RAHAB

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A SERMON
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"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies in peace."
Hebrews 11:31

"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"
James 2:25

THESE are two New Testament summaries of the life of Rahab, and they are equally honorable to her. Paul puts her amongst the great worthies who by faith wrought wonders. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a triumphal arch to the soldiers of faith, and amongst the illustrious names inscribed thereon is the name of this harlot of Jericho.

We are not, however, so much surprised at that, for she was evidently an instance of great faith, but we are somewhat surprised, I think, to find her name recorded by James, because he is an eminently practical writer, and was writing of good works rather than of faith. His object is to show that the faith which justifies the soul is a faith which produces good works, and hence he looks for instances of holy service of God.

We should not have thought that he would have singled out Rahab, but he has done so, and this is the more remarkable because the only other person whom he mentions is Abraham, Abraham the Father of the Faithful, the Friend of God, a perfect and an upright man. James cites Abraham as standing for the one sex and Rahab the harlot for the other.

I have no doubt that James knew what he was about, and that the inspiration which guided him was infallible. Possibly Rahab was chosen to represent the Gentiles in connection with the founder of Israel, who fitly stood for the Jews. While Abraham possessed a faith which manifested itself by works, so also did Rahab, the daughter of the Gentiles, descended from a race doomed to destruction, a Gentile of the Gentiles.

And possibly another reason for mentioning her may be this, that as Abraham renounced his own kindred at the call of God, and came forth from Ur of the Chaldees, separated unto the Most High, so did this woman leave all her associations with Jericho, practically renouncing her nationality, forsaking her country, and leaving it to its destiny and doom, while she took her part with Israel to be a partaker with the people of God in the promised inheritance.

It is no small honor then to this remarkable woman that she has her name recorded not only with the heroes of faith, but also that she is selected by the great practical apostle as one of two remarkable instances of the works which result from faith.

Let us consider her faith and her character, all the more attentively because of this high position which the Holy Spirit has accorded to her. With the commendation of Paul and the praise of James, backed as they both were by the witness of the Spirit of God, this woman's character is well worthy of attentive consideration. May the Spirit of God bless our meditation to our profit.

I. Our first observation upon her shall be that she possessed SINGULAR FAITH.

This will be apparent if we reflect that she received *no instruction from her parents.* Birth-right membership was not a question which touched the case of Rahab. Her parents were of the condemned

race of the Canaanites. They had no faith in God themselves, and could not inculcate it. She did not become a worshipper of JEHOVAH because the family had always been so. They had no family pew in the sanctuary, no prophet's chamber in the house, no name to keep up amongst the Lord's people.

She was the first and only one of her race called out by grace. God had chosen her as "one of a family" by His electing love, and though we hope that grace continued in the household for many generations, yet it first of all came into it by her.

Now, we do not so much wonder, though, I believe, in many respects it is equally to God's glory, when we see the children of godly parents becoming believers in Christ, for we remember the many prayers offered for them, the instructions which they have received, the affectionate admonitions which they have heard, and above all the godly examples which they have seen. We do not so much wonder, though indeed even in that case it is a work of the Spirit of God as much as in any other if the conversion is genuine, but we do marvel, and we cannot help it, when we see one rising out of a family in which no true religion had ever been seen before.

Here we see a lone palm in the desert, a solitary life among the tombs. It is a struggle, as some of you know to stand in the position of a lonely witness for God in a family. When in seeing inquirers I have to talk to young persons who are the only ones of the family attending the house of God at all, the only ones who make any pretensions to godliness, I feel great sympathy with them because I know they will have much to put up with, and a heavy cross to carry.

Such converts are not plants in the conservatory, but flowers exposed to the winter's cold, yet it is right to add that I have often observed that these have become amongst the strongest, and most decided, Christians that I have ever met. Even as Rahab, though her faith was solitary and was like a lily among thorns, yet was her faith none the less strong, but perhaps all the more unwavering.

Reflect again that her faith was singular because she was *not in a believing country.* Not only within doors had she none to sympathize with her, but in the whole city of Jericho, as far as we know, she was the only believer in JEHOVAH. It is right to conclude that if there had been other believers there, either the city would have been spared for the sake of ten righteous, or else there would have been means found for their preservation, but she was the only one there.

