

Rahab - an unlikely believer

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[0 : 00] There are quite a number of unlikely conversions in the Bible. Now there's a sense in which, of course, every single conversion is unlikely.

But what I mean by that phrase is that there are certain individuals in the Bible who, from a mere human perspective, you would never expect to see them coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But yet the Lord in his sovereign power does just that. He takes those who, very often from the outside, you just would never expect to see them coming to faith.

And he comes in and he works in their hearts and he produces faith in their hearts. He draws these people to faith and he produces that faith sometimes in the most unlikely places.

And straight away you could think of many people in the Bible, characters perhaps from the Bible that you might place into that particular category. You might think of Saul of Tarsus.

[1 : 03] He's a fairly obvious one. He's an individual that you would never expect to see coming to faith. You know, humanly speaking, you would never expect it. He's persecuting the church.

He's putting them in prison, effectively killing the Lord's people, the last person you would expect to become a Christian. And amazingly, of course, the Lord so works in his life and he brings that man to faith.

And there's lots of other people as well. You could think of an Ethiopian eunuch. That's another example. Again, you know, he's the chancellor of the queen of Ethiopia there and you're not expecting someone like that to come to faith.

That's not the kind of person who's been coming to faith and the rest of the gospel accounts or through acts. But amazingly, Ethiopian eunuch. He's saved on a desert road somewhere.

And there's others as well. You can think of Nicodemus. You can think of Zacchaeus. There's a whole list of them, isn't there? Lots of different people, tax collectors, people from different backgrounds or different ways of life that you wouldn't expect to be saved.

[2 : 05] And yet, amazingly, through the power of God, they are. Well, in tonight's passage here, we come across one such unlikely believer, the harlot or the prostitute Rahab here.

So this is a woman with quite clearly a very immoral life, a woman that lives in a very immoral and pagan city. And she's a woman that really has absolutely nothing to do with the people of God. She has nothing to do with the covenant people of God. She's got no part in the covenant promises of God. She is very much on the outside. But yet, amazingly, we see this woman come to faith. And with this woman's conversion here, we see that there is absolutely no barrier to the work of God when it comes to salvation.

Absolutely no barrier. No barrier at all. Sometimes we think there's a barrier. And sometimes we let that barrier affect our evangelism and even affect our prayer. But there is no barrier.

[3 : 09] And we clearly see that here. And that is a tremendous comfort to each one of us. Because we have all got people in our, whether it be our families or friends or colleagues, people who are outside of Christ and who we are very burdened for.

Now, some of these people, they might be people that we think of as being close to the kingdom. And there are individuals like that, that perhaps you'd be less surprised to see them come to faith. You feel as though they're very close. But there are others, and they're just not close at all. In a very outward way, you can see that they're a million miles away from ever putting their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But yet, as we come to a passage like this, we are reminded that with the power of God, absolutely anything is possible. And I think that's a great encouragement to us to pray. It's a great encouragement to us to pray, knowing that the Lord can take even those people who we think that there is no way that they'll be brought to faith.

The Lord can do just that. So let's have a look at this fascinating narrative here in Joshua chapter 2. So here, just by way of context, the people of Israel, they're at the end of their 40 years of wilderness wandering by this point.

[4 : 26] So remember, God had already led the people to the banks of the Jordan, and effectively, he told them to go and conquer Canaan. That was 40 years previous to this.

And they said no. So straight after they came out of Egypt, went through Sinai, he eventually led them to the Jordan and to the edges of the land of Canaan. And he said to them, go and take Canaan, go and conquer Canaan.

But the people said no. And they're effectively saying no, because they were too scared to go in. They thought the enemy was too strong for them. And of course, as a result of that, the Lord judged them. The Lord judged them to 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

And now, in this part of the narrative here, we're finished that 40 years. That 40 years has now finished. And now, for a second time, the Lord has led them to the Jordan and to effectively, to the outskirts of the land of Canaan.

