

# By Faith Rahab

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Date: 01 March 2009

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn again for a little to the chapter we read, Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews chapter 11, and reading at 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.

Now, this chapter in Hebrews is one of the great chapters where we have a catalogue, as it were, of some, not an extensive catalogue, but it is nonetheless a catalogue of some of the great people of faith.

And what I like about this chapter in Hebrews is that some of the people who find their way in there, and let us remember that this is God's record, and that certain people have been highlighted.

And when you look at some of the people who have been highlighted, it's incredibly encouraging, incredibly humbling, because it shows us how great God's love and his mercy really is.

[ 1 : 24 ] Because some of the people that are in there, if we were to carry on, obviously when we talk about people of faith, we think automatically of somebody like Abraham. He was the father of the faithful, and we say, oh, Abraham, he was a giant in the faith.

And I have no problem in sort of looking at, thinking about Abraham as this great pillar. And he was. He was like a frontiersman of faith, an extraordinary believer.

But then you look at some of the others, if we had gone on to read in verse 32, we see others like Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, and then, of course, yes, you would say definitely David and Samuel.

But we've got to see there that these people are highlighted also as great people of faith. And we're told here in this chapter that without faith, it is impossible to please God.

And I think when we look at this particular chapter, it brings us to see that God sees people in a way and in a light and in a manner that you and I don't.

[ 2 : 35 ] We are always being told, judge not, because invariably our judgment is wrong. We base our judgments often upon what we see, upon what we think we know.

And very often, what we think we know, we only know a little of it or we've got it altogether wrong. And our judgments are so often wrong.

And when we come to God's word, that's, I suppose, one of the reasons why sometimes we get a little surprise. Because God deals with it as it really is.

Now, this woman, Rahab, was a great woman. A great woman of faith. And in fact, we'll see that in a moment. The declaration of faith that she gives is possibly as great a statement of faith as had been given up until that point in the Old Testament.

It really is quite remarkable. And she is not only mentioned here in Hebrews. She's also spoken about in James. Because James highlights two people as an example of real faith.

[ 3 : 51 ] Abraham is one and Rahab is the other. So really, when you think about it, it is quite remarkable. Now, I'm sure we're all familiar to a certain extent with the background to this.

And the story, of course, is found in Joshua chapter 2. Remember how Joshua had taken over command of the Israelite, not just the army, but he became the leader of Israel following on from Moses.

It was an incredible task because Moses was that extraordinary man. And anybody trying to take over the mantle from Moses would have felt such an incredible sense of inadequacy and fear.

And there's no doubt that Joshua felt that because when we read in Joshua chapter 1, the Lord keeps coming to Joshua. And he keeps saying to him, don't be anxious.

Don't be dismayed. Don't be afraid. And God is obviously saying that to Joshua because he is afraid. And so would you and so would I if we were going to take over the leadership of this huge traveling nation and leading them into the land of promise and taking over from such a charismatic and powerful character as Moses himself.

[ 5 : 14 ] And I think anybody who is doing anything for the Lord will have an awareness of Joshua's fears because so often we feel so inadequate, so helpless, so useless.

But the Lord keeps coming to us and telling us, look, be strong. Be strong. Not in yourself. The Lord never comes to us and says, all right, come on, just be strong in yourself. Come on, pull yourself together and go.

It's be strong in the Lord. That's where real strength is found. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. As we were saying this morning, all the resources are available.

We don't work them up in ourselves, but we receive them from him. He is the abundant giver. He is the one who has everything at his disposal.

If we feel weak, we can go to him for strength. If we feel fearful, we can go to him for courage. If we feel, it doesn't matter what the situation, and we've got to go and be honest and say to him, Lord, I feel discouraged.

[ 6 : 28 ] Tell him how it is. If you're struggling in the Christian faith tonight, tell him that. The worst thing that you can do is to try and pretend that things are all right.

They're not all right. You know they're not all right. And the Lord certainly knows. The worst thing he can do is to keep away. Go and tell him. Tell him, Lord, I need you. I need you to help me in all these different things.

And he will. Far more than you could even begin to imagine. And again, sometimes in our own personal battles, because Joshua is a book all about battles.

And it's a very vivid book, but it also speaks to us personally about who we are and our own battles as we battle through life.