If we could have taken a birds-eye view of the city of Jericho, and had been informed that there was one believer there, I warrant you we should not have looked to Rahab's house. She would have been about the last person that we would have supposed had been a possessor of faith in the true God.

God has a people where we little dream of it, and He has chosen ones among a sort of people whom we dare not hope for. Who would think that grace could grow in the heart of one who was a harlot by name, as though her sin was openly known to all. Yet it did grow there, like a fair flower blooming upon a dunghill, or a bright star glittering on the brow of night. There her faith grew and brought forth glory to God.

I know not what god they worshipped at Jericho, but the whole city was full of idolatry, and she alone looked to the living God. The whole city was full of filthiness and bad as she had been, her faith must have made her loathe the sin. Jericho was neighbor to Sodom, not only as to locality but as to condition, and bad as this woman had been it is probable that her sin was among the least of the offenses practiced there.

It is a shame even to speak of the loathsome crimes which defiled Jericho. When reclaimed by sovereign grace Rahab must have found herself as much alone in Jericho as Lot had found himself alone in Sodom. She was the one only believer amidst an idolatrous and depraved generation.

May we not have hope, dear friends, that from the lowest slums of our vast city there may be other Rahabs? Why not a Rahab in the Haymarket as well as in Jericho? May we not trust that among those who have been in our prisons, there yet may arise believers in the Lord God of Israel? May we not even hope that the fame of the Gospel may have been carried by rumor into cities unvisited by missionaries, and that here and there Rahabs in unknown cities may be seeking after the Lord?

There is no telling what grace may be silently doing throughout the world in culling out the ones and twos whom God has chosen. Israel dreamed not of finding an ally within her enemy's walls, yet the Lord would have it so, and so it was.

Remember too, that Rahab's faith was remarkable because *her means of knowledge were very slender*. And therefore, the food of her faith was comparatively scant. She had no book inspired of God to read, she had been instructed by no prophet, no Elias had spoken to her in the name of God, no Jonah had gone through the streets of her city warning men to repent. What information she had obtained she had gathered by odds and ends.

She had put together the talk of the marketplace, the chat at the well, and the gossip outside the city gates, and she had concluded that a nation had come out of Egypt, and that for their sakes, and by their God, JEHOVAH, the Egyptian king had been destroyed at the Red Sea, that Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, had been overthrown in battle by this people, and that it was certain they were on their way to take the whole of Palestine to themselves, because their God had given it to them. Out of these common reports, this woman had gathered evidence sufficient for faith to rest upon.

The proverb has it that common fame is a common liar, but in this case the general panic with which her countrymen had been seized, convinced her that the reports were true. The terms in which the advance of Israel was everywhere described, convinced her that a terrible calamity hung like a cloud over the country, and paralyzed both the court, the army, and the people. She saw that the ground of fear was that a living God was with this people, and she said within herself, "Verily, there is one God," and her conscience within responded to that declaration.

She felt it was so, and light streamed in upon her spirit. She believed in JEHOVAH the God of Israel, and she began to worship Him, expecting that the cause which He espoused would be successful, and that those who were His enemies would certainly come to destruction. Slender, I say, was the basis, strong enough in itself, but far inferior to that line upon line, precept upon precept, which we have so long received.

Many here present have the whole of God's Book before them, and yet do not believe. They have the testimony of His saints by the thousands, and yet do not believe, they are earnestly entreated by living witnesses, yet do not believe. But this poor woman, with her few opportunities became a believer in JEHOVAH. Take heed lest in the day of judgment she should rise up against you. She believed with far less testimony, how will you be able to excuse your own persistent unbelief? I pray you, dear hearers, think of this.

Perhaps the most wonderful thing about her faith was that she should be a woman *of such a character*. She was apparently the most unlikely person to become a believer in JEHOVAH. She was a harlot, a woman that was a sinner, and universally known to be such. Desperate attempts have been made to find some other meaning for the word rendered harlot, but they have been utterly fruitless.

Both Paul and James declare concerning her that she was what we commonly call her. The idea that she was a hostess or tavern keeper is absurd because such a thing as an innkeeper was not known in those days, as everybody knows. To foist such an interpretation as that upon the original Hebrew is not to translate, but to misinterpret, and no one has ever attempted it with the Greek.

