

Unlikely Faith

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[0 : 00] Well friends, we're here to worship God and we're going to do so singing to his praise from Psalm 98 in Sing Psalms. Psalm 98, that's on page 129 of the Blue Psalm books.

Reading at the beginning of the psalm. We'll sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he has done. His right hand and his holy arm the victory have won. The Lord declared his saving work and made it to be known to all the nations of the world his righteousness is shown.

We're going to sing down to the end of the verse marked six to the praise of God. We're going to sing to the tune Petersham and we're going to stand to sing. A new song to the Lord for wonders he has done.

His right hand and his holy arm the victory have won.

[1 : 19] The Lord declared his saving work and made it to be known to all the nations of the world his righteousness is shown.

His death was love and gratefulness he has been ever held.

And all the nations of the earth have seen what God has done.

All the nations of the earth have seen what God has done.

Our God who brings the elements by his right hand alone.

[2 : 33] Acclaim the Lord, O all near, shout out thee and rejoice.

Make music and be jubilant to him lift up your voice.

With heart make music to the Lord, with heart his graces sing.

With trumpet and with heart rejoice before the Lord the King.

Let's join together in prayer. Let us pray. Lord our God, we come once again and we seek to praise and worship your great name.

[3 : 47] We seek that our hearts might be bowed down before you, not through and right spirit of worship.

We have much to be thankful for as we reflect upon your loving kindness to us in so many different ways. You're a God of mercy, a God of love, a God of grace.

The testimony of which has been witnessed in this place, this day as we have remembered your death until you come again.

And so we thank you for this remembrance that has been ours. For we come and we confess that we are so apt to forget. As we find ourselves all too often submerged in the busyness of life.

We find ourselves, as it were, even at times at a distance from you. But yet we praise you, O Lord, that you are never at a distance from us.

[4 : 57] That you are our God. That you are our King. That you have bought us for a price. That we cost you too much to neglect us and to leave us to ourselves.

And so we praise you, O Lord, for that covenant security that is ours in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And what many of us here tonight enjoy in terms of such safety, not only for time, but for the endless ages of eternity.

We plead, O Lord, that all gathered in here would be able to share in such a wonderful provision.

That all our friends here, who are as of yet strangers both to grace and to God.

That they would come even this evening hour and taste and see that God is good. For who trusts in him is surely blessed.

We hear the wind around us this evening hour. A reminder of your power. We cannot see it, but we can see what it does.

[6 : 10] How we long, O Lord, to know the wind of your Spirit in our midst. That the power of God unto salvation would work mightily in the hearts of our dear friends here.

Who do not know you as their Lord and their Saviour. Perhaps many here who've been sitting in these pews for years, even decades.

But who still are unable to know what it is to have that closeness with you. Would you not in your mercy and love come? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Work in our midst, not for our glory. But so that your name would continue to be high and lifted up as we come and as we seek to worship.

And we thank you, Lord, for this time of worship. We know that there are many in this world today who are not afforded such a luxury as this.

[7 : 11] To be able to come alongside brothers and sisters in the Lord without fear of persecution. And so we pray for the persecuted church.

We pray for those who are doing all that they can in their power to worship you. But perhaps in secret, even in fear of their lives.

Be with them, O Lord. And help us as we reflect upon such. Not to take for granted that which could so easily be taken from us.

And so we thank you, O Lord, for the ordinary means of grace. For those times that you have appointed for us to meet with you.

To come around your word. To hear it preached and sung. To come before you with our prayers and supplications. A spirit of thanksgiving and confession.

[8 : 07] We praise you, O Lord, that this is our testimony. And we pray, O Lord, that for all of us this appetite would only increase. That we would have a thirst and a hunger after righteousness.

And that indeed we would be filled. We pray, O Lord, for this congregation. We give thanks for them and for their witness in this town.

We pray, O Lord, that this place would continue to be as a beacon of light. In the darkness of this world. Not the building itself, but the people within it.

As your church. As your bride. As they go out into the ordinary every day. With the good news of the gospel. We pray that you would help them, one and all.

To have that boldness. To share even a word in season. Or even in their walk. That something would be seen in them. Something different.

[9 : 09] Something that is not of this world. Something that is of Christ. We confess, O Lord, that at times we find it difficult to witness on your side.

But your word tells us not to worry what we are to say at certain points. For you will give us the words. And so help us to come with that prayer each and every day.

