

The Faith Of Rahab

A message exploring the character and faith of Rahab and her part in the fulfilment of God's purposes for His Jewish people

Headings

Rahab – An Unlikely Heroine

Rahab – A Heroine of Faith

Rahab's Courageous Faith

Rahab's Confident Faith

Rahab's Concerned Faith

Rahab – An Unlikely Heroine

- **Let us Read Joshua Chapter 2**
- **An Ungodly Life**
 - Rahab was a Gentile woman, a Canaanite – not one of the 'chosen race'
 - A worshipper of pagan gods
 - A Prostitute - selling her body for money
 - In the books of James and Hebrews she is identified as a harlot
- **A Woman of No Value**
 - Rahab was not valued by her people
 - She had no view of a better life, one with hope
 - Yet to the Lord she was a Woman of Value
 - One of the remarkable aspects of the Bible is that it contains stories of some of the most disreputable and despised people in society, who come to faith in the one true God – and are used by God in amazing ways
- **A Message for Us All**
 - Rahab's story is an encouragement to people who may feel that in the world's estimation they have little value – we all ... YOU ... can be used by the Lord for his amazing purposes if we have faith in Him!

Rahab – A Heroine of Faith

- **Listed in Hebrews Chapter 11 as one of the Heroes of Faith**
 - Only two women are listed in Hebrews 11 – Sarah and Rahab
 - Sarah, the wife of Abraham (*Hebrews 11: 11*), and Rahab (*Hebrews 11:31*)

- Sarah was a godly woman, the wife of the founder of the Israelite nation – who God used to give birth to Isaac, the father of Jacob (later named Israel)
 - By contrast, Rahab was an ungodly Gentile woman, who worshipped pagan gods, and was a prostitute – yet God used Rahab to assure the Jews that God had given them the Land of Israel
 - Yet, in God’s eyes, Sarah and Rahab shared the most important thing in life: they both had a saving faith in the true and living God
- **Rahab’s Faith Demonstrated in Her Actions**
 - **Rahab’s Actions were Proof of Her Faith**
 - She hid the Israeli spies
 - She gave them confidence in God’s purposes and plans for the Jewish people
 - It was Rahab who told the Jewish spies that God had given them the land (Israel) – *note the past tense!*
 - It is the same for us – we too prove our faith by our actions ... we demonstrate our trust in what the Lord has said He will do – and our trust in His character – by our actions in faith
 - **Rahab was a Woman of Covenant**
 - Before the spies leave, Rahab and the spies make a covenant
 - “Our life for yours!”
 - Rahab receives the promise of deliverance – she and all her household will be spared when Israel invades Jericho
 - It is the same for us today – we too must enter into a covenant of faith in the Living God – and the blessing is deliverance!

Rahab’s Courageous Faith

- **Faith Often Involves Risk**
 - Even though God knows the end from the beginning, from our finite human viewpoint, we don’t know exactly what the future will be
 - As a result, faith always involves risk

(But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) **Joshua 6: 2**

- Rahab had put her faith and trust in God before the spies had arrived in Jericho
 - She courageously took a risk when she welcomed the men

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. **Hebrews 11: 35**

- It was a risk:
 - a) To Host the spies in her home – they could have killed her and her family in the house
 - b) To make a Deal with the spies – Rahab had to trust the men that they would keep their word and save her when the Israelites invaded.

- c) To Collaborate with the enemy – when the authorities came to the door, Rahab was economical with truth – what she did made her a traitor, a collaborator, and put her life in danger

- For Rahab, Faith was spelt, R-I-S-K

- She was a ‘freedom fighter’ who visibly showed her courageous faith in the One True God – as James writes ‘Faith without works is dead’ (though it is by faith we are saved)

Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James 2: 25

- Rahab’s faith was obvious, visible, and clearly seen by the spies through her actions, though hidden from the authorities of the time
- As Christians, Rahab’s courageous faith raises a challenging question: is our faith in God visible (with wisdom) to those around us, and evident by our actions?
- We too must live by faith – not only when things are good and peaceful – but we must show our Courageous Faith, with wisdom, when times are tough

- For Us Today – We Need to have Courageous Faith

- A few days ago Jenny and I had a van pull out in front of us – and on the back was painted ‘It’s later than you think!’
- Many Christians today sense that these are the end days
- Not only will we need to be prepared for the Lord’s coming for His bride – but we may well need to be prepared for growing persecution of the Christian faith
 - This may come from political authorities and expressed by legal restrictions and penalties – we will need to be wise in witness and action
 - It may also come from the increase in godlessness generally, and society expressing hatred of faith and the gospel – in these latter days we need to be prepared in our spirits, and in our faith, for such things – with wisdom

Rahab’s Confident Faith

- Rahab’s faith was based on facts, not just feelings

- She had heard what God had done, the miracles that God had performed, and this fuelled her faith
- Rahab listed three events where she was certain that God had been at work:
 - a) The Israelites Crossing of the Red Sea on dry ground (*Exodus 14*)
 - b) The battle victory over Sihon, king of the Amorites (*Numbers 21*)
 - c) The Israelites winning their fight with Og, king of Bashan (*Deuteronomy 3*)

- Rahab Expressed Her Confidence to the Spies

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, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.”
Joshua 2: 8-9

- The word translated ‘know’ (*yâda*) includes a deep-down certainty, and a confidence in something or someone
- This is important, because faith is only as good as its object
- Some people say that they have faith in faith – they think that just by believing they can make things happen
 - Some people have faith in lies! ... faith in lies is superstition
- Rahab the prostitute (as she is known) not only acted in faith to enable Israel to defeat Jericho, but she is actually recorded in Scripture as one of the mothers in the messianic line – how about that for the grace of God!
- May our faith see us recorded in the heavenly books as enabling the Lord to achieve His purposes in us and in others

- Rahab’s Faith Encouraged Israel

- Rahab lived in Jericho – Jericho means ‘house of the moon’ – they were moon worshippers
- Yet Rahab spoke of the Lord to the spies

‘and said to the men: “I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, 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.”
Joshua 2: 9-10

- Rahab’s through her words and actions encouraged the Spies – she said to them...

