Rehab′s Advent Hope — Delivery Transcript

Joshua 2:1–21 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, December 1, 2024 · *Advent 2024*

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We′re going to be in Matthew chapter one for the next four weeks as we kick off a series for Advent. And we always celebrate Advent at Broadview or we have for as long as I can remember. Or at least since I′ve been pastoring for as long as I can remember. I don′t know if I did the first couple of years, but it′s really become a tradition for me. And this year the way that I want us to explore the themes of Advent is through the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew chapter 1.

I came across this idea when we preached in the book of Genesis. And the life of Tamar in Genesis chapter 38. I don′t know if you guys remember Tamar. It was one of those chapters that not a lot of people deal with when it comes to preaching because it′s so just kind of jarring. You′ve got Judah, who is God′s chosen man, to establish the lineage of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. And God chose Judah, a man who, when he left home, married a Canaanite woman, which he wasn′t supposed to do.

And not only did he marry that Canaanite woman, he had a bunch of Canaanite kids. And those Canaanite kids were so evil that God killed the first two because of their actions, being evil in the eyes of the Lord. And when they died they were married to a woman named Tamar. Tamar married the first one, he was evil in the eyes of the Lord, so God killed him. Judah married Tamar off to the secondborn. He was evil in the eyes of the Lord, and so God killed him too. And so when the second one was born, he had one son left and he said, Tamar, let′s wait on it.

And so he sent Tamar away to his to her dad′s house, which was kind of a cowardly act. Because Judah was legally and spiritually responsible for her welfare. And so she is a single w a widowed woman who is promised to another, but that promise was just kind of an empty promise because Judah never had any intentions on letting Tamar marry his third son. She thought that maybe she he thought maybe she was the reason why his sons kept dying. And so she takes matters into her own hands. Desperate times call for desperate measures, as they say.

And so she knew that Judah was coming through town and on his way through town, she dressed up like a prostitute, put herself right on the side of the road. And knowing that Judah had already grieved the death of his wife, he was on the market, single man, maybe he would succumb to her temptations, and he did. And as pledge he said I'll give you a goat, but since I don't have a goat right now, I'll give you some other items that make good on the promise. And so he gave her the equivalent of like a driver's license or passport, credit card information, something that would have uniquely identified him for who he was.

And has sex with Tamar and goes about his day, thinks nothing of it, and a couple of weeks later Tamar got pregnant. Which is what happens when you do that kind of thing. And she was honest about how it happened. She told everybody I was playing the harlot, you know, side of the road, harlot playing, you know, these things happen. And everybody's like, oh my goodness, and chatter, chatter, chatter, word got back to Judah, and Judah is technically still like over Tamar because she was part of his patriarchy, if you want to use that language.

And so he was going to execute the judgment, and he said she needs to be burned at the stake. And so as she's being marched to the stake to be burned, she makes a final appeal for her life and says, I just want to identify the other man on the other side of this equation. And Judah agrees. And so she sends Judah his driver's license, passport, credit card information. It's like you're the man. And Judah experiences genuine conviction from the Lord, admits his guilt, says that I am more guilty than she is.

And genuinely repents before the Lord because not only does he take ownership in that moment, he goes back home to his dad's house, takes responsibility later on in the book of Genesis through the life of Joseph. And ultimately becomes the one through whom God establishes a royal line that kind of gets its historical fulfillment in a man named David, King David. And he's in Jesus' genealogy. But it's not just David who shows up in genealogy, it's not just Judah who shows up in the genealogy. It's also Tamar, the fake prostitute, who shows up in the genealogy as well.

So if you're taking notes, Jesus is the reason for all of that. He's the reason for the season, he's the reason for these covenants, he's the reason for everything that the Bible points to in terms of God's redemptive plan for humanity. And we see something kind of uniquely susp specific about God's reasoning through Jesus in his genealogy in Matthew chapter one. So thumb on Matthew 1 and then another thumb in Joshua 2 because the next woman we're going to look at her story is in Joshua 2. So Matthew 1, an account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham fathered Isaac fathered Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers, the guy we're just talking about. And then Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by who? By Tamar. Perez fathered Hezron fathered Aram fathered Amminadab fathered Nahshon fathered Salmon. Salmon fathered Boaz by Hu? By Rahab, and then Boaz fathered Obed by Hu. By Ruth. And Obed

father Jesse, and Jesse fathered king David, and then king David fathered Solomon, by who Uriah's wife doesn't even use her name, that's Bathsheba. And on and on it goes. And those four women plus Mary are the five women who are mentioned in Jesus' genealogy, a genealogy that that begins with two epic patriarchs or men that were that were strategically used in the redemptive plan of God, Abraham and king David.

