

Rahab

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[0 : 00] Let us now turn to the second chapter of Joshua. Verse 1. And Joshua the son of Nan sent out of Shittim two men to spy, secretly saying, Go view the land even Jericho.

And they went and came into a harlot's house named Rahab and lodged there. So we think tonight of this Old Testament woman, Rahab the harlot.

Well why should we gather ourselves together here as we are now doing on an evening of God's day to give any thought at all to a woman whose name is seldom mentioned in scripture by itself but generally in conjunction with her depravity.

Why should we spend time doing this? Why spend time on such a person? For what spiritual nourishment can we get from a person with such an odorous name as this?

Rahab the harlot. Well simply because Rahab became a trophy of grace. She was taken from the downhill by the God of heaven and was given a place in his role of honour in Hebrews chapter 11.

[1 : 25] There we read, By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with those who believed not for she received the spies in peace. That is, she received them kindly.

Now Rahab was so different from Rebecca of whom we were thinking a fortnight ago. Rebecca began so well and then she faded out from our view in her duplicity and in her unworthy conduct. But here, this woman, Rahab, began on the dunghill and ended with a place among the princes of God's people.

Let us then look at this woman and notice the first of two things. Notice the place she had in the purpose of God. The place she had in the purpose of God.

For I think it is abundantly clear to all of us who know anything of the story of Rahab that she had in the purpose of God's people. That she had in the purpose of God's people. That she had in the purpose of God's people. A very real place. A very honourable place in spite of what she was.

[2 : 37] Let us then look at her history as far as we can trace it in the very limited account that is given of it here in the scriptures. First of all then, who she was.

Her name was Rahab. And that word may mean something like insolence or arrogance. And certainly she came from an arrogant people and from an arrogant race.

She belonged to the Canaanites, although some think she belonged actually to the Amorites. But whatever, they were a heartless people, a ruthless people. Who were the inveterate enemies of Israel.

And their pagan religion was as abandoned as any on earth at that particular time. That was our background. From the Canaanites. From their paganism.

From their ruthlessness. And from such pagan scenes, Rahab descended. Along with her brothers and sisters of whom reference is made in this chapter.

[3 : 43] And it's entirely due to the marvellous grace of God that Rahab became what she did. And it was all to the glory and honour of his name.

And my dear friends, the deeper the mire into which a person sinks. And the deeper the mire from which grace lifts that person. The more glorious is the grace of God.

God's grace is sovereign grace. And God's grace is gloriously sovereign. When we see him lifting a sinner from the mire. And setting that person's feet upon a rock.

That's what happened to Rahab. Well, we first come in contact with this woman in the city of Jericho. She probably left her parents' home earlier on.

And set up a place of her own. It may well be that she was like many another girl. Who found life at home rather irksome. She became rather disillusioned with the whole set-up.

[4 : 42] Even a pagan set-up. And so she went out on her own. And got this house in Jericho near the wall. Against the wall of Jericho.

And it's not unlikely that at this time she became the moral leper that she was. She acquired this house beside the great wall that surrounded Jericho.

And the roof of her house was probably level with the top of the ramparts of the wall. With an outside stairway. And there in that house she lived. As some think a menkeeper.

That may well be the case. But also as a woman of ill repute. Well that's who she was. Now let us notice what she was like. What kind of woman was Rahab?

No description of course is given of her. But certain features of her character emerge. As we follow the short account of her life here. In the scriptures of the Old Testament.

[5 : 46] Now at this particular point in Rahab's life. The children of Israel were preparing to take the city of Jericho. For it had to be destroyed.

If they were to gain admittance into the land of promise. And because of the nature of the city. In all its paganism and bankruptcy. It was as well to be destroyed. And we know that.

From Rahab's own confession. The fear of the Israelites. Had fallen on the inhabitants of the city. And the security of the city was tight.

In view of the assault that was to be made on the city. And so tight was the security within the city. That no one could get in or out without being noticed.

