

The Faith of Rahab the Harlot

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Our Father in heaven, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we call upon thy name and we stand before thee and enter into thy sanctuary, Lord, to give thee all the praise, the honor, and the glory now and forevermore, to bless thy name, to worship thee, to thank thee, in all that thou hast done, in all that thou hast revealed, in all that thou hast given unto us. Thou art the only God, and thou art righteous, and grace, and mercy, and holy, and thou art all of thy perfections and thou will not have thy glory taken from thee. And every day thou dost judge the wicked and thou dost say unto the wicked that thou art angry and thou wilt destroy them and every day that thou declarest unto thy people that we are righteous, all for the sake of Jesus Christ. And we depend upon thee. We have nothing that we can give unto thee, nothing that we can render to thee but thou, to shower upon us thy good gifts, thou dost rain upon us thy blessing with those gifts and thou dost bless us in Jesus Christ, who in him is stored up that infinite storehouse of salvation, of which all that salvation comes to us as a gigantic chute and all of those things come into our possession, all of those spiritual blessings, grace, holiness, and righteousness. And when we think of it, ponder it, we cannot help but be humbled to the dust for what can we give thee that thou hast not already given us? All we can do is receive of thy infinite goodness, of thee as the overflowing fountain of all good, thou who art from everlasting to everlasting the same, the I am that I am. And what thou hast said, thou art faithful to thy word and to thy promise, to save us miserable sinners and all of thy elect people from their sins. And wilt thou give unto us the gospel again this evening, the gospel which is all of our life and our hope and our joy and peace, and outside of which we have no hope. Lord, we believe thy gospel, but help thou our unbelief for we are by nature tainted and vile and we hate thee and our neighbor, and thou must save us by thy grace. For Lord, we are no different than the world in that nature, that nature which is and of which the natural man stands at enmity with thee and hates thee and hates thy cause and hates thy Sabbath, and which is full with the pride of life and the lust of the eyes in which does all things for its own amusement and pleasure, which tramples upon thy holy day which thou hast set aside. Lord, we are no different. All in that nature. It is a wonder of thy grace, of thy sovereign, particular, efficacious, irresistible saving grace, thy undeserved attitude of favor towards us, thy power to accomplish what thou hast decreed, to realize all that thou hast determined within thyself. What a God thou art, and how nothing we are. Lord, forgive us of our sins, wash them away in Christ's blood,

impute unto us Christ's righteousness by faith, by a true faith, to being joined to him, being partaker of the promise and of life eternal.

Lord, we thank thee that thou hast gathered us into thy house of worship. Wilt thou keep us from distractions? And Lord, we know and thou knowest this evening hour that there are many distractions. Wilt thou strengthen our faith and hear this word which thou dost speak unto us and wilt thou care for us? We thank thee for the office-bearers which thou hast given to us in thy church, gird them up in thy Spirit. Bless the deacons as they meet in the upcoming week to judge matters that come before them. Wilt thou give unto them the Spirit of Jesus Christ for our deacons depend upon thy word, depend upon thy Spirit. For as we hold office in the church of Jesus Christ, what man is worthy, what man has the understanding for our understanding is foolish and darkness, but the understanding and wisdom of the Spirit, to understand spiritual things spiritually, is a gracious gift. Will thou endue our deacons richly of thy mercy, that they might show forth that mercy unto thy flock in wisdom and in truth and in glory of thy name. Hold also within thy care our elders and our pastor, our elders who guard the pulpit and see to it that the truth is taught. Make them men of the scriptures, spiritual men, filled with the Holy Ghost, not novices, apt to teach, not greedy of filthy lucre, not given to wine, but men who search the scriptures and try the spirits and guard over this flock. We thank thee for them in their often tireless labor and work in thy Kingdom, would thou endue them with thy grace.

