

Unlikely Family Tree / [Matthew 1](#), [Joshua 2](#)

1st visited Hampton Roads 7 yrs. before moved here to spend a week with my college roommate who lived off the Last exit off I64 before going in to the Hampton Roads bridge tunnel. I was 20 driving my chevy Chevette. squeamish ca. tunnel. didn't sound safe. later in week, able enter because friend took me thru.

What messaging ca. becoming part of God's church do people sense as walk in among us here?

Anything contribute to sense of dread, foreboding, perhaps not safe known more 4 what against than for?

message beginning nt. need help. God likes process. made to love puzzles. Love 2 explore & discover.

think we want bulleted steps. How to have less stress this Christmas? How make sure right/ God?

Jaxon, sitting at table. Get milk. My do it. Wanted to put lid on his cup and lid on gallon of milk.

• God built us 2 love stories. Trace path to God's welcome. Tamar. Rahab. Bathsheba. Mary.

grand epic reveals God's mercy. Beginning of 2nd great movement. all part of big story.

[Mat. 1:1-6](#) The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by **Tamar**, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, 4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5and Salmon the father of Boaz by **Rahab**, and Boaz the father of Obed by **Ruth**, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the **wife of Uriah**.

• Here list stands at 1st of NT. Announcing something important.

• Non-Israelites. Women. Suspected of sexual sin. expansive

But God is God. We don't set the terms.

How can we trace the path to God's welcome?

- Last week Judah & Tamar. [Genesis 38](#).

- Now Joshua, 1st book after books of Moses. Moses died. Joshua new leader. 1st ch. Charge 3rd chapter continues taking promised land. Ch. 2 ca. Rahab unnecessary? Here 4 important reason.

- God welcomes all kinds people 2 himself. Message need now extreme polarization & division, people rather marry person of different religion than different politics. sign at beginning NT & another near end. [Rev. 7:9](#) What sense give us?

[Joshua 2:1-7](#) (ESV) And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. 2 And it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." 3 Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." 4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. 5 And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." 6 But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. 7 So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

- Josh sent 2 secretly. Learned lesson from 40 yrs before.

Joshua learned from his experience with Moses and his partner Caleb to send a smaller group that was more controlled that he could trust. Furthermore, the atmosphere was clearly more tense. It would have been far more difficult if not impossible for a larger group of spies to enter Jericho undetected. In fact, not even two could do so. It was impossible to disguise such a nomadic group of hundreds of thousands of people in the desert. So the people of Jericho, or likely all the people of Canaan were on notice and so they were on guard.

- View land, focus on Jericho.

So Joshua sends the two spies to view the land but especially Jericho. This is the first act recorded for us following Joshua's commissioning recorded in chapter 1. Curiously, the spies go to the house of a prostitute and lodge there. The text neither confirms nor denies that they went there for sexual purposes. It's not easy for us to grasp the full cultural differences of the

time regarding both prostitution and hospitality. We should not conclude that something more sinister was happening. The scriptures don't shy away from telling us uncomfortable details when that's critical to the story as in the incident with Judah and Tamar we discussed last week (See [Genesis 38](#)).

- **Came to house of prostitute, Rahab, lodged. Bible doesn't flinch telling truth about main characters.**

- **Stealth failed. Spotted. King asks bring out. Thinks Rahab naïve.**

Their entrance was not undetected and the king of Jericho's informants let him know that men had come that very evening to search out their land and they knew they had come to Rahab. So the king sent to Rahab to give the men up. He presumes she does not know why they have come, so he informs her. However, she did know and was cooperating with the Israeli spies and had hidden them. She intentionally misleads the investigators and diverts them to pursue the Israeli spies on the road while all along she has hidden them on her roof. Her ruse worked and they left to search.

- **Misleads. Don't get hung up here. Something happened heart. Not just picks winning team. V. 8-9 how we know this.**

2:8-9 Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof 9 & said to the men, **"I know that the Lord has given you the land,** & that the fear of you has fallen upon us, & that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you.

- **Before sleep. faith conversation. Not just pick winning side.**

Lord given. Genuine fear of Lord. Not just fear bigger opponent

Please note this means she is acting as a traitor to her own people. As Nicolas Cage says in National Treasure, had the revolution failed the founders would have been drawn and quartered.

Something has happened in her heart to cause her change allegiance. She has learned to fear God. When God is at work, then we just join him in the work, we don't have to worry so much. We put ourselves in harms way, but we can have confidence in God.

She has crossed the point of no return. She is on the hook now. She has thrown in her lot with God's people. She is protecting these men. Or rather, God is protecting these men through this woman, this prostitute. It doesn't say how she thought up this plan, but she sends her own people, she sells out her own people, because of her fear of God, which she explains later. She effectively sends military resources in the wrong direction to disguise what she is doing and what they are doing.

