

People Like Us: Rahab

12.11.22

Matthew 1:2–6 (CSB)

FROM ABRAHAM TO DAVID

²Abraham fathered Isaac,
Isaac fathered Jacob,
Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers,
³Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar,
Perez fathered Hezron,
Hezron fathered Aram,
⁴Aram fathered Amminadab,
Amminadab fathered Nahshon,
Nahshon fathered Salmon,
⁵Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab,
Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth,
Obed fathered Jesse,
⁶and Jesse fathered King David.

FROM DAVID TO THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

David fathered Solomon by Uriah's wife,

Joshua 2:1–24 (CSB)

SPIES SENT TO JERICO

2 Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two men as spies from the Acacia Grove, saying, "Go and scout the land, especially Jericho." So they left, and they came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab, and stayed there.

²The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelite men have come here tonight to investigate the land." ³Then the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab and said, "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, for they came to investigate the entire land."

⁴But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. So she said, "Yes, the men did come to me, but I didn't know where they were from. ⁵At nightfall, when the city gate was about to close, the men went out, and I don't know where they were going. Chase after them quickly, and you can catch up with them!" ⁶But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them among the stalks of flax that she had arranged on the roof. ⁷The men pursued them along the road to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as they left to pursue them, the city gate was shut.

THE PROMISE TO RAHAB

⁸Before the men fell asleep, she went up on the roof ⁹and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given you this land and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and everyone who lives in the land is panicking because of you." ¹⁰For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings you completely destroyed across the Jordan. ¹¹When we heard this, we lost heart, and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below. ¹²Now please swear to me by the LORD that you will also show kindness to my father's family, because I showed kindness to you. Give me a sure sign ¹³that you will spare the lives of my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all who belong to them, and save us from death."

¹⁴The men answered her, "We will give our lives for yours. If you don't report our mission, we will show kindness and faithfulness to you when the LORD gives us the land."

¹⁵Then she let them down by a rope through the window, since she lived in a house that was built into the wall of the city. ¹⁶"Go to the hill country so that the men pursuing you won't find you," she said to them. "Hide there for three days until they return; afterward, go on your way."

¹⁷The men said to her, "We will be free from this oath you made us swear, ¹⁸unless, when we enter the land, you tie this scarlet cord to the window through which you let us down. Bring your father, mother, brothers, and all your father's family into your house. ¹⁹If anyone goes out the doors of your house, his death will be his own fault, and we will be innocent. But if

anyone with you in the house should be harmed, his death will be our fault.
²⁰And if you report our mission, we are free from the oath you made us swear.”

²¹“Let it be as you say,” she replied, and she sent them away. After they had gone, she tied the scarlet cord to the window.

²²So the two men went into the hill country and stayed there three days until the pursuers had returned. They searched all along the way, but did not find them. ²³Then the men returned, came down from the hill country, and crossed the Jordan. They went to Joshua son of Nun and reported everything that had happened to them. ²⁴They told Joshua, “The LORD has handed over the entire land to us. Everyone who lives in the land is also panicking because of us.”

Joshua 6:22–25 (CSB)

RAHAB AND HER FAMILY SPARED

²²Joshua said to the two men who had scouted the land, “Go to the prostitute’s house and bring the woman out of there, and all who are with her, just as you swore to her.” ²³So the young men who had scouted went in and brought out Rahab and her father, mother, brothers, and all who belonged to her. They brought out her whole family and settled them outside the camp of Israel.

²⁴They burned the city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD’s house. ²⁵However, Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, her father’s family, and all who belonged to her, because she hid the messengers Joshua had sent to spy on Jericho, and she still lives in Israel today.

Introduction: God tells stories differently than we do.

A. We read Jesus’ genealogy, and there are people that do not belong.

1. Tamar and Judah would not be who we would choose to be in Jesus’ story.

2. Rahab is even more unlikely.

B. Rahab is remembered in the Old Testament for two reasons:

1. First, before she was a follower of Israel's God, she recognized God's power and placed her hope and trust in Him.
2. This faith was evidenced in her hiding two unqualified spies.
3. Second, she is remembered because she married an Israelite and gave birth to Boaz.
4. Through this, she was part of not only Jesus' genealogy but also part of the story of faith.

