

Joshua
Scandalous Grace & Saving Faith
Joshua 2

God's grace has been described as scandalous.

Romans 4:5. *To the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.*

Romans 3:31 When the ungodly place their personal trust in Jesus, they are not merely forgiven of all their sins; they are considered perfect doers of God's law! How is that possible?

When people place faith in Jesus Christ, a shocking transaction takes place. They are placed *in Christ*. Christ's life, death, and resurrection are applied to the ungodly person's record in heaven, and, from that day forward, the believer, now declared a saint in God's family, enters a life-long journey of becoming more personally righteous by the power of God's Spirit at work in him/her.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus makes it possible for God to remain just and, at the same time, justify a sinner who places his/her trust in his Son.

That is the scandal of God's grace, and one of the most compelling accounts of this is found in **Joshua 2**.

THE SETTING: JOSHUA 2:1

Like Moses, Joshua sends out spies to surveil the land, but unlike Moses, he sends them out *secretly*, probably to avoid resurfacing fear in the people because of how badly things went with the previous spies in **Numbers 13-14**. Also, he only sends out two, instead of 12.

Joshua sends the spies from Shittim, Israel's final encampment before crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land. It was located on the NE end of the Dead Sea, straight across from Jericho.

Several important events took place here, the first of which was a disaster. At Shittim, the Israelites fell into the idolatrous and immoral practices of Baal-peor. The men of Israel allowed themselves to be enticed by Moabite and Midianite women into the sexual sins of Baal fertility rites, even next to the Tabernacle (**Numbers 25:1-9**). Thousands were struck with a plague and died.

It was also there, in Shittim, that final preparations were made to enter Canaan:

- A census was taken of all men (20 years & up) for military purposes and eventual settlement allotments (**Numbers 26**).
- Joshua was publicly announced as Moses' successor (**Numbers 27:12-23**).
- Reuben, Gad, and part of the tribe of Manasseh received their land allotment East of the Jordan, after promising to fight with their brothers to secure the land West of the Jordan (**Numbers 32**).
- Moses delivered his final address to the people (**Deuteronomy 31ff**).
- Joshua sent out spies to Jericho (**Joshua 2**).

When the spies surveilled Jericho, they lodged with Rahab the Prostitute.

THE ACCOUNT: JOSHUA 2:2-24

THE TAKE-AWAYS

1. **God's Scandalous Grace - Romans 5:20-21** *Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Leviticus 18; Deuteronomy 18 - God lists the gross evil of the Canaanites in detail. Yet, where Canaanite sin abounds, God's grace super-abounds, and Rahab found that grace, because she turned to the true and living God and believed

Rahab's faith is so remarkable, it became an object lesson for the ages of what saving faith looks like.

2. Rahab's Saving Faith - James 2:25-26 *And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*

vv. 17-18 *"Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. I will show you my faith by my works."*

Saving faith is personal trust expressed in tangible acts of obedience. The obedience itself has no saving merit, whatsoever. We are saved by grace through faith apart from any good works on our part (**Ephesians 2:8-9**).

Romans 10:9 – *If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your hearts that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

3. Rahab's Shocking Legacy – Hebrews 11:31; Matthew 1:3-6

Hebrews 11:31 *By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.*

Matthew 1 Rahab, the Canaanite whore, is the great, great, great, great...grandmother of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, along with another Canaanite woman named, Tamar, whose son, Perez, came by way of an incestuous union with Judah, a Moabite woman named Ruth, whose people were condemned enemies of Israel, and Bathsheba, with whom David committed adultery and then committed murder.

God's scandalous grace turns our mess in a message of hope for any sinner.

THE APPLICATION:

(2 Great Misconceptions)

1. I'm too bad. I'm beyond saving.

God is always ready to show mercy and grace to anyone, no matter how lost, who turns to him and believes. (**John 1:12; 3:16; Romans 4:5; 2 Peter 3:9**)

2. I'm good enough, better than most Christians that I know. I'll take my chances that I've lived a good enough life to get into heaven.

Compared to God, you and I are much more like Rahab than we are like God. God requires nothing less than perfect righteousness for anyone to have the right to be called one of his children. (**Romans 3:23**)

The gift God offers you in the Gospel of Christ is full pardon of all your sins and Jesus' own righteousness credited to you as the basis for your acceptance into heaven, IF you believe and receive him as your Savior. (**Romans 6:23**)