We thank thee for our school, which thou hast given, which thou dost build. Lord, except the Lord, except thou dost build the house they labor in vain that build it. Thou dost build the school, and thou must maintain this little school. We thank thee for her, for the teachers and the aides, the students and the parents that give up their time and energy and money liberally to that school. And as a school, an association, we wait upon thee what is thy will for Lord, as we lay all these plans for what the future might hold, we confess that thou art the one that has decreed all things, and thou art the one that accomplishes all thy will. Let thy will be done and whatever thy will might be, give unto us contentment with that. We beseech thee for thy wisdom as a school, as an association, as a school board, as parents, as we consider these things prayerfully, what is thy will. And let us not with the eye of the flesh look into the brick, but with the eye of faith, look unto the spiritual, our Lord Jesus Christ. Have our eye pointed and directed towards him in heaven, with what he has accomplished for us and the salvation that he has wrought.

Bless our worship now. Fill us with thy Holy Spirit. Anoint us as prophets, priests, and kings to confess thy truth, to stand before thee as thy friend-servants, and to fight against sin and Satan in this life, for the glory of thy name, by faith being anointed and equipped by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hear our prayer, Lord, and answer us in mercy for the sake of Jesus Christ, our High Priest. Amen.

We worship the Lord with a giving of our offerings. The first is for the Building Fund, and the second is for the RPC Denomination Common Fund.

Let's sing Psalter number 64. We'll sing all three verses of Psalm 64.

"Lord, I lift my soul to Thee,
O my God, I trust Thy might;
Let not foes exalt o'er me,
Shame me not before their sight.
Yea, may none be put to shame,
None who wait for Thee to bless;
But dishonored be their name
Who without a cause transgress.

Lord, to me Thy ways make known,
Guide in truth and teach Thou me;
Thou my Saviour art alone,
All the day I wait for Thee.
Lord, remember in Thy love
All Thy mercies manifold,
Tender mercies from above,
Changeless from the days of old.

Sins of youth remember not,
Nor my trespasses record;
Let not mercy be forgot,
For Thy goodness' sake, O Lord.
Just and good the Lord abides,
He His way will sinners show,
He the meek in justice guides,
Making them His way to know."

We read from the word of God this evening from Joshua chapter 2. Joshua 2 and that is in connection with our text in Hebrews 11 verse 31. Joshua 2.

1 And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. 2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. 3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. 4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: 5 And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. 6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. 7 And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto

the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate. 8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; 9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. 12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: 13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. 14 And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. 15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. 16 And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. 17 And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. 18 Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. 19 And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. 20 And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. 21 And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window. 22 And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. 23 So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them: 24 And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

Our text this evening is from Hebrews 11, verse 31. Hebrews 11, verse 31.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

Thus far we read from the holy, inspired word of God. May he bless it to our hearts this evening.

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, we considered last week the truth of the fall of Jericho, that on that seventh day, the Israelites marched around Jericho and those walls fell down flat; at that long blast of the trumpet, at that victory cry of Israel, all the walls fell down except that one spot where there was the house of Rahab situated on that town wall and those two spies, those two men come in and they take Rahab and her family alive. Faith, then, those familiar words of Hebrews 11, "By faith," faith is the subject of Hebrews 11 and that faith has been illustrated all throughout the lives of the Old Testament saints, and here this evening we really come to the conclusion of that. There will be some further explanation, but all that further explanation of the inspired writer is just merely a sketch. So this is one of the last times that we'll consider all of those saints as they're listed in Hebrews 11, and see that faith illustrated and laid out before us, and the practical purpose for you has been, and this evening, is that faith, you might understand what your faith is, that faith which is the instrument of your salvation, that faith which receives all of Jesus Christ, that faith which is the bond to the Lord Jesus Christ, that faith which is not salvation itself, that faith which is the instrument of that salvation.