And now, he's actually going to enable his people to go in and conquer this land of Canaan. So Joshua, it's really a book all about the conquest of Canaan.

[5 : 30] It's a book that's really full of battles. It's a book that's full of bloodshed. And it can be quite difficult to read it sometimes. There are other books as well, perhaps, that people find a bit more difficult to read.

And Joshua is one of these, for that reason, that the bloodshed and the battles that we find in it. But amazingly, before we read of any battles, and before we read of any bloodshed, so bear in mind, it's a book of battles and a book of bloodshed.

But before we read of any of those things, we read a story of salvation. That's quite powerful. Before any Canaanite is killed, a Canaanite is saved. A Canaanite is converted.

And that's a very powerful beginning to this particular book. And it's a reminder to us that when it comes to God, mercy and salvation are absolute priorities.

Absolute priorities. You see, critics will come to a book like Joshua. They love to come to books like Joshua. And the critic of the Bible will come to a book like Joshua and they will say, what kind of a God do you have?

[6 : 33] A God who's interested in genocide. A God who's interested in just wiping out whole people groups just like that. And they might say, that's exactly what's going on here. Israel is going in and they're going to conquer Canaan.

But, we can answer that here at the very beginning of this book and show them the kind of God we have. Because here we have a clear example that our God, yes, he's a God of justice and judgment, but he is also a God of mercy and salvation.

Before any Canaanite blood is shed, the Lord goes in and the Lord actually saves a Canaanite. And arguably, the most unlikely of Canaanites as well.

Now, at the outset of the book, back in chapter 1, what's effectively happening there is God is reiterating his covenant promises to Joshua.

So, these covenant promises, of course, have always been there from Genesis 12 onwards and they keep cropping up. And at the beginning of Joshua, he's reiterating them to the people and he's saying to them, look, I am going to give you victory over Canaan.

[7 : 35] I am going to give you the land of Canaan. There is absolutely no doubt about that. I will never leave you and I will never forsake you. So, the people of Israel here, they're not in a situation where they don't know if they're going to win.

They know they're going to win because the Lord has told them they're going to win. You are going to have victory over the Canaanites. And that's really what he's telling them there in chapter 1 as God commissions Joshua as their new leader.

He commissions him and he says, you're going to have the victory. So, there is absolutely no doubt about it at all. They have this promise that they would be victorious. But, strangely, you would think that if they got that promise that they would then just make their way straight across into Canaan and take that victory.

But that's not actually what happens here. Joshua, he doesn't straight away send the army across. We read here that he first of all sends spies to spy out Jericho.

He sends some spies to spy out Jericho. Now, why does he do that? God's already promised the victory. Is Joshua doubting what God has promised here?

[8 : 39] Is that why he's sending out these spies just to double check what God has actually said? Well, that's absolutely not what's going on here at all. Joshua isn't doubting the promises of God.

But, just because God has promised something, that does not take away from our responsibilities. Now, that's a really important biblical principle.

It follows through lots of different parts of the word of God. Just because God promises something, it does not take away from our responsibilities. And here, the people have been promised victory. But that doesn't take away their responsibility to prepare for this battle like they would prepare for any battle. And that's one of the reasons why they send these spies out.

Because it was common strategy, common battle strategy, to send spies out if you were going to attack another land. That's still the case today. We hear much today in the news about spies.

[9 : 37] It's a common practice now. And even then, you would send spies out and they would identify the strong points and the weak points of whatever it is you were going to attack. And that's what's going on here.

They've got this promise of victory, but Joshua has a responsibility to make all the right preparations. And it was right for Joshua to send in those spies because that is the right way to prepare for battle.

And that's true for ourselves as well. God gives us many promises in Scripture, doesn't he? We have many promises in Scripture, but we don't just sit back and presume upon these promises, do we?

