



Potomac Hills

Presbyterian Church, PCA



By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

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Joshua 2:1-24

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English Standard Version

“Rahab and Her Rope”

This is the 2nd sermon in a topical series entitled,
Misused Stories of the Bible

Joshua 2:1-24

“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. ² And it was told to the king of Jericho, “Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” ³ 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.” ⁴ 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. ⁵ And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” ⁶ 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. ⁷ So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

*⁸ Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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. ¹² 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 ¹³ 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." ¹⁴ 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 and faithfully with you."

¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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 afterward you may go your way." ¹⁷ The men said to her, "We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear." ²¹ 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.

²² 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. ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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."

*Heavenly Father, this is Your Word and we need it. Thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. We do not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from Your mouth and we especially need this Word for it deals with an unlikely faith from an unlikely person. Lord, as we come to your Word, we pray that You would give us a greater understanding of who You are and what You do. Thank You for bringing us to this hard story, this difficult story, this sensitive story so that we might learn more about You and have our faith renewed and strengthened as a result. Bring us to Yourself, for we are sinners who wonder what do we have to do with someone like Rahab? Help us to see Your grace in her story. Help us to see our own need of Your grace this morning. Help us to know You more through Joshua, chapter two. And so we pray, **have mercy on us** this morning, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, **help us see Jesus**, for in His name we pray, amen and amen.*

INTRODUCTION: The Name We Don't Choose ¹

Christians love to name their children after Biblical characters, especially those of outstanding spiritual strength, beauty, or faithfulness. That's one reason why our children are named David, Rebecca, Sarah, Daniel, and Samuel. Clearly, we were going to work our way

1 The Introduction is adapted from "The Name No Christian Will Give To Their Daughter" by Dr. David Murray, Presbyterian Reformed Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA, 1/15/14, www.headhearhand.org

through the Old Testament. Truth be told, you can go through any church and you'll find lots of Peters, Pauls, Matthews, Marks, Johns, etc. And among the ladies, there will be Sarahs, Rachels, Marys, Ruths, Leahs, Lydias, and so forth. But there's one woman's name ... you **generally** won't find. Which is strange because **she's the only woman in the Bible who** ...

- Is named in the Messiah's genealogy (**Matthew 1:5**), and
- Is praised for her faith (**Hebrews 11:31**), and
- Is praised for her works (**James 2:25**).

She also had the most incredible conversion story, being saved from a totally pagan community and a completely immoral life, she performed some of the bravest actions in the Bible, and raised one of **the godliest men in Israel's history** (a man named Boaz). So, what's her name? ... **Rahab!**

Possibly **the most commended woman** in the whole Bible. But few people, if any, want to name a daughter after her. How come? Well, the name is fine ... but there's an issue with the **occupation** usually attached to the name. There are certain occupations that we associate with certain biblical characters. To say a particular name immediately brings a certain occupation to mind ...

David was a shepherd.

Nehemiah was a cupbearer.

Isaiah was a prophet.

Peter was a fisherman.

Esther was a queen.

Matthew was a tax collector.

Paul was a tentmaker.

Lydia was a seller of purple.

But say the name ... **Rahab**. Mention her name and immediately **one occupation** ... **and only one** ... comes to mind. Rahab was a **prostitute**. She traded herself for money in what has sometimes been called the world's oldest profession. Whether it is or not, prostitution has been with us for thousands of years. There's no city of any size, anywhere in the world, where there aren't women (and now some men) who sell themselves for money. The Bible makes no bones about Rahab's occupation ... **and makes no attempt to cover it up.**

The first time we meet her in **Joshua**, she's called "***a prostitute whose name was Rahab.***" She is called "***Rahab the prostitute***" in **Joshua 6:17** and again in **6:25**. If that isn't enough, twice in the New Testament her occupation is mentioned, **Hebrews 11:31**, "***By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies***" and then in **James 2:25**, "***And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?***" That's **five times** ... when one probably would've been enough. It seems that God **wants us** to think "***prostitute***" when we think of Rahab. And that's a little hard to understand.

The biblical record doesn't give us very many details about Rahab. We know that she lived in Jericho near the city wall. She was evidently well-known to the men of the city because the two spies had no trouble finding her house and the king of Jericho knew who she was and where she lived. But there's a lot of things we don't know about her.

1. We don't know why or how she became a prostitute.

2. We don't know her family background.
3. We don't know her religion, except that she wasn't raised to believe in the God of the Bible.
4. We don't know if she was hungering for a better life when the two spies came to her home.