The truth of our text is that all who believe, all who believe shall have everlasting life, and all who do not believe the gospel of our Lord shall perish as Jericho did, and now the question of our text emphatically this evening is this: how does that faith manifest itself? That's the question of the text. That's been the question of all of Hebrews 11. How does that faith show itself? How does that faith manifest itself? And the inspired writer has been sketching that out, showing that faith which has joined the promise, that faith which receives Jesus Christ in promise and all of salvation is made heir of the world. How does that faith reveal itself and manifest itself? And Hebrews 11 and James 2 have much in common. Was not the harlot Rahab justified by works. You see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only, and when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way, Hebrews 11 is demonstrating that faith in the lives of the Old Testament and the scripture, according to the scripture there is a justification by works. There is a justification by works. And now, we need to be very clear, we need to be very emphatic of what we're talking about in Hebrews 11 when we say there is a justification by works. Was not the harlot Rahab justified by her works and not by faith only? We must be very clear, justification, justification in the sense that God declares you righteous, that is God's legal declaration that you've obeyed the law perfectly, that you have no sin, that you stand before the tribunal of God innocent before him, that is not the justification by works that is being spoken of in Hebrews 11. That is not the justification by works in James 2. That justification by faith alone, which is the legal declaration in your subjective experience that you are righteous before God in Jesus Christ, that there's no sin which can condemn you, that there is no deeds of the law that you must accomplish to have that, that faith alone, which is the instrument of that justification, that faith which is kindled by the gospel, that's justification by faith alone. That faith justifies you apart from any deeds of the law, apart from any works of the law.

Was not the harlot Rahab justified by works? And so then there emphatically we have that distinction between justification by faith alone and justification by works. Justification by works simply means your faith is demonstrated. Is that not true in all of Hebrews 11, that the inspired writer has been demonstrating the faith of all those Old Testament saints? And here too, the harlot Rahab's faith was demonstrated when she received the spies with peace. Those works of faith demonstrate, manifest that faith. That is justification by works. You have faith. You say you have faith. I say I have faith. Show me your faith. I'll show you my faith. I'll show you my faith by my walk and my confession. That is justification by works. To corrupt that idea of justification by works and justification by faith alone, to corrupt that distinction is to corrupt the heart of the gospel, to not understand that distinction. Sermons were preached in James on Belgic Confession Article 23, which is justification by faith alone in Belgic Confession Article 3. Sermons were taught in James 2, in James about that justification. There is the corruption of the gospel so it is important for you as a congregation to understand that distinction. It must live in your mind. There is a justification by works. That's scriptural. That's confessional. And that is distinct from justification by faith alone. And faith always has its works. Faith always has its fruit, its inevitable fruit. Show your faith by those works. That's the idea. Faith is demonstrated by those works.

Was not the harlot Rahab justified by works and not by faith only, and it's from that idea, then, that understanding that you have is that the church from that exhorts in the preaching of the gospel, calls sinners to repentance. It's from that that the Consistory that the church administers discipline. Faith has fruit. Faith has a sure fruit. If you're walking in sin, you're walking impenitently in false doctrine, then the church, you become the object of discipline. It's not of faith and you persist in that. Faith has fruit. Rahab believed. She believed. She perished not with them that believed not. She was saved by faith in the promise. The promise of God, that God would give Israel the land. And believing, having true faith in that promise, she acted. She acted when she received those spies with peace. Their faith manifested itself in the world. And by that true faith, she escaped. She escaped the destruction and the complete annihilation of Jericho, and by that true faith she prospered in the nation of Israel.

So let's take, then, this text under the theme, "The Faith of Rahab the Harlot: Believing, Acting, Escaping." The faith of Rahab the harlot. In our text we read that Rahab was a harlot and that word harlot, most of the time except for really one place, those two things go together. She was always called Rahab the harlot. And what does that word mean? Rahab, but that word means wide, that word means pride and both of those words are fit translations for Rahab the harlot. In the first place it was a fit translation, she was a loose woman. She was a loose woman who in the fulfillment of men's lusts and desires sold herself and made herself the object of those desires. She sold herself to men for gain. She sold her womanly glory to men for gain. She was a loose woman. In the second place, that word Rahab, which can mean also pride, is also a fit translation of the name Rahab; likely not a word that her parents gave her, but a word that she received from her life and her occupation in the city of Jericho. And what an appropriate word that is for in scripture we read of a whore's forehead and the idea is that a woman or a man is so proud and intractable and impenitent. That's the idea. Rahab the harlot.

And some are embarrassed of Rahab. Some commentators are embarrassed of Rahab. They say, "Oh, she was an innkeeper." She was an innkeeper. But that's impossible. That's an impossible translation of that word harlot. It's an impossible translation because that word everywhere means harlot. Exactly that. And in the Greek, that word harlot comes from the word which we have today, pornography. It's the same word in the Greek, pornography. She was a harlot, she was a whore, and we need to emphasize that this evening because that emphasis brings out and will set that dark backdrop over God's sovereignty and salvation that he saves whom he will. We can call her an innkeeper, it's appropriate to call her an innkeeper if her inn was a brothel and she was the madam of that brothel.