These promises that the Lord gives us often they require action on our part. In a sense, they're not dependent on our action. They're the promise of the Lord, but the promises of God often require action on our part as well.

So for example, one good example here is that God promises to save his people. That's clear. He absolutely promises that he will go out and he will save all of his people, all of the lost sheep who are wandering out there.

[10 : 45] He will go out and he will bring them in. But that particular promise doesn't take away from our responsibility as the Lord's people. God promises that he will save his people, but yet he sends us out with the gospel and he tells us to make that gospel known.

Share that gospel with those around you. To pray for those who are lost, to evangelize our communities, to evangelize our families, to evangelize our friends. It's a responsibility that we have on our part.

So it's God's promise, but God brings about his promises through his servant. And here, God promises Israel victory, but that doesn't stop Joshua making the right preparations, doing what he can.

Doing what he can. He's not taking matters into his own hands. He's doing what he can based on the promises of God. And for that reason, he sends these spies into Jericho.

And these spies, then we see there in verse 1, they make their way to Jericho and they come to the house of a prostitute, this woman called Rahab.

[11 : 52] Now, we don't know exactly why they went there. I suppose, obviously, the place of, the home of a prostitute would be a place that would be visited frequently and arguably, it may well have acted like a guest house as well, so it might have been good cover for spies coming in, but for whatever reason, that's where they've found refuge for the night.

They've come and they're hiding out here. However, there's a bit of a problem and the problem is that their cover has been broken. Their cover has been broken.

So people who are loyal to the king of Jericho, they have found out about the true identity of these men and not just their identity, they've actually found out about the mission of these men and these locals of Jericho, they've come and they've told the king and they've told the king about these men and then the king sends officers and he sends officers right to Rahab's house in order to get these men and to find these men.

Now, we don't know exactly how their identity was blown. We don't know that. We don't read that. But it was. Something has caught the attention of the local people of Jericho.

Something sticks out about these men, these two Israelite spies. They stand out for whatever reason we don't know exactly. But in a sense it's a good thing, isn't it?

[13:19] In a sense it's a good thing that they've not been able to blend in. When you think about it, these are two Israelites, two men of God and they've come into this idolatrous pagan city and they're trying to blend in.

And it is impossible for the Lord's people to blend in to that kind of environment. And here, in a sense, it's quite good that they don't because it shows us that they can't blend in to this kind of immoral and pagan environment and culture that they're in here.

And that ought to be the case for us as the Lord's people as well. You know, assuming that you're not backslidden and that's a big assumption, but assuming you're not backslidden, it'll be absolutely impossible for you to blend in to an outwardly sinful and pagan kind of environment.

It's impossible. You can try to go into an environment like that, but you're just not comfortable.

You're just not at ease. Now, if you're backslidden, it's a different story. If you're backslidden, it's very easy to feel comfortable in these kinds of evil environments.

But if you're not, it's impossible. And people can see that you're not comfortable. People can see that you're different. They see that the Lord's people are unique in that sense.

[14:38] So, for the Lord's people, assuming that we are not backslidden, that's how it should be for ourselves. But here, for whatever reason, these men, they've been found out and the king, he sends these officers to the house of Rahab to arrest them.

And then, we read something quite surprising there in verse 4. So, the woman hides the two spies of Israel. So, she takes them upstairs and she hides them under stalks of flax.

And, at this point, you're quite confused as a reader and you can imagine the men themselves would have been quite confused. Why is she helping us? I mean, she is the enemy.

Why is she helping us? Why is she protecting us? And, you can perhaps imagine this kind of confusion going around these men's minds here and then, they hear, of course, the officers coming to the door and these two spies are hiding, obviously, and they're trying to be as quiet as they can because they don't want to be caught.

So, they're going to have heard this conversation that's going on outside and they hear this conversation that's going on outside and they're probably wondering, is she going to tell on us? Is this all a setup to hand us over to the officials?