All of that makes the following fact even more startling. The Bible mentions ***Rahab the prostitute as a hero of the faith***. She made the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11. Think of that list ... Abel ... Enoch ... Noah ... Abraham ... Sarah ... Isaac ... Jacob ... Joseph ... Moses ... and then suddenly ... **Rahab!**

And if you go to the end of the next verse, you find David, Samuel, and the prophets. That means ***Rahab the prostitute*** is in some **pretty good company**. She's up there with the man who built the ark (Noah), the father of faith (Abraham), the man who led God's people out of Egypt (Moses), the greatest King of Israel (David), and she's up there with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and the rest of the Old Testament prophets. If Israel had a Mount Rushmore, she'd be on it.

So what does this tell us? First of all, it tells us that **faith can be messy** at times. Real faith is rarely as neat and clean as we make it out to be on Sunday morning. Real faith is always mixed with very human imperfections. If you doubt that, well, look in the mirror. Some days you have faith, and some days you try to have faith, and some days you just muddle through as best you can. How close to perfection are you? That's the point. Though Rahab was **far from perfect**, her name shows up in an honorable way in the Bible. Which also tells us that **messy faith is better than no faith**. So, let's start there as we think about Rahab.

Now, this is the second sermon in this new series on "***Misused Stories of the Bible***." So what gets misused here? Two things mostly. First, this is an easy story to turn into a morality tale. An immoral woman gets saved and now lives a moral life. Go and do likewise. And Rahab merely becomes a good example. Second, we focus on the wrong things. Why did she lie? Is lying ever justified? What about the scarlet cord? Doesn't it have to represent something? Christian writing on ***The Scarlet Thread of Redemption*** goes all the way back to Clement of Rome in 95 AD. But as I wrote to you earlier this week, we're told in **verse 18** it was a "***scarlet cord***" and it's easy to make the jump from the red cord to the red blood of Jesus. Dr. Sidney Greidanus, one of the great preaching professors of the last generation, coined the term "leapfrogging to Golgotha" to describe this — which means you take something in this story that sounds similar to something in Jesus' story and make up a connection between the two. However, sometimes **a rope is just a rope**. In reality, it's a story about two spies, an undeserving woman, the God who connects them, and how both the spies and the woman respond in faith.

So, what can we learn from this story? Turn with me to the Book of Joshua, it comes early in the Old Testament, right after Deuteronomy. And today, we're looking at chapter 2, starting with ...

v. 1-7: RAHAB'S FAITH IN ACTION ²

2 The Exposition of the text is adapted from the sermon, "From Rahab to Jesus" by Dr. Ray Pritchard, Keep Believing Ministries, 2/7/09, www.keepbelieving.com.

And the books, Preaching the Word – Joshua: People of God's Purpose by Dr. David Jackman, pages 33-38; Joshua: An Expository Commentary by Dr. James Montgomery Boice, pages 27–34; The Message of Joshua: Promise and People by Dr. David Firth, pages 43-52; The Complete Works of

Now, the background to the story is that Moses has led the people of Israel to the edge of the Promised Land, whereupon he handed off the baton of leadership to Joshua ... and died. And so Joshua goes before the Lord and asks Him what to do. And the Lord tells him to cross the river and enter the land. So Joshua decides to first scout out the land and he sends in two spies, starting at **verse 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.* ² *And it was told to the king of Jericho, “Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.”* ³ *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.”* ⁴ *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.”* ⁵ *And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.”* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.”*

Here Rahab’s story is intertwined with the story of Joshua sending two spies to Jericho, just as Moses had sent twelve spies to report on the land way back in **Numbers 13**. It’s interesting that Joshua sent **two** spies. 38 years earlier, when Moses dispatched the twelve spies, remember that **only two of them** returned with a faithful report that God would give the land to the people. **And one of those was Joshua**. So now, Joshua, perhaps symbolically, chose **two** men from whom he expected a believing report rather than an unbelieving one.

It may seem like sending spies in first reveals a lack of trust on Joshua's part — like he's testing God's promises — but the Bible doesn't actually comment on that either way. So the spies go in and enter the house of a prostitute — the Bible doesn't make a comment about that choice, either. It only says that the spies went and stayed there. End of discussion. It could be that this choice was good strategy. They went to a place where lots of men went, a place where two strangers wouldn't look suspicious. Perhaps we should give them the benefit of the doubt.

However, these guys aren't the best spies in the world, are they? I mean, right after we learn that they stayed at Rahab's house, we read, **verse 2**, *“And it was told to the king of Jericho, “Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.”* So much for staying under the radar. The king's messengers went to Rahab, and she said, **verse 4-5**, *“True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.”* ⁵ *And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.”* And then she hid the spies on her roof.