And without being reported to headquarters. There was a state of emergency in Jericho. And it may well be that the king and his counsellors were meeting hourly throughout the day.

[6 : 50] Getting reports of what was happening among the armies of Israel. As they approached the city of Jericho. And so it was. That when Joshua's two spies entered the gate of the city.

And went to Rahab's house. Perhaps as the innkeeper. They went to that house. That they were noticed immediately. And word was sent to the king and his counsellors. That two unknown men had entered the city.

And were lodging with Rahab. And when the king approached Rahab. And demanded that the spies be released. For the king said that's just what they are. They've come to spy out the land.

That she refused. Or rather. She instead of handing over the spies. She hid them on the roof of her house. Under the flax.

So that instead of telling the king what had happened. She told him a deliberate lie. She had hidden the men. And told the king. That they had gone somewhere out.

[7 : 52] Into the wilderness. She didn't know where. Now a lie can never be justified. And a lie can never be defended. And we cannot for a moment defend.

The lie that Rahab told. The king of Jericho. And yet at the same time. Before we condemn Rahab out of hand.

Let us watch. Lest we condemn ourselves. Supposing at this moment. We were living in Eastern Europe. And two prisoners of conscience.

Escaped. From an atrocious prison. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And they came to our home. Because they knew. We were Christian believers. And they asked for some kind of shelter. And we gladly took them in. And hid them in the law. And then the KGB. Or its equivalent there. Came to us. Asking if we had these men. And if so.

[8 : 48] Would we please deliver them. What would be our response? Of course. Come in. We've got the men. You can have them as soon as you wish. Would that be our response? Would it not be the case.

That in such a situation. We would be in an intolerably difficult situation. To deliver two of God's people. To the enemies of the gospel. What could we do?

It's not an easy thing. It wouldn't be an easy thing. That's precisely where Rahab was. In that situation. Not for a moment do we defend our lives. But nevertheless.

She was in a very difficult position. And before we condemn her out of hand. Let us watch lest we condemn ourselves. But her action in dealing with the spies.

Reveals certain facets of her character. And the first is that we notice her bravery. To defy the king. Her own king. To mislead his troops. And to act against her own country.

[9 : 48] As in fact she did. Was the very height of treason. For which there was only one sentence. And that was death. She would know that. Because she was an intelligent woman. But she didn't go along that line.

But that's the line she went along. She defied the king. She acted against her country. She took in the spies. We see there her bravery.

And of course we also see her kindness. She received the spies in peace. She received the spies in a kindly way. She spared their lives. If she wanted to act according to the law.

She could have reported the spies immediately. She might have got a medal for that. But she didn't. Kindness prevailed. She took them in. And she hid them.

But I think one of the most important aspects of her character. Is the third one. Her discernment.

Discernment. She was a discerning woman. For she spared the spies.

[10:48] Not only for their own sakes. But because of what they represented. And because of the cause they served. Now it's clear.

From verses 9 to 11. That Rahab knew about the Israelites. And she knew about the God of Israel. She says in verse 9 for example.

She says. I have. And she said unto the men. I know that the Lord has given you the land. And that your terror is fallen upon us.

And that all the inhabitants of the land faint. Because of you. She knew about God. She knew about his power. She knew that there was a divine power.

Behind the invading foe. She knew about Sion and Og. The kings of the Amorites. Being defeated by the Israelites. And she knew that behind that defeat.

[11:49] There was some power of God. At work. She knew that God had dried up the Red Sea. For the Israelites. And brought them safely over. And you see what she says.

In verse 11. She says there. That I know. That God. Is. That there is a God.

In heaven. And in the earth beneath. A God in the heaven above. And in the earth beneath. She was a discerning woman.

She knew. The situation. She understood the situation. And I wonder. If the first glimmerings. Of Rahab's faith.

Were to be seen. At this very point. As she spoke to the spies. And to the king. In fact. I don't wonder. I am as certain. As it's possible.

[12:44] To be certain. Regarding a history. So far away from us. I am certain. That her discernment. At this point. Was the discernment. Of faith. That at this point.