C. Today, we read another story of how God works amongst people.

1. God uses the most unlikely of people and situations to bring Him glory and to advance His purposes.
2. Furthermore, we see more proof that **God can redeem our genealogy.**

1. Due diligence in a Promised Land.

A. At this moment, Israel has just crossed the Jordan river.

1. No longer are they in the Wilderness; now they are in the Promised Land.
2. This is the Land that God had promised to give them.
3. Even though it was their promise, there were still enemies in possession of the land.
4. Israel had the task of dispossessing the possessors.

B. Joshua, the leader of Israel, doesn't know the details yet.

1. And the first obstacle after crossing the Jordan River was the walled fortress of Jericho.
2. Most of us know that the walls of Jericho fall miraculously.
3. Joshua knows he will be victorious, but he is expecting a typical kind of battle: with a siege or an assault.

C. So Joshua does his due diligence.

1. It was not a sin to go and recon the city.

2. Joshua chooses two men to go spy on the city.
3. Joshua, 40 years before, had performed a similar mission in the same land.
 - a. It's even possible that Joshua, 40 years before, had even seen the city of Jericho.
 - b. Now it's time for Jericho to fall, and Joshua wants some intel.

2. The spies are really bad at their job.

A. The walls of Jericho were massive.

1. History tells us that the walls were large enough to perform chariot races across the top.
2. This was a fortified city that served as a major obstacle for the armies of Israel moving into the land.

B. It takes no time for the whole city to know they were there.

1. They go to what seems to be a tavern since taverns and prostitution were linked at that time.
2. They thought they could be sly by visiting a common traveler's spot, hoping no one would spot them and they could listen to what the inhabitants had to say.
3. But very quickly, everyone knows they are there including the king of the city.

C. We don't know if the spies intended to "take advantage" of being with a prostitute.

1. It doesn't seem likely that they did, especially considering that they would have been circumcised and no other males would have been.
2. Regardless of what happened, they are quickly discovered and need help to save their mission.

3. But that help comes from the most unlikely of sources: a prostitute.

3. Rahab knows the plan of God.

A. I am struck by what happens next.

1. Rahab has hidden the spies overnight.
2. Then she gives them this insight:
3. "I know the Lord has given you this land..." Vs. 9.
4. All the land knew of the wonderful works God had done.
 - a. What the Israelites did not yet understand is that the Fear of the Lord had gone before them.
 - b. The enemy was defeated long before Israel had ever arrived.

B. I am learning this lesson:

1. The weapons of my warfare are not carnal.
2. God can do more in a moment than I could ever do on my own.
3. Some of us in this room are dealing with stuff right now.
 - a. If so, I point you to Jesus!
 - b. For if He is for us, then who could stand against us?
Romans 8:31.

4. "Give me a sign". Verse 12.

A. Rahab knew that Jericho was going to fall.

1. She does not know that the walls are going to collapse.
2. But she knows two things:
 - a. The Lord has already decreed the defeat of the city.
 - b. Walled cities and fortresses that resisted, were usually utterly destroyed by the attacking army.

3. Here, Rahab a prostitute, asks for a sign.

B. She's asking for a promise.

1. Because of her kindness, because she risked her life to protect the spies, she asks to be remembered when destruction comes.
2. By asking for this promise, she is putting her life in the hands of Israel and Israel's God.

Joshua 2:17-21 (CSB)

¹⁷The men said to her, "We will be free from this oath you made us swear, ¹⁸unless, when we enter the land, you tie this scarlet cord to the window through which you let us down. Bring your father, mother, brothers, and all your father's family into your house. ¹⁹If anyone goes out the doors of your house, his death will be his own fault, and we will be innocent. But if anyone with you in the house should be harmed, his death will be our fault. ²⁰And if you report our mission, we are free from the oath you made us swear."

²¹"Let it be as you say," she replied, and she sent them away. After they had gone, she tied the scarlet cord to the window.

C. The promise had conditions:

1. Do not leave the house, which are the bounds of safety.
2. Do not betray the mission.
3. Hang the scarlet cord on the window.

D. These conditions sound similar to the day of Passover in Exodus.

1. As God promised to bring destruction upon Egypt and the Firstborns, He gave these conditions.
2. Stay in your house.
3. Be ready for the journey.
4. And place the crimson/scarlet blood of a lamb over the doorposts.

a. Those who obeyed would live, regardless of if they were Jewish or not.

b. Faith and obedience have always been more important to God than where you came from.

