

Jos205 – Heroic Faith – Joshua 2:1-24

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Open your Bibles. Title of the message this morning “Heroic Faith.” Joshua Chapter 2 is where we are headed. We are going to do all 24 verses in Joshua. But, we are starting in Hebrews 11.

There are many women of faith in the Old Testament. But only two are named in the “Hall of Fame of Faith” in Hebrews 11.

In Hebrews 11:11, it is Sarah (Abraham’s wife).

Hebrews 11:11 (NLT)

11 It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise.

And in Hebrews 11:31 it is Rahab.

Hebrews 11:31 (NLT)

31 It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

Sarah lived her life as a very godly woman. The wife of Father Abraham. By faith she bore Isaac to Abraham through whom God would bring the entire Hebrew race.

Rahab – on the other hand – lived much of her life as a worshipper of pagan gods and a prostitute. In fact, she may have been a pagan “Priestess” who sold her body for an “offering” during “religious” acts.

Humanly speaking it’s safe to say Sarah and Rahab had *nothing* in common. But from God’s perspective they both exercised heroic faith. Today we will see the *heroic faith* of Rahab that led to *heroic action*.

Let’s Pray. *Father, please, your Word is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. And so Lord may it pierce our hearts today. Lord, not because of the difficulty of my voice, or anything else, but because of your living Word we pray that you would pierce our hearts today. That you would inspire us, that you would exhort us, that you would empower us by your Spirit and through your Word and for your name, Jesus, amen.*

It's not just Hebrews Chapter 11 that "points to" the heroic faith of Rahab. In James Chapter 2 God uses Rahab and Abraham side-by-side as co-examples of true faith. (Turn there.)

The subject of James Chapter 2 is that *true faith* brings a response of action.

James 2:21–25 (NLT)

21 Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God (not 'made right' but 'shown to be right') by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

22 You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete.

. . . (skip)

24 So you see, we are shown (not made – shown) to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.

25 Rahab the prostitute is another example (alongside Abraham). She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road.

True faith – brings *true action*.

Heroic faith – brings *heroic action*.

And not only is Rahab used twice in the New Testament to illustrate heroic faith. But, because of her faithful actions that we will see today, Rahab also ended up in the direct genealogy of Jesus Christ and she became the Great Grandmother of King David.

How did this one time "pagan god worshipping" prostitute end up not only with so much credit in the New Testament but also in the direct *bloodline* of Jesus Christ? The answer is – because of her heroic faith which was displayed in her heroic action.

So let's turn to Joshua and get started.

In our last message, Joshua told God's people to pack a sandwich because in three days they were going to cross the un-crossable Jordan River and begin to *take possession of the promised life*.

So today we pick it up in Joshua 2:1.

Joshua 2:1 (NLT)

1 Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove. He instructed them, "Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho." . . . (Let's stop right there)

Joshua was NOT sending in these two spies like Moses sent in the original twelve spies. Those original twelve spies went into the land with *uncertainty*. Joshua is sending in these two spies with *certainty*.

We saw last week that there was no doubt in Joshua's mind about the outcome of the battles that lay before Israel. But still, Joshua must plan and prepare in order to be victorious in the battle.

God has already *assured* Joshua of the victory, but the enemy is *still* going to put up a fight.

The Lord wants us to have that exact same approach to the spiritual battles in *our* lives. Our victory has already been assured *in Christ*. Yet Ephesians 6:10-18 calls us to prepare *carefully* and prepare *fully* for the battle – even though Jesus has already won the victory.

And 1 Peter 5:8-9 says,

1 Peter 5:8–9 (NLT)

8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

9 Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith . . .

We *must continue* to STAND FIRM against the enemy and we *must continue* to BE STRONG in our faith even though our victory is *already assured* by God.

So Joshua is sending the spies in preparation for the victory that God has already promised him. That is a big lesson in just verse 1.

So we pick up the spies' mission in Joshua 2:1(b).

Joshua 2:1(b) (NLT)

1 . . . So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night.

There is our heroine Rahab the Prostitute. We don't know how the spies ended up at her house. But we do know that she was the only one in Jericho who had (or developed) heroic faith in the God of Israel.

How do we know that? Because of her heroic actions on behalf of the God of Israel. As we just read in James Chapter 2, our faith is shown in our actions, and we'll see Rahab's faith *come to life* as we continue through the text.

