship. So they hit upon a plan.

In the middle of the strands of that rope, they put a scarlet cord. And then they made a law that if anybody was found with rope with scarlet cord in it, he was immediately imprisoned. That was the way they took care of it.

Wherever you cut that rope, you found a scarlet cord. And you know that's true of the Bible. Wherever you cut the Bible, you find the scarlet cord.

The work of our Lord Jesus Christ, by typology, by prophecy, by picture, you see it throughout the Bible. This house was protected by its scarlet cord. Now I don't know whether Rahab's father and mother and brothers and sisters had any scruples about her being a harlot.

But I'm going to say this. If they did have any scruples, there was one time in their lives when they were glad to take shelter under her roof. And that was the only place of safety, nevertheless.

They tell the story of D.L. Moody during his campaign in Chicago years ago. He held a gospel meeting and hundreds of people were out. When the invitation was given, a man came down in full formal dress, a rich man evidently, with a swallowtail coat.

And he sat on one side of the aisle. Across on the other side of the aisle there was a woman of the street. You could tell it by looking at her.

They faced at the index of the light and you could tell she was a woman of the street. Everybody knew who she was. She was another Rahab.

Mr. Moody approached the rich man first and he said, Why are you here? And he said, I need to be saved. He said, Are you a sinner? He said, I'm a sinner. He looked across the aisle and he directed the man's attention over there.

Are you willing to take your place alongside that woman? The man thought him an illiterate. He got up and walked over and sat down beside the woman. D.L. Moody had the pleasure of pointing the quote when they believed one was just as clean as the other.

Precious blood of Christ then. I don't know their scruples, but this was one time they were glad to be in Rahab's house. Now the city fell.

It took seven days for them to do it, so I can't do it in two minutes. But the city fell, all except Rahab's house. They brought her out, her father and her mother and her brothers and sisters and they were absorbed in the nation of Israel all by faith.

Now they had to have faith the same as Rahab did. That there was only one safe place. Now they were specifically told don't go out of that house.

Now the assurance comes that these men guaranteed the safety of these people. Well now, my safety is not guaranteed by spies. My safety is guaranteed by the Lord.

He says, My sheep are My boys and I know them and I give unto them eternal life. Jesus shall be praised. Jesus shall end the man.

Put them out of it. My hand is not theirs. I and My Father are one.

My hand and My Father's hand are one. That's not a literal quote. I've got a better guarantee than the spies.

My guarantee is from the Lord Himself. Nobody is going to take it out of their hands. That incident was an instruction that was given to the children of Israel in 12th chapter of Exodus 2. They said, Don't go out of your house.

Stay in that house. And they told the same thing to Rahab. Don't go out of that house.

Now that doesn't mean that we can go in and out of Christ at random. It doesn't mean that at all. It means that that's the only place of safety underneath the precious blood.

These, the blood on the doorpost and the lintel and the scarlet cord, speaks of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the only safe place. Are you under the blood? I'm under the blood.

That blood was shed for me. It shall be praised. Father, we do thank Thee for these Old Testament stories that illustrate to us and we pray that we might have faith that will put us in the kingdom, that will glorify God, will believe Him when He tells us that God loved us and that Christ died for us.

We thank Thee for such a wonderful salvation and give thanks in His name. Amen.

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