Lord, give me an opportunity to tell of the wondrous works of the cross. For we know that in doing so, you are the God who delights in mercy.

And who opens up the way for us to share the good news. And so bless every effort, not only of this congregation, but every congregation in this town.

As they seek under the banner of the love of Christ to further your kingdom. That indeed they would see fruit for their labor. For the glory of your name.

[10 : 07] And we give thanks, especially this evening. That we have a dear sister being added to the number of this congregation as a communicant member. We pray for Lorna that you would be with her.

Be with her not only today, but perhaps especially tomorrow on the days that lie ahead. As she reflects upon this profession of faith.

This step of faith that she has taken. And we know that she may be a prime target for the evil one. Who seeks to distract us and to bring us down.

But yet we praise you, O Lord, for that wonderful promise. That greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. And what we pray for, Lorna. We pray for us all.

That you would protect us and keep us. Lead us and guide us in your truth. Every step of the way that we would seek at all times to be informed by the infallible promises of Scripture.

[11 : 11] That are yea and amen in Christ Jesus our Lord. We pray for our young. We give thanks for them as they join with us here this evening hour. We pray, O Lord, that you would touch them in their tender young years.

We pray, O Lord, that you would know something of what it is to grow up in this world.

Not leaning upon the fragile props of this life. But rather leaning upon the rock of ages. The one who is sure and steadfast.

The one who will never let us fall. So be with us, we pray, in our time of worship and in our time of fellowship after.

We pray for Marshaally that you would be with her as she embarks on a new chapter in her experience also. That she reaches out to children who are so less fortunate than our own.

[12:15] That you would bless her ministry there in all that she seeks to do. That indeed she too would see fruit for her labor. And we praise you for every servant of yours.

And in many ways all of your people are servants called to our own particular ministry. Whether that is in our homes or in our workplaces, in our communities.

Wherever that may be. And so help us by the grace of God to fulfill that ministry to the glory of your name. Lead us then and guide us.

And forgive us for Jesus' sake. Amen. I'm going to sing once more, friends. This time from Psalm 62. In the Scottish Psalter on page 294.

294. And that's reading at verse 5 of the Psalm. We'll sing down to the end of the verse, Mark 9 to the tune, Martyrs.

[13:34] We'll stand to sing. My soul, wait thou with patience. My soul, wait thou with patience.

Upon thy God alone. On him dependeth all my hope.

And expectation. The only my salvation is.

And thy strong rock is here. He only is my sure defense.

I shall walk through the end. In God thy glory.

[15:01] In God thy glory this it is. And my salvation sure.

In God the rock is all my strength. By my life.

I reputable. I reputable. I reputable. I reputable. Savior. I reputable. Savior. Ye peep the blaster of the ends. In the name of the ends.

In the name of the valley. In the name of the valley. Before him for ye after are.

God is our refuge high. God is our refuge high. Surely we need men. Our refuge high. Surely we need men.

[16:12] Our vanity. Our refuge. And they can arrive. And they can arrive. In players where they can There could be the light of sea.

And they can emerge. Even the love of our flag.

For I can't allow it to be. Well friends, let's turn together to read the word of God.

We're going to turn to the pages of the Old Testament and to the book of Joshua. Joshua chapter 2.

I don't know if the numbers correlate to the Pulpit Bible, the Pew Bibles.

It's page 215 on my Bible here. Joshua chapter 2. We can read the whole chapter together.

[17:29] Let us hear the word of God. Let us hear the word of God.

Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land. Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab saying, bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.

But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, true, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.

And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.

But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan, as far as the fords.

[18:56] And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out. Before the men 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 and that the fear of you has fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you.

For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites, who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction.

And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you. For the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

Now then, please 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 give me a pure sign that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.

And the men said to her, Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall.

[20 : 39] And she said to them, Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterwards you may go your way.

The men said to her, We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours, that you have made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household.

Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless.

But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear.

And she said, According to your words, so be it. Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

[21 : 56] They departed and went into the hills and remained there three days until the pursuers returned. And the pursuers searched all along the way and found nothing.

Then the two men returned. They came down from the hills and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun. And they told him all that had happened to them.

And they said to Joshua, Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands. And also all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us.

Amen. We pray God's blessing on that reading of his own holy word. We're going to sing once more, friends. We're going to sing this time from Psalm 84.