Two mediators of two very important covenants. You've got the Abrahamic covenant that I'm going to bless you and through you I'm going to give you many descendants and that offspring is going to bless the nations. And the historical fulfillment of that. You have the twelve tribes of Israel being established. But within that promise, you have an additional promise to a royal line that gets established by Judah, but later by David. And God promises David a covenant, in addition to the Abrahamic covenant, that of your kingdom there will be no end.

And historically that's not true, right? The reign of David ended. I suppose when Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian invasion came and they sacked the city of Jerusalem, they destroyed the temple, but what is fulfilled in that Davidic covenant is a kingdom that never ends, a kingdom on which Jesus rules as king, even now, seated at the right hand of God, and one day when he comes again. Swallows up this world with the new heavens and new earth that is to come, we will reign with him, and that reign will be forevermore.

So that's the resume. That's why they do genealogies in the Bible. Genealogies, we kind of skip over them in our devotional times. It's easy to anyway. But in the ancient world, there's like the resume. This is the CV, the why the person under question matters. And in this case Jesus matters because he's the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic covenant. But equally as important as those two giant men of God are these four women, who also, by the way, were not often mentioned in any ancient genealogy. Women didn't have the kind of status in the ancient world as they thankfully have today.

But these four women are mentioned. 'Ca tells you a little bit about God's view of women and the elevation of those those types of contributions that women make. But it also shows you something about the covenant of God and something about this kingdom that is unique, and that is that this kingdom is offered to even the outcasts and the alienated, the ostracized, and the ones who've experienced injustice like Tamar or the ones who are no good and you don't let your kids hang out with them like Rahab, or even the great sinners who destroy marriages like Bathsheba, all of these people are used by God in redemptive ways because God's covenant to save is a covenant covenant that is universally offered to anyone who comes.

Whosoever will may come, but it's exclusively enjoyed by those who have eyes to see it. And so if you're taking notes, true hope is available. I think true hope, Advent hope in Jesus. And that hope, in terms of this genealogy, means it's universal in scope. But it's exclusively applied. Not everybody receives it. Not everybody was chosen like God chose these particular

individuals. But God chose those who reacted or acted on the invitation of faith. And so that brings us to Rahab's story. We're going to go from the fake prostitute to a real prostitute in Joshua chapter 2.

And just to give you a little catch-up on the story from Genesis, the Israelites end up being enslaved in Egypt to Pharaoh for hundreds of years. And after 400 or so years, God hears their cry, delivers them from their slavery, raises up a man named Moses. Moses delivers Israel, says, Pharaoh, let my people go. Pharaoh says, no, Moses says, You sure. God sends ten plagues. The tenth plague was a Passover plague that killed the firstborn of every person in Egypt, including Pharaoh's son. He gets so angry he lets him go Changes his mind last minute, and as they are going through the red Sea, God splits the sea for the Israelites and closes the sea on the Egyptian army, and the Israelites are onward to the promised land.

They sin against God, building a golden calf Ascribing worship to the calf that they should have ascribed to God. God punishes them. They wander in the wilderness for 40 plus years. Moses ends up dying, handing the baton over to Joshua, and Joshua leads the Israelites into the promised land. Which is back into the land of Canaan, and Jericho is their first stop. So that's catch that's Bible rewind super fast. But this is where they are, and Joshua is sending spies into Jericho to kind of plot out their attack and measure up their enemy.

So Joshua, son of Nun, secretly sent two men as spies from the Acacia Grove, saying, go and scout the land, especially Jericho And so they left and they came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab, and they stayed there. As we work our way through this story, I'm going to try to give you some attributes of Advent hope, genuine Advent hope anyway. That is in Jesus. And the things that strike me just in the first couple of verse is how the hope comes. The hope in this story is represented by these secretly spent, secretly sent Israelite spies to the house of a very famous prostitute.

And that's how hope that's how hope often comes. When God is going to do something great in the world, certainly when he did something great through the birth of Jesus, he did it in such a way that it shook up the status quo. It came to a virgin, which should kind of shake the status quo of your engagement, right, man? He was she was cons Jesus was conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin Mary. It shook up the status quo and how kings would come. Usually kings came with great power and prestige.