Faith. Was taking root. Within her heart. And that this discerning woman. Was speaking. As a woman. With awakening faith. And then.

The other thing. About her character. Is this. We notice her obedience. Her obedience. She asked. For a very natural thing. She asked.

The spies. In fact. For reciprocated kindness. She was kind. To them. She received them. Graciously. And kindly. And so. In verse 13. She says.

To the spies. I want you now. To save me. And my father. And my mother. And my brothers. And my sister. From the death. That is bound to come. Upon this city of ours.

[13:41] And to this. The spies. Very readily. Agree. And then. At this point. The spies. Made their first request. The spies. Issued their first instruction.

To Rahab. And this is what they said. In effect. They said. For identification purposes. When our army. Invades the city. Tie a scarlet rope.

From the window. You're to let us down by. So that. When we come into the city. We will know. That this is your house. And bring all your relatives.

Within this house. And as long as the scarlet rope. Is there. All in the house. Will be safe. And so we read.

In verse 21. What Rahab did. At the end of verse 21. We read. And she bound. The scarlet line. In the window.

[14:38] She bound. The scarlet line. In the window. Now most of the sermons. That are. Written. About Rahab.

Are on this particular verse. She bound. The scarlet line. In the window. And this. Part of the verse. Is used.

As an emblem. Of the sacrificial work. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. With the emphasis being. On the scarlet. It wasn't a brown rope. Or a blue rope. It was distinctly.

Scarlet. Or red. Now we can be pretty sure. That the color of the rope. For any further significance. Had. Made no impact. Upon the.

Upon the spies. Or upon Rahab. They didn't see the rope. In that light at all. All they saw. In the rope was. It was. A means of identification. And also. A means of safety.

[15 : 31] For all within the house. But nevertheless. We can see. In the scarlet cord. Or the scarlet rope. What we can see. In the doors. Of the.

Of the Israelites. Sprinkled as they were. By the blood. At the Passover time. When they were in Egypt. So that God said. When I see the blood.

I will pass. Over you. And those who have. The scarlet cord. And are gathered. Under the saving blood.

Of Christ. Are identified. As the elect. Of God. And are safe. For time. And for death. And for eternity. They are safe. Because of that red cord.

Because of Christ. Sacrificial work. Safe. From the angel. Of the second death. And yet. No one. Who does not.

[16 : 26] Have the scarlet cord. Is safe. But is condemned already. May we be found in Christ. May we be found in Christ's church.

In Christ's kingdom. Remembering that all who were in the ark. Were saved. That all who were in Rahab's house.

When the invading foe came. Were saved. And so all who are in Christ's church. Through faith in the Lord Jesus. And are members of his kingdom.

Are saved. For the eternal ages. Paul says. Put ye on. The Lord Jesus Christ. Tie the cord of scarlet.

To the window. Put ye on. The Lord Jesus Christ. My dear friends. If we are not under the blood. If we have no part. Or lot with Jesus. Then let us give obedience. To that command.

[17 : 24] Put on the Lord Jesus. Get hold of him. Be under the blood. And under his salvation. For time. And for death. And for eternity. Let us see the obedience.

That Rahab gave. To the command of the spies. Tie the cord. The scarlet line. To the window. And when we give similar obedience. Then we are safe.

From the second death. From eternal death. Well. That's the kind. That's the kind of person she was. That's what she was like. A brave woman.

A kindly woman. A discerning woman. An obedient woman. That's what she was like. Now let us notice. Third thing about her. Notice the prominence.

She was given. The prominence. She was given. And this point. Leads us. To see the place. She had. In the purpose of God. God. Eventually.

[18 : 23] Rahab. Married. She married. A man. By the name of. Salmon. Whose name is referred to. In Matthew 1. And verse 5. And it's possible.

That Salmon. Was one of the spies. That Joshua. Sent into the promised land. Into Jericho. But what is definite. And not just possible.

Is. That Salmon. Was a descendant. Of Abraham. And that is referred to. In Matthew 1. In the genealogy.