Again in the Scottish shelter on page 339. Psalm 84. Psalm 84 at verse 7 of the psalm.

[23 : 03] So they from strength unwearied go, still forward unto strength. Until in Zion they appear before the Lord at length.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear. O Jacob's God give ear. See God our shield. Look on the face of thine anointed dear.

We're going to sing to the end of the psalm to the tune, Wetherby, standing to sing, So they from strength unwearied go. So they from strength unwearied go, still forward unto strength.

Until in Zion they appear before the Lord at length.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear. O Jacob's God give ear.

[24 : 29] See God our shield. Look on the face of thine anointed dear.

For in thy courts, while they excel, A thousand brotherhood.

My God's will I keep adore, and dwell in chance of sin.

For God the Lord at length. For God the Lord's Son and Shield, In grace and glory day.

And dwell in grace and glory day. And dwell with hope, no good from them, That have right thee to live.

[25 : 58] O thou that art the Lord of hosts, That might is truly blessed, Through thy assured compass, On me alone the rest.

Friends, let's turn together to the New Testament now, To the book of Hebrews once again, This time chapter 11. Hebrews 11. Verse 31.

By faith Rahab the prostitute, On page 1212. We can take our text this evening from verse 31.

Hebrews 11, verse 31. By faith Rahab the prostitute, Did not perish with those who were disobedient, Because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

Friends, this evening we're considering the words that we read together in Joshua chapter 2, Alongside the verse we have here in Hebrews 11.

[27 : 53] Joshua chapter 2 is one of these chapters whereby so often, Many people have, perhaps even myself included, Completely missed the point.

That can happen from time to time as we come to scripture. We read a chapter, And there's a detail in the chapter that captures our interest, our attention, Something we find to be worth exploring further.

And in doing so, we miss the point. We miss the wider message of the chapter. What it is the Lord is really telling us in his word in that particular chapter.

Joshua 2 is no exception. Why is that? Well, pages and pages of commentaries have been devoted to one issue in this passage.

The fact that this prostitute, Rahab, told a lie. Should she have done it? Should she not have done it?

[29 : 08] Are there times when it's okay for us to lie? Or should we never even think about lying? Was her action inexcusable?

Now, pontifications and writings galore abound on this one topic. Yet as interesting as it is, and we will look at it slightly, But as interesting as it is, within this passage, There is something far more wonderful, more captivating for us to focus on.

It's a bit like preparing a meal for someone. A beautiful meal. A meal that is delightful to eat. But in doing that, we have guests round to eat this delicious meal.

And what do they do? They comment on the plate. They don't think about the meal. They don't comment on the meal. They don't consider the meal. They look at the plate. And so in doing so, they're missing the point as to what it is you were trying to do.

Show hospitality. Show love by giving this one meal. A completely wrong focus. And so just for a short time this evening, friends, What I'd like us to do is to go through the passage in Hebrews 2.

[30 : 31] You might want to turn back to Hebrews. It's not Hebrews rather. Joshua chapter 2 together. And I'd like us to consider what it is that the Lord really wants us to take away from this fascinating account that we have before us.

And in doing so, answer the final question of the weekend. For those who perhaps haven't been here until tonight, we've had a bit of a theme over the weekend.

On Friday night, we thought about why it is we're here this weekend. We thought about the story of Peter and that we are here because we are secure in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Last night, we thought about how this was possible. It's possible, of course, only because of the precious blood of Christ.

This morning, we thought about what we've received as a result of this. We have, of course, received that new and living way. The curtain of Christ's flesh has been torn in two.

[31 : 40] That curtain of separation. So we have direct access to the Lord. And tonight, friends, as we consider this passage, we're going to conclude by asking the question, who?

Who is this all for? Turn then, if you will, in your Bibles to Joshua 2 and chapter 1.

And Joshua, the son of Nun, sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, Go, view the land, especially Jericho.

And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there.

Now, a little bit of context will, at this point, be helpful for us just to set the scene.

Because what we have before us here is a narrative that is set against that backdrop of the conquest of the land, that land that has been promised to God's people.

[32 : 45] If you know the story, you might remember that some years earlier, Moses had sent 12 spies to the land of Canaan in order to report back as to what was happening in this land.

And, of course, only two spies returned with a favorable report. All the others were saying, it's a no-go area, don't go near it. Whereas, two, they came back and they said, Yes, yes, it is possible that the Lord will give this land to his people.