Jesus came as king as a baby born in a manger. He had no place to lay his head hope when it comes to your house will shake up the status quo. It will not always come as you think it might come. Sometimes it will come in packaging that is two spies from an enemy force. I don't really understand how that could be for my good, but sometimes God sends messengers that don't always look like they're for your good on the surface. But if you look beneath the service a little bit longer as Rahab will, you see that there is something from the Lord in there indeed.

And so it comes through spies. To a prostitute shaking up the status quo, and the king gets word of it and sends word to Rahab Give up these guys. So the king of Jericho is told, look, some of the Israelite men have come here tonight to investigate the land. Fact check true. Then the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, probably because she was a very famous prostitute and he knew where to find her, bring out the men who came to you and entered your house. Because they came to investigate the entire land.

Now a couple things stand out about this. Number one, the guy's not lying. The king is accurate in his statement. These are enemies who have come here to exploit our weaknesses. They come to examine how they can take us out. So you need to hand them over. That was true, but it was also true they were going to be agents of her deliverance and agents of hope. And what was required of Rahab in this moment was to reject that spirit of fear that was no doubt within her heart and do something that would allow her to look beneath the surface.

And that's how hope always works. Because hope comes in a shocking package often, it's going to require you and I to reject a fearful spirit that would keep us from examining what's underneath the surface. It was a fearful spirit that led Herod to kill every infant in and Bethlehem because of the word of a king who was coming it's fear that causes a lot of people to reject the hope that is in Jesus because it doesn't look like I think it should look, or it doesn't sound like I thought it would sound.

Rahab had that same fear, but she chose to reject the spirit of fear so that she could receive the fullness of that hope. So she tells the guys, look, I don't know where they are. The woman had taken the two men and hidden them, so she said, yeah, the man did come to me, but I don't know where they were from. Notice this phrase, I don't know. I don't know where they came from. And about nightfall, when the city gate was about to close, the men went out, and I don't know where they're going.

Chase after them quickly, and you can catch up with them. But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them among the stalks of flax that she had arranged on the floor, and so the men pursued them along the road to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as they left to pursue him, the city gate was shut. Now she's a crafty little booger, right? She kind of lies, right? That's a s that's a sin. She lies to the king. King's an authority. You should honor the authorities unless they're asking you to sin.

Yeah, I guess you could make a case on that. I'm not going to spend time doing that this morning. Point is she probably did something she shouldn't have done, but she did it for a reason, and the reason that she did it was to buy herself some time to get answers to the questions she did not know. Right? So I don't know where they're from and I don't know where they're going, but I know there's something about these men that I need to know, and I'm open to it. And that's the other thing about hope.

It's not just going to require you to reject the spirit of fear. It's also going to require you to reason with an open mind. Paul, when he was talking about the gospel, he said it's a stumbling block to Jewish people. It is foolishness to Gentile people who want power and prestige. But for those who are being called, it is the wisdom of God and the strength. Of God. And so hope doesn't always come as you think it might, and it requires you to reject a fearful spirit and reason with an open mind.

So Rahab does that. She's got 'em hidden. She's bought herself some time and before the men fell asleep she goes up on the roof. And she said to them, I know, notice the phrase again, I don't know, but I do know. I don't know where they're from, I don't know where they're going, but one thing I do know, 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 I love that juxtaposition.

I don't know, but I do know. And it's the other thing about hope. When hope comes to visit your house, it will come in a shocking way. It'll shake up the status quo. But hope, whether it's hope in the real truth of God's design or hope in some counterfeit, all hope is secured by something. Hope and hope is silly, right? This is wishful thinking. Hoping against hope is nothing, but you hope against something. Something has to promise that better tomorrow. There has to be some reason or ground why my hope is worth establishing in this thing.

And for Rahab, her hope was in the Lord. She said, I don't know where you're they're going, I don't know where they're from, but I know the Lord is with them. And she's going to give us reasons why she thinks the Lord is with them. But it teaches you that Advent hope is secured by faith. And your hope and your heart, whatever it is, is also secured by faith. That's why there's no such thing as a atheists without faith. Even atheists have faith that the worldview that they've developed for themselves is true.

