

Message: Be Brave
By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison
Joshua 2:1-7
Look Up Sermon Series
July 19, 2020

Be Brave Rahab. She's a real outlier. How can a prostitute be in Jesus' genealogy (Mt 1) and be listed as a hero in the "Hall of Faith" (Hebrews 11)? Why do you think the Israelites would include her story in Scripture? Rahab was not an Israelite, but she had heard of God and chose to align with Him and His people, at risk to her own life. She acted courageously when she decided to take the spies up to the roof and hide them. Her bold choice saved her family and gave her a better future. Isaiah reports that God's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55). God uses the insignificant, the small, the rejected, the marginalized, the forgotten, the lost, the overlooked, and the despised for His kingdom purposes. If God can use Rahab, no one can be discounted in God's plan. Redemption can happen to anyone, no matter his or her background. Why was Rahab included? She had faith in God and the courage to act on it. James (2:24-25) insists that faith has a witness. Faith is not simply an internal belief; it is something we do. Faith and action are bound together. Rahab believed. Rahab acted. Rahab was brave.

APPLICATION: Having faith is one thing. Acting on faith is another. What is the bravest thing you have ever done through your faith? What step of faith is God calling you to now? How will you do it? Who can you enlist to help? Will you volunteer in Vacation Bible School in some capacity? Or invite a family to attend? Redeemed people are on a mission to help others be redeemed. We all have work to do.

When you checked in you should've gotten a bulletin that has my Sermon Journal Intro/Application.

Context: 5 Words of the Bible slide: Israel

When you texted to check in you find a bulletin with our Sermon Journal Intro/Application.

Jericho is just a few miles from the Jordan River. It is the oldest continually inhabited city in the world. Archaeologists have unearthed the remains of 20 successive settlements, dating back 11,000 years. A 1907-09 German excavation of the walls of Jericho uncovered part of the site that didn't fall as the rest of the wall did. It rose as high as 8 feet with houses built against it still intact. An opening in the wall (a window) would have provided an escape for the spies. This northerly location was only a short distance to the Judean hills where the spies went.

We are introduced to **Rahab**, a most unlikely character for a heroine.

Joshua 2:1-7

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. And it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." 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." 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. 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." 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. 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.

Rahab had to think and act quickly. This story was chosen to go with the theme because Rahab took them "up to the roof."

Answers: LOOK UP – see the Lord. 3 things I see in this story:

1.) **Courage** Courage is the ability to do something that frightens us. Everyone had something to lose in this: the spies, Rahab & Joshua. It was a fearful time. Joshua had been there 40 years before with Caleb and 10 other spies who lost their nerve & they did not go into the Land they were promised.

3x the Lord tells Moses' successor, Joshua, in the previous chapter to be strong and courageous.

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

"Fear Not! Don't be afraid!" are familiar refrains when the Lord speaks to people.

2 Timothy 1:6-7 *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

2.) **Wisdom** Why did Rahab choose the Lord? The answer is found in the following verses.

Joshua 2:8-14 Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof 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. 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.

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. 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 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." 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."

1 Kings 18:21 Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And the people did not answer him a word.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. Be wise. Don't do crazy things. I think wisdom helps us have a calm, non-anxious presence.

3.) **Patience** 40 years later, they are about to enter the Promised Land. Ps 27:13-14 *I believe that I shall **look upon** the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! **Wait** for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage. God is our strength & salvation.*

Some of the early Christians called themselves "parabolani." The Greek word literally means "gambling." They weren't running point spreads on the local chariot races nor playing 5 card stud games. The word also means, "to risk or hazard." To be a parabolani meant you were willing to take a risk for Christ. The parabolani went to the prisons where all kinds of desperate and even depraved prisoners were kept. Without regard for personal safety, they ministered to some of these criminals, even though some were crazy. They also did a lot of work for the sick. In 252 A.D. the prominent African city, Carthage (Tunisia), was struck by a deadly plague. Dead bodies were piled up on the streets. This only spread the plague more. Carthage appeared doomed. The Christian bishop, Cyprian, asked all Christians to form a squad of parabolani who would risk their lives in an attempt to clean up the city. They responded. As a result of their work, the city was saved. Why could they be patient? Because they knew the end of the story. When we can see the big picture & that it will be good in the end, we are willing to risk it all. That's why Paul wrote to the Philippians: *Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I*

cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again. (1:18-26)

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson took the field as the 2nd baseman for the Brooklyn Dodgers and broke the color line in MLB. It opened the door for blacks to participate openly & freely at the highest level of professional sports in America. He scored the winning run that day & was named the Rookie of the Year that year. Branch Rickey, the President of the Dodgers, knew he had to pick the right person who could withstand the prejudices, pressures & persecution that was inevitable. Rickey spoke with Robinson before the season: "Jackie, if a guy slides into you at 2nd base & tries to spike you & calls you the dirtiest, ugliest names, what will you do?" "Mr. Rickey, do you want someone with the courage to fight back?" "No, Jackie, I want somebody with the courage NOT to fight back. Tag the guy out & then turn & walk away." Jackie said, "I've read the Bible & know how Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek & I know how to do that." "Jackie, that's what you will have to do. You will receive terrible taunts, be the victim of horrible prejudice, cursed, ridiculed & threatened. I want you to rise above all of that. Stand tall. Turn the other cheek. And read this book." BR gave Jackie a copy of a book, "The Life of Jesus." JR had an incredible career with a lifetime batting average of .311, was an All-Star 6 times, led his team to a World Series championship & was inducted into the Baseball HOF in 1972. But the best thing about him was how he studied the life & teachings of Jesus & how he showed the world the power of what Jesus taught. He exercised courage, wisdom & patience.

We don't face invading armies, but other situations can overwhelm us.

- 1.) "Everyone is carrying something. **"What are YOU carrying?"**
- 2.) We all have **choices**. We can always control how we **respond**. How are you choosing?

Look up and see that **GOD is at work**. This should give us confidence

Look up and see **OTHERS are in need** (not just our own problems)

What are **you** DOING? How are you **helping others follow Jesus**? John 4:35 *Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.*

Join with God is on a rescue mission to redeem a lost world.