

Rahab

To show, through the example of Rahab, that no matter what your life may have been like, there is still hope for change and a bright future.

What if it were possible to go back in time and change your past. What would you change? What would you do differently? Unfortunately, we cannot go back and erase the mistakes that we made in the past. However, I'm here to tell you that it's not how you start, but how you finish!

The children of Israel are making their final preparations before entering the promised land and they have not yet crossed the Jordan river. Yet here, the bible tells us of what happens with a woman who is only known as Rahab the harlot:

In the first two verses we have 5 main characters:

Jos 2:1 - Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.

Jos 2:2 - And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

Joshua

He is the leader of the people of God and has succeeded Moses.

Joshua represents the leadership of all of the children of Israel! He has been commissioned, encouraged, and now he begins to plan.

He has a different task than Moses – he has to lead the people into battle.

Two Spies

There is a difference from when Moses sent out the 12 spies:

- Only two – these were hand-picked men. Moses sent men who were already the leaders of their tribes.
- Secretly – without the children of Israel knowing. Why?
 - So that the people would not be discouraged, thinking that Joshua feared the people
 - They are the right people to do the job! You need the right people to do the right job. The spies were sent to examine the land so that they could be prepared for battle.
 - They had to be men of faith and of skill to do this job. More than likely, Joshua chose these men because of their diligence, persistence, wisdom and, above all, their faith.
 - He knew what was necessary because he had done this before.

The king of Jericho

- He is the leader of the enemy's city, and speaks on behalf of his people
- He knows that he leads a sinful people, yet there is no sign of repentance or remorse.

- He has fortified his city, which sits as a stronghold.

Rahab the harlot

What do we know about this woman?

- She was known as a harlot, but probably was also an inn-keeper, since inn-keepers were usually loose women and she had a place to lodge the spies. She is the main character in this passage.
- She is someone that any of us can relate to – someone who had made mistakes:
 - There is no mention of a husband
 - She takes the responsibility for her entire household – no one else speaks apart from her, even though she has a father, mother, brothers and sisters

What happens?

The king of Jericho learns of the whereabouts of the spies and is searching for them:

Jos 2:3 - So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

Rahab hides the spies and deceives the pursuers:

Jos 2:4 - Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they *were* from.

Jos 2:5 - And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them."

Jos 2:6 - (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.)

Jos 2:7 - Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

Rahab's actions prove that she had faith in the God of Israel:

Jos 2:8 - Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof,

Jos 2:9 - and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.

Jos 2:10 - For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

Jos 2:11 - And as soon as we heard *these things*, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He *is* God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

Jos 2:12 - Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token,

Jos 2:13 - and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

Listen to what Rahab said to the spies:

- She believed - "I know that the LORD has given you the land..."
- She told them the state of the people – "
 - Terror had fallen on them
 - They were fainthearted
 - They had heard what had happened to other enemies
 - Their hearts melted
 - They had lost their courage
 - The LORD is God in heaven above and on earth beneath
- She asked them to spare her father's house (for mercy)

The spies responded with an oath:

Jos 2:14 - So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

Jos 2:15 - Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house *was* on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall.

Jos 2:16 - And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way."

Jos 2:17 - So the men said to her: "We *will be* blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear,

Jos 2:18 - unless, *when* we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home.

Jos 2:19 - So it shall be *that* whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood *shall be* on his own head, and we *will be* guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head if a hand is laid on him.

Jos 2:20 - And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear."

Jos 2:21 - Then she said, "According to your words, so *be* it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

Jos 2:22 - They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought *them* all along the way, but did not find *them*.

Jos 2:23 - So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them.

Jos 2:24 - And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

What was required of Rahab?

- A scarlet cord had to be seen from the window
- All who were to be saved had to be inside the house with the scarlet thread
- They couldn't say anything about it

Rahab did not do well in her early years of life. We only know that she ended up with a reputation as a harlot. However, because of her faith, which was shown by her actions, she was saved, along with her entire family.

And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

This is what is said about her in the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 11:31

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

But there is something else that is said about her:

James 2:25

Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

She was a woman who showed her faith by what she did! She also retains one other honour:

Matthew 1:5

Mat 1:5 - Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,

She was the great-great-grandmother of David, which made her one of only two gentile women in the genealogy of Jesus.

Here are a few things that we can learn from this historic event:

- God is a merciful God! Even though Jericho was to be destroyed because of sin, God still had mercy on one family who had faith and repented.
- Even if your life is a mess, there is still hope for change and a bright future.
- Remember, it's not how you start, but how you finish!