

Series: Hebrews

Lesson: #50

Title: Rahab's Scarlet Line

Text: Hebrews 11: 31

Date: Sunday, September 14, 2008

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Princeton, New Jersey

Only four women are mentioned in the genealogy of our Savior: Tamar, who was guilty of incest; Ruth, a cursed, unclean Moabitess and Bathsheba, who was an adultress. Thus it seems that even in his genealogy our Lord associates himself with sinners. And our text today holds the fourth woman:

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

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.

Two things we see here.

A. First, we see that Rahab was an ungodly woman living in an ungodly land.

1. She is called the "harlot Rahab." Almost every time her name is mentioned in scripture she is mentioned as "the harlot Rahab or Rahab the harlot."
2. God does not cover up what she is, but records over and over for us to know Rahab was a prostitute who ran a house of prostitution in Jericho--
 - Some folks don't think the pastor should bring that out but why?
 - You and I need to be told what we are in the flesh?
 - Sinner's need to be told that we are on the same footing with Rahab the harlot by nature.
3. Furthermore, she was not a natural descendant of Abraham, but a foreigner--she **perished not with them that believed not**. She lived in that cursed city of Jericho, even of a cursed race of people--an Ammorite whose race was devoted by God to utter destruction--as far as anyone could tell she was "an alien from the commonwealth of Israel" "a stranger from the covenants of promise"

Lesson: But Rahab is just the kind of person God saves. God saves those who have absolutely nothing in themselves worthy of God's notice, but for his total holy indignation. God. While the world of self-righteous, pious, snooty religionist turn up their noses, the holy Lord Jesus draws the harlot near and speaks words of everlasting love and grace to comfort her weeping heart.

Luke 7: 36: And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37: And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38: And stood at his feet behind him weeping,

and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment. 39: Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. 40: And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41: There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42: And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43: Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44: And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. 45: Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46: My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47: Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little. 48: And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49: And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50: And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Mattehw 9: 11: And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? 12: But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 13: But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Ephesians 2:1: And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

B. But we see a second thing here, we see the wise hand of our God directing the spies right to the door of his chosen vessel of mercy.

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.

Lesson #2: God predestinates everything from the tiny sparrow falling to the ground to a couple of spies walking up to the house of Rahab and lodging there.

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: **4:** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. **5:** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, **11:** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Now, let me read our text in Hebrews once more and point out something to you:

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

A. God had already given Rahab the gift of faith when the spies came to her door.

1. But true faith is not a fruitless thing but the working, thriving, trusting life of the believer.

Joshua 2:2: 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.

2. She was not saved because she received the spies but she received the spies because she was already saved. She risked death by what she did.

3. But what Rahab did in receiving these spies was not a work to obtain faith, but was the fruit of faith.

Lesson #3: Good works are the fruit--the result of God's gift of faith--and where there is no fruit there is no faith.

- **Galatians 5: 22:** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, **23:** Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

- James uses Rahab as an example of someone whose actions justify their claims that they truly believe God: James 2:25: Likewise also was not **Rahab** the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?
- **Hebrews 11: 31: By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.**

Example: Is a person saved because they obey the Lord and follow him in believer's baptism? Not at all. Baptism never saved anyone. Every sinner who has truly believed was saved by the grace of God through faith which lays hold of Christ our Righteousness, their obedience to baptism was the fruit of faith already possessed.

II. WHAT WAS THE PROMISE AND OBJECT OF RAHAB'S FAITH?

A. RAHAB'S FAITH WAS BASED UPON PROMISE.

Joshua 2: 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.

Lesson # 4: Faith rests in God's promise.

Our Lord promises John 10: 27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

Romans 16: 20: And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

Philippians 1: 6:...he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

Therefore faith says: I Thessalonians 5: 24: Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

The Lord promises us saying: Hebrews 13: 5: *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Therefore faith says with confidence, Hebrews 13: 6..., The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Every believer trusts God's promise to save us.

B. RAHAB'S FAITH WAS IN THE PERSON OF HER REDEEMER, TYPIFIED BY THE SCARLET LINE IN THE WINDOW.

Joshua 2: 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.

Joshua 2: 21: And she [Rahab the harlot] 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.

God's true messengers can not preach the gospel without preaching the blood of Christ Jesus the Lord because a gospel with no blood is no gospel.

1Corinthians 1:18: For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God...v23:...and the wisdom of God.