And she was a harlot and she was neither unique nor was she rare in the land of Canaan, now very specifically in Jericho. She was indicative of her time. She was indicative of the spiritual condition of Jericho, very specifically Jericho in this time. She was a symbol of Canaan as Canaan's cup of iniquity was filled as Canaan, very specifically, now Jericho was ripe for judgment. Jericho in its time and its place that it's occupied, when we say the measure of iniquity is full, is we mean this, that all of the sin that was in the nature of Jericho in the time and place that God had set, had used all of the means at their disposal in the service of sin. Their cup of iniquity was full. That's what we mean when we say that the end of the world will not come until God's cup of iniquity is full. There still is yet sin in man's nature, which has to fully develop in all of its wicked fullness and fruit and then the cup of iniquity is full, and then God will come in judgment. Here God came in judgment in Jericho and all of that sin, that measure of iniquity, it's all in that one word, harlot. All in that one word. That was all of the rebellion of Jericho in that one word of Rahab who sold her womanly honor to men for gain, and along with that, when all of the disgusting, vile sexual practices in the city of Jericho, all of the drunkenness, all of the orgies, all of the festivities, all of the wickedness, that was all in that one word, harlot. That was the rebellion of Jericho as a symbol of that, that God was coming in judgment and the nation was ripe for judgment.

And that spiritual condition of Jericho is no different than today, in this very specific way, in all of the sexual promiscuity. Rahab, the men of Jericho had to come to Rahab. They had to come to Rahab to fulfill all those sexual desires. And now, Rahab comes to you. Rahab comes to the world, comes to the child of God, all through a little device. Pornography. And the world tolerates that. The world promotes that, says it's natural. That's the way things are supposed to be. The world praises that, all the women who give themselves to that, and men who lust after those women, that's totally natural, that it's right, that it's good. And they praise and honor and promote it. That's Jericho. That's the spiritual condition in Jericho and that's the same spiritual condition today.

Rahab was not only a symbol of that depravity, but no one was ashamed of Rahab. No one was ashamed of Rahab the harlot. Where was she? She was on a wall. They gave her a high, prominent place in the city of Jericho. She wasn't a nobody. She was on familiar terms with the king. So the king sent messengers to Rahab, and Rahab tells that lie. Rahab tells that lie and the king's messengers, they believe her. No one was ashamed of

Rahab. It's the same today. No one's ashamed of that sexual promiscuity. The world law says that's women's rights to do with what you want. It's all in that word, harlot. All in that word, in her name, Rahab. Rahab, that seductive, flirtatious, alluring, promiscuous, influential harlot.

We read in our text by faith she perished not with them that believed not. That woman believed. That woman had the same faith as Abel whereby he offered a more excellent sacrifice. She had the same faith whereby Noah built the ark. She had the same faith whereby Enoch was translated. She had the same faith whereby Abraham became a pilgrim and a stranger in the land, dwelling in tents. The same faith of Moses. The same faith of Joseph, Jacob, Isaac. Same faith of Sarah whereby she received strength to conceive seed. The harlot Rahab believed. She had true faith. And let's not overlook, then, the obvious when our text says by faith. When the text says by faith it means true faith in distinction from false faith. When the text says by faith and it means true faith, it's saying Rahab the harlot had a real spiritual bond, was given a real spiritual bond to the Lord Jesus Christ in promise by the wonder work of the Triune God who in his sovereign grace came down to that harlot Rahab, and by the wonder of his grace he implanted into her, into that regenerated heart, implanted into it faith and gave to her the gift of faith and all in his grace and uniting that harlot to Jesus Christ. That wonder of that woman who sold herself and her body in sexual work for gain, the one who was the symbol of the depravity of Jericho, that one God took. and joined to his Son Jesus Christ. Made one with him. Made flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. And that faith, that true faith, is nothing less than the expression of God's absolute sovereignty and salvation.

