

Session 1

June 2, 2019

“RAHAB: COURAGEOUS FAITH”

Joshua 2:1-14

Nobody names their little girl “Rahab.” That’s because Rahab’s name seldom appears without the descriptive label, “the harlot.” Yet Rahab (the harlot) appears in the lineage of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 1, the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11, and as an example of faith in action in James 2.

While Rahab’s moniker will likely never be changed to “Rahab the Faithful,” her interesting life attests to God’s marvelous grace that can turn even a harlot into a hero. Her story unfolds in three acts:

Prelude (vv. 1-3). With the death of Moses, Joshua was called upon to lead the children of Israel into the next chapter of redemptive history: the conquest of Canaan. The first obstacle along the way was the double-walled, fortified city of Jericho. Like any good commander, Joshua sent out spies to “go and scout the land, especially Jericho” (v. 1). The story of God’s faithful and miraculous deliverance of His people was already well known among the Canaanites, and fear was building as they watched the army’s progress. The fact that the secret spies were spotted entering the city meant that guards had already been posted and the people were on “high alert.” The spies wisely entered the home of Rahab, a house that no doubt had lots of traffic in and out, many of whom were likely strangers. Unfortunately, the spies were seen and identified, and Rahab was confronted.

Protection (vv. 4-7). With great foresight, Rahab knew that housing the men would only bring trouble. But rather than expose them, she chose to protect them instead, hiding them on the roof and covering them with stalks of flax she had put up there to dry. She then pulled off an effective ruse, convincing the city officials that the spies had indeed stopped there, but moved on “just a few minutes ago,” convincing the officials to give chase just as the city gate closed behind them. Having bought some time, she climbed back up to the roof to give the spies an update and strike a bargain.

Promise (vv. 8-14). This is where the faith of Rahab comes in. One could argue about the ethics of her lying to her superiors, but not with the evidence she cites for protecting the spies. First, she acknowledged the Lord and the provision of the land He gave to Israel (v. 9). In support, she recounted His miraculous works in delivering them from Egypt some forty years before (v. 10) and their God-given victory over the Amorite kings who stood in their way (see Numbers 21:21ff). This unstoppable army had the Canaanites in panic-mode and pointed to the presence and empowering of the One true God of Israel. It’s interesting that the display of God’s great power had some running for cover, and others running to conversion! Rather than run and hide, Rahab surrendered to “the Lord your God,” the One who is “God in heaven above and on earth below” (v. 11).

Rahab’s faith was *logical* faith, because she based it on evidence. Contrary to popular opinion, faith is not “blind,” but is founded and built upon what God has already shown us. Rahab’s faith was *courageous* faith because it was risky. Hiding the spies could have backfired and cost her dearly. But courageous faith takes a stand and does what is right. Rahab’s faith was *unyielding*

faith, strong enough to bargain with. Having just saved the spies, she quickly used her good deed to ensure the safety of her family when the inevitable invasion took place. The final result? Indeed, the spies kept their promise and Rahab and her family were delivered from destruction (see Joshua 6). Her courageous faith turned this harlot into a hero and secured her position in God's redemptive plan.