

God's Invitation to Serve: Rahab

Joshua 2: 1-21

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Joshua 2: 1-21 (selected verses)

Joshua sent two men secretly to Jericho as spies, saying, "Go view the land."

They went and entered the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab, and spent the night there.

The king of Jericho was told, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to search out the land."

Then the king sent orders to Rahab, "Bring out the men who have come to you, for they have come only to search out the whole land."

But Rahab took the men and hid them.

She told the king, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they came from. And when it was time to close the gate at dark, the men went out. Where they went I do not know."

She had, however, brought them up to the roof and hidden them.

Before they went to sleep, she came up on the roof and said, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us. The Lord our God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below. Since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the Lord that you will deal kindly with my family. Spare my father and mother, brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.

The men said to her, "Our life for yours! If you do not tell this business of ours, then we will deal kindly and faithfully with you and your family when the Lord gives us the land."

Then the men said, "We will be released from this oath that you have made us swear to you if we invade the land and you do not tie this crimson cord in

the window and you do not gather your family into your house. If any go out into the street, they shall be responsible for their own death; but if a hand is laid upon any who are with you in the house, we shall bear responsibility for their death. But if you tell this business of ours, we shall be released from this oath.”

Rahab replied, “According to your words, so be it.” She sent them away and they departed.

Then she tied the crimson cord in the window.

What an incredible story! The context of this story is so amazing when you consider what Israel has gone through up to this point:

The Passover; The Exodus; Wandering through the Wilderness; The Death of Moses; Among Many Other Circumstances.

Their Faith was Confronted, Their Resolve was Challenged, Their Commitment and Trust were Tested!

And within this Context we find this Story. This Story where 2 Spies, sent by Joshua (Israel’s Leader), were sent to get the “FIRST GLIMPSE” of the Promised Land... Where they find this Woman, Rahab, a Prostitute, whom they trust to hide/protect them as Trespassers.

While the spies are there, their presence is leaked, and the King of Jericho sends orders to Rahab to release these 2 men...

It is at this point, that Rahab puts her life in jeopardy! Rahab tells a lie in order to protect the two spies of Israel in exchange for protection for her and her family.

Rahab is used in an integral way by God in the Story of God’s People...

Rahab’s name, in addition to being remembered through the retelling of this

story, is also one of the four women mentioned in the Genealogy of Jesus found in the FIRST CHAPTER OF MATTHEW.

Rahab is remembered for bravery, her faith, and her good works through the protection she provided!

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Throughout Lent, we have been looking at Women in the Bible. And although Rahab was not a member of the Jewish Nation, she demonstrated her faith in God through service and selfless actions...

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I find great hope in this story...

Rahab is presented with an opportunity to TRUST... Rahab was also confronted with the CHOICE of where she would place her faith...

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This past week I found out that I have been selected to serve as an Active Duty Navy Chaplain...

Knowing my past, there are ways in which I can sympathize and relate with Rahab's character in this story.

I didn't grow up going to church, and my only knowledge of Jesus was that Christmas somehow involved His Birthday... The first time I started attending church regularly, I was on staff as a Pastor.

Rahab was put in a position to trust, but I believe she wasn't 100% sure she knew what she was doing, and I bet she wasn't 100% confident in what she was doing either... I know I wasn't!!

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You see I never had a dream... What I mean by that is I never knew exactly what I wanted to be when I grew up. I have always enjoyed being around people, and knew I wanted to be in a position to serve others, but I wasn't positive in what capacity. I looked into teaching, coaching and counseling, but nothing ever seemed to 'fit'. When I was a junior in high school, I first heard the story of Jesus Christ, His atoning death and the redemption and hope He offers to all those who believe. I first heard the story of a God who loves me, and things started to make sense. Knowing that there was a higher purpose for my life, and that as a believer I am called to live a life of service for God, was exciting and illuminating. I knew my purpose was to lead a life of service to others for the glory of God.

Even so, I have always felt like an outsider. As an undergrad I completed college as a commuter student, never making lasting connections with my fellow classmates. Upon graduating college I served as the Youth Pastor at the Army War College, a wonderful experience that first exposed me to the military lifestyle, but I was a civilian serving the military. For seminary I traveled 2 hours each way to complete my course work so my family wouldn't need to move. Throughout my life I have felt more like an invited guest than a valued member. The opportunity to serve my country, as a chaplain, in order to join a mission and a camaraderie that is greater than myself, while also serving a faithful God and caring for the spiritual needs of my fellow sailors is what first excited me about joining the Navy.

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This opportunity has been on my heart several times over the better part of a decade! As the Youth Pastor at the Army War College I researched the possibility of becoming a Chaplain Candidate, but the timing wasn't right for my family. Upon graduating from seminary I again spoke with a

recruiter about becoming a military chaplain, but with young children at the time my wife and I didn't feel it was the right opportunity for our family. Then about two years ago (Nov. 2017), a Navy Chaplain (Chaplain Lantz-Who I had the honor of attending her Retirement Ceremony at Great Lakes this Past Friday) was attending our church and complimented me on my sermon one morning. Through casual conversation I shared with her my past desires to serve as a military chaplain. At that moment she shared the phrase that stirred my soul, and which I believe was symbolic of the Spirit working in my life, 'It's never too late.' Since this conversation there has been a lot of prayer and conversations, but God continues to affirm this calling on my life.

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God is at Work... God is at Work in us... God is at Work Through Us...

We Never Know when someone, like Rahab, may be tasked with TRUSTING and HAVING FAITH in a Way They May Not Feel Prepared For, Or Capable Of...

We Never Know When a Chance Encounter With a Stranger Who Becomes a Dear Friend Will Change the Entire Trajectory of Your Life...

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So as I end this morning, I want to end by Sharing this...

Pastor Chip was originally scheduled to Preach this Morning, but was gracious enough to allow me this opportunity to share with you after I received word that the Navy had selected me...

And in our Pastor's Meeting that followed it was offered that I could change the Scripture Lesson, if I wanted to, to better reflect the message I wanted to share... Because the Story of Rahab may not be the clearest Biblical Story

to teach from when detailing a Call or sharing about One's Personal Story ("UNLESS THE STORY OF RAHAB SOMEHOW PUTS A NICE BOW ON YOUR CALL STORY" - - This is an example of Pastor Humor, which to be honest is one of my favorite parts about working in a church!!)...

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As I've mentioned, My first job out of College was serving as the Youth Pastor at the Army War College.

Bible - - USE IT WELL!!

West Point Retreat (Sat: Football Game; Sun: Worship at the Cadet Chapel)

Dr. Charles Stanley was Preaching.

And I share this Information for 2 Reasons:

1.) I wrote a note in here DATED 10/31/10 - - "Heard God's Calling... !!"

2.) The Scripture that was used in the Cadet Chapel that morning was Joshua 1:1-9... A text that is only 9 VERSES BEFORE OUR PRE-SELECTED SCRIPTURE LESSON HERE THIS MORNING.

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Joshua 1:9 tell us "*I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*"

I do not know where this calling, and this journey, may take me. My life is not my own.

My HOPE, is that we ALL may be ENCOURAGED TO TRUST!!

Trust in each other. Trust in the Movement of the Spirit. Trust in God's Provisions.

*“Be Strong and Courageous... Do Not Be Dismayed... For the Lord God is with YOU, Wherever You Go.”*

May these Words Bring Us Hope and Strength... Both Now and Forevermore... Amen!