Think of that. Of all the inhabitants in the city of Jericho, of every single one of the wise, of the mighty, of the powerful, of the influential, God saved a nobody. A nobody in her sin. God saved a filthy harlot. God chose Rahab, that elect child of God from all eternity to save her from her sins, to deliver her from the destruction of Jericho and God always chooses the foolish things to confound the wise. God chooses the weak things to confound the mighty. God calls sinners to repentance. God doesn't call the righteous. God doesn't call the man who is good in himself who has no need of the physician. God calls the damn-worthy sinners. He comes in his sovereign, irresistible, effectual grace, particular grace to save his people, to save you from your sins. He speaks. And that faith, that true faith in that harlot Rahab was the evidence of that sovereign grace. She believed. She was elect. And God gave her that gift of faith according in harmony with election.

And that faith, that true faith, held for truth everything that God revealed in his word, just as true faith does as it's stated in Lord's Day 7. It held for truth all that God had said. What did she say to the spies in Joshua 2? She said, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land. We have heard. We have heard how Jehovah, your God, dried up the Red Sea and delivered you and drowned Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. We know how God destroyed Sihon and Og, the king of Bashan. We know, I know he is your God and he is God in heaven above and in the earth beneath." She held for truth all that God said. All that God's word. All that he had said. "I know. I know what your God has done for you." She believed every word of that. She believed all of those rough edges we might say in our carnality. She believed in a sovereign God, a sovereign God who created. A God who

realizes his decree of election and reprobation. A God who utterly destroys all of his enemies and saves his people from their sins.

And how that true faith differs from false faith, false faith, which says, "I've heard your reports. I've heard how you created. I heard all of those wonders of God. I heard how he dried up the sea and the wonder of the cross and the wonder of the resurrection, but it's all a myth." True faith says, "I believe all that God has revealed in his word." In the heart of that, all of that truth that God reveals, it's the promise. The promise. "I know God has given you the land, the promise that God had said to Abraham 430 years prior, 'Unto thy seed will I give this land.'" She says, "I know. I know that thou wilt cast out all the Canaanites, and thou wilt cause thy people to inherit the land. I know it." She believed that promise, which was reflective of the promise of God to save his people from all of their sins.

And Rahab believed all that. She believed it. By faith, she drew near unto her God. That was when she took the oath of the spies. She said, "Swear unto me that thou wilt show me kindness in thy name." That was that oath demanded of the spies. By faith she had peace with God. By faith she trusted in the shadow of his wings. Before she trembled in fear, and now she says, "I know that thou will give thy people the land. Show thy kindness unto me." She trusted in the Lord God.

She believed. Well, how do you know that? How do you know she wasn't just being a shrewd harlot? Harlots are shrewd, you know. They live their whole life and it's always working to get something, to the next thing. How do you know that she believed? The text says she acted by faith and it says that when she received the spies with peace, and the text is drawing attention to that act, to that act of her faith of receiving the spies with peace. And so what's the history of that? The two spies, they came to lodge at that harlot's house in God's providential care and control and directing. They came to that harlot's house and they went to that inn. They went to that house as not to arouse any suspicion. There would be no suspicion if two men went into the harlot's house. And immediately as they enter into that gate, they're immediately spotted by the king's messengers who take word and send it to the king and say, "There's men here to spy out the land." And the king sends his men over into the harlot's inn. And as those king's men are standing at the door of Rahab's house, they're pounding on the doors and Rahab takes those two spies of the nation of Israel and runs them up to the roof and hides them in the flax or the stalks in the roof. And then she goes back down and talks to those two men and says, "Yes, there was men here. I don't know who they were. But hurry. If you go there, if you run, if you go out of the gate, you'll be able to catch them." And they headed towards that river. And those messengers believe that report. They go out through the gate, the guards shut the gate, lock the men in the city. And when she's rid of those messengers, she goes up to the roof. She besought those men, "Swear unto me thou shall show kindness unto me." She received the spies with peace and she lets them down by a scarlet cord through the window of that house on that wall, and she didn't utter her business. And those two spies, they go into the mountain and for three days, after the pursuers are gone, they return to Joshua and give the report that all of Jericho stands in fear. And then at that point

principally, the victory was already theirs. The victory was in their hands. Jehovah God would give it unto them.