Different world religions have faith. And they approach their text and they approach their life with those faith commitments. And the Christian assumption about our faith is that Jesus And his life, death, and resurrection is a worthy ground of our hope. As we sang a minute ago, he's the only one worthy. Revelation 5 to open the scrolls, to unroll the plan of God. He's the only one. And so I'm putting my chips. With him and that's what Rahab is doing here. I don't know, but I know one thing. These men are from the Lord, and that faith is securing her hope.

And then she begins to explain why I have that faith. She says in verse 10. We heard, notice that language, sensory, I heard, I saw. We heard how the Lord dried up the water of the red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt. We heard what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings, you completely destroyed across the Jordan. And when 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.

Now we don't know all the details of the God that they worshipped in Canaan, but all of some some kind and all sorts of different worship. But what she's doing is she's pointing to historical facts. That were that were told to her for some somehow, some way she got news about these things. And she goes seeing those things and hearing those things I'm persuaded to believe your God is real. He's the real God of heaven above and on earth below. And she even uses the covenant name of God. It's all caps in your English translations.

It's the word Yahweh. It's the covenant name of God that he gave when making the covenant with Abraham. The Davidic covenant. So she's not just saying God exists in a general sense. No, there's a God who exists and has established relationship with man, and that man that relationsh that covenantal relationship has been established through Yahweh. And the proof of the pudding is in the tasting. And the way I know is because God delivered you from an Egyptian army by splitting the red Sea. He delivered you from this Canaanite army, Sihon.

And Og, when you were trying to be obedient to God and get to the promised land. If you don't, you can look up the details. I can't remember chapter and verse, somewhere in. Numbers in Deuteronomy is two parallel stories. But Israel's trying to be obedient to God, right? They're trying to get into the promised land. They show up at Sihon and Og's house and they're like we need to come through to be obedient to God. And they said, we don't care, we don't like you, and we're going to resist you.

So they tried to fight them, and because they're trying to be obedient to God supernaturally enabled the Israelite army to defeat the much bigger, much better equipped pagan armies of Sihon and Og. And it was evidence God loves these people. God loves this nation of Israel. There's something unique about them that God has chosen them for a purpose. And Rahab is saying, I don't know a lot of things about life, but I know one thing. The God you say you worship has materially, historically manifested himself in such a way I cannot deny he loves you.

And that's how faith always works. True hope in Jesus isn't hope against hope. It's not my mom and dad's faith, and that's what got me. No, there comes a point in your life where you recognize God loves me and the reason I know that God loves me is because he has demonstrated his love towards them. And the them in this case is the nation of Israel. The them in our case as Christian people is who Israel points to, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. God loves me. How do I know?

Because he sent his one and only son into the world. Whoever would believe in him wouldn't perish but have everlasting life. He materially evidenced that love by sending his son to die on a cross for my sin and three days later raising him from the dead, stamping paid in full on my on my sin debt before the Lord and I know that that love is true. So faith is always secured by something and Christian faith is secured by a recognition. That God not only

exists, but He's a God who can be known and loved and received by faith, and that faith has been manifested historically through through the story of Israel and Jesus.

But he doesn't just recog she doesn't just recognize God's love. She also recognizes that as God, he is a God of mercy. She makes an appeal in chapter two verse ten when I'm sorry in verse twelve now please swear to me by the Lord. Notice don't just do it because I ask. Because you believe in God, Yahweh, because of that, by the Lord, would you also show kindness to me and my father's family because I showed kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father, mother, brother, sisters, and all who belong to them and save from death.

Now a couple of two two things interesting. This again is the Hebrew word Yahweh. And this word, translated kindness, is actually the Hebrew word Hesed. And it's Hesed love. That is kind of uniquely applied to God throughout the scriptures. You see it in the life of Abraham. You see it all throughout the Psalms. It's a kind of love that is wrapped up in God's covenant. It's his covenant-keeping love. His hested love, his sometimes translated steadfast love, his loyal love, his loving kindness. The s the Bible I like to read for my kids sometimes is the Jesus Storybook Bible.

And Martin Lloyd-Jones for Hesed Love gives the definition, it is the never stopping, never giving up. Unbreaking, always and forever love. That's the love that God shows his people that he loves. And I want that kindness. Arahep says, I need that kindness. I need a God who won't give up on me when I give up on him. I need a God who sees past my sin and my failures. I need a God who will deliver me like your God delivered you, even though You know, looking at you're not you're not all that great.