Clearly Rahab set no great value on honesty. Her denial of knowing about the spies and

Francis A. Schaeffer : *A Christian Worldview* (Volume 2: *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History*) by Dr. Francis Schaeffer, pages 203-212; *Focus on the Bible Commentary – Joshua: No Falling Words*, pages 75-81; and *The Word Became Fresh: How to Preach from Old Testament Narratives*, pages 129-132, both by Dr. Dale Ralph Davis, Professor of Old Testament, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson. **And the articles**, *“The Big Picture of God's Faithfulness”* by Jenny Salt, Dean of Students, Sydney Missionary and Bible College, Sydney, Australia, August 2015, www.preachingtoday.com and *“God's Mission to Rescue a Prostitute”* by Barbaraanne Kelly, Christ Presbyterian Church, New Braunfels, TX, 7/189/20, www.thegospelcoalition.org.

deliberately misleading the pursuers seem both fluent and without any issues of conscience. She is, after all, a pagan. Not surprisingly these verses have raised a considerable ethical debate about when it's right to lie. Many have compared these lies to the military practice of deception in wartime, or the righteous gentiles lying about hiding Jews from the Nazi's during World War II.

However, in this text, her lies are neither **condemned**, nor are they **commended**. The story doesn't teach that lying is justifiable or that the end justifies the means. Rather Rahab seems to have been trapped in a moral choice in which **either option would involve sin**. Either she disclosed the spies and almost certainly brought about their execution, or she denied that she knew where they were, which was clearly untrue. A lie is a distortion or denial of the truth with the **intention to deceive**, and that's clearly what Rahab did. It seems to have come naturally since, just like us, she's a fallen human being living in a fallen world, something we need to remember before we get too eager to point the finger.

She had to choose the lesser of two evils, and as far as she was concerned that meant lying to save the spies' lives. It was also motivated by her growing spiritual awareness, as the next few verses show, but that doesn't excuse her sin. All false witness calls out the judgment of God who is the Truth. So we can't say that God saved her because she saved the spies. As **James 2:25** points out, that high-risk strategy constituted the "**works**" that demonstrated the reality of her faith. But it was her **faith** that saved her and her family.

God did not need Rahab's lie to protect the life of Joshua's men. Had she told the truth, God could well have worked in other ways to deliver the spies, as the rest of the Bible frequently illustrates. God has total ability to confuse and redirect those who are seeking to interfere with His purposes. But ... and this is only speculation ... Rahab was being herself. Lying came naturally to her, as it does to every sinner, as it does to all of us. No one would have imagined that she could become the object of **God's saving grace**. But her story is wonderful evidence that no one is beyond the reach of divine mercy.

So, believing Rahab's lie, the king sent soldiers on a fruitless chase into the surrounding countryside. Meanwhile, Rahab gave a powerful statement of her faith to the two spies still hiding in her house. And so we see ...

v. 8-14: RAHAB'S FAITH IN WORDS

⁸ Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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. ¹² 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 ¹³ 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." ¹⁴ 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 and faithfully with you."

We've come to the heart of the story, and the real main point of the passage.

For a proper understanding of the Rahab story we must pay careful attention to how it is put together. I've shared this before, but a common literary technique in the Hebrew language is called a **chiasm**. Unlike Greek and English, this means that the main point of the text often comes in the **middle**, rather than at the end. And that's true for **Joshua 2**. Take a look with me at the following slide ...

Chiastic Structure of Joshua 2

A. Sending by Joshua, v. 1a

B. Arrival/concern: Protection of the spies, v. 2–7

C. Profession of Faith, 8–14

B. Escape/concern: Protection of Rahab & Co., v. 15–21

A. Return to Joshua, v. 22–24

Now that we have this structure in front of us, let's focus on the major teaching of the chapter. This structure helps us see that, first of all, the story underscores the Profession of God's Sovereignty. One might think of this structure as a sandwich, with **the A sections** representing the slices of bread, **the B sections** the lettuce and tomato, and the **C section** the double meat in the middle. Obviously, the meat is the most important — and most expensive — part of the sandwich; the lettuce and tomato is extra; and the bread's just there to keep the Miracle Whip from getting all over your hands. In this way the writer seems to tell us that **verses 8–14 are the most important part of the story.**

But does that necessarily mean that just because that section's in the middle that this is what the writer thinks is most crucial. Can't we find some other clue? Yes, we can. Note how the writer creates suspense at the end of **verse 7**, "*And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.*" The reader has a mild anxiety attack. You wonder ... How will the spies get out if the city gates have been shut? And note that the writer doesn't answer the question and bring any relief until **verse 15**. And in between, **verses 8–14, in the very center of the story**, he places Rahab's **Profession of Faith**.