[15:52] But they listen and they hear this woman lying. They hear this woman deceiving the officers and she sends these officers off in another direction. And we can't even begin to underestimate the gravity of what she has done there.

This is not just a wee white lie sending a few people down the road. She has lied to officials of Jericho in order to protect two Israelite men.

And that is a serious, serious crime. She has committed treason. That's what's happened there. She's committed treason against the king of Jericho. She has committed treason against Jericho itself.

And had she been found out, well, in most countries and kingdoms, especially in the past, if you committed treason, it would be punishable by death itself. And highly likely she would have been put to death here.

So this is not just a wee white lie. This woman here, this Canaanite prostitute, she is risking her life to save these two Israelite spies.

[16:54] Now, why would she do that? Why? And as the reader, you're asking that question, why? Why would this woman do that? But then the mystery becomes a bit clear.

In verse 8 to 14 there, the woman, she comes upstairs to the men, and she gives this wonderful confession of faith. And now all of a sudden things start to make sense.

And these verses there are 8 to 14. That's really the central core of this whole narrative. It's the main thrust of what God wants to leave us with and wants us to think about here, this extraordinary confession of faith from this pagan prostitute.

Now, as I said by way of introduction, from a human perspective, you would never expect her to come to faith. From a human perspective, she did not belong to the covenant people of God.

She did not inherit any of the covenant blessings or the covenant promises of God. She has not been brought up under the word of God. She's not been brought up, as we would say, in church under the preaching of God's word.

[18:02] She has not had any of those things blessings. At all. And actually, contrary to that, it's not just that she didn't have these blessings, but contrary to that, she was actually living in a very

pagan environment, a pagan society, and it wasn't even that she was someone who was innocent living in that pagan society.

She was very much involved in a kind of profession which is quite obviously against the word of the Lord and against the law of God. But amazingly, she has come to faith.

And you see that in this confession. And I want to just turn to this confession for a few moments now in verse 8 to 13 there. And just highlight a couple of things.

Now, the first thing I want to notice here is that although she wouldn't have had the word of God, she wouldn't have had access to the word of God, but she has heard about the works of God. She's heard about what the Lord has done. And you see there in verse 10, she says, we've heard, we've heard about how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea.

[19 : 07] We have heard about how you utterly destroyed the Amorites. We have heard these things. So she didn't have the word of God, but she has heard something about the Lord.

She has heard about what the Lord has done. She has heard about what the Lord is like. So stories of God somehow have started circulating around Jericho.

And they've been circulating for quite a while because it was quite a while since they crossed the Red Sea. So these stories have been circulating around Jericho and the people of Jericho are getting scared.

They are struck with fear. And that fear has obviously struck into her own heart. And Rahab has this sense of fear. She has a sense of awe before the God of Israel.

And you very much see that here. And I think that there is application there for ourselves from an evangelistic point of view.

[20 : 01] You see we can think of the church as Israel. And respectfully speaking you can think of those outside of the church those who don't come in and don't hear God's word.

You can think of them as the Canaanites. So we come under the word of God. We've been brought up under the word of God. We hear the word of God every week every Lord's day, every midweek perhaps.

We're familiar with the word of God. But those who are outside they never come under the word of God. They might come in for a funeral or a wake every now and again but generally speaking they don't come under the word of God.

Very much like these Canaanites here. But we must make sure that these people hear about the Lord. We must make sure that they hear about the work of the Lord, what God has done and what God continues to do.

They're not coming in here to come under God's word. So we must do all we can as the Lord's people to tell them about the work of God. When our communities, when they look at the Lord's people, they should be able to see something of the power of the gospel.

[21 : 09] They should be able to see something of the transforming power of the gospel in our lives. That's difficult and that's challenging, but that must be the case. They're not coming in here under the word of God, so they need to hear out there about what God has done and indeed what God continues to do.

The Bible tells us that we are living epistles to be known and read by all men and my prayer is that we would be just that here in this community, that we would be living epistles, that they would see and that they would hear about the work of the Lord.

