

Joshua Chapter 2 – The Grace of God revealed in the life of Rahab

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. <sup>2</sup> 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.” <sup>3</sup> 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.” <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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.” <sup>6</sup> (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.) <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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, <sup>13</sup> and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.” <sup>14</sup> 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.” <sup>15</sup> Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house *was* on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. <sup>16</sup> 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.” <sup>17</sup> So the men said to her: “We *will be* blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear.” <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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*. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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.”

Introduction.

As we began our new series last week we discovered at least 4 reasons why it will be good to study the book of Joshua.

1. It is a fulfillment of a promise that God gave to Abraham. (Gen.12:v. 7) The book highlights the faithfulness of God in keeping His promise.
2. The book speaks to us about the "Holiness of God". God was using His chosen people to punish the people of the land for their sin. ( Deut.20:16-18 )
3. The book of Joshua has lots to teach us about the Christian life today. Many of the things that Joshua faced, we will also face in our lives. Joshua had to do things by "Faith" in God's word, and so will we if we want to live a victorious Christian life.
4. All scripture is written by the inspiration of God. Therefore Joshua is written by God to teach us about God. If we apply what we learn to our lives, we will grow to become more mature Christians.

Last week in Joshua chapter 1 we learnt three main things.

1. God promised Joshua the land of Canaan.( Gen. 15: v.18 )
2. God encouraged Joshua in two ways. Firstly he promised him that nobody would be able to defeat him as long as he lived. Secondly God promised that His presence was going to be with him wherever he went. Finally there was a promise from God's people that they would support Joshua.
3. God instructed Joshua to "Meditate" on the word of God and to do everything written in the book of the Law. ( First 5 books of the Bible )

We now come to Joshua Chapter two.

There are a few things going on in chapter two. However the main focus of the chapter is v. 8-21 which is the confession of Rahab and her actions after that. Therefore I will focus mainly on these verses.

However before we come to these verses we need to look at the beginning of the story from Chapter 2: v. 1-7.

1. Joshua sends out spies to view the land – v. 1-7.

It had been 40 years since Joshua had been into the land of Canaan. Last time Joshua had been one of 12 spies who had gone out to view the land and only two came back with a positive response. That was Joshua and Caleb. Perhaps Joshua decided that two spies were enough after the last disaster.

Although God had promised to give Joshua success in his battles in Canaan, he didn't put his brain in neutral, he sent the spies out to check out the land, especially Jericho. Jericho was a fortified city and would be hard to destroy.

The two spies arrived in the land and entered the walled city through the gates that were open in the day time. They went to a house of a prostitute named Rahab and booked in to stay the night there.

It seems that Rahab was running a sort of Bed and Breakfast house for visitors. It was some sort of home stay for foreign guests to the city. Although Rahab was called Rahab the harlot, it doesn't mean that she

was a prostitute at the time, but she must have been in the past. The reason I say this is because in v. 6 we are told that Rahab had a small business gathering “Flax” and laying it out on top of her roof to dry. There had to be sufficient flax in order to hide the two men, so it appears that this was her main business.

Although Rahab had the stigma of her former life, she appears to have repented of her former life -style and was now trying to earn a living by getting “Flax” ready for spinning and weaving and running a small guest house.

What we do know is that God knew her heart and that her heart was seeking after the true God.

In v. 2 we are told that someone saw the men going into Rahab’s house or at least heard about them and reported the matter to the king of Jericho.

In v. 3 we are told that the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab to bring out the two men who had entered her home to stay for the night. The King had heard that they were spies who had come to search out all the country around them.

As soon as Rahab received word from the king she hid the two men. Then Rahab reported back to the king that the men had initially come to stay the night, but as it got dark they left just before the city gate was closed for the night. She advised the king to go after the men as they had not gone long and they would soon catch them.

The truth of the matter is that Rahab had hidden the men with the stalks of “Flax” that were drying on her roof.

However the king sent out men to catch the spies and then they closed the gates for the night.

0. The Confession and Actions of Rahab. v. 8-21.

V. 9 Rahab had heard of the people of God. – Stories had been circulating about God’s chosen people. She ran a guest house and had foreign travelers to stay. No doubt they would have told her first hand about God’s people. She knew about the covenant promise of God to give the children of Israel the land to dwell in.

V. 10 Rahab had heard about the Power of God. - She had heard the story about how the Israelite God had dried up the water of the “Red Sea”. She also heard how they had destroyed the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og.

Rahab not only heard about the power of God to do all these things, but she noticed how it affected the people. We are told that their hearts melted and they lost their courage. In other words they were afraid of what the Israelite God might do to them.

V. 11 Rahab declared that the Jewish people followed the Almighty God, who controlled Heaven and Earth. She declared that this God was sovereign over the universe and in control of everything on this earth. What a mighty God she declared.

v. 9 Rahab believed herself in this Almighty God. She said in v 9 “I know”. There was no uncertainty in her words; she was fully convinced about the God of the Jewish nation. Rahab was the only person in the city who believed in the one true God. If she had been found out she may have been killed?

Rahab’s faith was personal and genuine.

## Application

Sometimes it can be a lonely thing in Japan to believe in the one true God when everybody in your University or workplace or family is not a Christian. Perhaps they even mock the things of the God of the Bible. If this is your case, then it means that you have to persevere in your faith. You have to believe in your identity in Jesus Christ.