But somehow God has demonstrated that kind of love. That's kind of love I want for myself. Would you have mercy on me? Would you have mercy on my family. She recognizes God's love. She makes an appeal for his mercy and then she responds to the invitation. And their invitation is, yeah, we will. We will show you mercy. Notice the language though. We will give our lives for yours. In other words, from here on out. Your life and our life are wrapped up together. If we survive, you survive. But if we don't survive, you won't survive.

We'll give our lives for yours. If you don't report our mission, we will show Hesed, we will show kindness and faithfulness to you when the Lord gives us the land. So genuine faith responds to the invitation. And notice the invitation is conditional. We will give you covenant faithfulness, but you can't report the mission. And you got to wait until God comes through. They're asking you, Rahab, to show faith by what you do, not by what you say. And so she so she responds, so be it. She let them down by a rope.

Through the window, since she lived in a house that was built end of the wall of the city. She said, go to the hill country so that the men pursuing you won't find you. And she said to

them, hide there for three days and till they return, and afterwards go on your way. So she responded to the invitation. She manifested her faith not by what she said, but by what they asked her to do. And genuine faith demands a response. It's one thing to say you believe in Jesus, but if your life demonstrates Otherwise, true faith is shown by how you live, not by what you say.

Faith always has some kind of fruit. And in the case of Rahab, the fruit of her faith was in actually putting these spies down on the ground through her window, and then manifesting itself externally. So you've got to respond to God's offer. Now that response needed a symbol, and the symbol is described in verse 17. The men said to her, we will be free from this oath that you made to us, that you made us swear, unless when we enter the land. Notice that timing. When we enter the land, you tie this scarlet cord to the window through which you let us down.

Bring your father, mother, brothers, all your family, all your father's family into your house. And if 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. And then if you report our mission, we're free from the oath you made us swear. So she said, let it be as you say. And she sent them away, and after they had gone, she tied the scarlet cord to the window.

So her faith was immediate. They said wait, they say evidence your faith by hanging out this scarlet cord. And the cord has to be shown before we enter the building, or before we enter the city, because if you wait until after, you've waited too long. And so as soon as she lets them down, she hangs the scarlet cord out the window. And it's a it's a it's a it's an attribute of genuine hope in the Lord. Genuine hope is not just secured by faith. Genuine hope is also visibly manifested. It is demonstrated or shown or seen, and in this case it's seen through a scarlet cord.

And the word scarlet, the color scarlet is intentional. It's that deep that deep red a lot of you ladies know what scarlet is. They I think they chose scarlet because it's the most similar to blood. And blood for these Israelite spies was significant for them because it was the blood of the Passover lamb that wasn't hung out their window, it was painted on their door frame. They took the blood of the Passover lamb and they spread it on their doorposts so that the angel of death would pass over their houses when the death angel came and visited Egypt.

And so what they're saying, I think, to Rahab is when we were saved and delivered by God, he invited us into an act of faith that demonstrated to the world we're covered by the blood. And we want you to demonstrate your faith that you're delivered by the Lord by being covered by the blood. This scarlet cord is going to represent the blood of the Passover lamb because our God delivers us, not because we deserve it, but because He's gracious and He's revealed if he'll do this then you will be saved.

And she does it immediately. She manifests her faith externally, and the rest of the story kind of tells what happens. The scarlet cord redeems Rahab from their guilt. And notice the language, if they go out and they die, it's their fault and we're innocent. But if they stay in and die, it's our fault. What they're saying in that is that Rahab, we're not saving you because you showed kindness to us. In other words, your actions and your deeds are not what save you in the end. Your salvation is dependent on the cord, the scarlet cord and staying in the house where the scarlet cord is hung.

You are actually guilty. And if you remove yourself from underneath this protective layer of deliverance, your guilt will be punished. But if you remain in the house, then your safety will be our safety. Our lives become your life. Our deliverance will become your deliverance. And so we are redeeming you from your guilt by you associating yourself with this scarlet cord. And that's really the story of the gospel. That Jesus and the blood of Jesus, who is our Passover Lamb, that's what he talked about with the disciples at the Lord's Supper, we call it.

