

Guest Preacher Rev. Kenny I Macleod

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Preacher: Rev. Kenny I Macleod

[0 : 00] Now, I want us to look at this chapter in Joshua 2 that we read, but also to keep in mind the words in Hebrews chapter 11 and at verse 31, and it tells us there, By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

I want us to consider this chapter, and in particular this woman, Rahab, who is an amazing trophy of grace.

The book of Joshua is one of the most inspiring books in the Bible, and if you're ever discouraged, go to Joshua chapter 1, because it's a book that is so encouraging, and it's little wonder that it is so, because Joshua was taking over in the footsteps of Moses, and that must have been a task that he felt totally inadequate to fulfill.

And I believe that that's why we find in Joshua chapter 1 that the Lord is encouraging Joshua over and over again. And he's saying to him, like, for instance, in verse 6, Be strong and courageous, for you will cause this people to inherit the land.

In verse 7, Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded. Verse 9, Have not I commanded you?

[1 : 33] Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed. The Lord wouldn't be saying that to Joshua were it not for the fact that he is obviously feeling overwhelmed by the task that is in front of him.

And I think we are all conscious of that sense of unworthiness and sense of unfitness in anything that we try to do for the Lord.

And it never gets any easier. A couple of weeks ago when I was preaching, one of the elders was saying to me in that congregation, he said, It's strange how different the way of grace is to the way of the world.

He said, When you do something in the world, and you do it over and over and over and over again, you get better and better, and it becomes almost second nature and becomes easy. But he said, It never is the case in any service for the Lord.

It's always, there is always a challenge. There's always, it's always, you never say, Well, I perfected this. It's easy for me now.

[2 : 46] It is never the case. And so it is always the case. Whatever we are doing for the Lord, it is something that we are, our dependence and our reliance is upon the Lord. And that's where Joshua was at that time.

He had been, Moses is an understudy for years, and he knew how fickle the people were. He knew how unpredictable they were. And he knew that this was going to be an immense and a challenging task.

So that is why the Lord is so encouraging Joshua. It's a book of faith. It's a book that demonstrates God's grace. It's also a book of judgment.

But there is flowing through it a tremendous display of God's grace. And so the Lord is encouraging Joshua so much in Joshua chapter 1.

And you'd expect when you finish in Joshua chapter 1 that it would be more of the same, and the focus would be on Joshua and leading the people. But the focus moves, as it were, onto this woman, Rahab, in the city of Jericho.

[3 : 52] And we find here that this woman, this is a woman who's living in a sinful and immoral way in a city that is ripe for God's judgment.

It's a cruel city, an immoral city, a perverse city, an idolatrous city. And as we said, it is a city that is ripe for God's judgment. And yet Rahab becomes a woman of great faith, so great that she takes

her place in Hebrews alongside the likes of Enoch and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and David and Samuel, these great, great people of God.

So we find her name is there as well. But she's always referred to as Rahab the prostitute. That's what it tells us in Hebrews chapter 11.

And you know, it's interesting, God never allows us to forget what we were. Matthew was Matthew the publican. Yes, he had left the tax booth. He had left if he, a lot of the tax collectors were quite corrupt, and they would be pocketing a lot of the money, whether Matthew was or not.

But it's quite likely. But he leaves everything and follows Jesus. But he never forgot what he was. Same with the apostle Paul. Paul, in his own writings, would say, I was a persecutor.

[5 : 19] I was a blasphemer. Paul never forgot what he was. And neither should you, and neither should I. Because it will keep us humble. The worst thing you can see is somebody who, when they become a Christian, they forget their own waywardness.

They forget their sin. They forget what they were. And they become judgmental on everybody else. The Lord doesn't expect that of us. Because we must never forget what we are.

We are sinners saved by grace. No more, no less than that. And so we find that comes through Scripture over and over again.

Now, we read that Joshua sent out two men secretly. That's what we see at the beginning here. And Joshua, the son of Nun, sent two men secretly as spies, saying, Go view out the land.

Now, Joshua himself knew all about being a spy. He was one of twelve. If you remember how nearly 40 years prior to this, Moses had sent 12 spies to spy out the land.

[6 : 28] Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the twelve who came back with a good report. The others, they all came back and they said, You know, it's everything we were told. It's a rich, fertile land.

It is truly flowing with milk and honey. It's a wonderful land, but we haven't a chance. Great, walled cities. And the inhabitants are so big we felt like grasshoppers beside them.

We haven't a chance. And the report that the ten spies brought back was latched onto by Israel. And they were ready to stone Joshua and Caleb and stone Moses as well.