This is an important mark of the writer's style. It's as if he's telling you, 'Don't bother with how those spies will escape; there's something **far more important** I want to tell you about.' It's the writer's way of indicating that what Rahab is about to say **is so important** that all other matters must be placed on the back burner. It's a marvelous summary, by the way, for teaching the components of genuine faith. Let's look at her Profession of Faith. It comes to us in three parts. First, we have her communicating ...

- **v. 10: The Might of the Lord**

The content of Rahab's profession justifies its central place in the story. She rehearses **the might of the Lord, verse 10**, "*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.*"

This was the basis of her faith; she'd heard about the mighty acts of God. This is the normal way of coming to faith. Biblical faith is based on at least some knowledge, some data, some evidence. Even couples who 'fall' in love don't come to love each other merely by oohing and ahing; rather they talk, they communicate, they find out about each other — their past, their likes, their dislikes, their character, and so on. Even romance has some basis in knowledge. So it is with faith. Faith is not just a warm, cozy feeling about God. Faith grows, if at all, out of **hearing what God has done for His people.**

Then Rahab professes her conviction in ...

- **v. 11: The Majesty of the Lord**

Rahab professes **the majesty of the Lord** when she says, **verse 11**, “*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.*” That’s the conviction that comes from faith. This was the conclusion Israel was to reach about God, **Deuteronomy 4:39**, “*know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.*” But here is a **Gentile, pagan, prostitute** with an ‘Israelite’ confession on her lips. She holds to the utter supremacy of God. She seems to know that He’s the only God functioning in heaven and upon earth.

All of this leads Rahab to seek ...

- **v. 12-13: The Mercy of the Lord**

“*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 sign¹³ 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.*”

Here’s the evidence of faith. Genuine faith never rests content with being convinced of the reality of God but presses on to take refuge in God. Rahab not only must know the clear truth about God but also must escape the coming wrath of God. It’s not just a matter of correct belief but of desperate need. Saving faith is always like this. It never stops with brooding over the nature or activity of God but always runs to **take refuge** under His wings. Amazingly, Rahab not only trembles before the terror of the Lord, but also senses that there might be **mercy** in this God. What but the touch of the Lord’s hand could have created such faith in the heart of this **Gentile, pagan, prostitute**?

This is a story of **great mercy** ... because Rahab had nothing going for her, humanly speaking. But in the divine view of things, God has been working in Rahab’s heart, leading her to true faith, and now He’s sending His messengers to confirm her faith and **physically save her**. It’s interesting that the first character in this great book of Joshua, other than Joshua himself, is this woman and the first real story is her story. Another way of saying this is to say that the first story in Joshua is a story of God’s mercy rather than of His wrath. Joshua is a book of conquest, and the premise for the particularly destructive nature of this conquest is that “*the sin of the Amorites*” [who lived in Jericho] had reached its full measure. That is, the people were ripe for judgment. Yet even in this book of harsh judgment, the very first story is about the salvation of this **Gentile, pagan, prostitute** of Jericho. The great apologist for the Christian faith, Dr. Francis Schaeffer, asks whether it is “**fitting**” that God should save such a person, and he answers quite correctly that “**it is most fitting.**” Rahab was no worse than we are, and yet God saves us. It’s not the righteous ... but sinners whom Christ redeems.

At the beginning, I told you that this is a story about two spies, an undeserving woman, the God who connects them, and how both the spies and the woman respond in faith. And they respond in faith because they have ...

- **v. 15-24: FAITH IN GOD’S PROMISE**

¹⁵ *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.* ¹⁶ *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 afterward*

you may go your way.”¹⁷ The men said to her, “We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ 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.²⁰ But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear.”²¹ 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.

²² 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.²³ 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.²⁴ 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.”

With the spies now away from Jericho the rest of the story can be told quickly. As Rahab had directed, the spies go to the hill country for three days, waiting for the pursuers to return to Jericho. This hill country is an area with many caves, suitable as hiding places. The pursuers don’t find them. Then the spies head back down to the Jordan Valley, cross the river and come to Joshua, where **verse 23**, “*they told him all that had happened to them.*”

The language is probably deliberate — **it’s not what they’ve done** but rather what has happened to them. So, when they report the certainty of the Lord’s promise of the land being fulfilled, it’s not because of their successful espionage or even their careful gathering of information; rather, it’s because God is at work in someone completely unexpected, and through her He has confirmed His promise to them. Indeed, their report is derived directly from Rahab’s profession. The Lord is known in the Bible as a God who **promises**, but promises are only meaningful when they’re fulfilled or when evidence is given that they’re being fulfilled.