God. And we don't just rely on our silent witness either, as important as that is. You also actually need to speak to them.

You need to tell them. You need to tell them about what God has done. Tell them what the Lord has done in your own life. So, for example, I think personal testimony is a great way to do that.

You know, sharing with other people about what the Lord has actually done for you, whether it be in the past or today or the day before, whatever it might be, to use opportunities. So, if someone asked you tomorrow, you know, about your faith or how you became a Christian or any kind of inroad, we should be ready and willing to use these opportunities to tell them about what the Lord has done, to tell them about the work of God.

[22 : 38] Because they're not coming in here to hear it, just like the Canaanites, they weren't under the word of God, but they heard about it. And these people out there, they need to hear, so that means we need to be prepared to do that.

And you have to ask yourself, as the Lord's people here, you know, you should be able to give a, I don't mean a 20 minute sermon or a 20 minute testimony, but you should be able to just say a few words to explain how or what the Lord has done in your life.

Small things, it doesn't have to be big, but to do that you have to think about it. You have to be prepared to do things like that, prepared to look for opportunities, take these opportunities. And we have to think as well about the different kinds of opportunities we have.

So for example, you know, someone might ask you, how was your weekend? That's quite a common question you'll get on a Monday, how was your weekend? And we can perhaps readily say, oh well, it was a nice quiet weekend, or we did, went out for dinner, or we did some things with the family, or something like that.

But surely for the Lord's people, the most important part of our weekend is that we came into the house of God, we heard about the wonder of the gospel, we heard about the grace of our Lord and Saviour, we heard the mercy and compassion that is on offer, we heard about the death of our Lord.

[23 : 54] Surely these are the things that are the most important part of our weekend, and surely that's what we should be directing people to. How was your weekend? It was great, I worshipped the Lord, I went and I heard his word proclaimed, and it did my soul good.

Use these opportunities to make sure that the people out there here, about the work of the Lord, they need to hear it, so we need to think about how we're interacting with others.

So Rahab here, she has heard about the amazing work of God, she has heard, it has come to her, what the Lord has done, and through these things amazingly, she has come to faith herself, and then we have this confession, and what does she actually confess in these verses?

Well, she's confessing the mighty power of God, that's one thing she's confessing, she's saying essentially, look, we don't stand a chance against your God, your God is going to come in, the God that destroyed the Amorites, your God is going to come in, and he's going to wipe us out, because your God is more powerful than any other force that we know about, than any other false God that we know about, your God is almighty, and your God is all-powerful, but she doesn't just confess that, see in verse 11 there, she's not just confessing his power, she's also confessing him as the one true living God there, so in verse 11, she says that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath, now we can read something like that and it doesn't strike you, because we hear that kind of language all the time, but you have to remember that this is coming from a pagan, this is coming from a pagan who lives in a culture where there is myriads of gods, there are gods over every aspect of creation,

God of the storm and the sun and the sea and fertility and all of these different things, there's gods connected with all of these aspects of creation, but here she is saying, no, the Lord he is God of all things, God in heaven above and on earth beneath, that's a marvelous confession, particularly coming from someone in that kind of pagan culture, and all of this, all of what she confesses here about who the Lord is, all of this, it causes her to fear, and you pick that up from the passage as well, and she's saying there that the Canaanites in general are fearful because of the Lord, and presumably Rahab herself, Rahab herself is filled with this sense of the fear of God, but it isn't just a normal fear, see Rahab, she quite clearly has a godly fear, you see that, it's a godly fear, and you know that's a natural response, a natural response when you see the true identity of God, we're thinking this morning about the true identity of the

