

The Lesson of Rahab



You and Your Household (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

I've been explaining that the salvation which God offers to humanity is a household salvation. Believe in the Lord Jesus, you will be saved, you and your household. The reason is that God has a deep love and concern for every family. God is the God of families. Every family takes its name ultimately from the fatherhood of God.

The scriptural key to this household salvation is the father in each family. In our previous studies we've looked at the examples of five men who brought their families into this household salvation: the Philippian jailer, Noah, Joshua, Abraham and Job, although Job's experience was in some respects different from that of the other four men.

Today I'll be sharing out of the story of a woman, a woman without a husband, and yet her faith brought salvation to her entire household. Her name was Rahab. Now, we need to just glance briefly at the background of Rahab's story. Joshua and the armies of Israel were encamped on the east side of the Jordan River, ready to advance across and move in and conquer the land of Canaan. The first city, on their way, which they had to conquer, was the city of Jericho. Jericho was a walled city that was strongly fortified and God had a special plan by which the Israelites would be able to conquer Jericho. But before the whole army moved in, Joshua sent two men ahead as spies to get inside Jericho and spy out the city and see what it's defenses were, and so on. So Joshua sent these two spies across the Jordan and into the city of Jericho.

Now, inside Jericho there lived Rahab. Rahab is called a prostitute. It's not absolutely sure whether she was exactly that, or she was just a woman who kept an inn. But probably in those days there was too much clear delineation between the one and the other. Bear in mind that Jericho was a very evil city. It was doomed to God's judgment. It was doomed to be totally destroyed, and here in this so wicked city is this woman, Rahab, a prostitute. Now, I'll read to you the passage from Joshua chapter 2 which speaks about the spies coming and how Rahab received them. Joshua 2:8-21:

> "Before the spies lay down for the night, she [Rahab] went up on the roof [where she had hidden them] and said to them, 'I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so

> that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Read Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts sank and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death.' 'Our lives for your lives!' the men assured her. 'If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land.' So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. Now she had said to them, 'Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way.' The men said to her, 'This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear.' 'Agreed,' she replied. 'Let it be as you say.' So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window."

So that's the background. She had taken the spies in and when their lives were in danger, she had hidden them on the rooftop under the stalks of flax and then she'd shown them how to escape. She'd risked her own life in helping them, even to the point of letting them out of her window, because her house was on the wall of the city, with a rope so that they could escape.

And then she said, "Because I've done all this for you, I want you to promise me that you will spare me and all my family." And they said, "Agreed, on two conditions. First of all that you'll tie this scarlet thread in your window, and second that they'll all come into your home. If you don't bring them in, if they're outside of your house, then our promise is not valid. They've got to come right inside and be in your house with you. And if they are there and the scarlet thread is in the window, then we promise you the safety of yourself and all your house."

Now, let's read what happened when Israel took the city. This is found in Joshua 6:20-23. The children of Israel had to march around for seven days, and the seventh day they had to march around seven times, and at the end of the seventh time they had to blow the trumpets and shout and God told them that the wall would fall down, and that's what happened. Here's the description.

> "When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it, men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys. Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, 'Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her in accordance with your oath to her.' So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel."

Notice, Rahab, by her courage and her faith, though she was unmarried, though she was a prostitute, brought salvation to her entire family. Everybody that belonged to her was saved on the basis of her faith.

Let's look at the aspects of her faith very quickly. There are three things that go together in Biblical faith and she demonstrates each. First of all she believed that God would give the Israelites the land, she had that faith. Secondly, she put action into her faith. She risked her life to save the spies. Third, she made a confession of her faith. That scarlet cord tied in her window, corresponds to our confession of the blood of Jesus. And by those three things, faith, works and confession, she was enabled to bring salvation to her entire family.

Now I want to show you what the New Testament has to say about this woman, Rahab. She's singled out for honorable mention more than once. In the great role of the victors and the heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter 11, Rahab gets a verse

to herself. Hebrews 11:31:

> "By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient."

Notice, she's called a prostitute, but she's held up as an example of faith. Isn't that a kind of paradox? And then in James 2:25, where James is explaining that faith without works is of no value, he takes Rahab as an example of somebody who had faith that worked, and this is what he says:

> "In the same way, was not even Rahab the prosititute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?"

That's a challenging thought that a prostitute can be considered righteous if she acts in faith. And that's not all. The greatest is yet to come. Because if you turn to the first chapter of Matthew and the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, you'll find this in verse 5-6:

> "Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David [and the ancestor of Jesus Christ]."

So, Rahab, after being delivered out of Jericho married Salmon who was a prince of the tribe of Judah and became the mother of Boaz, who was the father of Obed. And bear in mind that Boaz also had a non-Israelite wife, Ruth, the Moabitess and she became the mother of Obed, and Obed became the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David. So Rahab is included in the genealogy of King David and still more of the Messiah. What a tremendous lesson on the limitless possibilities of faith which works by love. You see, the thing that I like about Rahab, she had a loving heart. She wasn't content to just get saved on her own. Her first concern was for her father, her mother, her brothers and sisters, her entire household.

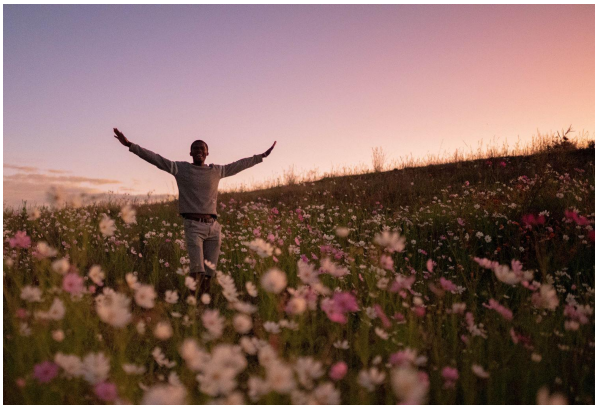
I've heard somebody say once that God saves us from the guttermost to the uttermost. I think that's really the story of Rahab. A prostitute in a city under a curse and she became the ancestress of the Messiah, saved her whole household.

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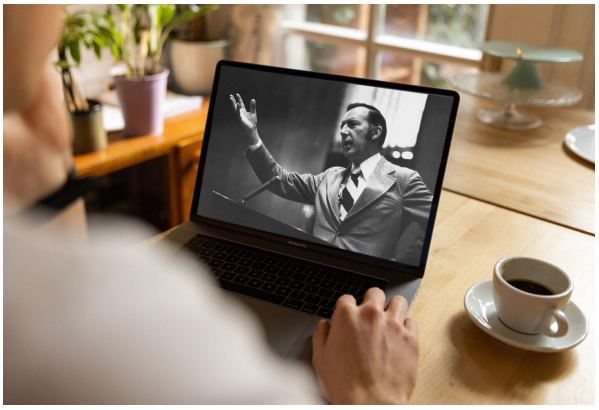
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