

Joshua ch 2-

Again as we enter into the book of Joshua let it be said that God buries His workers but His work still goes on. None of us are essential to the work of God, God in His grace and His mercy chooses to allow us to be apart of what it is that He is doing, but whether we do it or not, that doesn't hinge the fact of whether or not it'll get done. God will accomplish His purpose, if not through you or me, then through someone else. If not through Calvary Chapel of Joplin, then through another group of dedicated, sold out believers that are willing to count the cost and allow God the reigns to their hearts that He might accomplish His plans for this city and on out through this city through them. God's will, will be done and in the book of Joshua we see just that happening, we find in the opening comments of the book of Joshua that God spoke to Joshua and told him that Moses, His servant was dead. But that wasn't the end of God's ability to work through the nation of Israel and accomplish His purposes for them as a people, because God had prepared another leader to continue the work after the death of Moses who of course we know was Joshua. And last week we took the time to note the 7 (or really 8) steps of the making of a leader as presented to us in the 1st 9 vs and then also vs 17 of ch 1 of the book of Joshua, and they were, preparation (vs 1), purpose (vs2) perspective (vs 3,4), power, or persuasion (vs5), people (vs6), precepts (vs7,8), presence (meaning the presence of God vs 9), and then finally, prayer (vs17). And it's important that these attributes be in their proper position in the life of any individual that is a leader of God's people. Now there was one other thing that caught my eye in the 1st ch of the book of Joshua that I didn't really draw to your attention last week because it really didn't line up with the emphasis that I was drawing out. But I believe it's important to take note of it because it gives even a little bit more insight possibly as to the type of individual that God chooses to raise up or utilize in, or call to positions of leadership. We read some 4 times in the 1st chapter of the book of Joshua alone the words, "be strong and of good courage", what's the implication, why so much repeated encouragement? The implication is that at least in this situation Joshua felt weak, and unsure of himself, in his ability to take on such a task. Sure he'd shown characteristics of bravery against the Amalekites, and fortitude in the event of spying out the land some 40 yrs earlier, but those things were different. All he had to do was what Moses told him, he wasn't directly accountable before God in that respect, now he's stepping up into a whole new level of leadership, and believe me when I tell you that filling the shoes of Moses was no small order to fill. It's one thing to be a trusted spy for your people, or to command a platoon of soldiers, but to be directly accountable for a nation, leading some 3million people; with the record of a man like Moses' to follow would surely be somewhat intimidating. And that made Joshua just the man for the job, not only was Joshua prepared, given purpose and perspective, power and precepts, people and the assurance of the presence of God, and the prayers of God's people behind him, he had no confidence in himself.

1 Cor 1:26-29 gives us this NT principal and we find that for every NT principal there is an OT picture, we read there, “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

Sure we’re to be strong and of good courage, we’re to have boldness and assurance, not in ourselves, notice vs 9 of ch 1(read). Eph 6:10 says, “*be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*” and It’s God that has promised them victory over their enemies and to bring them into the rest of the land, God’s the one who has told them that He’s already given them the land all the have to do is take it, every where the sole of your foot treads I have given you.

Translation: wherever you put your foot down and claim the promise of My word it’s yours.

There are some 3000 promises in the bible for you and me, they’re already yours in Christ, how many have you put your foot down on and taken, just received them by faith and claimed that which God has given you. Even 10% would be 300, many of us don’t even know of 300 of the bibles promises, much less 300, what about 1/100 are you living in 30 of God’s promises for you, or even 1/1000, can you think of 3 promises of the word of God that you’ve appropriated to your life. You see that’s what we’ve been talking about on Sunday mornings, there’s so much provided for us in Christ from which to draw from and live by if we’ll just believe it and receive it. Joshua trusted in the word of God, that’s why with such confidence he could say in vs 11 that with in 3days they *would* pass over the Jordan and begin to possess the land that God had promised them. Not because he trusted in his words, but because he trusted in God’s word. He didn’t say with in 3days we’ll try to cross over and hopefully if we’re real lucky we might make it. He said you *will* cross over, he had no confidence in his own ability, but he didn’t waiver at the promise of God’s word and God honored that, so we approach ch with in the time frame of that 3day period, and we read in vs1.