1. God chose a people and promised to save them in covenant with his Son and Spirit.
 - Then that people became totally ruined and guilty in sin.
 - God's holy character demands he must make good on his promise or his word is worthless.
 - At the same time, *the soul that sinneth it must die*, or God's holy justice means nothing.
2. If it were possible that some man, who is not God, could save this people then the creature would receive the glory and not God.
 - If God provides himself to die in their place then his justice is satisfied and him being the one who satisfied it he receives all the glory.
 - But God is eternal and Spirit and cannot die, while his people are flesh and blood and cannot obtain eternal justification and eternal salvation.
 - So how will God retain his glory and yet show mercy to a people who deserve only justice?
3. If God provides his only Son who and yet his Son comes as a man, born of a virgin, spotless, holy, righteous, God and man.
 - Eternal in his Godhead and thus able to obtain eternal satisfaction,
 - One with his people and thus able to die in their place
 - Able to know the infirmity of their flesh and thus provide their needs
 - While at the same time being God and able to make intercession before his Father
4. There, covered in flesh and dripping in blood, covered in the marks of man's depravity and hatred for Holy God, is not a helpless, little Jesus, but the Power and Wisdom of God!

- He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
- He suffered eternal wrath for each chosen child of God.
- He died the eternal death of each chosen child of God.
- But he rose as the eternal Resurrection of each chosen child of God.

5. Now, he sits enthroned in majesty at God's right hand with power over heaven and earth.

- He is sending forth the Holy Spirit to each one for whom he died.
- Regenerating them to newness of life.
- Gifting them with repentance toward God and faith in Christ.
- Protecting each one as the apple of his eye
- All the glory in their justification is God our Savior's.
- All the glory in their being made holy is God our Savior's.
- All the glory in their persevering belongs to God our Savior alone
- ALL THE GLORY BELONGS TO GOD OUR FATHER, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IF ALL THREE DO NOT RECEIVE THE GLORY IN THE SALVATION OF SINNER'S THEN GOD HAS NOT RECEIVED THE GLORY, CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN HONORED AND MAN HAS PROVEN HIS FEAR OF SUFFERING THE PERSECUTION OF MEN WHICH COMES FROM PREACHING THE CROSS OF CHRIST!

1Corinthians 2:2: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Galatians 6: 14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Lesson #5: As surely as that scarlet thread hung there between Rahab and the spies and bound them to one another in covenant mercy, so Christ's blood binds--it is the new testament in his blood--his blood is the scarlet thread which binds everyone one of his blood-bought children to him and not one will be lost.

Lesson #6: True faith waits for the coming of our Redeemer. Rahab tied that line in the window and waited.

- What do you suppose kept her going?
- Every day she walked to that window to see the scarlet line.
- You've come to the window today, and I hope you have fresh courage, having again, seen the scarlet line in the window. So you too, can wait.
- Was Rahab disappointed?

Joshua 6: 20 So the people shouted when *the priests* blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city,

every man straight before him, and they took the city. 21: And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. 22: But...Joshua...

- The trumpet blew just as the trumpet shall blow in the last day...
- The people shouted with a great shout just as they shall in the last day...
- The wall fell down flat just as every man-made wall shall fall in the last day...
- God's troop took the city and won the victory just as the Lord shall do in the last day...
- Everyone, everyone, every vile, God-hating rebel was destroyed...

1. But what about Rahab? Do you remember where Rahab's house was in Jericho?

Joshua 2: 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.

2. But what happened to the wall?

Joshua 6: 20: So the people shouted when *the priests* blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat,

3. It fell down flat except in one place. I picture a row of dominions. But when it got to Rahab's house--the wall was left standing--why? That scarlet thread.

V22: But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye swore unto her. (Just as he promised, just as he purchased, so shall the believer be delivered by our faithful Redeemer.) 23: And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. 24: And they burnt the city with fire, and all that *was* therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25: And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel *even* unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

A. She dwelleth in Israel *even* unto this day?

1. Well, we ought to buy us a ticket and cross the Atlantic and go to Israel and see Rahab.
2. That is not Israel and that is not where Rahab dwells unto this day.
3. She is in that promised land, that new heaven and that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, the Lord our Righteousness.

Application:

Oh, sinner, listen to me...whether you be a harlot, despised by men, rejected by this world, looked down on by religion, know this...as you have trusted your eternal soul to Christ Jesus your Lord...as you have by faith bound the scarlett line in your window...like Rahab, ye shall dwell in Israel with your Joshua! Why?

Because of the scarlett blood of Christ Jesus the Lord you can not, can not, can not perish with this sinful Jericho, but must, must, must and shall be brought out to dwell with Christ the Lord forever and ever and ever!