



“A Cinderella Story” (Hebrews 11:31)

Danny Hodges – NT3547

MISC. THOUGHTS

- Rahab’s Hometown - Jericho dates back more than 10,000 years, the most ancient known city in the Bible. It is over 1,000 feet below sea level, making it the lowest town on earth. The domestication of plants and animals and the invention of pottery took place in ancient Jericho 1,000 years before Mesopotamia and Egypt. The walls and towers of Jericho preceded the pyramids of Egypt by 4,000 years. It is also called “the city of palms” because of its oasis type palm trees. It is rich in agriculture, producing fresh fruits and vegetables year round. Jericho’s dates, bananas and citrus fruits are especially famous. It was and still is a favorite winter resort. In the days of the conquest of Jericho by the Israelites, the city covered six acres, and its walls reached a height of twenty-one feet. Jericho was also extremely pagan (Refer to Lev.18, noting v.27).
- Rahab’s Occupation – Some scholars suggest that Rahab was simply an inn keeper, but that is not in keeping with the Hebrew and Greek words used to describe her in the Bible. The Hebrew is “zanah” and means to be a harlot, to act as a harlot, to commit adultery, and is found not only in the story of Rahab, but in many other verses as well (Gen.34:31; 38:15, 24; Ex. 34:15-16; Lev. 17:7; 19:29; 20:5-6; 21:7, 9, 14; Deut.22:21; 23:18; 31:16). So Rahab lived in the oldest city and practiced what many say is the oldest profession known to man.
- The Story - Read Joshua chapter 2. These spies sought lodging in a place characteristic of traveling merchants, feeling their chances of escaping notice were best there. But their strategy failed. Someone saw them and reported it to the king. The king sent out the local police, and it looked like they were doomed. And they would have been, except for a very unexpected turn of events – the faith of a prostitute! Someone put it this way: “God’s agents were saved by a madam, the proprietress of a bordello, a woman who sold her body for money, who submitted to any man who crossed her doorway if he had the cash.” But a dramatic change was about to take place in the life of this prostitute, and it all began when she simply put her faith in the God of Israel. When we look closely at the faith of Rahab, certain characteristics emerge that are both instructive, and extremely encouraging. I’d like to share a few of those with you.
- Now read Joshua 6:20-25.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RAHAB'S FAITH

1. Saving Faith (James 2:24-26)

- Read Joshua 6:22-25; When the walls crumbled, obviously one part remained – Rahab's house; Psalm 91: 7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. 8 You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. 9 If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge.
- Her initial deeds that proved her faith involved a lie, but we must consider this against the backdrop of an incredibly pagan culture. We must be sympathetic and patient with the character of recent converts. John Newton, the author of that great hymn "Amazing Grace," and one of the fathers of the evangelical movement in the Church of England, continued to participate in the slave trade for over a year after his conversion. Rahab, living in an extremely pagan culture, takes a step to no longer side with the people of her culture, but rather side with the God of Israel, and His people. That is a step that everyone who is truly saved must take. See Eph.2:1-3; I Peter 4:3-5.
- II Cor.13: 5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. One of the first tests is "Whose side are you on?"

2. Surprising Faith (Matt.12:20)

- Matt.12: 20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out...
- Who in the world would have put money on the chances of Rahab getting saved? But the Bible is filled with unlikely people whose lives God radically changed. Summarize Mark 5:1-20; Mark 16:9 When Jesus rose...he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons; Zaccheus; Matthew, Saul of Tarsus, Danny Hodges, etc. How many of you have friends and family that were shocked when you became a Christian?
- Matt.21:31..."I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

3. Singular Faith (Joshua 24:15)

- "Have you ever felt that it is a very hard thing to have a singular faith? It is the easiest thing in the world to believe as everybody else believes, but the difficulty is to believe a thing alone, when no one else thinks as you think; to be the solitary champion of a righteous cause when the enemy mustereth his thousands to the battle. Now, this was the faith of Rahab. She had not one who felt as she did, who could enter into her feelings and realize the value of her faith. She stood alone. O!