[26 : 53] Lord Jesus Christ, when you see the true identity of who God is, in all his power, in all his holiness, in his justice, goodness, and truth, when you see all of that, you cannot but be struck by this sense of godly fear, you see, out there in the media and in the culture of our day, we've turned God into some kind of powerless force who is never offended, and he's quite happy as long as everyone else is smiling and happy and enjoying their lives, that's what our media and culture portray God as, almost this kind of cuddly toy version of God, and that kind of picture of God, which is displayed out there in the world, that kind of picture of God doesn't bring about any godly fear or anything like that, in fact it has the opposite effect, it causes mockery, and this cuddly toy version of God which is portrayed out there, it causes people to mock God, and you're more likely to read articles about God being mocked today than anything else, certainly more so than any sense of reverence, they've made

God into some pathetic being, that's what they've done out there, and because of that the Lord is mocked, but when you see the Lord for who he truly is, when you get an insight into the reality of

who he is, then you are struck by the sense of godly fear, this sense of reverence, but amazingly here for Rahab, this fear isn't something that drives Rahab away, you notice in her confession, she doesn't say, your God is a God who I fear, so get away from me, leave this place and take your God with you, it's not a fear that causes her to run away or that causes her to beg for these spies to leave, it's not the kind of fear that you have here, this is actually a fear that draws her towards God, and that comes in this confession of faith here, that she's pleading for the Lord's mercy, she's pleading for the Lord's salvation, and verse 12 there, now then, please swear to me by the Lord, the pleading nature of the language there, swear to me by the Lord that as

I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and she's asking for salvation there, you see, that is exactly what true faith looks like, true faith isn't content with knowing something about God, true faith isn't content with standing at a distance and admiring who God is, or understanding who God is from a mere intellectual perspective, true faith always goes further than that, true faith sees who the Lord is, but it steps forward, and it throws ourselves at the feet of our Lord and Saviour, and we come pleading God save me, it's not just a faith that says, wow, God is great, it's a faith that says, wow, God is great, and it draws us towards him as we fall at his feet and begging for his salvation, and I wonder if you have done that here tonight.

Now, yes, you know a lot about God, perhaps, and yes, you have heard much about God, you've seen much of the Lord's goodness, yes, you know you're a sinner as well, and you know that perhaps that you've got a sense of the fear of the Lord, but have you actually come before him, fallen on the floor before him, and pled for this mercy and grace and salvation?

Is that fear just something that keeps you at a distance, or is it something that draws you towards him? Saving faith never just sits there in awe of God, it always leads you to throw yourself under the wings of the almighty God and to find refuge with him there.

[30 : 53] So, the rest of the inhabitants of Jericho here, they fear, but the kind of fear they have is the fear that pushes God away, it's the kind of fear that makes them run away from God, but not Rahab.

Rahab is very different here, the faith that she shows here and the fear that she shows here is one that drives her towards the Lord. And, of course, we see as well this woman's faith, not only in her confession, but in her actions as well.

Because that's important. You see your faith not just in word, and word is very important, to confess with our mouths is very important, but you don't just see faith in what we say.

You see faith as well in what we do, in how we act. And you see that here with this woman, and you see it in the way in which she actually deceives these officers of Jericho.

faith must always reveal itself in action. Not just in word, but in action. And here in this passage, she very clearly, she stands out on the side of the Lord, doesn't she?

[32 : 02] She stands out. There's absolutely no doubt about that. She sacrificed her life for it. She stands out on the side of the Lord. It wasn't easy to do that. Not easy at all to go against her own culture, against her own society.

She does that, and she comes out on the side of the Lord. Now, I realize that I've not addressed the elephant in the room in some ways when you look at a passage like this.

I've not addressed the moral question of whether Rahab was right or not to deceive these officers. I'm not focusing on that for good reason because sometimes when you come to a passage like this, that's all we can focus on.

we can focus on whether Rahab was right or wrong. I remember many a fellowship meeting after anyone's preached on Rahab and the whole discussion is about whether Rahab was right or wrong, to have lied or should he have done something else.

When here it's to miss the point to focus on that. That's not what the Lord wants us to focus on.

