



Risk-Takers: The Adventure of Walking by Faith

Sermon Title: A Story of Transformation by Faith

To be used with Session 3: Rahab: A Faith Not Held Back by Fear

Date of First Use: June 15, 2025

Text: Joshua 2:1-25; Matthew 1:1, 5-6; Hebrews 11:30-31

Connection with the Study:

The Bible study for this week features an amazing subject - Rahab the prostitute – as an example of faith not held back by fear. The main points focus on Rahab's story in chapters 2 and 6 of the book of Joshua. They describe how Rahab acted in faith instead of fear. Instructions for the Bible study writers include pointing out that Rahab is in the lineage of Jesus (Matt. 1:5), that she is in the "Hall of Faith" (Heb. 11:31), and that she is an example of faith (Jas. 2:25-26).

This sermon portrays these passages in a series of scenes that paint the larger portrait of Rahab's faith and its results. Scene 1 focuses on the primary story in Joshua. Scene 2 moves to Matthew. Scene 3 concludes in Hebrews.

Introduction

How sad it would be if our personal stories ended with the worst thing we've ever done. Rahab's history could have been tragic. In her narrative throughout the book of Joshua, she's called "Rahab the prostitute." Her sin was her identity. In God's mercy, that was not the last word. Radio broadcaster Paul Harvey often shared part of someone's history before introducing "the rest of the story." The rest of Rahab's story made all the difference, not only for her life, but also for many others – including you and me.

At a critical moment, God put Rahab at the intersection of fear and faith. Had she chosen the road of fear, she would have faded into the background of history. Instead, Rahab followed the path of faith to the saving of two Jewish scouts and, as a result, the preservation of her entire family. Moreover, she became part of the royal ancestry of Jesus Christ.

Through Christ, our stories also have a much happier ending. Christ takes the worst days of our lives and turns them into blessings. Mistakes of the past can become springboards for the future when we put aside fear to act on faith.

1. Scene 1: an overcoming faith. (Josh. 2:1-25; 6:17-25)

Rahab may have been afraid, but her faith overcame her fear. She didn't let fear paralyze her. She acted because she believed. The first scene of Rahab's story included five segments – each of which can be characterized by a key descriptive word:

- a) **Duty** (vv. 1-2). The spies were doing their duty in going to Jericho to investigate the enemy's strengths and weaknesses. Why did they seek shelter at Rahab's house? No questions would be asked in the apartment of a well-known harlot. Her home was built into the wall around the city, possibly near the gates. The spies must have asked questions, so word got around. Informants around the gates or at Rahab's residence would have noticed their strange manner of dress and language.
- b) **Danger** (v. 3). Word came to the king about the spies' presence at Rahab's home. He sent word ordering her to bring the men out. Up to this point, she had been safe. With the king's command, she entered the danger zone: obey and put the Israelites in danger or risk danger to herself and her family.
- c) **Daring** (vv. 4-7). Rahab risked all to defy the king. Why? Faith. She believed.
 - 1. By faith, "I know the LORD has given you the land." In her mind, this was an accomplished fact before Israel ever crossed the Jordan.
 - 2. By faith, "We have heard how the LORD dried up Red Sea and delivered the two kings of Amorites." She confessed the hearts of the people of Jericho panicked at the approach of Israel.
 - 3. By faith, she believed that "the LORD your God is God in heaven above and in the earth beneath." Using the covenant name of Israel's God, she accepted that He was the one and only, true God.
- d) **Deal** (vv. 12-22). Choosing faith over fear, Rahab made a deal with the Jewish spies. She helped spare their lives at great risk to herself. She only asked them to show kindness to her father's house. She didn't only seek her own personal safety, but she wanted to preserve her entire family. The deal was struck as the spies promised kindness and faithfulness in return for her pledge of secrecy.
- e) **Delivered** (6:17-25).
 - 1. Joshua cursed the city (v 26), but declared "Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all in her house because she hid our messengers."
 - 2. Joshua destroyed the city but ordered the two spies to deliver Rahab and her family. When the walls fell down, one small section was spared because Rahab's home was built into the wall where she had let the spies down through a window.

3. Joshua saved Rahab and her whole family. God may use us to save our families if we act by faith instead of fear – sharing the gospel and showing we believe it.
4. As a result of Rahab's faith, she was able to "dwell in Israel" safely. At first, her family was settled "outside the camp." Though faithful, they were still foreigners. Later, she married into what would become the royal family.
5. We can also experience God's deliverance as we faithfully follow God's Word.

2. Scene 2: an overwhelming future. (Matt. 1:1, 5-6)

- a) Rahab's story didn't end with Joshua's account. By faith, she had an overwhelming future. Matthew's gospel begins with the genealogy of Jesus Christ going back through Abraham and David. It recognized that Jesus is the heir of these two covenants and is the promised Messiah.
- b) Salmon, from the tribe of Judah begat Boaz of Rahab, Boazs begat Obed with Ruth. Could it be that Boaz was open to marry Ruth, a Moabite widow, because of the grace God showed through his mother? (Some scholars argue that Rahab was Boaz' great-great-grandmother). Obed begat Jesse, Jesse begat David the king, David the king begat Solomon with Bathsheba, who had been the wife of Uriah.
- c) Matthew's biography includes Rahab's past, Ruth's heritage, and Bathsheba's shame. By faith and grace, all became part of Jesus' ancestry.
- d) Tradition suggests that Salmon (Rahab's husband) may have been one of the two spies that she protected. Her faith led to an overwhelming future that included being an ancestor through the legal lineage of both David and Jesus. What difference will we see in our future if we by faith follow Christ completely?

3. Scene 3: an overflowing fame. (Heb. 11:30-32)

- a) **Faith's action.** The apostle James noted that Rahab's faithful action showed how she was justified before God (Jas. 2:25). She demonstrated her faith by her deeds (v. 18). Rahab believed in the one true God – Who He was, what He did, what He would do. By faith she did not perish with the residents of Jericho who did not believe. Her faith can be seen as she received the spies in peace. From the moment she let them into her house, she believed. As a result of receiving the spies, Rahab received deliverance, a family, future, and fame, not just as the harlot, but as an ancestor of Jesus.
- b) **Faith's result.** Rahab's faith led to her inclusion in what has been called the "Hall of Fame of Faith." She is right there between the story of the walls of Jericho falling down (Heb. 11:30) and the summary of Gideon, Samson, and David (v. 32).

You and I may never make anyone's Hall of Fame on earth, but through Christ we can know our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Conclusion

Like Rahab, our future depends on choosing faith over fear. Difficulties, opposition, and even persecution often accompany the decision to follow Jesus. Just as people rejected and hated Him, even so they will reject and hate His followers. Instead of allowing fear to determine our choices, by faith we can live as disciples of Jesus. As such, we will receive a future blessed by Christ's presence – in this life and in the one to come.

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