She had doubtless been a great sinner. It is no use trying to mince the matter. Let the glory be to divine grace. Why should we wish to rob God of His honor in having delivered such a woman from her sin? But after she became a believer in JEHOVAH it strikes me she forsook her sin and became another character, though she was still known by her old title. We read that she hid the spies among the stalks of flax. For what purpose had she stalks of flax upon her roof if she had not begun to be an industrious working woman?

A little thing will often indicate character, a straw shows which way the wind blows, and it seems to me to be most probable that she had forsaken her unhallowed life. And then, since hospitality had come to be forgotten in Jericho and the other Canaanite cities, she, being a follower of JEHOVAH, and

knowing that hospitality was His delight, would go to the city gate every now and then, just as Lot had been accustomed to do, and watch for strangers, and see if she could entertain them.

She was under no suspicion in doing this, because her old name would stick to her, and give her a license to do what others might not attempt without being suspected of treason against the crown by entertaining aliens and adversaries. So I doubt not she most honestly entertained strangers, and the reason why on this occasion the spies came to her, was because she was generally on the lookout to receive wayfarers, who else perhaps would have received sad treatment at the hands of her wicked townsmen.

So the generous spirit which true religion gave her brought her into contact with the Israelites, who came to spy the land, and they became in God's hands the means of her safety when the city was destroyed.

The grace of God had, even before these men came, lifted her up out of her former self, and though her old name stuck to her, I think I see reason to believe that her old character was gone and she had become a new creature through the power of faith. However, she was a harlot once, and the wonder is that she became a believer. Wonders of grace are God's delight, He loves, for Jesu's sake, to call unto Himself the lowest of the low, and the vilest of the vile.

The Lord acts in the same manner still. Let us rest assured that Jesus still receives sinners, and that publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before the self-righteous and captious. It is very remarkable that in the pedigree of Christ there should be so many women with blotted characters, that there should be an incestuous Tamar, a harlot Rahab, an idolatrous Ruth, and an adulterous Bathsheba, so that Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners, has descended as to His earthly parentage from the loins of sinners, and so is nearly akin to them. O the depths of the grace of God! How matchless is the condescension of the Redeemer!

Once more, Rahab's faith was singular because *the subject of it was difficult.* What was it she had to believe? Was it not this? That Israel would destroy Jericho. Now, between Jericho and the tribes flowed the Jordan, and the Israelites had no means of crossing it. Only a miracle could divide that overflowing river. Did Rahab's faith expect a miracle? If so, it was remarkably strong.

Around Jericho stood a gigantic wall. There was no likelihood of the assailants scaling it or making a breach in it. Did Rahab think that those walls would fall flat to the ground? Or did she leave the way of the capture with God, firmly believing that it would be conquered? If so, she was a woman of no small faith.

I have known intelligent Christians whose faith could neither have divided a flood nor leaped over a wall, but this poor woman's faith in God did both. She was sure that the God of the Red Sea would be the God of the Jordan, and that He who smote Og, king of Bashan, could strike the king of Jericho too. Her faith was special because it was strong, and the strongest faith often is in those who have far more of a basis on which to rest it.

Now, let each one of us say as we think of this woman's strange faith, "Why should not I have the same faith in the living God? God can give it to me. Though my past life may have been greatly defiled with sin, yet why should I not put my trust in the Lord, the Savior? Is not faith the very grace which best becomes a sinner, and does most for a sinner? Has not God sent Jesus Christ into the world to redeem men from sin? Has He not redeemed many already by the power of His Spirit, and the application of His precious blood? I will believe in Jesus."

Oh, may the Holy Spirit give you faith at this moment. May God's electing love single out some here who have been, if not actually, yet in heart, as bad as Rahab. And may they be led by infinite mercy, having followed her in sin, to imitate her in faith. Come, ye fallen, Jesus can raise you. Come, ye filthy, Jesus can cleanse you. Believe, and eternal life is yours.

II. In the second place, RAHAB'S FAITH WAS ACTIVE.

It was not a sleeping faith, or a dead faith, it was an operative faith. It was active, first, *mentally*. When she believed she began to think.

Some persons get converted at revivals and wild excitements, and seem to me as if they either have no brains or else their heads were never entered by grace. You have always to keep up a great excitement or you will miss them. They have no well-considered principles. If you asked them what they believe they would not know, nor would they be able to tell why they believe. They probably believe because other people believe, the minister is earnest, and they had a good time in general, hence their faith; reasonable reason they have none.