And these two spies were, of course, Joshua and Caleb. Now, some years later, what we find is that Joshua does the same thing. He doesn't send 12 spies out, but rather two.

And he sends these spies out to find out if the land of Canaan could actually be conquered.

Now, some have criticized Joshua for doing this. Why is he sending spies out? They know the promises of God. They know the land has been promised to God's people.

[33 : 55] So why bother sending these spies out at all? What a lack of faith. And, you know, the wonderful thing about Scripture is this. Scripture doesn't paint a perfect picture of what it is to be a Christian.

If it did, we would all despair. What makes Scripture all the more believable is, in many ways, it's just like a mirror. And as we see the way people act from Genesis through to Revelation, what really we see is ourselves.

We ought to be surprised by how people act in Scripture as if somehow they ought to be different to how we ourselves would act.

But it's easy, of course, for us to pass judgment from the comfort of our own armchairs, as it were, as if to say, well, they shouldn't have sent out these spies.

But he should have. He should have because in God's perfect plan for whatever reason, this sending out of the spies, yes, they knew the promises, but this sending out the spies was to form the narrative that we have here before us.

[35 : 10] God's purposes for us aren't always what we think they might immediately appear to be. And that's what we see here. Because really what we find is that within this little story, we see a reflection of the greatest story of all.

The greatest story of time and of eternity. That story of redemption that is relevant to each and every one of us here tonight. Whether we are young, middle-aged, or old.

As we consider the story of Rahab, it has something to say to us. And so they, the spies, they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there.

These two men who Joshua had sent out in the name of the Lord, they come and they lodge in perhaps a strange set.

The house of dogs, as it were. This is the house of a prostitute. These are God's servants. What's happening here? Well, we need to think, first of all, what do we know about this woman?

[36 : 22] On the surface, at least. And again, it's so easy for us to judge, is it not? On the surface. On the surface, she's someone who had very little going for her.

She's a Gentile, firstly. She's out with the covenant people of God. She's out with the religious privileges that accompanied the Jewish people of God.

And not only that, she was an Amorite. Now, Canaan was awash with all kinds of different people living there. The Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, the Jebusites, the Amorites.

A whole different mix of all kinds of different people worshipping all kinds of different gods. Yet in this society, it was the Amorites of whom Rahab was.

They were the most wicked. The most wicked. Why? Well, they were a people who were so wicked that they thought nothing of sacrificing their own children in their own depraved religious practices.

[37 : 35] And so really, they were ripe for God's judgment. But not only was Rahab identified with this wicked people, she herself, of course, was a prostitute.

She was a woman, no doubt, who led a difficult life. Again, it's always good for us to try and get into the shoes of the characters that we see in Scripture.

What's led her to this place in the first place? A woman who, in order to make ends meet, has resorted to selling her own body.

This is a human being created in the image of God. So what on earth are they doing? What are these spies playing at, frequenting her home?

Well, in many ways, this was a tactical move, a clever move. Men would often come and go from places like this without being questioned. That's just what happened.

[38 : 38] And so in coming to Rahab's house, these two men were able to discreetly slip into Canaan. And hopefully, that was the plan, to spy out the land incognito, as it were.

Nobody would really notice them coming and going, doing what they needed to do. Or so they thought. Because very soon, the text doesn't tell us how or why this happens.

But very soon, the cover of these men is blown. So much so that the king of Jericho gets wind of these intruders. And what does he do? Of course, he seeks to have them dealt with.

Verse 2. This is where it gets interesting.

This is where we begin to start seeing a little bit of the main point of this narrative. Verse 3.

[40 : 10] Now, what is she doing here?

She is, of course, telling a blatant lie. A blatant lie. The spies hadn't gone out at all. In fact, what she had done was she had hidden them on the roof under stalks of flax.

But what do we expect? What do we expect from this, as it were, lady of the night? This Amorite. You'd expect nothing less.

True to form. She's lying through her teeth. That's just the way these kind of people operate, isn't it? That's the way we think. But sometimes there's a deeper narrative, even in the way people appear to be operating.

That reminds me of a story. I'm sure many of you know it. The story of Corrie ten Boom. An interesting story. And in that story, we read of Nazi soldiers bursting into a house looking for men to

work in munition factories.

[41 : 27] Corrie ten Boom's nephews, they had been hidden under a trapdoor in the kitchen floor in order to avoid being taken away.