‘And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.’
Joshua 2: 11

- Rahab’s words Encouraged the Spies to Greater Faith in the Lord
- Rahab gave the spies good advice about evading their pursuers – which they followed and thereby escaped back to the Israelite camp
- Encouraged so much by Rahab – they reported back to Joshua with great faith

And they said to Joshua, “Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.”
Joshua 2: 24

- Rahab’s words and actions had convinced the spies that the land of Judah & Benjamin (in which Jericho sits) was given them by the Lord

Rahab's Concerned Faith

- Rahab's faith was expressed in concern for her family

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 father's 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."

Joshua 2: 12-13

- She was concerned not simply for her life but for her family (her father, her mother, her brothers and her sisters)
- Rahab's concern for her family is a lesson to us to pray for and witness to our families

- Rahab sought to enter into a Covenant Relationship with the spies

- She asked the spies to make an oath to her – 'swear to me' she said to the spies
- Because of her kindness to them and her faith in the Lord who had given the land of Israel to the Jewish people – she sought a covenant with them
- She was asking that the same covenant love that God had shown towards the Israelites would be poured out on her and her family
- Their response is to make that covenant relationship: 'our lives for yours'!

So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the Lord has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

Joshua 2: 14

- 'Our Lives For Yours' – speaks to us of the Covenant Relationship we have with the Lord – it is one in which it is our lives (of love and service to Him, even though we are not yet perfect) – for His life (His eternal life becoming ours too)

And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The Lord has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'"), by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

Hebrews 7: 20-22

- Rahab's faith was Demonstrated in Action

- The spies told Rahab not to tell anyone – and she kept her word to them
- Jesus told His followers to tell the whole world that He is the way, the truth, and the promise of eternal life

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5: 14-16

- Our Faith in the Lord is likewise to be demonstrated in action – through witness of our lives and character as well as by our words

- The Oath and the Scarlet Cord

So the men said to her: “We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father’s household to your own home.” **Joshua 2: 17-18**

- The scarlet cord was a sign of the oath and covenant between Rahab and the spies
- We have a covenant with the Lord – His life for Ours – which is sealed by his blood – like a scarlet cord symbolising the covenant
- Every time we share communion we remember the covenant sealed by the shed blood of the Lord – a scarlet cord through which we (like Rahab) will be spared from death

‘In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” ‘ **1 Corinthians 11: 25**

Rahab’s Heritage and Our Spiritual Line of Faith

- Rahab and her family were saved when Jericho was invaded and she joined the people of Israel
 - Rahab married a man called Salman (a Jewish man)
 - Together they had a son called Boaz
 - Boaz married Ruth and they had a son called Obed
 - Obed had a son called Jesse
 - Jesse had eight sons, the youngest being David – the King of Israel

Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. **Matthew 1: 5-6**

- Rahab is thus an Ancestor of Yeshua
 - Yeshua is from the line of David, King of Israel – He is the ‘Branch’ from the stem of Jesse (David’s father)

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. **Isaiah 11: 1**

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” **Jeremiah 23: 5-6**

- Yeshua’s lineage from Rahab is detailed in the Gospel of Matthew – see **Matthew 1: 5-15**
- Rahab’s faith and actions are the reason she is one of the two Heroines of Faith listed in Hebrews chapter 11

- We are Sons and Daughters of God through Faith in Yeshua

- By Faith in Yeshua we become children of God

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1: 12-13

- Notice that our faith in Yeshua gives us the 'right' to become children of God
- It is not of our own doing – but it is God's work in us
- The Greek word translated as 'right' is 'exousia' which means ability, privilege or delegated authority
- We receive from God the adoption as His sons and daughters (*Galatians 4: 5*)
- Believers receive the Holy Spirit who assures us of our relationship with God

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Galatians 4: 6-7

- Rahab's story should encourage us and teach us that we too can become children of God, just as she became joined to the House of Israel
- It is God's doing – but we should have the confidence to know that we are His children – and we too can, and should, cry out to Him 'Abba, Father'

- Encouragement from Rahab

- Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute in Jericho who became an unlikely heroine of faith
 - We may think our background makes us unlikely heroes or heroines – but ... take heart from Rahab! *The Lord can use Anyone – even YOU!*
- Despite her sinful past, she demonstrated remarkable courage and trust in God
 - We may think our past makes us unlikely heroes or heroines – but ... we too can be courageous through our faith in God – take heart from Rahab! *Faith in Action leads to Great Things!*
- Remember Rahab's faith led to her salvation and inclusion in the genealogy of Yeshua
 - We too, through faith in Yeshua, are grafted into the household of the Living God – take heart from Rahab! *A Canaanite who is an ancestor of Yeshua!*
- Her life exemplifies the power of redemption and the transformation that comes through faith in God
 - We may think we have little to offer; but by faith in God we can be heroes and heroines of the Faith – take heart from Rahab! (see *Hebrews 11: 31*) *Rahab was used by the Lord to encourage the Israelites to possess the Land*
- Rahab was a true woman of faith in God – a woman who feared God only
 - We can be true men and women of faith in God if we fear God and not man – take heart from Rahab! *The Lord honours men and women whose faith He can use to achieve His purposes*

Scripture References for Rahab

Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who *are* in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. Joshua 6: 17

And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. Joshua 6: 25

Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. Matthew 1: 5-6

Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way? James 2: 25

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. Hebrews 11: 31