And so the spies come into Rahab's house. And then we read in Joshua 2:2-3,

Joshua 2:2-3 (NLT)

2 But someone told the king of Jericho, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land."

3 So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: "Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land."

Now if Rahab was indeed a "Temple Priestess" she actually had some social standing in the community, so the king trusted that she would bring these men out if they were there. But the king also would definitely *kill* Rahab if she misled him or lied to him. And so this becomes a matter of allegiance for Rahab.

Would her allegiance be to the *worldly* king?

Would her allegiance be to the *Heavenly* King?

Joshua 2:4-5 (NLT)

4 Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, "Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from."

5 They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them."

Ahhh, she lied. Yeah, she lied.

She lied to a king who would've killed these two men of God on the spot and her lie would mean her own death if she was found out by the king.

But Rahab's allegiance is changing. Her position in her world and her priorities in her world are changing and she just made changing her allegiance a "life or death" situation.

So she tells the king they went "that-a-way." And then we read in Joshua 2:6-7,

Joshua 2:6-7 (NLT)

6 (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.)

7 So the king's men went looking for the spies along the road leading to the shallow crossings of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king's men had left, the gate of Jericho was shut.

Rahab had just chosen sides. She had just "turned her back" on her old life. If the king found out she would be killed. But there is a new life starting for Rahab anyway. Her allegiance was changing and so her actions were changing.

And so it is with us.

Is our allegiance to a *worldly* king?

Is our allegiance to the *Heavenly* King?

At some point our allegiance will be tested – usually in a *crisis* event. And our allegiance will be *displayed by our actions* in that crisis event.

You see, in the spiritual battle, there are really only two sides. You might think there are more than two sides, and might even be able to think of what they are.

But Jesus said in Matthew 12:30,

Matthew 12:30 (NLT)

30 “Anyone who isn’t with me opposes me, and anyone who isn’t working with me is actually working against me.

Jesus is not being *narrow-minded*. Jesus is saying there are really only two sides. There are those who are *with me* and there is *everyone else*.

And so, can I ask you have you acknowledged your “*allegiance*” yet? Is your allegiance *clear* to those around you *by your actions*?

At this point Rahab’s allegiance was made clear and it was made clear *by her actions* which is the same way *our allegiance* is made clear.

Rahab’s allegiance had changed and now her confession would change.

Joshua 2:8–11 (NLT)

8 Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them.

9 “I know the Lord has given you this land,” she told them. “We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror.”

10 For we have heard how the Lord made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed.

11 No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the Lord your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.

Oh, man! Can you imagine if the Israelites had *that* level of faith?

Can you imagine if Christians today had *that* level of faith?

Rahab is supposed to be an enemy of God's people yet she has far more faith than *most* of God's people. An entire generation of Israelites dropped dead in the Wilderness because they did not have the faith that this pagan harlot had. That generation of Israelites actually *saw* the miracles of God that Rahab had only *heard* about. Yet Rahab's faith was heroic and the Israelite's faith was horrendous.

Rahab *heard* the truth about God and she believed and it showed in her actions. The Israelite's *saw* the truths about God and they refused to believe and it showed in their actions.

So I guess seeing is NOT believing – but *believing* is actually seeing.

Look again at Rahab's faith.

Verse 9 - I know the Lord has given you this victory

Verse 10 - For we have heard how the Lord has done great miracles for you

End of verse 11 - For the Lord your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below

Can you imagine the increase of the spies' faith as they heard their supposed enemy talk like this? This is heroic faith coming from the most unlikely person in this text.

And you and I can have this *same faith*.

We can say:

I know the Lord will SEE ME through this because ***I KNOW he has done great miracles in the past and I KNOW that MY Lord is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.***

THAT is heroic faith and God is calling *US* to *heroic faith* just as he was calling Rahab to *heroic faith*.

So, first Rahab changed her *allegiance*.

Then Rahab changed her *confession*.

Now, Rahab is going to change her *actions*.

Now we see Rahab enter into a covenant of *faith and action* with these two spies.

After her heroic confession Rahab says in Joshua 2:12-14.

Joshua 2:12–14 (NLT)

12 “Now swear to me by the Lord that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that

13 when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families.”