The trapdoor was covered by a rug. And on top of the rug was the kitchen table. So that when the soldiers came in and asked where the boys were, Corrie ten Boom's niece, she pointed to the table, to the floor, to the rug, and she said, They're there.

They're there. Now, of course, there was nothing under the table. And so the soldiers thought that this little girl was just being sarcastic, that she was having a bit of a ploy, a bit of a joke.

And so they went on. They left Corrie ten Boom's house and the nephews were safe. Their honesty paid off.

The boys weren't found. Now, some would say that this young girl's actions were indeed foolish and naive, that they could have backfired terribly, but still she trusted in God.

[42 : 32] But the reality is this, friends. We have these stories. But the reality is this, that we don't always have the courage, do we, to take such risks?

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations that we'd rather not be. And that's what we see with Rahab. She, of course, is in no way mature in her faith at this point.

And so she's forced to lie. She's forced to lie for what she saw as the greater good. And in doing so, and this is interesting, not to excuse lying, but make that clear.

But in doing so, the Lord accommodates such an action. And that's the way our Lord works. He's able to take good out of evil.

He's able to do that because God is God. It's not that he condones evil, but he's able to take good out of evil. That's just the mystery of providence that, in many ways, we don't have an answer to.

[43 : 46] But it's true. He doesn't do this, as I said, because the action is correct. But rather because in him, as we read in Scripture, we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses.

But rather one who knows exactly what we're doing and why we're doing it. And he knew that with Rahab.

And so leaving the lie aside just now, let's really think about what's happening here. Here we have Rahab, this worthless prostitute in the eyes of society, someone who was the lowest of the low. And what's she doing? She is protecting God's people. Protecting God's people. And that's the crux of the matter. She had a choice to make.

She could either expose God's people or she could do what she did. She could protect God's people by telling that lie. Now, I'm sure there's many opinions in here just now as to, I said we're leaving the lie to one side.

[44 : 57] But just coming back for one moment. There's many opinions in here as to what she did. But let me ask you this. What would you do?

What would you do? It's a searching question. In any given situation, ask yourself the question, what would I actually do?

We know the textbook answer. But what would I do if I was faced with the same set of circumstances? It's always good to put ourselves in other people's shoes.

You can't talk the talk, as they say, until you've walked the walk. What would you do? And more than that, if an account was to be written of your life as it is of Rahab's, as a child of God, what would it look like?

Would it be without fault? Would it be squeaky clean without one account of you ever having been told a lie? Why am I saying this? Am I trying to gloss over sin to make sin light?

[46 : 04] Of course not. Sin cost our saviour. Certainly not. But what I am doing is this, friends, is to try and make us all aware, readily aware, of the reality of what it is to be in this world.

It's so easy to look in, as I've said before, from our ivory tower and impose our own opinions on situations when we ourselves might not act any differently.

Things are not always as black and white as perhaps we might think. And so, just digging a little deeper, we see that taking such a decision, it was so costly for Rahab.

And this is where we begin to see things fleshing out, as it were. What she did had huge implications. As I said, she had a choice. She could expose God's people or she could hide God's people.

And what she did had huge implications. Not only for her, but for her family. Because if they'd searched the house, if they'd found the spies, what would have happened?

[47 : 16] Well, she and her family, quite likely they would have been tortured or even killed. So, before we go branding her a liar, let's just consider at this point her courage.

But that begs the question, why? Why would Rahab do such a thing to put her own life and her family's life at risk?

Why would she do this? Well, the reason for her actions are brought to light with her own words. Just notice what she says to the spies as she's in the middle of hiding them in verse 9.

Verse 9. And she said to the men, I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you.

For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea, before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the kings of the Amorites, who were beyond the Jordan, to Zion and Og, who you devoted to destruction.

[48 : 34] Particularly those words, for we have heard. For we have heard. She'd heard.

She'd heard. She'd heard of the mighty works of the God of Israel. She'd heard that he'd, we don't know how she'd heard, perhaps it was a talk on the street, have you heard what the God of Israel has done?

She'd heard that he had parted the Red Sea, and he'd brought his people to safety. She'd heard that God had destroyed two of the most wicked Amorite kings that had ever lived.

She had heard. Now this Amorite prostitute may not have known anything of the word of God. She may never have had any godly influence in her life, yet she heard of the power of God. And what did she do with this small, small fragment of knowledge of the God of Israel?