The best believers to wear and endure are the thoughtful ones, men of principle, men who weigh and judge. They of course have their conflicts all the more for their thoughtfulness, but then, on the other hand, they gather strength by the mental exercise. And these are the men who are not carried about with every wind of doctrine, but who stand fast in the trying hour. Would to God we had a large army of thoughtful believers for then Ritualism and Rationalism would do far less mischief.

Rahab was a thoughtful woman, and had quite a system of theology of her own. She knew the past, she knew the story of the Red Sea, and of Og and Sihon. She knew something about God's having promised by covenant to give the country to the Israelites, and from that she gathered the present.

Notice her doctrine upon present things, "The LORD JEHOVAH he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." She laid that down as a certain fact, that the Lord JEHOVAH who had done so much must be the God in heaven above and in the earth beneath, and then from that she drew her inference as to the future. She believed that God would give the country into Israel's hand, and she asked that when the Lord did actually do so, they would deal kindly and truly with her.

So she had a doctrine about the present, the past, and the future, and she had it all arranged in her own mind. But her thought was not only so active that she became a doctrinalist, and one commentator even calls her a semi-prophetess, but she was active in her mind as to her decision for the Lord.

She said, "I belong to this town, I have citizen privileges in Jericho, I will give them all up. God is against this city and it will be destroyed, and I shall be destroyed in it if I am against God, but He is the true God. I therefore side with Him and take part with His people. If He will but have me, I will put myself beneath the shadow of His wings and ask Him to cast the skirt of His garment over me. Henceforth I am no citizen of Jericho. I disavow my allegiance to its king."

When the spies came she knew her course of action, she did not regard herself as bound to take any part in the defense of the city by sending word to the king that spies had come. She considered herself as an Israelite, and acted as such.

Oh, I wish that some professors were half as decided as this. They know the truth but they do not stand up for it. They will hear it caviled at and ill words thrown at it, yet their blood never boils with indignation against the adversaries of God. They keep very quiet, and perhaps one reason is that they have nothing to say. They have not learned Christ, they have no reason for the hope that is in them, and therefore they cannot give it with meekness and fear. And so their religion appears to be a dead letter as far as their mind is concerned.

God deliver us from such a faith as that. May we have a faith which thrills our entire manhood, moves our judgment, enlightens our understanding, and makes us decide for the truth and righteousness in whatever company we may be thrown.

But next was another form of activity. Her faith was *active in her own sphere.* As I have already conjectured that she became willing to entertain strangers, so when she saw the servants of God in the form of the two spies she knew at once what to do. She took them home and she did her best to hide them. She did not set up to be a heroine, and say, "Now I am a follower of JEHOVAH, I must be doing something extraordinary." She did not pack up her clothes and start off to some distant place where she could find more glittering service for JEHOVAH, but she stopped where she was and served God there. She minded her own guests and kept her own house.

I believe that home duties are one of the very best forms of the activity of faith, especially in Christian women. Our business is not to do what we fancy but what the Lord appoints for us. Of many a Christian woman it is best to have it said, as of Sarah, when they said, "Where is Sarah?" and the answer

was, "In her tent." It is a good thing when a Christian feels he will not choose his work but will take the work God chooses for him. He resolves not to ape somebody else, but to follow the special path which the Lord marks out for him.

Now Rahab was not to anticipate Joel, and drive a tent pin through the head of the King of Jericho, nor to be a Deborah and call some Barak to the battle. She had work at home ready to hand, and what her hand found to do she did with all her might. May we see in all of you who are Christians the faith which works in its own sphere, may you exhibit the religion of common things.

Do not believe in knight-errantry. Do not be spiritual Don Quixotes. God has made you what you are, a mother, or a daughter, a husband, a servant, or a master, serve God as such. There is something for you to do in your position. Extraordinary calls may come, and I pray they may come to some here present, but they are not likely to be given to those who cannot use their present everyday opportunities. We may be called to very special service and have special grace given, but it is best for us till such calls are felt to mind our business in the station of life in which God has placed us.

Moses kept sheep till he was bidden to deliver Israel, Gideon was threshing when the angel appeared to him, and the disciples were fishing when Jesus called them. They used diligence in their callings, and then threw their hearts into their higher calling.

So Rahab did. The spies came to her, she received them in peace, she hid them, and after she hid them she let them down by a rope from her house on the wall, which perhaps she had done before to very different characters. Then she gave them the best advice she could, and was thus the means of preserving their lives. She fulfilled a very necessary part in Israelitish history. Her faith was truly active and is to be commended.