Vs1-

You say, hey wait a minute what’s going on here? What is he doing sending out spies; didn’t they learn their lesson the 1st time? 40yrs ago they sent out 12 spies and because of that they spent another 40yrs in the longest death march in world history. Because 10 out of the 12 came back with a bad report saying, oh we’re like grasshoppers in their sight, these guys are huge, we’ll be squashed like bugs.

Even though there were 2 of them that said hey, lets go for it, if God be for us who can be against us and so it doesn't matter what they look like or how big they are, God is going to fight our battles for us and give us the land of which He promised. And they encouraged the people to take heart and were seeking to provoke them to good works, but instead they all fell prey to the majority report and became fearful and chose to turn back and because of that God sentenced them to 1yrs worth of wilderness wandering for every day that the spies were in the land. And swore that all those people who were scared to enter in wouldn't enter in but rather they would die in the wilderness and their children whom they were supposedly so worried about would be made to inherit the land save two. God promised the 2 spies that gave a good report, who followed God fully with their whole hearts, trusting in the strong arm of the Lord would also enter the land. And who were those 2 spies, Caleb and Joshua, and so here Joshua is again right up to the very edge of the land and this time instead of sending 12 spies, he only sends 2. And instead of sending them openly, he sends them secretly, not even allowing the Israelites to know it in case of another bad report. Because he was going in either way, because he trusted God, but if there was a bad report it might dishearten the people; so he sent them secretly. And his motives were different as well, Joshua is simply using military strategy, he's not sending them out to see *if* they could take the land, to see if the conditions were favorable or not, or if the cities looked weak or like strongholds, like they did 40yrs ago.

Instead he's sending them in to find out *how* they should take it, and since Jericho was a strategic city in the land, he wanted them to find out information on that city in particular. So it wasn't see *if* we can take it, but rather *how* we should take it, so this was a totally different episode. And here we find mention of this harlot by the name of Rahab, how was it that they wound up at her house, we don't know, ultimately it was due to the sovereign guidance of the Lord. Have you ever gone on about your day or you were headed to a certain place and you happened to stop somewhere on your way and something winds up happening or you wind up sharing Christ with someone and then when you take off you realize, hey that was the Lord that led me there or us there. We thought we were just living life, but in reality hindsight tells you that God's sovereign hand was on your life, leading you and guiding you. Well, God led them to Rahab and we'll talk a little more about her later.

Vs2-7

Ok, here we seem to have a mess, she just lied through her teeth, is that right, is that acceptable or justifiable? These guys come to her house (And I don't know maybe they knocked on the door) and she realized who it was and so she takes these guys up on the roof (which in that culture would've been flat) and she hides them under the flax that was up there drying. And these guys say hey we've caught wind that some Israeli spies have come into your house, do you know anything about that?

And she plays ignorant, she says well there were a couple of guys here that I didn't recognize but I didn't know who they were or what they were up to, they just took off a couple of minutes ago, if you hurry you might be able to catch them, they went that way. And so the guys take off after them, now if she'd been caught in that lie she would've been executed, she took her life into her own hands to try and protect these guys. So does that justify her, no, listen, just because the bible records people's errors doesn't mean it approves of them. And just because God's moving, doesn't mean God's approving. There's a few things to consider here, #1 some people believe that Rahab has already been converted at this point having heard of the things that the God of Israel has done, as we'll see in a minute, and having heard of those things gave her allegiance to the Lord. And that's quite possible, but even if that's the case she has had no guidance as to how to serve God or what it is that God requires of those who serve Him. In other words she may not even be thinking that she's doing anything wrong, she's protecting the servants of the most high God, she may feel as though she's honoring God, and showing her dedication to the God of Israel over her concern for even her own life. However other's believe that she actually makes the conversion in just a couple of minutes when she talks to the spies, and so if that's the case, she's not even one of God's children yet and so not telling the truth is the least of her worries, she needs the Lord. And if she has given herself to the Lord by now, then she definitely solidifies that through her soon confession to these guys, but surely we could all agree that she's absolutely operating on minimal knowledge of the Most High at best. Now all that having been said, it still does not justify her lying, in reality by lying she showed a lack of trust in God's ability to deliver these guys by another means. So it could be that she robbed God of another opportunity to show Himself strong on Israel's behalf, making a way where there was no way, because God likes to do that. He allows us to get our backs against the wall, where there is seemingly no hope, no way of escape, and then God makes a way where there is no way and gets all the glory. He does that all the time, He did it when they were up against the Red Sea & the Pharaoh's army was coming against them, and there were mountains on either side. They were trapped, herded into the valley like sheep to the slaughter and there's no escape, God loves it, so what does He do? He parts the sea and they all walk through on dry ground while He hold the Egyptian army back with a pillar of fire and then when the army tries to pursue them, He allows the sea to collapse upon them destroying them all, now what man is going to take credit for that. These spies seemed to be in a no win situation, there's soldiers at the door, they're trapped in the house, the situation is perfect, now God can do a miraculous work. It could've gone down like another Red Sea experience, a Shadrach Meshach and Abed-Nego event, a Daniel in the lion's den type happening or a Gideon occurrence. But instead she lied, they bought it, and God gets no glory. But now that being said, let's not be too quick to judge this (at best) new believer or one with minuscule if any knowledge of God, with out being willing to place on the table the short comings of these seasoned men of faith that the bible records as well, Noah stumbled and got drunk, Abraham deceived the Pharaoh of Egypt, Moses murdered a man, and David, the man after God's own heart committed adultery, committed murder and deceived the whole nation about it.