Of Christ. That Matthew gives. Starting from Abraham. So that. So that Salmon. Was a descendant. Of Abraham. The gratitude. Salmon had.

For Rahab. In saving his life. Ripened. Into love. And when grace. Erased. Her former. Evil life. She.

[19 : 18] Salmon. Made her. His wife. And when Rahab. Became the wife. Of Salmon. She married. Into one of the leading. Families of Israel.

There was prominence. Note her progression. From being an unknown. Canaanite. And from her former. Way of life. She hid the spies.

She believed. In their God. She entered. Into a covenant. With them. For the salvation. Of herself. And her house. And then. She married. A relative. Of Abraham.

But the final. Stage. Of her prominence. Was still. To come. And it came. When she became. She became. A mother. For she was.

The mother. Of Boaz. Who married. Ruth. And who had. A son. Called. Obed. Who was. The father. Of Jesse.

[20 : 15] Who in turn. Was the father. Of David. Through. Whose line. Our blessed. Lord. Was born. Here. Is the place.

She had. In the purpose. Of God. This. Innkeeper. Harlot. Was. An ancestor. Of our Lord. Jesus Christ.

And she's. Referred to. By Matthew. Referred to. By the apostle. James. And referred to. By the writer. To the Hebrews. With approval. In fact.

Four. Foreign. Women. Are referred to. In Matthew's. Genealogy. Of Christ. Tamar. Ruth. Bathsheba.

And here. Rahab. Or Rechab. Which is called. In our version. But that is just. Rahab. And of these. Four. Women. Of pagan. Ancestry.

[21 : 14] In Christ. Genealogy. Jerome. One. Of the church's. Fathers. In the early days. Of Christianity. Says this. Regarding. The genealogy.

And the four women. Of foreign extraction. In that genealogy. He says. In it. None. Of the holy women. Were included.

In that genealogy. None. Of the holy women. Were included. Only those. Whom the scriptures. Blame. In order. That he.

Who came. On behalf. Of sinners. Himself. Being born. Of sinners. Might destroy. The sins. Of all. So here.

Is Rahab's. Place. In the plan. And design. And purpose. Of God. And ancestors. Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. God. Is no man's.

[22 : 07] Debtor. He does all. Things well. He can turn. The wrath of man. To good account. And to his. Praise and glory. For God. Is working. His purposes out.

As year. Succeeds to year. Well that's the. First thing we notice here. Regarding. Rahab.

The place she had. In the purpose of God. And now the other thing. We notice about Rahab. Is this. The pardon she received. In the mercy of God.

The pardon she received. In the mercy of God. For Rahab. Was a pardoned sinner. She obtained mercy. She became a trophy of grace.

In the saving purpose. And mercy of God. Now as I said. In the New Testament. She is referred to three times. In Matthew 1. It's our place.

[23 : 03] In Christ. Genealogy. That is mentioned. In Hebrews 11. It's our faith. That is mentioned. And in James chapter 2.

It's her works. That are mentioned. But in both Hebrews. And James. She is represented. As a justified sinner. Let us put it this way.

James. Says. She was justified. The writer to the Hebrews. Says. She was. A woman of faith. And therefore justified. By faith.

And going back to James. He says. She was a woman. Of works. And therefore justified. By works. And these three facts.

Add up. To the great truth. Of the pardon. She received. In the mercy of God. Notice them. One by one. First. She was justified. That's what James says. Was she not.

[23 : 58] Was Rahab the hardot. Not justified. When she sent away. The spies. In another way. In another direction. She was justified. These are the words of James.

So this woman. Of the Canaanites. This woman. Of ill repute. This woman. Who was as great. A sinner. As there was. Became a.

Justified sinner. And was put right. In the eyes of God. She who knew. Little but sin. Was declared. Righteous. And put right.

With God. She who's standing. Was one. Of judgment. And condemnation. Was given. A new standing. Which we call. Justification.