And they grumbled and they complained against God. And you remember what happened. God, they said that they would rather have died in Egypt. And God said, exactly, or die in the desert.

That's exactly what's going to happen. And they were left for all these years wandering in the desert. Well, Joshua was one of the two who had brought back a good report because Joshua was saying to the people, What these other spies are saying is true.

[7 : 39] But with God, we can. And God has promised to take us in. But they wouldn't listen to him. They were ready to stone him back then. So it's interesting that Joshua sends out two spies secretly.

He's keeping his cards close to his chest, and rightly so. Because if he had told everybody, Well, I'm going to send out two spies, people would have, you know what it's like. Everybody has an opinion.

One person would say, Oh, this is right. Or the other person, Oh, that's the wrong thing. You should do this. You should do that. Joshua, he's a military man. And he's playing, as it were, cards close to the chest.

And secretly, he sends out these two spies to go and to spy out the land. And at this stage, of course, Joshua doesn't know how Israel are going to, what the strategy God is going to unfold that to him as they go along.

And so, as we say, Joshua, as a military man, does what any military man would do, sends out these spies to spy out the land. Now, Jericho, as we find here, was a large city with great walls, and Rahab's house was on the wall.

[8 : 53] And in a sense, Rahab's place was, from a human point of view, was probably the place to raise least suspicion. Although she is termed Rahab the harlot, and there's no doubt, Rahab the prostitute, that that's what she was, the wording can also indicate an innkeeper.

And it's quite possible that she was both. So that if they were to go anywhere, this is a place that would raise the least suspicion to see two men going.

But, of course, we know that they were directed there by God. God was overruling everything, because the Lord was going to display his grace in the most wonderful way.

And we see that Jericho was on high alert, because they were aware of Israel. They were aware of Israel, and camped on the other side of Jordan. They had heard all about Israel.

And so, as we say, they were on high alert. The word comes to the king. Two men gone to Rahab's house. So the king sent a deputation. And Rahab, well, we know that what she said wasn't true.

[10:06] But it's interesting, although she doesn't tell the truth, no doubt she lived in a culture where lying was second nature. The Scripture is silent on this, because what Scripture highlights is her faith of what she did and why she did what she did.

And so she concocted this story, and she said, yes, they were here, but they left. And they went out just before the gates were closed, and they headed up. And if you send people after them, no doubt you will catch them.

So she does this, and she hides them in. She hides them up on the roof. People ask, why did Rahab do that?

Well, she did it because her heart had changed by God's grace. And although she was a citizen of Jericho, and the Jericho people were naturally her people, she no longer wanted to side with the people of Jericho.

She wanted now to side with the people of God, because she saw, and she was brought by the Lord's grace to lay hold upon who the living and true God was.

[11:25] And she's very like another heathen woman who was transformed by God's grace. You remember Ruth? And Ruth had to make a decision, just as Rahab had to make a decision.

You remember the time when Naomi and Ruth and Orpah were making their way back to Bethlehem from Moab, and then they came, as it were, and liked to the borders, and Naomi said to them, look, girls, there's absolutely nothing for you back at home.

And that was true at a natural level, because they would have no place. She couldn't guarantee them any safety. She couldn't guarantee them any money.

She couldn't guarantee them anything. Their lives would be in danger. And she said, there's nothing for you here. You should go back. And it's a very moving scene.

We remember how Orpah, the three women were hugging each other and crying. And we find that Orpah, she disentangled herself from this huddle.

[12:30] And we find that she went back. But Ruth, it says she clung. She wouldn't let Naomi go. And she said to Naomi, where you go, I go.

Your people are my people. Where you die, I will die. There I'll be buried. And so she made this great declaration. She made this great choice, where she sided with the people of God.

God's people were her people. And that's exactly what we find also with Rahab. She is making this decision. And it wasn't an easy decision because her life is just, as it were, in the very balance.

If it was discovered that she was actually hiding these men up there, she would have been put to death right away. No two doubts about it. So she was taking her life in her hand.

But she didn't count her life precious in the sense that she had thrown in her lot with the people of God. And you know, decisions have to be made in life.

[13:36] And if there's anybody here tonight and you're still outside the kingdom, you have to ask yourself, why? And you cannot have one foot in the kingdom and one foot out.

You're either in or you're out. There's no halfway house. You're either in Christ or out of Christ. And you see, the time is passing by. And so often, there are people who may believe the word and believe the gospel.

And there's so much that you say is true. You want the peace. You want the security of being a Christian. But there's this holding you back. You're being held back.