So we can't isolate her in failure, the scripture records peoples errors and fallibilities and thank God for it because it shows us that God can use imperfect people. If these are the types of people that God used in tremendous ways, then we all qualify, God over and over again demonstrates His grace and His ability to use us in spite of our fallibilities, the bible never approved of Rahab's lie, the bible approved of her faith as demonstrated by her good works of receiving the spies, being willing to risk her life for the sake of theirs. It was faith mixed with works, which is what the bible defines as saving faith, James 2:25-26 tells us "*was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*" and It's not that works in and of themselves save you, it's that true faith, demonstrates itself and illustrates itself through our lives by the way that we live our lives, and it's a belief in Jesus Christ. And the love of God working in us that causes us to do those good works. The works are basically the proof that's in the pudding, it's the walking the walk not just talking the talk, and that's what justified Rahab, not the fact that she was seeking to protect God's servants, but the fact of what caused her to do that, that was a work of her faith.

Vs8-11

Now, you talk about a confession, these things that she's saying are nothing short of a miraculous working of God in her life, and this is where some see her conversion take place as to where others say this is her confession of what's already happened in her heart. But we take note of the fact that conversion is a matter of the entire being, the entire personality, not just one aspect of it, it's more than an intellectual consent. Or an emotional warm fuzzy, or willing to do good things, all three have to work together, it's a matter of the intellect, the heart and the will all working together, it a complete transaction. Heb 11:7 tells us that, "*By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen (which was a matter of the intellect), moved with godly fear (which is the emotional side), prepared an ark for the saving of his household (which was a matter of the will).*"

Rahab's experience was similar in that she consented to the fact that "*the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath (the intellect).*" and When she had heard of the great things that He had done she feared for both herself and her family, (it was working her emotions as well) and then because of those things she received the spies (which was a matter of her will). And it's interesting to me that Rahab who knew little more than what she had heard concerning the Lord exhibited more faith in the Lord, then the 10 spies did 40yrs ago though they had been walking with the Lord and seen all these miraculous workings of the Lord. She says in vs 9 "*I know that the Lord has given you the land.*" How unfortunate that the Israelites weren't as convinced as she is now 40yrs ago. And she made this assessment based upon the things that she had heard about what the Lord had done for them and out of that she placed her faith in the God of Israel. The bible tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Notice with me vs 9-

10 (read); notice how God has kept His word to the nation we read in Ex 15:15-16 *“All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away.*