And so what was that act? What was that act? It was first of all this, it was an act of faith. It found its source and its root in faith. Just like all the others, how all the others in Hebrews 11, how they acted, they acted by faith. By faith and not by fear because fear is not faith. She didn't act in worldly wisdom or all of her shrewdness of being a harlot, but she acted by faith. And now the question: how was this act an exhibition of faith? How did this act of Rahab the harlot manifest her faith? The best way to explain this is this way. If in the United States you are in your home and you are under foreign occupation, so that there is a foreign nation that has you under some sort of occupation at wartime, and if two spies were to come to your house from that occupying nation and you were to receive them with peace, what would that be but an act of treason. You would be aiding and abetting the occupying nation while your nation remains under occupied territory. That's the idea here. How was this an act of faith? It was an act of faith because she committed treason against her own city. She aided and abetted the enemies of Jericho and by that, she was committing herself to the complete and utter destruction of Jericho, to the complete annihilation of that entire city. She was committed to that. That's what that act, how that was exhibited. To be at peace with the spies, meant to be at war with Jericho. It meant to be an enemy of Jericho. It meant to be an enemy of that accursed city. Jericho, which was a symbol of all the depravity, a symbol of the world as it was ripe for judgment at that time, whose cup of iniquity was full.

By faith she took a stance that was antithetical, a stance that was in hostility against Jericho and when she received the spies with peace, how that act, how that faith was manifested and demonstrated. She was also at war with her former self too. That harlot was no longer a harlot. She was at war with herself. She was at war with her sin. She was at war with Satan. She was at war with the world. She stood in hostility to her own flesh. And when she received the spies with peace, that indicated her own repentance. That's how that faith was manifested. So it's absolutely appropriate to say that repentance is a fruit of faith. That's the text.

She received the spies with peace. She was at peace with God. She was at peace with the people of God and she was at war with all of the enemies of God. She was at war with the world. Don't you understand friendship with God is war with the world? Friendship with the world is enmity with God. You have to see the antithesis in this text. Faith manifests itself always the inevitable fruit in antithesis with the world, receiving the spies with peace and standing and maintaining a hostile position towards Jericho and all that Jericho meant and the hatred of Jericho and the destruction of Jericho and the downfall of Jericho. True faith always receives the spies with peace. That warfare which begins in the heart when God takes hold of you in regeneration, when God plants in you faith and flowing out of that, that faith manifests itself in hatred against your own sin and hatred against Jericho.

It's true of us. Faith manifests itself in warfare with the world, manifests itself in a confession, manifests itself in a walk. Do you have faith? Do you have true faith? Do I

have true faith? Show me your faith. That's justification by works. That faith is demonstrated to all around you. She had received the spies with peace and that meant the destruction of Jericho and the text yet has an important point to make about that. Faith has fruit. Faith has inevitable fruit. It's joined to Jesus Christ. It's joined to Jesus Christ like a dead branch is grafted into an alive root so that all the fatness and life of that root flows through into that branch, the life flows like a tree in an orchard and produces fruit. That was Rahab's faith. Rahab's faith wasn't a hole dug in the ground with a giant stick and some boards nailed to it that a lunatic called a tree, but she was engrafted into Christ and that faith produced fruit. It was a real tree. She was alive. That's the idea of faith without works is dead.

She acted by faith but the point yet that has to be made in this text is that those works could never save Rahab and the text draws that out. Rahab lied. That's the great exegetical question of this text. What of that lie? How do you explain that lie? What of that lie? What do you say about that? The text here isn't giving the church permission to lie. There's no mitigation of the fact she lied. But I'm not sure what she could have done. What would you have done in that situation? I don't know. What else could she have done? The old spies were her friends. She was an enemy of the world. She couldn't turn them over. It was perhaps the most noble lie in all of history, but it was still a lie.