Somehow she was tipped off that they were coming. Perhaps they feared that they had been seen. Perhaps they knew that was a possibility. Again the text doesn't say. But this woman is actively working, this prostitute, this foreigner, is actively working, she is actively seeking to assist these foreign spies. But even this is an act of God's grace. This is God's grace and mercy to her and not just to the Israelites. God is demonstrating grace to everyone. To everyone who lived in Jericho, God was extending grace to them, every time they sinned in any way, by not destroying them in the moment. Sin against God is the equivalent is standing before God and smacking him across the mouth saying, I don't recognize your leadership. I will be my own God.

Their ruse didn't work. They tried to enter pretending just to be strangers looking to purchase a night with a prostitute. That was ineffective. Someone knew who they were and why they were there. They were not fooled.

1. Feed Your Faith with Evidence

2:10 For **we have heard** how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, & what you did to the 2 kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon & Og, whom you devoted to destruction.

- **V. 10 heard how Lord dried up Red Sea before u. 40 years before**
- **What u did to 2 kings Amorites beyond Jordan, devoted 2 dest.**

The good news of the mighty works of God in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness, served an evangelistic purpose in Rahab's life but one of fear into the lives of the rest of the inhabitants of the land. Their hearts had melted for fear because of the military nature of the conquest that they feared was coming.

- **Faith comes by hearing & hearing by word of God.**
- **Learn to trust God.**
- **Rahab seems unlikely candidate. Because we think good moral behavior is criteria. It's not. It's faith.**
- **reasons to fear God, trust God. Not feeling she created**

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But we live in a different time and the need of our moment is for a different conquest that people need to hear. We live in a post Christian society where not just a Christian but a protestant sensibility swept through this country and dominated for much of the first 200 years of this countries existence and certainly before that as well in the 200 years or so before the founding of this country.

The news our world needs to hear is not of military conquest but of heart and life transformation amongst the least of these. What people need to hear is how the gospel of Jesus Christ and the love of God's people cares for the least of these and brings transformation to the Rahab's of the world. The flexing of political muscle scares people. But the transformation of those who are hurting and struggling has the power to sneak around the hearts of those most hardened to the cause of Christ. We must focus on the Rahab's of the world as a priority over fighting culture way issues at the political level. Or as the quote I read this morning said,

"“Instead of using our platforms and influence to persuade other people of faith to take a moral stand against secular ethics, what if we focused on embodying Jesus’s Spirit-filled, life-giving ethics beautifully and compellingly?”" (Scott Sauls , Joni Eareckson Tada (Foreword), Scotty Smith (Foreword), From Weakness to Strength)

How can we trace the path to God’s welcome?

2. Dwell on God’s Supremacy

2:11 And as soon as we heard it, our **hearts melted**, & there was no spirit left in any man because of you, **for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above & on the earth beneath.**

• **Hearts melted but led to trust. Only God can do this**

This shows a stunning transformation in Rahab and in the people. When they heard about how God was working on behalf of the Israelites then their hearts melted. She knew their hearts were failing them for fear. All the people began to fear God in a sense, but the rest of them did not mix this fear with faith. The evidence shows that Rahab persevered and her fear of God caused her to run to him for mercy rather than from him in futile rebellion. There's no reason to believe that there wouldn't have been others to whom God would have shown mercy, if they had come to him for mercy. They all feared God, but she was driven to God. She begins to recognize God for who is. it was because of you. Because the Lord your God,

- Dwelling on God's acts builds faith in God's power.
- provokes prayer. Trust in God's mercy.

How can we trace the path to God's welcome? Feed faith/evidence, dwell on God's supremacy.

3. Call on God's Mercy

2:12-13 Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, & give me a sure sign that you will save alive my father & mother, my brothers & sisters, & all who belong to them, & deliver our lives from death."

- Seeking God's mercy. Evidence of faith.

Genuine faith never rests content /being convinced of the reality of God but presses on 2 take refuge in God. Davis

- She & we must not only be convinced of reality of who God is, must escape coming wrath of God.
- Genuine faith not just correct belief but sense of desperate need. runs to take refuge with him.
- trembles before Lord but senses can find mercy/him. Only God could create such faith in a pagan prostitute.
- We tend 2 show strength & power or gentle & approachable. fear of the Lord knows God is both.

How can we trace the path to God's welcome? Feed faith/evidence, dwell on God's supremacy. Call on God's mercy

4. Find Assurance in God's Promises

2:24 And they said 2 Joshua, "Truly the LORD **has given** all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us."

- Spies learned from whole incident to trust God's promise.

• God had promised them the land. But the spies experience provided that they might feel this assurance.