Battle with ourselves. Battle with all the temptations and trials of life. Battle with the different circumstances that sometimes we confront. Battle with the enemy that's out to disrupt and to spoil.

[ 7 : 34 ] And there's sometimes we can feel that the going is too much for us. And I'm sure if you're honest, there might be times when you feel and you say to yourself, I'm afraid.

I'm afraid I'm going to make shipwreck. I'm afraid I'm not going to make it. Do you ever feel like that? I'm afraid that I might not make it.

Well, you want yourself, but the Lord will help you. Because you know what he says? He tells us that you are kept. You are kept by the power of God.

The power that saved you is the power that will keep you. It's not wonderful. He will never let you go. And so when we go to Joshua, we find there the encouragement that just as the Lord was encouraging Joshua, so he is encouraging us in our battle to go forward.

And he's saying, it doesn't matter where you go, I'm there with you. You know, sometimes, and I do it often myself when I pray, and I say, Lord, please be with me.

[ 8 : 44 ] Do you know something? If you're a believer, the Lord is with you. And do you know what? He's promised that he'll never leave you, nor forsake you. I suppose if we were to be absolutely correct in the way we're praying, we might be saying, Lord, make me conscious, or make me aware that you're with me.

Because he is already with you. Sometimes when we're saying, Lord, I know what we mean is, I suppose that's what we really mean. Lord, make us aware that you're with me.

But I think often we say that, oh, Lord, please be with us. Well, he is, because he's promised it. But I think maybe we should be saying, Lord, make me aware of you being with me.

Anyway, in this, when we come to see Joshua here, and in Joshua chapter one, we have this great, it's like Israel are preparing to go in to the land of promise.

But when we come to the second chapter in Joshua, it's like everything changes for a moment. And the focus is on three people. The main focus, it's upon two spies, and upon this woman, Rahab, Rahab, who is a prostitute.

[ 9 : 58 ] And here is this woman, and her lifestyle is all wrong. And yet, in an amazing way, by God's work, by God's grace, she becomes a notable woman.

So notable as we saw, she takes her place alongside Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Samuel, and David, these great, great people, we find this woman, Rahab.

But it's interesting, despite the greatness of her faith, she's still termed here, in Hebrews, and in James, as Rahab, the prostitute.

In the same way that Paul, never forgot what he was. He, talking about himself, used to say, I was a blasphemer. You will find him that he's, as he's writing to the churches, he couldn't forget what he was.

It's the same way as Matthew, when he's writing about himself, he calls himself, Matthew, the tax gatherer, or the publican. He never forgot what he was. Neither should we.

[ 11 : 10 ] Because it will give us, a spirit of thankfulness. How God has set us free. How God has delivered us. Because, some people say, oh well we should never, once we're in Christ, that's it now, I know what people, I know what they're saying.

But that we should never think back. Ah, but we should. We should remember, what the Lord did for us. I believe, in fact, that even in glory, we will not forget.

It never, it won't be to our shame, and it won't be in any way of disgrace. But, people say, you know, what, what, what will we remember? Remember in heaven.

We'll remember more, I believe, than we even remember just now. Do you think it's possible, that we could ever forget, what Jesus did for us, on the cross?

No. We will be worshipping, the Lord, throughout eternity. Worshipping him, because of what he did, in this world. It's in this world, that Jesus died, on the cross.

[ 12 : 15 ] It's in this world, that you and I, came to faith, in Jesus Christ. And are we going to forget that? Of course not. It's an ongoing part, of this journey, that goes on forever, and ever, and ever.

And so, we find that, there's this highlighting, what we have been. But God, demonstrates his grace, by often saving those, that society, would write off.

You see, we often, make an assessment, and we make our judgments, and we think, oh well, these people, would become Christians. Sometimes we have it worked out, who will come to faith, in Jesus Christ, and who won't.

We don't know. And the Lord, is showing us, over and over, and over again, that it's by grace, that you are saved, through faith. Not of works, not one of us, can work out, our own salvation.

When it comes, to our being, safe, in Christ, it is, by grace, a gift.

[ 13 : 26 ] It's one of the most, essential discoveries, for any person, to make. That salvation, is a gift. And a gift, is something, that you receive.