That's quite clear from the passage. What he wants us to focus on is the amazing faith of this woman, the amazing faith of this Canaanite woman.

[33 : 13] So for example, when you read about Rahab in the New Testament, it never necessarily commends specific actions, but it commends her faith always. It's her faith that comes to the fore.

And that's what ought to grab our attention in this passage. Not how right or wrong she was in the way in which she went about this, but her faith, the faith that is behind it all. That is the focus and that's what we must see and that's what we must be amazed at, that such faith like that can be found in a pagan, in a prostitute, in someone who was far from the covenant people of God.

That is what's supposed to strike us, not questions about whether she was right or not to lie. I'm not saying you can't ask that kind of question, I'm just saying that's not the focus, so let's not make that the focus of what we go away with this evening.

And then after this wonderful confession here from Rahab, the two spies, they effectively accept her now as one of their own, she's now an Israelite and they agree to protect her and anyone else who comes into her household as well.

And as they're departing here, they ask her to do something. They ask her to put a scarlet cord, a scarlet rope out the window and that was to be almost like a sign of this promise of salvation and if this scarlet cord was hanging out the window, then everyone inside her house would be protected.

[34 : 42] And that kind of image there, it cannot but make you think of the Passover blood on the doorpost and the lintel. I don't think that this scarlet robe is specifically teaching and specifically directing us back to the Passover blood, but when you're reading it, you can't help but be reminded of it.

It's impossible. The imagery is so close, isn't it? There, the rope was hanging down and protected everyone inside it. And the same was true of the Passover blood. The blood was there on the doorposts and the lintel and it protected those who were inside.

It protected those inside from the destroyer. So it's impossible to read it without perhaps making that link in your mind at the very least. Whether that's the intention of the text is perhaps another matter, but it's certainly there when you're reading it.

And of course, the blood in the Exodus was pointing forward to the blood of the Passover lamb, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

So here, in this home in Jericho, you see something of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. again, not necessarily in the scarlet cord, in the cord itself, but you see it in Rahab.

[36 : 01] In Rahab. Literally in Rahab. Because in Matthew and chapter 1, we have the genealogy of Jesus. And when we read the genealogy of Jesus, we read, at the beginning of Matthew 1, that this is the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham, Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and so on, down to verse 5, and then we read, Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab.

Amazing. Amazing. This Canaanite prostitute here, it's not only that she is saved, but actually through her bloodline would come the saviour of the world.

That's remarkable. Through her own bloodline would come one whose blood ultimately would cleanse her from her sins. And you see there a wonderful picture of the beauty of the gospel. Not just that the Lord would reach out and save such an obscure woman as she was in that particular profession that she was in. Not only does he reach out and save her and bring her into the fold, but he has her as actually part of the bloodline of the Lord himself.

And she is one of the few women who is actually mentioned in that genealogy. You see it's amazing not only the fact that the Lord would bring someone like that in, but how he uses someone like that.

[37 : 33] And you know, God has not changed in that sense either. The Lord is still able to do just that. He's still able to pluck those who we would never imagine, and he's able to pluck them and to place them inside his kingdom and not just place them inside, he's able to use them in marvellous ways.

Think of Saul of Tarsus again, like that. Not only was he saved, he was used in a remarkable way. And the Lord can still do that today. And that I think should be an encouragement to us, to pray for those who we see as on the outside, to pray that the Lord would bring them in.

And not just that, but that the Lord might use them, and use them mightily for the cause. Because that's what we need today. And may that be an encouragement to each one of us.

And if you are in here today perhaps, and you're very much on the outside, and maybe there are those in your family who think that you are very hard to the gospel, and very hard to the things of the Lord Jesus Christ, but yet the saving power of the Lord can work in your heart, can bring you to faith, and can surprise not just a congregation, but a whole community of people, as certainly would have been the case with Rahab.

Let's pray.