The text doesn't say she perished not with them that believed not when she lied about the spies, but the point of Hebrews 11 verse 31, it's looking at the whole act of faith, that whole act of faith of the harlot Rahab, and the point here, the point of all this is that her works could never save her. Even the most noble lie was still a lie. Even the best of her work she tainted, she mingled in with all of her flesh. That's the point. That one good work, that one good work didn't blot out all of the sins that she had committed in her past. That one good work, no matter how noble it was, was still tainted and defiled with her own flesh. It wasn't spotless. Those works could never save her.

It's true with your works too. You must show your faith by your works. You must, you can, you will, you may especially in that warfare against yourself, especially in antithesis against the world and the false church, and friends and family that hate the truth, but you're not saved by that. You're not saved by receiving the spies with peace and standing in antithesis with the world. That's all polluted. You polluted it all with your flesh. Salvation is not by works, but salvation is by the promise of God to save sinners from their sins. By faith, she was saved and it says she perished not with them that believed not. It doesn't say she perished not when she received the spies with peace. By faith. By true faith joined to Jesus Christ, she perished not.

All who believe shall not perish, but have everlasting life. All who do not believe shall perish and be cast into outer destruction. That's God's word about Jericho. By faith, she escaped. By true faith, being joined to Jesus Christ. By faith, we escape. Not by works. By faith, washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, that filthy, disgusting, wretched woman was saved. She was covered over in the blood of Jesus Christ in promise and that dirty, foul woman, she became beautiful, clean, spotless, righteous, holy, being joined to Jesus Christ. And that is the gospel of the text. That's your spiritual condition.

We've talked and spent a lot of time about Rahab. To walk away this evening and think, Rahab, she was a bad woman, and not take this home and apply that to yourself, that's your nature. That's no different, Rahab is no different than you. Maybe you are not given over to all of those lusts of the flesh as Rahab, but you commit all of the same sins. All of that lust is in your flesh. All of that worldliness, all of that depravity, it's all right there. But being joined to Jesus Christ, you're saved, declared righteous in his blood, not realized but in promise then, and you're cleansed from all the pollution and defilement of that sin. But that sin can't condemn you're cleansed and that curse is taken away from you in his blood so that you stand before him righteous by faith alone. You're partaker of the promise. You're justified by true faith. You're imputed Christ's righteousness, all of Christ's perfect obedience, that's all yours. All of that obedience to the law is perfect obedience, it is as if you obeyed that law perfectly so that there's nothing left for you to do, so that all of those works that faith must inevitably manifest itself, that God in his decree gives to his people, and flows through them through that gift of faith, those works can't save. They never can save because of your flesh, which is no different than the harlot Rahab.

God forgave her sins. God delivered her. God gave her the right to be joined with his people. By faith she escaped. By faith she was made joint heir with all the fathers, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By faith she escaped and by faith she prospered. You know of what happened to Rahab after this, do you not? They circled around seven times. On the seventh time the walls fell down and the men marched straight in and slaughtered the entire city and Rahab stayed in that house and saw the destruction of Jericho, saw all the bloodshed through the windows in her own house. She stayed in that house in that one spot where that wall didn't fall down, and the spies came, those two men, they brought her outside the camp and Joshua took and brought her inside into the camp. By faith she was incorporated into the church. By faith she was incorporated into God's church. She was made an Israelite who by nature was a filthy harlot. And then what happened in that camp? What happened in that camp is that a man saw her. Salmon. Salmon by name, and Salmon begat Boaz. And Boaz begat Obed. And Obed begat Jesse. And Jesse begat David. And Jesse begat Christ. By faith Rahab prospered and Rahab became one of the mothers of Jesus Christ. She escaped by faith, and she prospered in the land and that's God's word to you this evening. All who believe shall not perish but have everlasting life. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not when she had received the spies with peace. Amen.

Let us pray.

Our God and our Father in heaven, we thank thee for thy word unto us. We thank thee that thou hast saved filthy, rotten sinners from our sins, and made us beautiful, spotless, and holy before thy sight. By faith we have escaped, and by faith we prosper with thy blessing, and thou dost give unto us the gospel, and we prosper in that gospel that thou pardon all our sins, wash them away in the blood of Jesus Christ, apply this word unto us by a true faith and kindle in us a true faith that cleaves only to the promise and

renounces all trust in self and all of our own working for salvation, but rests and relies upon thee alone as our God. Hear our prayer and answer us.