It's not something, that you've earned, that you worked for. It is something, you receive. And that is what, salvation is, by grace.

And that is why, the Lord, so often, he, takes in people. God has chosen, the weak things, of this world, to confound the things, that are strong, and mighty.

That's what we're told, in the Bible. And that is why, the Lord will often, gather those, people, from outwith. And that's what we find here, with this woman, Rahab.

Just as Manasseh, that, awful man, in the New, in the Old Testament, that king, who caused, the very streets, of Jerusalem, to run red, with the blood, of believers.

[ 14 : 30 ] He, turned to the Lord. The thief, on the cross, we would have, in the initial stages, we would have, walked away, saying, there is no hope, for that man.

Because he was, he, along with the other thief, was mocking, the Lord Jesus Christ. Zacchaeus, whose, God was money.

And yet, he found grace. And the list is endless. But so, we find here, that, there's this woman, and she's mentioned. Now, you remember, how Joshua sent, spies, to spy out the land.

And, we've got to remember, that, in the previous verse, verse 30, by faith, the walls of Jericho, fell down, after they had been encircled, for seven days. Joshua, didn't know, how, they were going to, take Jericho.

You see, it was by faith, that the walls fell. You've got to remember that. If Josh, if the Lord, had come to Joshua, and he had said, look, I want you to walk around Jericho, once, every day, for seven days, and on the seventh day, to walk around seven times, and then I'm going to cause the walls to fall, when you make this, huge shout, and blowing in the trumpet, then that wouldn't have been, well, there would have been faith in it.

[ 15 : 51 ] But, they didn't know. It was by faith, that they acted. And through that faith, God, God was the one, who worked, and demonstrated his power.

Now, Joshua, being a military man, he didn't know, how things were to be done. And, he himself had, under Moses, had been a spy himself.

He had initially gone out, into the promised land. Remember, some, nearly 40 years earlier. Here he is, doing what a military man would do. He's taking every precaution, and he's looking at every strategy, and he's examining, every route and avenue.

And he says, right, on you go, these two, you go and see how things are. Go into Jericho. And they go to Jericho, and they go, and many people think that, Rahab's place was a kind of an inn.

And that, although she, she was engaged in this work, as a prostitute, that it possibly was an inn. And that, this kind of place, would raise the least suspicion.

[ 16 : 54 ] Because it was a kind of place, where people were going, in and out. Anyway, word came, to the king of Jericho, that these two, spies, had come, a deputation had come.

And of course, they were on high alert, because they knew, that Israel were preparing, no doubt, to attack. And as we know, Rahab hid the spies, and she, told this story, about that, she made up the story.

Now, it was, let us remember this, it was by faith, that she hid them. Why? Because God, had begun to work, in this woman's life.

And she saw, in these two men, who came in, she said, they are my people. Naturally speaking, the people of Jericho, were her people. But a change, had taken place.

A change by grace. And she saw, these two spies, as, they, belonged, to God. And she said, that's, these are my people.

[ 18 : 03 ] And you know, that's what happens, when grace works. There is a drawing, to the fellowship, of God's people. We know, the Bible says, that we've passed, from death to life, because we love, the brothers.

We love the brethren. There is, there is this, awareness, this sense of family, a sense of, of belonging. It's, it's something, that, you, you, you can't work at, but it's, it's, it's just something, that's there.

This identity, of belonging, within the family. And so, Rahab, realized, these are my people. I am siding, with them.

She might not, have been able, to work out, all the ways, in which God, had worked within her. But God had. And she had, to make a decision. Who do I side with?

Because when the king's, messengers came, Rahab, had to make a decision. Am I on the side, of Israel, and their God, or am I going to continue, with the people of Jericho?

[ 19 : 11 ] She had to make that decision. And she made that decision, by faith. And she threw in her lot, with the people of God. And it was by faith, that she hid these spies.

And she's like another, Old Testament woman, who made another great decision. Remember, Ruth, and Orpah, when they came to the borders, of the land of Canaan.

And when Naomi, was going back home, and Naomi was pleading, with Ruth and Orpah, oh, don't come with me. Remember, they had lost their husbands. It had been a terrible time.

Naomi's husband had died, and Ruth, and Orpah's husbands had died. And they were going, going back as, well, Ruth and Orpah, remember, were Naomi's daughter-in-laws, daughters-in-law.