Now my dear friends. Justification. For any one of us. Is. The complete. Reversal. Of our. Of the standing. We have. By nature.

[24 : 57] And while we are. In our sin. Justification. Removes. The sin. It sets aside. The condemnation. And it declares.

And pronounces. For us. A new status. A new position. And a new standing. All because. Of the grace of God. And all because. Of Christ.

Jesus. Our Lord. Now when we are justified. We are. Freely forgiven. For in justification.

There is forgiveness. There is pardon. But on what ground. And in what way. Are we pardoned.

Does God. Suddenly. Change his mind.

And indulge us. A little bit. By granting us. A pardon. And calling us. Righteous. Righteous. While all the time. We are not. Of course not. Our pardon.

[25 : 52] Is only. On the ground. Of what Christ. Has done. And what has Christ done. Christ. Died for our sins. According to the scriptures. He came into this world.

To put away sin. Our sin. By the sacrifice. Of himself. And all that. Jesus. Has done. There on the cross. Is charged. To our account.

It's put against. Our account. As righteousness. And because of that. Righteousness. That is charged. To our account. God looks upon us. As righteous.

And pardons. All our sins. And then. When our sin. Is put away. The way. Is open. For God. To accept us.

And to receive us. As righteous. In his sight. And closely. Tied. To that justification. There is. Our adoption.

[26 : 48] Into the family. Of God. Having a right. To all the privileges. Of the sons of God. And furthermore. Attached to our justification. Is the great fact. That at that moment.

We become heirs. Heirs of God. And joint heirs. With Christ. So in God's wondrous grace.

Rahab. Was justified. Now the next thing is this. That Rahab was justified. By faith.

She was justified. By faith. In other words. She was justified. Just as her husband's. Ancestor. Abraham.

Was justified. For there is no other way. To be justified. But by faith. We are told that. He believed God. And it was reckoned. To him. For righteousness. For the righteousness.

[27 : 43] Of justification. But now we must ask ourselves. This question. What did her faith consist of? What did her faith consist of?

Just this. Between the Israelites. And the city of Jericho. There was first.

The river Jordan. And then the great walls. Of that city. And Rahab. Believed. That God.

Was able. To get. The Israelites. Across the Jordan. Able. To demolish. The walls. Of Jericho. And to destroy.

The city. That took some faith. But there. Was the faith. Of Rahab. I wonder. My dear friends. If we have the faith. That removes mountains.

[28 : 40] Well. Rahab had. Rahab had. That kind of faith. That would bring. The Israelites. Over the Jordan. Cause the walls. To fall in some way. And to enter in. And take possession. Of the city.

She believed it. She knew. It was going to happen. And that's why. She asked for protection. And remember this. Rahab had no instruction. From her parents.

Rahab had no encouragement. Of any kind. She belonged. To a race. That was condemned. Because of its sin. And abandonment. And yet. Rahab believed God.

And it was counted to her. For righteousness. And there are those who. All their life. Have had every encouragement.

Every opportunity. All kinds of instruction. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Backed up by parental prayers. And if such.

[29 : 38] Have to stand before God. As unbelievers. It were better for them. That they were not born. Jesus says that. Harlots. Entered into the kingdom.

Before those. Who ignore. The instruction they receive. Who despise the privileges. Who disregard. The opportunities. And if there's anyone here.

In that position. Then take note. There's a solemn thing. I'm saying. Harlots. Enter the kingdom of heaven. And will be for you. If you despise. And reject. And disregard. And put on one side.

The opportunities. And privileges. That you have. That Rahab. Never had. And yet. Rahab. Is within the veil. She's within the veil.

She's in heaven. I wonder if that will be. Our ultimate place. With her. Or may she teach us. What faith is.

[30 : 38] She was justified by faith. Now the last thing I want to say is this. That she was also justified by works. She was justified by works. James 2 and verse 25. James says.

Was she not justified by works. When she received the messengers. And sent them another way. Of course she was. But there's no conflict at all.

She was justified by faith. But she was also justified by works. For what are works. But faith in practice.