Fear and dread will fall on them; By the greatness of Your arm They will be as still as a stone, Till Your people pass over, O LORD, Till the people pass over Whom You have purchased.” Ex 23:27 “I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.” Deut 2:25 *“This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.”* Rahab says all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you, because of the God that they serve, because of what they had heard concerning the parting of the red sea and how they had destroyed such fierce armies. When did those things begin to happen, when did they hear of the parting of the red sea? It happened some 40yrs previous, God in His mercy, though sovereignly judging Israel was simultaneously giving the people of the land of Canaan an additional 40yrs to repent and get right with Him. God told Abraham that his descendants would inherit this land, but he told him that they’d have to wait some 400yrs plus because “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” Gen 15:16 In other words God was going to give the people of this land at least 420yrs to repent and get right with God meanwhile the measure of their guilt would be filling up the wine cup of the wrath of God. And when it had been filled He would press it to the lips of the people and they would drink of the wrath of God. Now there are those who desire to present God as a ruthless bully in the OT, but when God gives a people 420yrs to repent, how much more time do you want Him to give, God even extended it another 40yrs the 1st time Israel reached the banks of the Jordan. God revealed Himself to those people when He delivered the nation of Israel from Egypt by the signs and wonders and the parting of the sea, but even still they didn’t repent. And God hasn’t changed His formula in the NT, you can either repent and get right with Him through the person of His Son Jesus Christ or you can reject His love and grace and provision for your soul and suffer the ramifications accordingly in eternity separated from Him. And when Judgment comes I’m sure there will be plenty of people who would like to think that God should have given humanity more time, but over 1900yrs have gone by since Jesus Christ suffered and died for the sins of the world, the bible tells us that *“The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy.”* Jonah tells us concerning the Lord that He is, *“a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.”*

God has given the world ample opportunity to turn to Christ, how much longer do we need, it would seem that 2000yrs would be an awesome display of patience and grace. Don’t get me wrong I’m thankful for everyday that goes by that gives opportunity for people to turn to Christ, friends and family members that don’t know the Lord. But God is completely just in His Judgment, Rahab heard and believed, and because of that she was saved from God’s judgment.

And she went down in history having been placed in the hall of faith in Heb ch 11 vs31, Isaiah's not there, Ezekiel isn't there, Jeremiah we don't see, so many people who aren't listed and yet Rahab, a harlot made it, we serve a God who is rich with grace. James associates Rahab with Ab, and if that's not enough she's also related to the Messiah Himself of the few women listed in the lineage of Jesus in Matt ch 1 Rahab is one of them right along with Jacob and David & all the rest. So she went from being a degenerated prostitute to one of the great grandmothers of Jesus Himself the Savior of the world. No doubt where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, God honored her faith, which is a vital attribute for us all because the bible tells us that with out faith it's impossible to please God.

Vs12-14

In other words you keep your mouth shut and we'll spare your lives.

Vs15-21

So if you rat us out, or anyone goes out of your house, or unless this scarlet rope is seen hanging out your window, the deal is off. But if you stay inside, the scarlet rope will be a sign to those of us bringing judgment and we'll spare your lives. Now we don't have time to get into it but those of you who are into typology, we see here another neat picture of Jesus Christ It's not coincidence that the rope is scarlet, so as to be identified with blood. And it's not a coincidence that the only place of safety, free from judgment was abiding in the house that was identified with that scarlet rope. This is reminiscent to us of the Passover, when they had to place the blood on the doorposts and lintels of their homes. And the blood was a sign so that when the angel passed over if he saw the blood he spared those in the home, but those who weren't under the covering of the blood, fell prey to the judgment of death. & If anyone ventured out from the house they would be killed, well we see the same thing here, the only safe haven was being in the house that was identified by that scarlet rope, you are only safe from the judgment of eternal death as you abide in Christ under the safe haven of His blood. You step outside the house, you choose to no longer abide under the blood, then you're on your own, the only place of eternal security is abiding in Christ.

Vs22-24

Now one more thing, Jericho was one of the strongest and most heavily fortified cities of Canaan; if Israel could conquer it, they whole strike further fear into the rest of the inhabitants of the land and it would be laid wide open for them. – But my question is how did this information that the spies went to receive, help them with their battle? It didn't, it didn't really do anything for them, so then why did God send them there in the 1st place? It goes back to that sovereignty of God that we were talking about earlier, there was a woman named Rahab in that city, who had placed her faith in the true and Living God and God will not let the righteous to perish with the wicked. (Another them we see woven throughout scripture.) God went to a radical extent to bring one woman and her family to salvation - Someone seemingly "impossible" to save, a prostitute.

And I'd leave you tonight with an encouragement. You may know some people that seem impossible" to save –But God's hand isn't short that He can't save and He'll go to a radical extent to bring even one to salvation, so don't grow weary, you keep praying for that person or those people and wait and see what the Lord will do.