Because you're not, you say, oh, I can't commit. I can't. I can't. And there's all kinds of reasons come up why you can't. One part of you wants and another part says, I can't.

Well, you need to ask the Lord. Lord, intervene. Take me over this hesitancy. Take me over this stumbling block. Take me over where I am. I need to come to you.

[14:38] Lord, take me. Help me. Because the days are passing. Every day is taking us one step closer. Commitment is needed. And so we find here that Rahab, as it were, throws in her lot with the people of God.

And she said to the spies, and she said to them, before we read that in verse 8, before the men lay down, she came up to the roof and said to them, 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.

So we say to ourselves, how did she come to faith? Well, I think we have a kind of an idea of it here because then she says in 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 Sion and Og, whom you devoted to destruction.

So you see, the first thing that she indicates there is that we heard. You see, Jericho was a big city. It was a sort of a key city and there would be a lot of people coming and going.

So they heard what the living and true God was doing. Everybody in Jericho had heard. And that's important for us to lay hold on because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

[16:07] It tells us in Scripture, how shall they believe if they haven't heard? So you see, there's a huge duty on all of us to share the gospel when the opportunity arises.

Because you might be the only person, you might be the only Christian at work. You might be the only Christian in your home. You might be the only Christian on either side of your house.

Who's going to tell your neighbor? Who's going to tell your work colleagues? Who's going to tell in the house if you don't? You see, it's so important that we share when the opportunities and we need to pray for the opportunities and grasp the opportunities to share the good news.

Because as we said, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. So that was the first thing she said we heard. And then the next thing it says, as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted and there was no spirit left in any man because of you.

So you see that there's this, a fear to go over. Now a lot of people, you know, there's a lot of people, and that's where the rest of Jericho. Rahab seems to be the only one who heard and feared in a way that drove her to the Lord because the rest all feared as well.

[17:32] And you know, there are many people who can sit under the Gospel and there are times that they will tremble. Particularly under what might be termed a hellfire sermon.

And they say, whoa, whoa, and they go out. And there is an impact. It touches them to a certain extent. And maybe for a few hours or maybe for a few days, there's a lingering impact, but then it fades.

And sometimes they become harder than ever. And that's what happened in Jericho. They all heard. They all feared. But you know, if we don't act on the fear, then we become harder.

There's one of two things happening all the time. People are either softening or hardening. And it's a solemn thing to be hardening. And you know, sometimes you'll see that with, and it's one of the saddest things I've ever seen.

I've seen it before with older people. And you try, as maybe in that, and it's happened when you're seeing people who are reaching the end of their life.

[18:42] And you're trying to say a wee word and they don't want to hear. Hardened hearts. The light is beside them. They don't want it. And it's one of the most solemn things.

Because as I say, people are either softening or hardening. Don't harden under the gospel. Today, if you hear my voice, the Lord says, harden not your heart.

And then the third thing we see with regard to 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. And you know, up to that moment, that's one of the greatest confessions that anybody had made in the Bible.

And here it is made in this city, ripe for judgment. And here's this woman in the last home or the last house. If you were to pick a house in Jericho and say, where are you going to get a confession of the Lord?

[19:47] Where are you going to get somebody who's going to come out on the Lord's side? That would be the last house. And you know, the Lord has a way of doing that. So often he does this, that he plucks the most unlikely to confound the things that are mighty.

And the Lord has a way of displaying his authority and his sovereignty and his grace. And so Rahab makes this wonderful confession. And again, confession is essential to our salvation because we're told, well, I should, confession is important for us in our Christian walk.

We're told with a heart that we believe and with a mouth we confess. You know, if you come to faith in the Lord Jesus and you don't confess, your growth is going to be really hindered.

It is vital to make confession. And we have what are known as secret disciples. We're known, they spoke about them in Jesus' time. They were, remember when, when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, they came to the fore.

Joseph had been a secret disciple. And it tells us of some of the Pharisees that they believed. And they accepted Jesus, but they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God because they knew that if they confessed Christ, they would have been thrown out of the synagogue.

[21 : 20] And they couldn't stand that. They couldn't, that idea of losing all their place and esteem within the community, they couldn't face it. Confession's important. That's why when we come, when a person, the communion time comes.

And there's always the invitation for people to come to take communion, to profess their faith for the first time. It's a lovely thing.

And that's what a person does in front of the session. That's basically what you're doing, is professing and confessing that Jesus Christ is your Lord.

That's really what it is. And it is something that's biblical, something that, that confession. And that's why I say that until we come to the point where we're able to confess, we'll never grow properly. It'll hinder us. It'll hold us back. I'm not saying that a person cannot be a Christian who isn't able to confess because we do believe that there have been some beautiful Christians that have never gone to the Lord's table.