It was the final Passover meal. Before Jesus went to die. He says, you guys know all about the Passover Lamb, right? You know about the blood. You know about the bread. Well, the bread isn't the suffering of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. The bread is my body broken for you. The blood is not just the blood of a lamb. Bulls and goats can't atone for sin. They never could atone for sin. I'm the atonement for sin. This blood is the blood of the new covenant in my blood. Which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

And so if you will hide beneath my atoning sacrifice on your behalf, You can be redeemed, you can be delivered, you can be set free, and not pay the price for the guilt and sin you owe before the Lord. But it doesn't just redeem those who. It doesn't just redeem sinners from their guilt. It redeems everyone. Notice the language: your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, anybody who hides in the house will be. Covered. And that's what she does. She goes, she gets her her her everybody and her family.

And if you read the rest of the story, we don't have time to do that. But they go back when they get on the ground, they go tell Joshua The land is ours. God's given us the land. They're scared to death. Joshua consecrates the people. He plans out the battle. They cross the Jordan in chapter 3. Then in chapter 4, they commemorate it with the twelve stones. Don't have time to get into that. Chapter 5, he gives them the sign of circumcision because they had been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years and a lot of the new generation didn't have the sign of the covenant.

So they've got God's blessing, they've got the covenant signed, and then in chapter six he sends them into Jericho and he says, here's how you're going to take the city. You're going to march around it once a day for six days. You guys remember this growing up in Sunday school, the walls of Jericho Song on the seventh day they walked around it for seven times.

And on the seventh time around the wall they blew the ram's horn. And they shouted. And when they shouted, the walls came tumbling down. Boom boom boom boom.

And they went into the city. You know, it's a funny kid's rhyme, but if you actually read the next verse. They killed all the women and children and all the animals. They don't tell the kids that part, but that's exactly that's exactly what happened. They cleared house. That's why a lot of atheists and skeptical people point to, you say this is a good God? That's not good, killing women and children and oxen. You know what the ox do? That's another ethical dilemma for another day. Represents God's judgment on their sin.

But it represents God's mercy on those hiding beneath the scarlet cord. Look at chapter 6. Verse 22. Joshua said to the men who had scouted the land, go to the prostitute's house and bring the woman out of there, and all who were with her, just as you swore to her. And so the young men who had scouted went in, they brought out Rahab and her father, mother, brothers, and all who belonged to her, and they brought out her whole family and settled them outside the camp of Israel. And so the blood not only redeems sinners from their guilt, the blood redeems everyone, all who hide beneath it, which is so good.

It's not just Rahab, you were chosen because we talk to you. It's the cord. The cord does the saving. The cord, it's the blood that delivers you. It's the mercy of God through the blood that hides you and shields you. And this is not just for you, it's for anyone who would come and receive this invitation of grace. And that's what the Lord Jesus says to us. John 3. 16, God sent his, God loved the world. He so loved the world. That he gave his one and only son. So whosoever, not just certain people, whosoever would believe in him, hide themselves underneath the cord, they wouldn't perish, but they would have everlasting life.

That's the kind of faith. That's the kind of hope that that we really need. That's the kind of hope that people are looking for. Rahab's hope. And it will be manifested externally in some kind of way. This is why the New Testament, we don't have time to get into this. This is why the New Testament, when it talks about Rahab, It talks about her works. James chapter 2 talks about faith without works is dead. And a lot of Protestants don't like that language. We like the justification by faith. By grace through faith, faith alone, the solas of the Reformation.

And don't get me wrong, I'm a sola guy. I'm all about the solas. But the Bible presents a nuanced picture that faith that you are saved by grace through faith alone. But saving faith is never alone. Saving faith always manifests itself through works. And so they use Rahab as the example. In the same way wasn't Rahab the prostitute. Justified by works, and receiving the messenger, sending them out by a different route. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. You can't have one without the other.

Faith is always manifesting itself externally. Hope is always secured by a faith that manifests itself externally. Now it's not that the faith is unimportant because Hebrews, whoever that author was, he or she Hebrews uses the same person to make the different point. He says in Hebrews chapter 11, by faith Rahab the prostitute, welcomed the spies in peace, and didn't perish with those who disbelieved. Anyone who believes in him will not perish. So faith is foundational. You are saved by grace through faith. But my point for us this morning is when it comes to Advent hope.

That faith is meaningless if it's not manifesting itself externally in the way you live. This is why when people ask, how can I be sure I'm saved? I don't say, well, when was your baptism? Or when did you pray a prayer of salvation? There's no prayer of salvation in the Bible. And baptism is an external confession of faith that one does right after conversion. But the best evidence that you have available to you that you are genuinely saved is by looking to the real, visible fruits of faith in your life right now.