And she said to them, there's nothing for you, back, in my land. You are widows, you have no rights. You're not Israelites, you're Moabites.

[ 20 : 12 ] And you have no, you will have no protection, you will have no, no privileges, no rights, no opportunities. There is nothing for you.

Go back to your own people, go back to your own gods, go back to your own way of life. And remember that very touching scene, where the three of them were huddled together, and they were crying.

And then we have these great words, of Ruth, where she said, entreat me not to leave thee, not to follow, from following after thee. Where you go, I'll go.

Your people, will be my people. Your God, will be my God. And Ruth was there, throwing her life, her lot, her everything, in, with the people of God.

Orpah, went back, to disappear off the pages of scripture. And Ruth, like Rahab, became a great name, in Israel.

[ 21 : 17 ] And that's the kind of commitment, that the Lord wants from us. It's not a half-hearted. It's not a foot, in either camp. It's not being, partly in, and partly out.

It's not following the Lord, one day, and then saying, oh, I'm going to follow somebody else, another day. We're either, with the Lord, or we're not. No man, having put his hand to the plow, looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Jesus says, if you will follow me, then you have to take up your cross, deny yourself. And these are the things, that the Lord, is requiring of us. And Rahab, had to make that decision.

It was complete. There was no turning back. She couldn't later on say, and go and say, oh, well, actually, I did hide the spies. She'd have been put to death. She knew, that the decision, she was making, could cost her her life.

Because if it was discovered, that she was actually, hiding the spies, she knew she was dead. And yet, she was prepared, to take that. Chance, or whatever, she was prepared, to stake her claim, with the people of God.

[ 22 : 26 ] And so, we say to ourselves, well, how did she come to that? Well, I don't know, how she came to faith, in Jesus Christ. But when we read chapter 2, there's a couple of things, that would indicate. One was, that they had heard, about God.

She says that, when we heard, about, your God. Now, that's important. Why? Because, because faith, comes by hearing.

And that is why, people must come, under the word. That is why, so often, you hear from this pulpit, to encourage people, to come to church. Because this is where, faith comes.

Faith, comes by hearing. And hearing, by the word of God. This is where, people are brought to faith. Where people are, built up in the faith. So, Rehobo had heard.

And she had also feared. In fact, all the people of Jericho feared. Because they heard, what God was doing. Not only about God, but they heard, some of the things, that he was doing.

[ 23 : 27 ] The miracles. And their hearts, trembled, with fear. But, the interesting, and the sad thing is, while all the people, in Jericho heard.

And while all the people, in Jericho feared. Only Rahab went further. And you see, it is possible, to hear, about God. It's possible, to fear, in what you hear, about God.

It is possible, for a person, to sit under the word of God, and tremble, and shake, and be moved, and weep. And yet, not go any further.

Still, remain, outside the kingdom. But Rahab, went further. And then, she made this, incredible, declaration.

For the Lord, your God, is a God, in heaven above, and in the earth beneath. That's what she says. The Lord, your God, is a God, in heaven above, and in the earth, beneath.

[ 24 : 35 ] And that is a God, that she had come to know, to love, to serve, and she had committed herself to. And then, that faith, went into action.

That is what prompted her, to hide the spies. Because she had heard, she had believed, and she had confessed. And now, that's what James highlights, her action, her faith.

Because James is saying, faith, without works, is dead. And he's highlighting, Rahab, as an example, of faith. She is somebody, who put her faith, into action.

But then, we see further evidence, of her faith. Because if you remember, the incident, she didn't just want, safety for herself. She wanted safety, for her whole family. Her father, her mother, her brothers, her sisters, everyone.

Oh, she said to them, please, save us all. And isn't that, what happens, when grace, comes into a patient's life? Straight away, you want others, to have what you have.

[ 25 : 41 ] And you want, all the members, of your family, you want your friends, that they too, will come to discover, that they too, will come to receive, Jesus as their own savior.

And that's what, Rehob, we see this desire, for protection. And so, Rehob got an assurance, from the spies.

And the spies, said to her, look, because of what you've done, you're safe. And they entered, into a covenant with her. A covenant, of course, is simply an agreement, between two parties.