[22 : 30] But their life, you see, a person's life is a confession to a certain extent. You can see a Christian. They're known by their fruits. But it's important for that person to make that confession, even to tell other people, I now love the Lord.

I'm following, following the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Rahab makes this confession. And then the evidence of her faith, that she has come to faith, is that she hides the spies, that she hides them. And a further evidence of it is that she wants her whole family to be kept safe and secure. And, you know, in a sense, that's what, you know when you come to faith, all of a sudden, you have a burden for your whole family, those whom you love, that they too will come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, she wants an assurance from the spies that her father and her mother and her brothers and her sisters and their families that they will all be kept safe.

And the spies make a covenant with her. And one of the things that they say in verse 14 there, it's very interesting, the men said to her, our life for you even to death.

[23 : 50] So, they promised that they, in verse 12, she says, please swear to me by the Lord that as I have dealt kindly with you, so you will also deal kindly with me.

And so, we find that there's this covenant that they make with the spies, with Rahab. Our life for you.

Can't read these words without thinking of the Lord Jesus. That's what he did. He gave his life for us. Couldn't do more.

Now, in Scripture, we often read of covenants. God made a covenant with Abraham. He made a covenant with Noah. But, of course, the greatest covenant of all is a new covenant, the covenant of grace, where God the Father entered into covenant with God the Son.

And God the Son stood on our part. Imagine if God had made a covenant with you and with me. It would be in tatters because we are incapable of keeping the covenant for a minute.

[25 : 06] Outside of it, we couldn't keep it. And that's why Jesus Christ is the covenant keeper on our behalf. God the Father made the covenant with the Son on our behalf.

And the Son fulfilled for us everything that is required. He took upon us the punishment required for sin. When he cried out on the cross it is finished.

He had achieved everything. That the Father had required from him. Every day in this world he fulfilled the law. Every moment on that cross he bore the wrath and the punishment for our sin. And he rose for our justification. And because God the Father is just he is incapable of punishing a person a second time.

Of casting away a person who is safe in Christ. It is impossible for him so to do. And that is he's a covenant making God and a covenant keeping God.

[26 : 11] And I just thank the Lord tonight that that is true. And so we find here that they make this promise and they said if they said the way if anybody goes out to your house their blood is on themselves.

but if you want to stay safe everybody must be in this house. And she had this rope that she was going to let them down the window that's what we're told in verse 15.

Then she let them down by a rope through the window from her house. And the men said to her we will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that we made that you made us swear.

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 mother brothers and all the household. And again when you think of the scarlet the colour of blood again you think of another house and houses in Egypt you remember that the way of safety was the blood sprinkled on the doorposts and on the lintel.

[27 : 24] It was the only way. to save. Here's the scarlet robe. Now I don't know and I would be I'm just spiritualizing to a certain extent.

But you know Paul talks about in Romans of how we have yielded our members to sin and to iniquity.

When we think of our hands and our eyes and our tongue and all the members of all that makes up our body that we've given all that over to sin we have yielded all that to sin but he says that in Christ now yield your members those same members that were there used for sin that these will be now used for righteousness used for Christ and you know that's what the Lord is able to do to take what has been used for sin and to turn it right round to be used for his glory that's what he does with people and I don't know it's only a possibility that maybe that red scarlet rope that that Rehab had might have been a signal for what she was doing in her line of work we talk of a red light area it could be I don't know but it would follow in with the very way that God works where he transforms totally what is unrighteous what is unclean what is unjust and turns it completely the other way round and so we find that the the the the the men flee and they they hide in the mountains and then they go back over to

Joshua and tell him everything that has happened and you know as we said you and I hide under the covenant as well that has been made between father and son but you know it can it can what we have to be careful about the Jews because they were covenant people believed that they were right with God whatever didn't matter what they believed that God would accept them and you know there are people in our own time too who believe that that by hiding by going under as it were the covenant of baptism there are a lot of people who think oh I was baptized I'll be all right I had a godly granny I had a good mother and a good father they were they brought me up well and people sometimes rest in that they rest in the fact that that they were brought up in the church they rest in the fact that they were baptized we must rest in nothing nothing but in the sure work of the Lord Jesus Christ nothing else saves nothing else counts Rahab wasn't trusting in that red rope she was trusting in the Lord that the Lord was the one who would deliver her the one who would save her and we see a big difference you know God's grace is so amazing you think of two cities ripe for judgment Sodom and Jericho and remember God's grace is displayed in Sodom where Lot remember Lot where Lot God sends two angels to deliver Lot and they say to Lot go and tell go and tell your loved ones go and tell your loved ones to come too well Lot's two daughters they went with Lot Lot's wife went but she didn't leave Sodom behind but all the rest they laughed at him judgment no they wouldn't believe him and they wouldn't come with him and of course the judgment came and you know there's a lot of people like that today