It’s important to note that Rahab and her family were saved **by faith** in the God of Israel and not by faith in the rope hanging out the window. The fact that she hung the rope from the window was **proof** that she had faith, just as the blood of the slain lamb put on the door posts in Egypt proved that the Hebrew people believed God’s Word. Faith in the living God means salvation. Rahab had faith in the Lord and in the covenant promises He’d made through His servants; and she proved her faith by hanging the scarlet rope from the window. When the Jews captured Jericho, they used the rope to find Rahab and her family; and they rescued them from judgment in **Joshua 6**.

God clearly delights in this story in providing such evidence of faith in the life of Rahab. Perhaps we’ll discover evidence of the new life in Christ and encouragement to faithfulness as we see the ways in which God is fulfilling His promises to us in Christ ... in people and places where we least expect it ... including those, who in His purposes, we might not consider or otherwise exclude.

One of the tenderest, if not the most tender, story in the New Testament, is that of Jesus’ encounter with the woman taken in the act of adultery. It’s found in **the Gospel of John, chapter 8**. We’re never given this woman’s name, but if we’re following the storyline of the Bible, we might call her ...

CONCLUSION: *The Next Rahab* ³

She was brought to Jesus for stoning, because that was the law of the day. It was clearly a test for Jesus. The accusing men who brought the woman put Jesus in a “**no-win situation**”, which was their real purpose, they didn’t really care what happened to this woman. If He choose to show mercy on the woman and let her go, He’d be disobeying the Jewish law. If He condemned her, He’d be going against everything He’d taught about compassion and forgiveness. The accusers thought they had Him. They made their charge, but they weren’t prepared for Jesus’ response. I’m sure they were speechless, immobilized by Jesus’ offer, **John 8:7**, “*And as they continued to ask Him, He stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”*”

Then Jesus did a very strange thing. Without saying another word, He bent over and wrote in the sand. We wonder — was He allowing them some relief in order that they might examine their own consciences? Or did He write something that probed more deeply and burned more searingly upon their calloused hearts? We don’t know what He wrote; we can only wonder and use our imagination.

One pastor suggested Jesus might have written a question in the sand — a simple one. And he thought the question might have been ... “*How would you feel if this was your sister?*” Powerful question, isn’t it? What a difference it would make if the accused was a sister. Jesus saw her as a sister, and you know what He did — whatever He wrote in the sand, and again, we can only guess at that — when He rose and looked around, there was no one left standing there to condemn the woman, and Jesus announced His forgiveness and called her to a new life.

That’s Jesus — merciful, tender, seeking the best and calling it forth from a person — “*seeking to save the lost.*” That’s who Jesus was and is and always will be, and it’s in keeping with everything the Son of God came to earth to be and do.

The magnificence of the gospel is that we were all wretched sinners and are saved by God’s **amazing grace!** In sending Christ, He sent a rescue party to redeem you from sin and judgment. He’s not ashamed to be called your God. **You**, because of the great love with which He loves **you**, are a trophy of His glorious grace. God has been working out His purposes in and through His chosen people throughout history. He chooses unlikely heroes, miserable failures, and those lost in the depths of their sin. God called a nation of hardhearted slaves out of Egypt and winnowed out the unbelievers through 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. In **Joshua 2** they stand at the brink of entering the Promised Land.

But first, in His great mercy, He will save **Rahab the prostitute**, a God-fearing woman. And He was not ashamed to be called her God. He wiped away her shame with His **amazing grace!** – *how sweet the sound – that saved a wretch like me.* And perhaps someday, we’ll stand with her in that Heavenly City and sing these words ...

*Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.*

3 The conclusion is adapted from the sermon, “Rahab, What’s a Woman Like You Doing in a Place Like this?” by Dr. Maxie Dunnam, President Emeritus, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY, www.preaching.com.

It's time to thank Him for that grace. You need to pray.
Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

Heavenly Father, we're amazed at the grace You showed to Rahab. She seems to us to be so undeserving and yet You drew her to Yourself in an act of Amazing Grace. We're not nearly so amazed at the grace You've shown to us. It's because we think, no, we know, that we're way better than Rahab. But Your Word makes clear that's not the case, we're fully capable of falling into sin just as much as she did. And yet here You are again, showing grace to the undeserving ... to us. Lord thank You that no one is beyond Your grace. Thank You that we're not beyond Your grace. Thank You that the blood of Jesus covers our sins ... all of our sins ... as we respond to You in faith and repentance. So make this faith and repentance part of our everyday lives, for we pray, in the Name of Your Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

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1 Kings 8:23

“O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like You, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart.”