And that's how God, deals with us, by way of covenant. God made several, lots of covenants. He made a covenant, with Noah. He made a covenant, with Abraham.

But of course, the greatest covenant, of all, is what we term, the covenant of grace. Where God, the Father, made a covenant, with God, the Son, on our behalf. Isn't that wonderful?

[ 26 : 39 ] And the foundation, of the covenant, that God has made, for us, is with the Son, Jesus Christ. Because we couldn't keep. And that's, the great thing.

If we are in Jesus, then we receive, all the covenant blessings, that have been won for us, and are assured, in Jesus Christ.

And so we find, that the spies, are saying to Rahab, right? Our life, that's what they said, our life for years. Now Rahab's house, was on a wall. And she got this rope, remember this scarlet, or red rope.

And she was going, to lower the spies, down by this rope. And the spies said, right, this is what you do. If you, when we attack the city, if you go out of your house, you're dead.

And we are free, from this covenant. The blood will be, upon your own head. But when we come to attack, you, and your family, stay in this house, but leave that red rope, hanging, from the window, so that we will know, which house it is.

[ 27 : 52 ] And you cannot, read or think about that, without thinking again, of another incident, in the Old Testament, earlier on, where houses, also had the red, where there was the blood, on the doorposts, and blood on the lintels.

And when the angel of death, was passing over, and when the angel, saw the blood, that angel, would pass over, and wouldn't strike, where the blood was.

There is no other place, of protection, no other place, of deliverance, no other place, of safety, and security, but in, and through the blood, of Jesus Christ.

And so, Rahab believed, she wasn't trusting, in the rope, she was trusting, in the Lord, the Lord God of Israel. And we are not to trust, the sign, of that covenant, that the spies, made with Rahab, was that rope.

And she was to leave, that rope, and that rope, was to be hung there, when they came. But she wasn't trusting, in the rope, she was trusting, in the Lord. We mustn't, rest, in any sign, of the covenant.

[ 29 : 04 ] For instance, the likes of baptism. And some people do. Baptism is this great blessing. But remember, baptism, in and of itself, doesn't save.

We need the baptism, of God's spirit, in saving power, into our lives. And I know, that there are people, I have spoken, with people, whose hope, for salvation, lies, in that baptism.

The fact, that they were baptized, by such and such, a minister. My friend, it was a great privilege, it was a great blessing, but that's not salvation.

Nothing, but trusting, in the Lord, Jesus Christ. blessed. And that's what Rahab, was doing. She wasn't trusting, in the rope, but she was trusting, in the Lord.

And we find, if we read, into Joshua, chapter 6, when, by faith, the walls fell, and the, the, the, Jericho, was destroyed, that, Joshua, gives a, clear command, and he sent, two young men, and I believe, it would have been, these two, these two men, the two spies, go, into the, prostitute's house, and bring out the woman, and all that she has.

[ 30 : 31 ] And Joshua, saved Rahab alive, and her father's household, and all, that she had. Rahab, is a trophy of grace, and showing to us, what the Lord, can do.

And if he did it for Rahab, he can do it for you. Doesn't matter, what you have been. Doesn't matter, what you have done. Doesn't matter, how many opportunities, you have had, under the gospel.

Doesn't matter, when you look over, your own life, and you say to yourself, you know, I should have been saved, long ago. Is it too late? My friend, do you know the great thing?

You're still coming to church. You're still in the place of mercy. You're still under the sound, of the gospel. Tonight is another opportunity. And this Jesus, this Jesus, who is mighty to save, is inviting you, yes, you, to come, to him, and trust, you're all.

Let us pray. Oh Lord, our God, we, pray to, help us tonight, to believe, to trust, and to follow the Lord.

[ 31 : 45 ] Forgive us, all that we are, in and of ourselves, that is wrong, that is, offensive to the Lord. And help us to, seek to follow the Lord, with all our heart.

Be with us all tonight, we pray. Keep us all in safety. We pray thy blessing, upon all, who worship as we do, throughout this island, and indeed, throughout our land.

We ask for protection, upon all, coming and going, from God's house, and making their way home. Oh Lord, be with us. Lead us in the way of truth.

Have mercy upon us, and cleanse us, from all our sin. In Jesus name, we ask it. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.