James says. Faith. If it have not works. Is dead. Being alone. But Rahab's faith. Was not alone. She hid the spies.

That was the practical aspect of her faith. She believed in God. And in. As God of heaven and earth. But she was practical in her faith. She hid the spies. For the sake of the cause. So that.
[31 : 37] Faith. Is made visible. By our works. One is the fruit. The other is the root. And both grow in the soil of grace.

Now I think that. It was wonderful. I believe that it was wonderful. That. When James the apostle. Looked for an example.

Of a justified sinner. He singled out this prostitute. And even more so. When we realize. That the only other person. Singled out by James. In that chapter. As one who was justified. Was the mighty Abraham. And they both possessed.

Like. Precious faith. And they were both justified. By the same faith. And brought in.

[32 : 41] At the end. Into the same kingdom. And into the same heaven. She was justified. By faith. But she was also justified.

By works. Well now I'm finished. I just want to ask this. What is our standing. Before God. For make no mistake about it. We do have a standing. That's for sure. We do have a standing. And we all have a common standing.

Because of our association with Adam. We have a common standing. We have a common standing of condemnation. And because of that common standing of condemnation.

The outlook is unbearably and intolerably bleak. And barren. And dark. And ominous. So that we need to have a new standing.

[33 : 44] And that's what justification is about. We need to have a new standing. And when we have a new standing. Through our faith in Jesus Christ. Through a faith which is not alone.

Then we are accepted. In the beloved. Clothed. In a righteousness. That's new. New to us. A righteousness.

That is not our own. And when we have that robe of righteousness. Then we can say. Bold I approach.

The eternal throne. And claim the crown. That is his own. May this be true. Of every one of us. That we are clothed.

With another's righteousness. Through faith in him who died. And rose again. Let us pray. O Lord our God.

[34 : 47] We thank thee. For this further revelation. Of sovereign grace. And we thank thee for. The glory. That this brings.

To thy grace. It is indeed glorious grace. And. The change that took place in Rahab. We know is. To the praise. Of the glory of thy grace. We can't understand. All the workings of thy grace. There's so much mystery. Attached to it. And always.

There always will be mystery. But we bless thee for the evidences. Jesus. And we thank thee. That. We are justified. Through faith in Jesus.

Even if that. Faith is no stronger. Or larger. Than a grain of mustard seed. If it is the real thing. It saves. It justifies. It puts us right with thee.

[35 : 44] And we pray. O Lord our God. That we would not. Trust in our faith. But trust in him. In whom faith is exercised.

The Lord Jesus Christ. And grant that the faith we have. Is a faith that is made visible. Through our works. We are not saved by right.

By works of righteousness. Which we have done. We are saved by. Thy son's righteousness. Imputed to us. Charged to us.

And received. By faith alone. May this be our happy position. For every one of us. May we not rest. O Lord. Until the common standing. Is taken away.

And the new one is ours. A standing in grace. A standing because of Christ's. Righteousness. And because of all he has done for us. Lord we bless thee.

[36 : 41] For the. Gospel of thy son Jesus Christ. We thank thee. For the. Clear way.

In which it is revealed to us in the scriptures. We thank thee. For the. Sure standing. That the gospel. Proclaims to us.

For all who believe. And we pray tonight. That we would. Have this new relationship. And. This new standing. And.

May the peace. That is proclaimed. In the court above. That we have been made. That we are declared righteous through Christ. Be declared. In the court below.

In our own heart. For being justified by. Peace. By. By faith. We have. Peace with God. May we know this peace.

[37 : 37] Which passes. All understanding. And may we have like. Precious faith. With Abraham. And with Rahab. Look upon us then.

O Lord. As. We. Bring. Our time of worship. To a close. Dismiss us. With the blessing we need. Thou knowest. Best of all. What we need.

Most of all. And we look to thee. And pray. That thou will do for us. Exceeding abundantly above. What we can ask or think. For we ask it all in Jesus name.

And for his sake. Amen.