And let me say that she did all this to *the best of her ability*, and used her common sense. She covered them up with flax, she put them on the housetop, she let them down after it was dark, she told them to go to the mountain, she recommended them to wait three days till the heat of the search should be over, she acted prudently. She did all she could, and she did it with remarkable tact and shrewdness.

I never could see why true religion should be so often associated with stupidity, and yet I have remarked that some gracious people either affect a babyish simplicity, or else the Lord has indeed chosen the foolish things of this world.

If you have faith, surely you are not therefore to act as if you had lost your reason. It seems to me that faith is common sense spiritualized, carried into the affairs of religion, and that it is quite consistent, nay imperative upon us, to discontinue common sense in your ordinary affairs. We are to be wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves. Does not the apostle say, "In understanding be ye men"?

Oh, if men had their wits as much about them when they serve God as they have when they are looking for guineas, how much more would be done in the church and the world, but there is often a blundering in the management of Christian societies and Christian churches which would not be tolerated for a moment in a house of business, and men are allowed to be head and foremost in Christian enterprises who would not be reckoned worth their salt for selling pins or driving pigs.

We ought to be as thoughtful, as careful, as prudent, as quick, as enterprising, what if I say as go-a-head, in the service of God as we should be in the pursuits of life. I commend Rahab's faith for that, because while she was thoroughly active she was active in the way in which she could best serve the church of God, and brought all her wits and abilities into full play.

Rahab was also active *at great risk.* Rahab's faith made her run the risk of being put to death, for if the spies had been discovered there would have been short shrift for Rahab. The king of Jericho's sword would soon have taken off the head of the woman who dared to conceal the enemies of her country. She gladly staked all upon the truth of God, and ran all risks to save the servants of the Lord. In this being far superior to those, who will not risk their employment, their situation, their good name or even the love of a single relative for Jesus Christ's sake.

She was thus possessed of an active faith and we may say as James does, "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out

another way?" Did not her works go with her faith? Was not the faith which justified her, a faith which produced works? Did not the Holy Ghost work in her a manifest activity which justified her faith by proving it to be real, and justified her by showing that she was sincere?

III. RAHAB'S FAITH WAS MARRED WITH GROSS WEAKNESS.

She lied unto the men who came to the door to seize the spies. She said that two strangers had come to her, but she did not know whence they came, which was a lie. And she did not know where they were gone, but they had departed some time ago, and they had better be pursued. This was another falsehood, and is altogether inexcusable.

But at the same time, please to recollect that she did not know it was wrong to lie. There were, no doubt, in her conscience, indistinct glimmerings of an idea that to lie was an evil thing, but nevertheless, her surroundings prevented her clearly knowing it as we know it. To this very day amongst many Orientals it is far more usual to lie than to speak the truth, in fact, a thoroughbred aboriginal eastern never does speak the truth unless by mistake, and he would be very sorry for it if he knew he had done so, even by accident.

Among the Hindus men cannot readily be believed upon their oaths in courts of justice. *We* despise a great liar, but the Easterns consider him a genius. Sad it is, but it has always been so and this very much accounts for our finding such men as Abraham and Isaac deliberately saying, under certain trying circumstances, the thing that was not.

You must judge individuals from their own standpoint, and consider their circumstances, or you may do them an injustice. I am not going to excuse Rahab's lie. A lie in Rahab, or in Abraham, is as bad as in anyone else, but in this case there is this to be said, she had not been taught, as most of us have been, that a lie is a degrading sin. Nobody had ever said to her, "To deceive is contrary to the law of God, for His Spirit teaches us not to lie to one another, seeing we have put off the old man with his deeds."

There is one thing else to be said. I have often tried to put myself in Rahab's place, and have said, "Now, suppose I had been hiding two servants of God during the old days of Claverhouse's dragoons. For instance, if I had Alexander Peden and Cameron in the back room, and two dragoons should ride up to my door and demand, 'Are the ministers here?'" I have tried to imagine what I should say, and I have never yet been able to make up my mind.