• same need 2 not just know but feel sure God's promises. God understand our needs, but many American believers don't grasp effort needed pursue God in his word. want assurance fast so can get back to pursuing whatever entertains us.

How can we trace the path 2 God's welcome? Feed faith/evidence, dwell on God's supremacy. Call on God's mercy. Find Assurance in God's Promises

5. Adore the Beauty of God's Grace

• Chapter 2 not essential to story.

6:25 But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

• Hid spies. Misled king. Let down by rope. House in wall.

• V. 17 men said we guiltless/respect to oath u made us. Swear

• V. 18 When come into land, tie scarlet cord in this window

• V. 19 if anyone goes out 2 street, blood on own head.

• V. 20 if tell business of ours, we shall be guiltless/respect 2 oath

• V. 21 she said, according to ur words, so be it. tied scarlet cord

• scarlet chord long seen as act of faith in God. no way 2 protect herself. What coming beyond ability 2 face. couldn't guarantee & couldn't accomplish. could only trust.

Both the presence of Rahab and Ruth in the genealogy of Jesus prove the lie that the Bible supported the separation of the races. It does no such things. the Bible's concern for separation always has to do with spiritual and religious influence and is not tied to race. Here resides the eternal witness that God welcomes anyone who comes to him even from the earliest days of the people of Israel who will come to him in faith. These verses reveal this truth from early in the OT pointed to from [Mat. 1:5](#) but are confirmed in [Rev. 7:9](#) after this I looked and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all

tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.

This reveals God's heart from the beginning to the end of history and shows that God has opened the door for people like you and me regardless of our past and certainly regardless of our racial makeup, because that presents no barrier whatsoever in God's economy.

• **please grant us confidence in u. beaten down long time. How can we learn to trust you? same problem. lack of progress hard know what to do. been what world considers loser most of my life**

went see Coach after Elkhorn city game. 40-0. rewarded vulnerability on humiliating me in front of other few days later.

Come to Jesus in faith expressing our need, doesn't humiliate us. He was humiliated for us. humbled himself

[Phil. 2:7-8](#) . . . by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

• **we have not come to God waiting to humiliate us for our weakness. God opposes proud gives grace to humble.**

• **honest praying for help declaration of dependence. We are not self sufficient. Only God is that.**

• **lack of prayer declares independence from God. Failing to pray says, know what I'm going don't want your help. You probably wouldn't listen to me anyway.**

• **But story of Rahab says God stands ready to hear prayers of those who come with repentant heart.**

• **can't dictate terms 2 God. can't say, I want to keep my brand of sin, want that more than u, can't have that.**

• **surrendering to God, repenting of sin, looking deeply into evidence of God's hand at work through word, faith comes by hearing & hearing from the word of God, then our reflection on scripture prompts our robust praying.**

- **What moniker could go by your name. for Rahab it was prostitute. greedy, lustful, selfish, doubting, lazy. Proud. Loser.**
- **Our sin has earned for us destruction as sure as people of Jericho. God had given 100's of years to repent. Rahab's story showed repentance & faith live option**
- **Only God's hand can reveal to us danger we face because of our sin & that we can run 2 him 4 mercy**
- **Does our practice of faith show we trust God or self**
- **Trusting self can present as frustration at human leaders or overly confident in leaders we have.**

Have a friend squeamish ca. entering faith. Looks intimidating. Doesn't sound safe. friend took me thru. As Evan wrote about this week, huge % come to faith through friend. Trace same path of welcome.

The Lord is my salvation

Extra reflection written in preparation but not used in the sermon

[Hebrews 11:31](#) here, "by faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies."

Nearly every time that Rahab's name is mentioned in scripture, her past is mentioned as that of being a prostitute. This does not provide a prescription for how we are to go around labelling one another by the failures of our past. However, it does point to a kind of trophy or marker point to the outrageous grace of God, that no matter our pasts, no matter our failures, the grace of God has reached for me, and is reaching for you. Rahab the prostitute as the great, great grandmother of king David and it was through his line that Jesus the messiah would come. God please grant me that I may speak this word to your people in a way that brings tremendous hope and healing to those grieving and wallowing in their sin. You no longer need to remain wallowing in your past failures as if you could never move beyond them. Rather, they serve as a marker of the glorious grace of God, because he really is that good.

God built us in such a way to love narrative. We are built to become engrossed in the effective retelling of a remarkable moment in history. Some of us think that we don't like history, but that's only when the history is poorly told. We love hearing genuine stories that help us to identify with the people and the circumstances and to get caught up in the drama.

But no story can compare with God's story and how he came to save his people from their sins. It has been obscured, distorted, hated, and ignored but still it remains as the most incredible and glorious of all stories.