5. Even today, the Promises of God require us to stay within the bounds of relationship and faith.

a. You cannot call upon the promises if you are outside of a relationship with Jesus.

b. 2 Corinthians 1:20 (CSB)

²⁰For every one of God's promises is "Yes" in him. Therefore, through him we also say "Amen" to the glory of God.

The symbol of the promise was a scarlet cord.

5. A Scarlet Cord and a Crimson stain.

A. The Hebrew word for scarlet and crimson are the same.

1. These colors are made by taking a specific louse from a unique oak tree. The female louse is collected and sprayed with an acid solution and then dried.

2. Then they are dissolved in water to produce the red/crimson/scarlet dye. It required 70,000 insects needed to produce 1lb of dye.ⁱ

B. There are associations with these colors.

1. Scarlet is the color of sin, especially sexual sin.

Isaiah 1:18 (CSB)

¹⁸"Come, let's settle this,"

says the LORD.

"Though your sins are scarlet,

they will be as white as snow;

though they are crimson red,
they will be like wool.

2. There is a classic book called "The Scarlet Letter", with the main character is labeled with the letter "A", being scarlet in color symbolizing sin.

3. Scarlet and Crimson stand out, especially in a culture or environment like Jericho.

C. These colors represent both sin and blood.

1. Furthermore, they also represent the costly nature of dying cloth.

a. It was very expensive to dye cloth crimson.

b. The only color more expensive to dye in those days was "purple", which was reserved for royalty.

2. Certainly, Rahab was not royalty.

a. But she had made enough money through prostitution to own cords or fabric that had been dyed scarlet.

b. This scarlet strand would be the marker upon her household that there resided a woman not of prostitution but a woman of faith.

D. Fast word 30 plus generations, some 1200 years, and we see that Jesus, of the earthly genealogy of Rahab, gave his life to grant us eternal life.

1. Unlike Rahab, we are not saved by a scarlet thread hung from a window.

2. But instead, we are saved through the crimson blood of Jesus.

3. **I am thankful for a scarlet thread that led to a crimson stain!**

E. Jesus, while being mocked and crucified, was dressed in a scarlet robe.

Matthew 27:28 (CSB)

²⁸They stripped him (Jesus) and dressed him in a scarlet robe.

1. The Roman soldiers were mocking Jesus:

a. They mocked his royalty.

b. What they did not understand or realize is that the blood from this Man that stained the ground around them, that bled into the fabrics of that robe, that would soon pour upon the wooden beams and the spear, would be the blood that paid for their salvation.

c. It was THAT blood that forgives sins.

d. It was THAT blood that would bring healing.

e. It was THAT blood that would be offered in Heaven's Temple as a perfect, sinless sacrifice.

2. How amazing that this act of faith by Rahab, in the city of Jericho would result in her being part of the genealogy of Jesus.

a. Rahab and her family join the Israelites in their journey.

b. She marries an Israelite named Salmon and has a son.

c. That son was named Boaz, who married Ruth.

6. From Prostitute to Person of Faith.

A. The New Testament writer of Hebrews lists all of the wonderful people of faith in the Old Testament.

1. He talks about Abraham, Isaac, David, and all the usual greats.

2. In Hebrews 11:31, he mentions Rahab!

3. Hebrews 11:31 (CSB) ³¹By faith Rahab the prostitute welcomed the spies in peace and didn't perish with those who disobeyed.

B. **The same hope that Rahab had amid her crisis is the same hope we have today.**

1. Although she did not fully understand the plan of God, or fully know the God she was trusting in, she believed and was saved.
2. We have an advantage over Rahab.
3. Our advantage is that we can read about, know, and experience Jesus for ourselves.
4. As you face your own obstacles, know that faith in Jesus is the key.

Close: For those in the midst of a trial, let me encourage you to go to Jesus.

- A. Take your problem to Jesus.
- B. Make your petition and prayers known.
- C. Hang on to the Promises that Jesus has given.
- D. DO not waver and do not quit.

ⁱ Boyd, Mary Petrina. 2000. "Scarlet, Crimson." In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.