

On Mission: Empowered for Outreach

“Embracing Hospitality: Welcoming Others”

Joshua 2:1-24

Mission: “To serve as a beacon of God’s love, striving to be the hands and feet of Jesus, shining His light for all to see.”

Introduction: In the ancient city of Jericho, amidst its towering walls and impending destruction, a story of courage, compassion, and divine intervention unfolds. Rahab’s unwavering faith and selfless actions serve as a timeless reminder of God’s providence and the transformative power of hospitality. Her story foreshadows the theme of redemption and inclusion that resonates throughout the New Testament.

I. Setting the Stage (Joshua 2:1)

A. Description of Jericho: A fortified city

- i. *Historical context:* Jericho, though relatively small by modern standards, was a crucial stronghold in Canaan during this period. Its fortified walls and strategic location made it a formidable obstacle for any invading force.

B. Introduction to Rahab and the Israelite spies

- i. *Rahab:* A woman living within the walls of Jericho, Rahab’s occupation and social status were secondary to her pivotal role in the events that unfold. Despite being an outsider to the Israelite community, her actions demonstrate courage and faithfulness.
- ii. *The Israelite spies:* Sent by Joshua to scout Jericho, these spies were tasked with gathering intelligence on the city’s defenses. Their mission reflects the strategic approach required in fulfilling God’s promises and conquering the Promised Land

II. Rahab’s Act of Hospitality (Joshua 2:2-7)

- A. Rahab’s courage to hide the spies on her roof in defiance of the king’s orders.

- B. Rahab’s dialogue with the spies reveals her faith and understanding of God’s power.
- C. Ethical Complexities: Rahab’s Decision and the Law
 - i. Rahab’s actions demonstrate an alignment with the principle of genuine faith manifesting through works of righteousness.
 - ii. Jesus’ teachings on the primacy of love and compassion over strict adherence to legalistic interpretations of the law, as seen in Matthew 12:11-12.

III. The Promise of Protection (Joshua 2:8-14)

- A. Rahab’s plea for mercy and protection for her family
 - i. Her plea reflects a selfless concern for the well-being of her loved ones, showing her willingness to sacrifice for their sake.
- B. The spies’ promise to spare Rahab and her household.
 - i. This promise underscores the significance of Rahab’s faith and her act of hospitality, as well as the divine mercy extended to those who demonstrate trust in God.
- C. The symbolism of the scarlet cord as a sign of salvation
 - i. This scarlet cord serves as a tangible sign of Rahab’s faith and obedience, marking her home for protection and salvation amidst the destruction that is to come.
 - ii. The scarlet cord also foreshadows the blood of Jesus Christ, which brings salvation and redemption to all who believe, highlighting the spiritual significance of Rahab’s actions.

IV. Rahab’s Faithfulness Rewarded (Joshua 2:15-24)

- A. Rahab’s assistance to the spies in escaping Jericho
 - i. Her actions not only ensure the safety of the spies but also contribute to the fulfillment of God’s plan for the conquest of Canaan.
- B. The spies’ report to Joshua and the Israelites
 - i. Upon returning to Joshua, the spies deliver their report, detailing Jericho’s vulnerabilities and Rahab’s faithful assistance.
 - ii. The people feared and recognized God through the people of Israel.