I suppose I have more light than Rahab, and certainly I have had more leisure to consider the case, and yet I do not see my way. I do not wonder, therefore, that she blundered. And I am not much astonished that she said what she did say, for it would most readily suggest itself to her ignorant and anxious mind. I have turned over a great many schemes of what I would have said. I do not see how I could have said, "Yes, they are indoors." That would be to betray God's servants, and that I would not do.

I have concocted a great many pretty-looking plans, but I confess that upon examination, they appear to be more or less tinctured with the deceit which tries to justify or conceal deceit, and therefore I have had to abandon them as being no better than falsehood and perhaps not quite as good. I am not sure whether Rahab's lie was not more honest and outspoken than many an evasion which has suggested itself to very clever people. In fact, as a rule, things which are not obvious, and need cleverness to suggest them, are rather suspicious. Strip a Russian and you find a Tartar, and if you strip these clever plans they peel into falsehoods after all.

I do not want to say a word of apology for the falsehood, far from it. It is wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, altogether wrong, but for all that, before you condemn Rahab, be quite sure that you do not condemn yourself, and ask yourself first what *you* would have said, or what *you* would have done under the circumstances. To tell the truth is always right. Consequences are not so much to be thought of as the claims of the God of truth. Sometimes, plain truth has had a very wonderful effect, and doubtless it would, in every case, be the best policy.

I have heard of a man who had been brought up before Judge Jeffreys to be tried for rebellion against King James II, and there was always very faint hope of a man escaping who had once been

introduced to that monster. By some means, Story had gained a great repute for honesty, and Jeffrey brought him before the king to speak for himself.

As I remember the history, it ran somewhat in this way: The king said, "Well, Mr. Story, you were in Monmouth's army, were you not?" "Yes, please your majesty." "And you were a commissary there, were you not?" "Yes, please your majesty." "Did you not preach and make speeches to the crowd?" "Yes, your majesty." "Pray," said the king, "If you have not forgot what you said, let us have a taste of your fine florid speech, give us some flowers of your rhetoric, and a few of the main points on which you insisted."

"I told them, your majesty, that it was you that set fire to the City of London." "A rare rogue, upon my word," said the king, "and pray, what else did you tell them?" "I said you poisoned your brother, and that you were determined to make us all papists and slaves."

By this time the king had heard enough, and asked him what he would say if, after all this, he should grant him his life and a free pardon. Story thereupon declared that he should, in such an unlikely case, become a right loyal subject, whereupon he received a free pardon as an honest though mistaken man.

In his case plain speaking did what falsehood could not have done, and if, in all cases, it did not turn out so, yet our duty is clear, and therefore, we must be prepared to do it and take the consequences. I suppose if Rahab had possessed great faith she would have said, "It is my business to serve God but not to break God's laws, and as it will be breaking God's laws to lie I will not do it. I will take care of His servants as far as possible, but it is *His* business to take care of them after all, and I must not do evil that good may come."

Though that would have been the best course, Rahab was not yet so instructed as to have thought of it, and I fear that a great many here would not have thought of it either. Her fault was by no means one which we can afford to throw stones at, avoid it carefully, but do not censure it self-complacently.

IV. Rahab's was A FAITH THAT WAS NOT ABOVE THE USE OF OUTWARD SIGNS AND SEALS.

Please note this. There are persons in the world who altogether despise the outward ordinances. They may be good, but they are not wise. Rahab first of all required from these spies an oath that they would preserve her, and next they gave her a token, a scarlet line, which was to be hung in her window. This was the blood red flag of Israel. Was it not hoisted on the passover night, so that the angel might pass by and deliver the people? She felt great comfort when she had placed the token in her window. She was not superstitious, she did not believe that anything mystical was in the red cord, but she put it there because she had been told to do so.

Now, the highest faith in Christ is perfectly consistent with the obedient use of Christian ordinances. We are resting on the precious blood of Christ, not upon sacraments. God forbid we should ever build our hope upon baptism or on the Lord's supper. What are these things in themselves, but very vanity if we repose confidence in them?

At the same time the Lord has given us baptism as the emblem of His death, His burial, and His resurrection, and if we believe we have been buried with Him, and are risen with Him, let us hang this scarlet cord in our window. He has given us the ordinance of the Lord's supper to be the emblem of His death, let us eat the bread and drink the wine in memory of Him. We do not trust in the emblems in the slightest degree. We abhor the idea. Still we put the scarlet cord in our window, and thus let all men know that we believe in Jesus. We are not ashamed to show His death till He come.