14 “We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety,” the men agreed. “If you don’t betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the Lord gives us the land.”

Notice the confident faith the spies have *now*. I wonder if some of that actually came from listening to Rahab’s heroic faith because heroic faith is contagious, isn’t it?

Joshua 2:15–16 (NLT)

15 Then, since Rahab’s house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window.

16 “Escape to the hill country,” she told them. “Hide there for three days from the men searching for you. Then, when they have returned, you can go on your way.”

Rahab’s house was built into the wall of Jericho. We’ll get to the incredible archeology evidence of the walls of Jericho when we get to Chapter 6. But for now, just know, archeology easily confirms two walls were built around Jericho with at least fifteen feet between them with houses built along the lower wall.

Jericho is in the current day West Bank and generally not considered safe to go there. But in our earlier Israel trips we were able to drive by the original city of Jericho. (Awesome.)

And so the escape plan is set and now the spies give Rahab some conditions for her salvation from the attack.

Joshua 2:17–20 (NLT)

17 Before they left, the men told her, “We will be bound by the oath we have taken only if you follow these instructions.

18 When we come into the land, you (1) must leave this scarlet rope hanging from the window through which you let us down. And (2) all your family members—your father, mother, brothers, and all your relatives—must be here inside the house.

19 If they go out into the street and are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on people inside this house, we will accept the responsibility for their death.

20 (3) If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in any way.”

Rahab's faith would lead to more action! And if she did not continue taking action on her faith it would prove that she had no faith at all. Faith is only faith if it leads to action and heroic faith must lead to heroic action.

James 2:26 which is the last verse of the paragraph describing Rahab's faith says this,

James 2:26 (NLT)

26 Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.

That is how the Book of James wraps up the story of Rahab.

FAITH is NOT FAITH – unless it results in ACTION.

And so Rahab acts on her heroic faith. Continuing in Joshua 2:21.

Joshua 2:21 (NLT)

21 “I accept your terms,” she replied. And she sent them on their way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window.

Rahab agreed to continue taking action on her faith and she sent the spies on their way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window.

It is often said, ***“There is a Scarlet thread running thru the entire Bible – from Genesis to Revelation.”***

And here that scarlet thread hangs from the window of a radically changed Jericho harlot as she waits for the Salvation of the Lord in response to her heroic faith.

And so in verses 22-23 the spies escape and return to Joshua and in Joshua 2:24 they report to Joshua.

Joshua 2:24 (NLT)

24 “The Lord has given us the whole land,” they said, “for all the people in the land are terrified of us.”

The spies came back with Rahab's heroic faith.

The Lord has given us the whole land our enemies are terrified of us

Good for them!

But how should we respond to this great example of heroic faith? Should we casually hear it as a great Bible story then go back to our same old life? Or is there a chance that there is one area in your life today where God is calling *YOU* to heroic faith?

Maybe it's making a first time commitment to have the heroic faith that leads to salvation? Saying to the Lord in faith, ***Lord I believe you ARE who you say you ARE, and I will give my entire life – over to YOUR will, and YOUR plan.***

Or maybe there is an area in your life where the enemy seems large and your options seem small.

Listen to me please – reach for heroic faith and be ready to take action.

Make the confession that Rahab made here.

I KNOW the Lord has given me Victory over this

I KNOW the Lord has done great miracles in my life

I KNOW that My Lord is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.

So – I will *take hold* of the *heroic faith* and I will *take heroic action*.

Let's pray. *Lord we want heroic faith in our lives. Lord we're not playing church here Lord. We don't want to barely make it in as through the flames. We want to actually live in your power and in your grace. We want to take possession of the Promised Life. We want to live in peace no matter what. We want peace that passes our circumstances, passes understanding. We want to see victory in our life over the enemy's work, over the challenges, over the bondage, over the chains that bind us. Lord we want to see victory. And so we pray for an infusion of heroic faith that would lead us to heroic action.*

And again, if you're here today and this is all new to you, you start by saying, *“Yes Lord. I'm a sinner. I know that. I'm far from God. But apparently I can have heroic faith too. And so Lord Jesus, come into my life. Make me a new person, change my allegiance. Change my confession. Change my actions. Revive me, Lord, restore me and make me brave. For your sake, for your glory and in your name Jesus, amen.”*