[31 : 25] God's judgment they laugh they pour scorn upon the idea where is the promise of his coming as Peter says God is through to his word but we find a different story here in Jericho because Rahab goes to her people to her father her mother her brothers her sisters and their families tells what's happening and they all go together they all shelter under the sign of the covenant that has been made trusting in the God of heaven and earth that he will deliver and that he will save and the other thing that is quite remarkable from this whole incident when we see you know when God begins to work it's almost like he doesn't stop well we know he doesn't stop but we talk of amazing grace and if ever we've seen amazing grace it's here in the book of Joshua with this woman

Rahab here is this woman who until the Lord worked in her heart was going to be destroyed under the judgment of God but God plucked her their family from Jericho because we read what happens that if we went to Joshua in chapter 6 we find that Joshua in verse 22 he says to the two spies but to the two men who had spied out the land Joshua said go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her as you swore to her so the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab their father and mother and brothers and all who belong to her and they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel and then they burned the city with fire and everything in it now you see that's an amazing deliverance that Rahab experienced but God wasn't finished there because we find that

Rahab is integrated into Israel she moves she joins in with Israel and her family and Rahab marries she marries a prince of Judah called Salom and they have a child they might have had a few children but they had one son anyway that we know of called Boaz and Boaz we know is a man who married Ruth you know sometimes you say it's a small world but in God's world it's amazing and Boaz married Ruth and we know that Ruth and Boaz had a son Obed Obed had a son Jesse and Jesse had a son David so King David's great granny was Ruth and King David's great great granny was this woman Rahab and then when you go to

Matthew's gospel you find the human lineage of Jesus where it works all the way back excuse me works all the way back and we find that Jesus this comes through this very line through Rahab through Ruth it's through the Davidic line we find the human line of Jesus isn't this amazing grace where God just displays the wonder of his grace and if God is able to do that for this heathen woman in a city ripe for judgment surely he can do for you as well and if you've never called out to him please tonight do so because you know where two or three gather in his name Jesus is present and it's a very solemn thing to be in the presence of our Lord and not to ask him to have mercy upon us remember when he was passing by Jericho we find

Jericho of course was rebuilt and so on and there was a curse put upon Jericho but remember how blind Bartimaeus when he heard it was Jesus he grabbed the opportunity and said Jesus thou son of David have mercy upon me because he knew this was an opportunity well so is tonight don't lose it because in losing it you may lose your soul let us pray Lord our God we give thanks for your amazing grace for the way that you work in life you surprise us in so many different ways so often when we come to your word and we look into it and begin to see something of the way your providence unfolds we marvel at the intricacy the pattern sometimes when going through the providences they seem difficult they seem sometimes such that we almost can't deal with them but for your people you always have a plan and always have a purpose and so we pray that we might have the faith to rest in you and to trust in you and to follow you with all our heart we pray to bless everybody here tonight bless our homes our families and all whom we love and take us to our homes safely at the conclusion of this service and that your grace and mercy will accompany us all the days of our life forgive us our every sin we pray in Jesus name we ask it

[37 : 17] Amen we're going to conclude singing from Psalm 116 in the Scottish Psalter Psalm 116 and we're going to sing verses 4 to 8 Psalm 116 verses 4 to 8 is on page 396 in the Psalm books upon the name of God the Lord then did I call and say deliver thou my soul O Lord I do thee humbly pray God merciful and righteous is yea gracious is our Lord God saves the meek I was brought low he did me help afford O thou my soul do thou return unto thy quiet rest for largely lo the Lord to thee his bounty hath expressed for my distressed soul from death delivered was by thee thou didst my mourning eyes from tears my feet from falling free 4 to 8

Psalm 116 upon the name of God the Lord upon the name of God the Lord and did I call and say deliver thou my soul O Lord God save the meek I want I do thee humbly pray God merciful and righteous is yea gracious is our Lord God saves the meek God save the meek I was brought low He did me help afford O thou my soul do thou return unto thy quiet rest for largely O the Lord to thee his bounty I've expressed for my distresses soul from death delivered was by thee thou didst my mourning eyes from tears my feet from falling free now may the grace mercy and peace of God the Father

Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore Amen