[49 : 35] Israel. She believed it. She believed it. Quite simply. What does it say in verse 11?

Beautiful words. And as soon as we, she and her family, heard it, this is after them hearing of the power of the God of Israel, and as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man.

That's just like when your breath is taken away. There was no spirit left in any man because of you. For the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

Isn't that something? Here we are in a polytheist society, a society where there are many gods where anything went in terms of who or what you worshipped.

All the worship of the varied and numerous gods was acceptable. You do what you want, that's fine for you. You do what you want, that's fine. Sounds familiar.

[50 : 48] Sounds very familiar. And so here she is in that polytheist society. And what's she doing in the backdrop, against the backdrop of this godless society, against the backdrop of her godless upbringing, against the backdrop of her godless way of life?

she is casting her lot in with the God of Israel. And so that, dear friends, is the point of the passage. Not the lie that was told, but the amazing love and matchless mercy of the God of Israel, the God of heaven, the God of earth, a love that is not restricted, a love that is not restricted by who we are or what we've done, a love that stretches out even to the lowest of the low of society, those who no one wants anything to do with, those whom we cross to the other side of the street when we see them.

It's a love that stretches to all. That's who it's for. You might be here tonight and you might not be a Christian.

You might be unconverted. And I suspect, without making assumptions, but I suspect that the reality is that you know far more than Rahab ever, ever knew.

[52 : 30] You know all about the Lord Jesus Christ. You know at least theoretically in your head about his matchless love and mercy. You've heard about it week after week, year after year, decade after decade.

You've heard the same thing coming from this pulpit, yes, from different mouths, but still from the mouth of God. You know. But then you say, I don't know enough.

I don't know enough to be a Christian. I lack understanding of this doctrine or that doctrine. I need to know my Bible better before I can become a Christian.

I've got a long way to go. Well friends, that is rubbish. That is a lie from the pit of hell itself. Just look at Rahab. Very little knowledge, but she knew enough.

She knew enough. She knew something of the power of God. Friends, Bible knowledge will come, but can I plead with you, in the meantime, while you still have time, make, or work rather, with what you've got.

[53 : 45] And you have got plenty to work with, even if it were only the words of John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

That's enough. That's all we need to know tonight. And we know it. We know it in here. But friends, do we know it in here?

So if we were to write our own account of Rahab's life, I wonder what would it say. I was struck by, as I was studying this, just by how the writer to the Hebrews puts this.

When we turn to Hebrews 11, 31, if we were to write about Rahab tonight, no doubt we would focus on the negative.

Somehow that's the way we've hardwired. She told a lie. She was a prostitute. She was an Amorite. That's what we would be naturally inclined to share, just to lay it out on the line.

[55 : 10] But that's not what the Lord shares. What do we read? Astonishing words. By faith, Rahab, the prostitute, not, glossing over who she was or what she was.

By faith, Rahab, the prostitute, did not perish with those who were disobedient because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

And not only had she given a friendly welcome to the spies, but she's beginning to show that she knows the God of the spies. Look at verse 12.

This is Rahab. Now then, please 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 give me a sure sign that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters and all who belong to them and deliver our lives from death.

She wants to be saved. She cares about being spared by God. She doesn't want to be under the judgment of God.

[56 : 36] She wants to be remembered. And really, is that the testimony of someone who doesn't know the Lord? Someone who doesn't care about the Lord?

Because what we see here is that she's pleading for deliverance, not only for her, but for her family. I wonder tonight, are you pleading for this deliverance?

You know, we can say we're seekers. We can say that we're seeking the Lord, but what does that seeking really look like in your life? If a microscope was to come in and to examine your seeking and expose it to all, would it show that we are desperately pleading with the Lord to save us?

As if our lives depend on it because our lives do depend on it. Are we doing that? Or is our seeking on our own terms? We come and we go, we float in and we float out, and we put our own caveats under certain things.

We give our own reasons as to why we're not seeking the Lord as we should. We call the shots. promise. And so a promise is made to her by the spies.

[58 : 06] And the men said to her, our life for yours even to death. If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the Lord gives us the land, we will deal kindly faithfully with you.

Isn't that wonderful? That where there is life, there is hope. That's why I impressed upon you, friends, just a minute ago, the importance of seeking the Lord with all your heart.

This isn't a time for messing around with the matters of your soul. today is the day of salvation, not tomorrow, today, tonight. Promises are made where there is life, there is hope.