You are the light of the world in the place where you are.

(Matthew 5:v.14-16)

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. <sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

The only light that these people are going to get is from you, whether they want to receive it or not.

You are the salt of the earth towards the people around you.

(Matthew 5: v. 13)

<sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

In Bible times “Salt” was a precious commodity. It helped to preserve meat and keep it fresh. If we are going to let our Christian light shine we need to keep fresh in Jesus by spending time in prayer and in God’s word.

Your ministry is where God has placed you, until He calls you to be in another place.

v. 6, v. 15 Rahab worked for God. - She hid the spies and let them down by a rope to escape out of her window. We need to turn to James chapter 2: v. 25 (read in the N.K.J.)

<sup>25</sup> Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

It wasn’t the works that saved her, but her works were the evidence of the faith in her heart.

We are justified in God’s sight by faith alone in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. However the faith which justifies us is usually accompanied by works.

Let us now turn to James 2: v. 18 & 20. ( read in N.K.J.)

<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

<sup>20</sup> But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

The big challenge for us here at O.I.C. is do our works and our lives show that we have saving faith in Jesus Christ and the Almighty God who sent Him from Heaven to die for us?

You can't have a more challenging example from Rahab. She risked her life to rescue God's people and eventually we will see that she was rescued herself by God's people.

v. 21 Rahab Obeyed and tied the scarlet cord in the window. - The condition that the spies made for the safety of Rahab and her family was that she had to tie a scarlet cord in the window that she let the spies escape from. Her obedience was immediate; as soon as the spies had left she tied the scarlet cord to the window. The scarlet cord was the sign of the agreement that she had made with the spies.

There is a tradition in Christian teaching that the scarlet cord represents the blood of Jesus Christ.

If we read our Bibles from cover to cover we will notice that there is a threat of blood that runs throughout the Bible from Abel's blood in Genesis throughout scripture, until we get to the blood of Jesus in the New Testament.

There is a remarkable parallel between the cord that Rahab put in her window and the blood of the lamb which was applied to the doorposts of the Jewish homes in Egypt when the Angel of death passed over the land.

In Egypt everyone died who did not have the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. Everybody in Jericho died who were not in the house which had the red cord in the window.

The story of Rahab is the wonderful story of God's Grace.

Rahab only heard about the God of the Jewish nation. Today we have the Bible and all the evidence we need from history.

Rahab was a prostitute, she knew her sinful behavior was wrong and she made an effort to turn from her sin. She was repentant.

Rahab trusted in the Jewish God to save her based up the scarlet cord. Today we have greater than the scarlet cord; we can trust is the precious poured out blood of God's only Son Jesus Christ.

However we have to exercise that faith and really believe in Jesus for ourselves personally.

When we actually do this, God sees our heart and He gives us the assurance, concerning our forgiveness. As a result we will want to serve this wonderful God.

The wonderful thing about Rahab is that she not only believed in God and obeyed the spies by tying the scarlet cord to the window, but she was saved from God's wrath and became part of the family line of Jesus. In God's Grace she was allowed to be married to someone who was part of the "Royal Line" from Adam to Jesus Christ.

Let us turn to Matthew Chapter 1. And read v. 1-5.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: <sup>2</sup> Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. <sup>3</sup> Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. <sup>4</sup> Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. <sup>5</sup> Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,

It is amazing how the genealogy of Jesus Christ includes Rahab. She was a Gentile, she was once a worshipper of a foreign god, and she was once a prostitute.

Romans 5:v. 20.

20 God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant.

Rahab is one of only two women who are recorded in the hall of fame in Hebrews Chapter 11. Sara is recorded for her faith in v.11 and then Rahab is recorded for her faith in v. 31. They both exercised faith in the living God.

The most important thing about Rahab was her "Faith"

It says in Hebrews 11: v. 6 – N.L.T.

<sup>6</sup> And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him."

In the same way, the most important thing about us is our "Faith".

We need to be sure that our faith and trust is in Jesus Christ and Him alone.

This is why Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

The one thing that Jesus Christ wants us to remember is His "Death". His "Death" gives us forgiveness for our sins and a home in heaven for eternity.

Yes God used Rahab in His sovereign purposes and He can use us too, in spite of our religious background and our moral background.

Before we leave Rahab let us remind ourselves of 1 Corinthians 1: v. 26-29.( N.L.T.)

<sup>26</sup> Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. <sup>27</sup> Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. <sup>28</sup> God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. <sup>29</sup> As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

v. 22-24 The spies returned to Joshua and reported back.

The spies returned to the Israelite camp and reported back to Joshua. Unlike 40 years previous, the spies were in 100% agreement that God Himself had prepared the land for destruction. God was going to fulfill the promise He had made to Abraham in Genesis 12:v. 1-3.

God showed His "Grace" to those who were repentant, but in this case it would only be one family. Nevertheless if Rahab knew about the Israelite God then everybody else would have known too. The difference is they didn't want to repent of their sin, but Rahab did repent.

In our Communion time we studied the word "Repentance". It is the beginning of a process that leads to Heaven.

Q. Are you willing to repent of your sin and trust in Jesus Christ as your own personal savior? If you are willing, maybe today is the day to trust Him.