And so sometimes I'll ask, well, are you trusting in Jesus for salvation right now? Are you abiding right now? Like if you were to die and go to heaven and God said, why should I let you in? Are you going to look to some track record or some list of works that you've done or are you going to say no it's because my faith is in Jesus. Oh well my faith is in Jesus. So then the next question if your faith is in Jesus in what ways does your life demonstrate that that is true?

And if it is, then why are you so anxious? Why can't you forgive? These these things that the Bible calls us to obedience and left and right are invitations for us to be assured that the Spirit of Christ actually lives within us. It's got to be demonstrated externally. You're not saved by your works, you're saved by grace through faith, but true faith is never alone. And it's hope and only hope that will save us from the judgment. So Rahab is pulled out, and then verse 24, they burn the city and everything in it.

But they put the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the Lord's house. However, 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. And so true hope saves believers. It saves believers from their judgment. Now if you take those four things about hope, shocks is in the way that it comes, it's secured by faith. It's demonstrated by a sign, and it saves us from certain judgment.

All of those things are preeminently true in Rahab's life because they're preeminently true in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ shocked the status quo when he came into the world. He turned the kingdom upside down. He says, this is what real righteousness is. This is where real salvation is found. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one finds the Father but through me. Jesus demonstrated faith. In that he was uniquely chosen by God and all you have to do is look at his life to see the unique love that the Father had for the Son.

You look at his baptism. This is my son in whom I'm well pleased. Listen to him. He's the one who invites us to respond to that love and receive it for ourselves if we would repent of our sin and put our faith in him. He demonstrated through his own life the scarlet cord that Passover pointed to in the Rahab's window cord pointed to and the blood of bulls and goats throughout the Old Testament, all of that's pointing to Jesus. You can look in the book of Hebrews, chapter 9, as an explanation of that.

The blood of bulls and goats doesn't atone for sin. It's the blood of Jesus Christ which takes away our sin. And Jesus Christ is coming again. And when he comes, he will come in judgment. He will come and he will execute judgment and God's wrath on all of us who deserve it, which means all of us, because we're all deserving of the wrath of God. And the only way we can escape his wrath is to be United to the one who is the recipient of his love. And that's not us, it's Jesus.

And so when you repent of your sin and you put your faith in Jesus, you hide your life in the life of his beloved. And when he looks at you, he doesn't see your sin and your guilt and all of your past mistakes. He sees the son that he loves. And by grace and mercy, he covers all of that away. And he says, I'll save you. I'll show you mercy. Not because of you, but because of him. And if you've never if you've never received that kind of grace in your life in that kind of way, if you've been persuaded to think it's about what I do or how well I live or what whatever people present as the way to get to God.

That's not the biblical answer. The biblical answer is Jesus. He is our Advent hope. And if He is not your hope this morning, there's an invitation from the Holy Spirit to receive Him into your life by faith, just like Rahab did. And there's an invitation for those of you who say you've received him by faith to visibly, externally manifest that faith in the way we live this Advent season. And so as Cheryl leads us through this time of response, I want to invite you to ask the Holy Spirit, what does repentance look like for me today?

What does it look like for me to agree with God about what needs to be done? And as we respond, I invite you to do that. If you want to pray with anyone or someone to pray with you, I'd be happy to pray with you but let's let's respond to the Lord as he leads during this time of response. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this such a powerful story of Rahab and your great love for sinners. It's humbling to realize that there's not a lot of difference between us and Rahab.

We don't prostitute our body for a prophet, but we have rejected your design in countless other ways. We have we have spit in your face, we have run our own direction, we have wanted to control our own lives. And if we're honest, it's resulted in a big mess depression and brokenness all around us. And so we thank you that you're a God abounding in steadfast love. That even when we don't deserve it, you demonstrate love towards us and you did it

preeminently through the sending of the Lord Jesus Christ to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

And so we receive that gift of grace. We repent of our sins. We put our faith in Jesus. We declare he is worthy because of who he is and what he's done. And we pray that our lives as your children would represent the freedom and the joy and the loving, joyful obedience that naturally flows from a life fully consecrated and surrendered to you. And so would you establish that in us now by your Spirit? As we respond to your word and we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.