And because she has honoured the people of God, the God of the people is going to honour her, showing us that no one is beyond the hand of God's mercy.

And isn't that good news for us today? not just for the prostitute, because there's always a tendency to think that the worse we are, the more we need the Lord.

[59 : 25] Well, salvation is only really for the drunkard or the prostitute or someone whose life is wayward, someone who's lost their way. That's why people turn to the Lord just as a crutch.

That's not true. Salvation is for the prostitute, yes, but salvation is also for the person in the pew. Salvation is for you. Do you believe that?

Believe it, friend. Believe it because it's true. And then time is gone, but we read of the detail then of Rahab letting the men down by a rope through the window.

then she let them down by a rope through the window, verse 15, for her house was built into the city wall so that she lived in the wall. And she said to them, go into the hills or the pursuers will encounter you.

And hide there for three days until the pursuers have returned. And afterward you may go your way. [60 : 35] But before the men go, they ask Rahab to do one last thing. And this fits so nicely into what we've been thinking about over these days. They ask Rahab to do one last thing to secure her safety and the safety of her family.

What do they ask her to do? The Bible, it's just so wonderful the way it ties everything together so clearly and concisely. They ask her to tie a scarlet cord to the window of her house so that when they would return, when they would come and conquer the land, they would know that out of all the godlessness that was abounding in this place, that in this one house, this one house where this one scarlet cord was hanging in the window, this was a house where the people identified with the god of Israel.

What does this remind us of? Well, it reminds us, does it not, of what's happened previously when the lord passed over the houses whose lintels had blood on them.

Is it not the same idea? Here we don't have blood, but we have that which is the color of blood, a scarlet cord as a means of identifying the saved people of God.

Tonight, if the lord were to come to your house, what would he find in the window? A scarlet cord? Would he be able to see, yes, this is a household where those who live therein are covered by the blood.

[62 : 23] They are safe, they are secure. is that what he would find? Do you have blood on your lintels?

Do you have the precious blood of Christ covering your soul? So why are we here?

Because we are in Christ. How has this been made possible through the precious blood of Christ? What have we received as a result?

A new and living way, direct access to God through Christ. Who is all of this actually and really and truly for?

Well, the good news is this, it's for you. It's for you. If you're not a Christian here tonight, this is for you.

[63 : 23] This message is your message. But the question I want to leave with you tonight, and I want you to go away with this and seriously think about it.

With an open heart and an open mind, think about this. This is for you, but do you want it? Let's pray.

Amen. Lord, our God, we give thanks for the gospel, that way of escape for sinners just like us.

And Lord, we long in our hearts that many more would know that way of escape, even here tonight, that you would make them aware of their need of you, so that even if they don't have that desire and longing to know you more and more, that tonight would be the night that your Holy Spirit would impress upon their hearts, showing them their need of salvation, for what indeed should it profit a man if he were to gain the whole world and lose his soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

let us all, one and all, seek more than anything to come and put our trust in you, for time is short and eternity is long.

[64 : 58] Part us then with your blessing, and forgive us in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well friends, it's been such a privilege being with you over these days, I think we've enjoyed a sense of God's Spirit, and what God's Spirit does is he unites his people, that's what we long for, that many more here tonight would be united by the Spirit of the Lord.

So we're going to close by singing that psalm that speaks of that glorious unity that God's people enjoy one with another, and how it delights him.

Page 424, Psalm 133, behold how good a thing it is, and how becoming well, together such as brethren are, in unity to dwell.

Let's stand to sing the whole psalm to the praise of our God. Amen. Behold how good a thing it is, and how we come in hell, together such as brethren are, in unity to dwell.

Like precious point bent on the head, that down the bearded low, in near a spear, and to the skirt did all his starm and go.

[67:16] home. S on ■ on dawn ire national Bar siempre greater ire la beaut God, come and life that shall ever end.

If after the benediction, you'll give me just a moment to get to the main door and meet you on the way out. We'll give thanks for the provisions we're about to enjoy and then close with the benediction.

Lord, we give thanks for every good and perfect gift that is ours in Christ, for every token of your goodness by way of temporal blessings. We pray that you would bless or fellowship one with another, be with Marcia as she shares with us.

Bless the food we're about to enjoy and that in our hearts we would acknowledge you as the giver of these things. And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with you now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.