Yes, and we enter the house, that is the church, and we delight to dwell there, numbered among God's people. We are not ashamed to be known to be members of the brotherhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not seek to get a faith that would cast off the assistance which God's Spirit appoints you. Everything that is of man's invention put aside, but that which is of God's ordaining is for your benefit, and you are bound to hold to it even though it be little as a scarlet line in the window.

V. HER FAITH WAS SAVING FAITH.

I have shown how it was grievously marred, but it was effectual notwithstanding. She was saved when all the city wall went down. Her house was on the wall, but there it stood. Must it not have seemed strange? The walls began to rock and shake, and then down they fell with a thundering sound, and upward flew dense clouds of dust, but above all there stood the piece of the wall on which was Rahab's house, like an island in the midst of a tempestuous sea.

The Israelites dashed over the ruins of the wall, pursued the doomed men with fury, and slew them, for they had been ordained of God to be their executioners. Not one escaped, but no sword came near to Rahab's bosom, no death took away one of her kindred. She was saved. She was taken out of her house with her friends, and put outside the camp of the Israelites, and afterwards received into it. She was married to Salmon, a prince of Judah, and afterwards had the high dignity of being one of the ancestors of our Lord.

So, dear brethren, true faith in Christ, despite its weakness, will save us, separate us from the world, join us unto God's Israel, marry us to the true Prince of Judah, gives us kinship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and what higher dignity is there to receive?

VI. With this I shall close when I have mentioned the last point, and that is HER FAITH BECAME WITH GOD ACCEPTABLE, SO THAT SHE WAS THE MEANS OF THE SALVATION OF OTHERS.

Oh, I like this in Rahab that she did not bargain for her own safety alone. Her sin had not hardened her heart as sin does in many cases. She thought of her father, and her mother, and her brothers, and her sisters. Now, wherever there is a real child of God there will be anxiety for his family. If you do not want to have your children saved, you are not saved yourself. I have seen professors who thought it quite enough if they went to heaven alone.

I knew a man who would walk twenty miles on Sunday to hear "*the truth*"—nobody preached it, but at one place. But when he was asked where his family went, he said that it was no business of his—God would save His own elect. Such people are not the children of God, because God's children are not worse than heathen men and publicans, for they care for their own households. Rahab was a good daughter, with all her wrong she loved her father and her mother. She was a good sister, and desired her brother and sisters to be saved.

O you Christian people, do seek to be good in your relationships at home. I won't give a penny for you if you are not a good husband or a good wife. Away with your Christianity if it makes you a bad child. A domineering, surly father, a rebellious child, a gossiping wife, an idle slatternly servant, a tyrannical master, these may belong to Satan, but God will not own them. Rahab, with all that was wrong about her, had an intense love for her kindred.

But notice that, love them as she might, she could not save them unless she got them under the red flag. If any of them stopped in the streets when the Israelites were slaying the people, they might say, "We belong to Rahab," but the reply would be, "We cannot help that, the oath we took was to spare all in the house where the red line was in the window, and if you are not there you cannot be spared."

It will be of no use when you die to say, "Spare me, O avenging angel, my mother prayed for me, my sister agonized for my conversion." No, you must personally get into Christ yourself, and have a real faith in Him, or no prayers of others can be of any avail for you.

But the mercy was that somehow Rahab was helped by God to bring all her family in. Her father did not say, "No, my girl, I do not believe in it." Some of you have fathers who do say that. Pray hard for them. And the mother did not say, "My child, you are mad. I have always thought you a little affected in the brain. Do not come teaching your mother." No, but mother came too.

When the Israelites marched round the city the six days, and the people of Jericho laughed and said, what fools they were to think they were going to make the walls tumble down by walking round them, she still confided in God, but I dare say she had some difficulty in persuading her lively sisters and her argumentative brothers to believe too. They would say, "Rahab, are you quite clear about this? Is it not all a mere farce?" Somehow, such was the influence God gave her, such was the power of her faith that

they all remained in the house, and with their families were saved. The house, I dare say, was filled as full as could be from top to bottom, and glad was Rahab to see it.

God grant I may have all my family thus preserved. I am sure every child of God here is breathing the same prayer—"God of Rahab, give me my father and my mother, and my brothers and my sisters, and all my kindred." The Lord hear your prayers, and bless you for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOSHUA 2 AND 6:22-25

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.