it is a noble thing to be the lonely follower of despised truth...Rahab's faith, sinner as she was, had this glory, this crown about its head, that she stood alone, faithful among the faithless found." (Spurgeon)

- All Jericho had an opportunity to believe. It was forty years prior that they began to hear about the people of God and the power of God. Word had continued to infiltrate their city, but they still refused to repent and turn to this God of Israel. And so for forty years these people had heard about the God of Israel, and while they melted in fear, they never moved in faith. Rahab did not let the disobedience of others keep her from taking a bold step. She stepped out in faith, and she stepped out alone.
- Matthew 7:13-14

4. Sanctifying Faith (II Cor.3:17-18)

- Rahab's faith set her on a whole new path in life. Her life as a prostitute was now behind her. And she could never imagine all that lay ahead. She had a peace in her life like she had never had before. And despite all her extremely sinful past, she felt mysteriously and wonderfully clean. She knew she had been saved from certain judgment, and now she was eager to learn more about this God in whose hands she had placed her life. She would have begun to hear the great stories of the God of Israel...creation, Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Details of the Israelite's miraculous deliverance from Egypt, The Passover. She especially liked to hear that story, because she had been a slave as well (to sin). She hung on every word she heard, and she soaked up truth like a sponge. Not all was easy in this radical life transition, because while God had saved Rahab by faith, now he was looking to transform her character (by faith). I can imagine the first time she heard The Ten Commandments, especially the ninth one (Thou shalt not lie!). And she learned about purity, especially sexual purity. She began to dress differently, no more short skirts and low blouses. No more extravagant and overly done outward adornment that attracted men based solely on her outward appearance. She could have at any time in this transformation process hit the road and said, "I've had enough, the God of Israel is far too strict for my tastes." There were plenty of pagan cities she could run to, and she'd have no problem making a living anywhere there were men! But she didn't do that. No, Rahab persevered in letting God change her whole life. She was becoming a godly woman, and it showed in her dress and her actions.
- Rahab's faith ended up influencing her whole family. How unlikely for Rahab to be the instrument God used to save her family? If Rahab had not stepped out in faith, her family never would have been saved. See I Cor.7:12-14.

5. Storybook Faith (I Cor.2:9; Eph.1:18)

- Remember the story of Cinderella? I've titled this message "A Sinderella Story." The story of Rahab is no less dramatic (or beautiful) than the story of Cinderella. Midnight was quickly approaching in Jericho, and Rahab needed help. And by faith

she got more than help, she got salvation, and with it a whole new life! If you had known Rahab when she first came into the camp of Israel, after a few years you probably would not have recognized her. She was truly a new woman. And one day, something, no, someone, caught her by total surprise. She noticed an Israelite man taking special notice of her. He may have asked her to go for a camel ride, and she accepted. They began courting, and eventually were married. How do we know that she got married? See Matthew 1:1-5a. Wow! Rahab (the former prostitute) is listed in the geneology of Jesus Christ! But that's not the end of the story. She married a man named Salmon. Who is Salmon? See I Chron.2:10-11; Numbers 7:1-2, 12. Rahab married a wealthy prince of Israel! And so she became a princess. But the story doesn't end there. See Matthew 1:5-6. Rahab became the great grandmother of king David!

CONCLUSION

- The final person to receive individual commendation in God's hall of faith is a former pagan prostitute named Rahab. Praise the Lord! Rahab stepped totally out of one life and into another, and she never regretted that decision. She went from being a pagan prostitute to becoming a princess among the people of God!
- You may be thinking, that's a wonderful story of God's love, grace and mercy, but I can't relate to it. You see, I've never been a prostitute (or anything close). Oh really? The truth is we are all spiritual prostitutes (See Luke 13:1-5ff; 18:10-14; Isa.64:6; Rom.3:23). But each one of us have the potential of experiencing a storybook ending to our lives...by faith!
- Is there someone listening that needs to step out by faith and set out on a whole new path in life, a path that begins by repenting of your sin and making Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior of your life. Will you take that step of faith today?