Grace Evangelical Free Church March 12, 2023

**Hebrews 11:31** Rahab: Wondrous Grace

God never condones or excuses sin, but He has made a way whereby sinful and failing men and women may find deliverance from the penalty and the power of sin: by faith.

**Hebrews 11:31**: “**By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.**”

* **Grammatical Usage:** “**faith**” or in the Greek, “pistis”, literally means, “belief, trust, confidence, fidelity); “**prostitute**” or “porné” (feminine noun) meaning, “harlot: woman indulging in unlawful sexual intercourse, whether for gain or for lust”; “**disobedient**” or “apeitheó” meaning, “rebellious”.
* **Literal Interpretation:** “**By belief, trust, confidence and fidelity Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who were rebellious, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.**”
* **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. Can a sinner be translated from a house of shame into the Hall of Fame? Yes! Notice Rahab’s faith - how it began, how it operated, how it was manifested and what it accomplished:

1. Rahab was a common sinner, yet she was saved by grace, through faith.

That of course is the only way for a sinner to be saved (**Ephesians 2:8-10**; **Titus 3:5**). Rahab was a pagan and she lived in spiritual darkness, among people who were given up to idolatry (**John 3:19-21**). She was a prostitute, but God loved her (**John 3:16**; **Luke 7:36-50**; **John 8:3-11**; **Romans 3:22-23**; **James 2:10**). Our need now is as great as hers was then! She entertained residents and visitors in her house on the wall.

2. Rahab’s faith began, where all true faith begins, by hearing God’s Word.

Twice we are told that she said, “**We have heard**” (**Joshua 2:10-11**); and because she had heard, and because she believed what she had heard, she was able to say, “**I know…**” (**Joshua 2:9**). Faith takes God at His word and reckons on it (**Romans 4:20-2l**). We are saved in the same way as Rahab was saved. We hear the gospel (**John 5: 24**); we hear that we are under condemnation, and we tremble (**Joshua 2:11**; **John 3:18**, **36**); and by faith, by taking God at His Word, by trusting Him, we are saved (**Acts 16:30-31**)!

3. Rahab confessed her faith to the spies.

She was not a secret believer. Notice the difference between a mere intellectual faith and a real heart faith. In **Joshua 2:10** she says, “**We have heard…**” (that presumably included many of the inhabitants of Jericho); but in **v. 9**, she says, “**I know that the Lord….**” Many in Jericho heard about the Lord and about His power and they believed about Him, but Rahab believed in Him and she trusted Him. This is amplified in **Romans 10:9-10**, and particularly notice the word “**heart**”. It is not enough to believe with our head; we must trust, and this has to do with our heart. Then, after believing in, or with, our heart, we must confess Him with our mouth and in our lives (**Matthew 10:32-33**).

4. Rahab’s faith was demonstrated by her works.

Works are the evidence of faith (**James 2:25**; **Ephesians 2:10**; **Philippians 2:12-13**). Where faith is real it will be seen. The evidence of Rahab’s faith was that she hid the spies (**Joshua 2:1**, **4**, **6**); that she confessed to the spies (**vv. 9-12**), and that she sent the spies away (**v. 16**). But the greatest and most striking evidence of Rahab’s faith was the scarlet cord, mentioned in **Joshua 2:18**, for this cord was the “**sure sign**” (**v. 12**) that she believed the word of the spies. While the cord was in the window Rahab knew she was safe (compare **Joshua 2:21** with **Exodus 12:12-13**). The only safe refuge for a guilty sinner is the blood of Jesus: **1 John 1:7**.

5. Rahab’s faith involved a radical change.

Because she believed on the Lord, her life was transformed. For her, a believer, it meant leaving the doomed city, being separated from her people (the Canaanites), and throwing in her lot with the people of God. She certainly turned to God from idols, and everything became new (compare **2 Corinthians 5:17** and **1 Thessalonians 1:9**) unlike Lot’s wife. A real work of grace in the heart will always lead to a real change in the life.

6. Rahab’s faith reached out and encompassed her friends and loved ones.

This is made clear in **Joshua 2:12-13**. What a lovely thing it is to see this woman showing a great concern for the salvation of her family and friends! She was like Esther (**Esther 8:6**); she was like Andrew (**John 1:40-42**); she was like Philip (**John 1:43-49**); and she was like the woman of Sychar (**John 4:28-30**). Do we have any real concern for the members of our own family and for our friends who do not know the Savior, and are we seeking their salvation?

7. Rahab’s faith brought her into a position of great honor and it made her the special channel of God’s blessing.

God’s grace is very wonderful! This woman Rahab, who had now been brought into a living relationship with the Lord, was given a godly husband, and as the result of their union she became the mother of Boaz, the great-grandfather of King David (**Ruth 4:21-22**); compare **Matthew 1:5-6**; **16**); and as we conclude this study be sure to read **Joshua 6:21-23, 25**; **Isaiah 1:18**: “**Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be as wool.**”

* **Conclusion**: Most everyone has a head knowledge of who Jesus is – but do you have a heart knowledge? Do you know that you know Jesus is your Savior?