

Grasping Your Legacy

“Please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family.”

This sounds like a phrase that could have been uttered by anyone in scripture and honestly anyone in our lives. More often than anything we just want to feel like God is watching out for us and our families. Hoping God keeps your parents, your children, your siblings safe. That’s a basic echo of anyone’s heart. Welcome to week 5 of **What She Said**, the last part of this series where we’re going to be looking at Rahab who made this plea, why she made it, and what we can learn from this for our faith and life.

We will look at **5 cords** for us to grasp and really understand this plea. This plea came from Rahab in Joshua chapter 2.

For context, Israel has wandered through the desert for their 40 year detour. They’ve fought battles. God has done miracles. They’ve made quite a name for themselves as this nomadic force of nature, and the power of the God they follow...or sometimes follow. They’ve just passed their waiting period, they have a new younger leader in Joshua and now God is about to send them into their promised land.

Joshua 2:1 Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. “Go, look over the land,” he said, “especially Jericho.” So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

A house of prostitution would be one of the few places foreigners and strangers would be welcome, and would be able to go without judgment, but still they were being watched.

2 The king of Jericho was told, “Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.” **3** So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.”

Rahab was put into a position where she was now harboring people that were considered enemies of the state. She got a message directly from the king. This wasn’t

like a lowly government employee, this word came directly from the king to her. She makes a surprising choice in what she does next in the circumstances.

Cord #1: She chose the power of God rather than the power of man

4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. **5** At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." **6** (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) **7** So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

She lied to the government officials and sent them on a wild goose chase. She could have been rewarded for turning them in. She could have been punished for hiding them. But something made her feel like it was worth it to take this bold risk.

8 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof **9** and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. **10** We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. **11** When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

Rahab wasn't an Israelite woman. She wasn't of the chosen nation. She hadn't lived a holy life. She had a comfortable enough place in the city and government that people knew to watch her establishment and to send messengers to her. She had an established place in this world, but she recognized that her place in this world didn't stand in light of who this God was. She knew that if this God was going to be in their presence that she wanted to be on His side of this story. That's not selfish. That's not cowardly. That's wise. **She knew what God establishes is more enduring than what we establish**

Cord #2: She trusted God's people to be godly

12 “Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign **13** that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death.”

14 “Our lives for your lives!” the men assured her. “If you don’t tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land.”

Rahab didn’t offer an elaborate prayer or worship service. She didn’t sacrifice anything at an altar. **She trusted that those who represented God, would act on God’s behalf.** She trusted that those who claimed to know God would be Godly. She wanted her family safe. She wanted to be on the winning side of what she saw coming. She wanted an assurance and she asked these men to be a genuine representation of what she thought their God was.

That’s a hard thing to do these days. Everyone that is labeled a christian or says that they believe in God doesn’t mean they are trustworthy. When people say they believe in God or follow Jesus now can mean so many different things. I’ve been hurt and damaged because I’ve trusted that just because someone serves in a ministry or claims to be a believer means they actually live that out. Imagine what would happen if Rahab was in this situation today and she trusted somebody to speak on behalf of God because they had “Christian” listed on Facebook. If she believed someone’s promise just because they had a cross and praying hands on Instagram. So often when people encounter believers now, you don’t know what you’re going to get, and the outcome of that is what we see in Romans 2:24

Romans 2:24 As it is written: “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

We should be living in such a way that when unbelievers interact with us, that they know they are going to be treated with the love of God, with the integrity of God, with the compassion and grace of God. Not just with someone who labels themselves with God’s name in vain. If you’re not living this way, you may need to look within to see what may be the reason you are blaspheming the name of God to those around you. Your actions either glorify or are blaspheming; there is no between.

Cord #3: She put her faith in action while she waited

Joshua 2:15 So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. **16** She said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."

17 Now the men had said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us **18** unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. **19** If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them. **20** But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

21 "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say."

So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

Rahab tied the scarlet cord in her window then. She didn't wait until she thought they were coming back. She didn't wait until she saw them marching or making noise. She tied that cord out her window and let it stay there. You don't think she got questions about that? We already know government officials were watching her house. We already knew the king was aware of her. All of sudden this woman just starts dangling a scarlet cord out the window? And what about her family? All of a sudden your daughter who has a dishonorable profession says you have to come stay in her house. Your black sheep sister says "Trust me" and you are supposed to just move in. She had enough faith not only to trust God on her behalf, but to be able to bring her family into the mix as well.

We notice the first 3 cords were all the decisions Rahab had made, but as we move into the next 2 cords, we see these are the results of those actions that we can all apply in our lives.

As we jump over to Joshua 6 when Israel shows back up to follow through with their actions and promise, we see our next cord to grasp

Cord #4: Faith and actions make an eternal impact.

Joshua 6:15 On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. 16 The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! 17 The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent.

She wasn't an afterthought. They didn't destroy the city and then look for her in the rubble. They didn't wait until after the battle to consider her. Her protection was literally part of Joshua's battle cry. When God tells us we won't be forgotten, we can trust that.

20 When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. 21 They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

22 Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her."

23 So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.

Rahab. Her father, brother, sisters, and all the rest of her people were brought out safely and put up in a place of protection. They weren't prisoners or bargaining chips. She didn't live a life of a social outsider or was abandoned when Israel fought their next battle either.

24 Then they burned the whole 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. 25 But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

At the time the book of Joshua was written and done, Rahab was still living among Israel. She became part of the family. She's not just who she was before the chaos, her faith literally changed the course of her life. She didn't have the education, credentials, or years of righteous living. She saw a moment to draw near to God and she took it.

She knew that who God is was more important than who she was

Her faith may have been a single small series of actions, but it was lasting and impactful.

Hebrews 11 is the chapter of scripture that is referred to as the “Hall of Faith” where the author of Hebrews highlights some of the people in scripture who’s powerful faith shifted the whole world. This chapter lists

Noah

Abraham

Jacob

Joseph

Moses

Gideon

Barak

Samson

David

Samuel

And Rahab. Rahab’s single act of faith in action landed her in the all time hall of faith.

What’s crazy is Joshua isn’t in this list. In the story of Jericho, Rahab’s faith was more memorable than Joshua’s. Joshua had seen God move hundreds of times. He was faithful for sure, but he KNEW what God could do. Rahab exercised faith without actually seeing what God had done in person.

It’s as Jesus said:

John 20:29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Rahab reminds us that it’s not about where we came from or our track record

Cord #5: A single step of faith is an accomplishment in itself

Rahab made it into the hall of faith, but as we bring this all together, Rahab had a bigger legacy than simply that one act of faith. Remember when we started this series we started with Ruth and her great faith? Ruth met a man that was as kind and faithful as she was. She met a man named Boaz, and through their family eventually came King David, and then eventually Jesus. That Ruth and Boaz had a hand in paving the way for the messiah and the salvation of mankind. That’s a powerful legacy right?

Guess who Boaz’s mother is?

Rahab.

Matthew 1:5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David.

Rahab went on to get married, and not only give birth to and raise one of the kindest and most faithful men in scripture, but to have a son that would be in the lineage of the messiah. How many of you know raising a child that grows up to be a great adult is a fantastic legacy all on its own?

Rahab's act of faith not only helped secure a battle for Israel, but the victory for our salvation.

Invitation:

Are there areas in your life that you are clinging to that you know would be in opposition to what God is doing?

Are you as concerned for the wellbeing of your family and loved ones as you are for yourself?

Are you willing to trust God if it means everyone else around you ignores him?

Are you too bound up in who you've been to see who you can be?