

Gospel Meetings s.h.c.- 11 Rahab the Harlot

by Stan Ford

The sermon explores Rahab's faith and God's grace, demonstrating that redemption is available to all, regardless of their past.

Duration: 44:24

Scripture: Exodus 12:5, Joshua 6:20, Joshua 6:25, Matthew 7:24, Romans 15:4

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Gods Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God is speaking, saving, and satisfying in our lives. He highlights the importance of listening and trusting in God's voice. The preacher mentions the story of Joshua and how God spoke to him, encouraging him to be strong and courageous. The sermon also emphasizes God's love and power in delivering us from sin and leading us into a life of fulfillment and purpose.

Transcript

I want to read, if I may please, in the second chapter of the book of Joshua, so you know the story that's on my heart for tonight. Joshua chapter 2, if we may, and we will commence reading in verse 1. Joshua chapter 2, and Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go, view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into a harlot's house named Rahab, and lodged there.

And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to knight of the children of Israel to search out the country. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house, for they be come to search out the country. And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were.

And it came to pass, about the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out. Whither the men went, I want not. Pursue after them quickly, for ye shall overtake them.

But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of plants, which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan, and to the fords. And as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

And behold, they were laid down. She came up unto them upon the roof, and she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egypt.

And what she did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side of Jordan, Sion and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt. Neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you.

For the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and the earth beneath. May the Lord just add his blessing to the reading of his precious word. I need not remind you that not only is the story of Rahab found in the Old Testament.

In the portion that we read in the second chapter of Joshua, but it leaks over into that great portion that we know the New Testament. And both in the Gospel of Matthew, and the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and when the brother of the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus James, writes his letter, he also tells us of Rahab. Now, there are not many people like that, you know.

There are some people who make the leap from the Old Testament into the New, once. Some of them make it twice or three times. But there are not many like her.

And so I have a feeling that the Spirit of God, as he records her story on three occasions in the New Testament, is saying to you and me, I want you to take note of the story of Rahab. Again, I would like to remind you that when her name is mentioned, she is always referred to as Rahab the harlot. I want to say this, if I may, please, that there are some things about the story of Rahab I don't understand.

I am certain that as we read together the second chapter of Joshua, many of you were saying to yourselves, she not only told a lie, a blatant, open lie, but God blessed it. Oh please, please, I have listened to many theologians try and get round it. I can't get round it, I'm not going to try and get round it.

All I'm going to say, if I may please, is simply this, if ever there was a story that will humble our pride, it's that story. If ever there's a story that tells us that salvation is not of works, it's simply of grace, it's that story. If ever there's a story that tells us, whoever we are, whatever we may have done, God hates our action but loves us, this is the story.

Because if God would bless a woman who was a harlot, and a lawyer as well, there's no need for any one of us to go away saying we're past redemption. I've got a God who's arm is stretched out to all men and women, and he says to us, whoever you may be, whatever you may have done, if with repentance in your heart you'll turn to me and ask for mercy, there is salvation with the Lord that he might be feared. Oh friend, if I didn't believe that, I couldn't stand before you tonight.

But because I know it to be Bible truth, because I know it in my own experience and have seen it in the lives of so many, then I want to say again, the vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus of pardon for sin, of pardon for sin. Now the background of the book of Joshua we are familiar with. Moses, the servant of the Lord, is dead.

At a hundred and twenty years old, he climbs Nebo's mount. So he was not physically exhausted, was he? He was not a worn out old man. He could still climb a mountain at a hundred and twenty years.

But the time had come for the children of God to cross that river Jordan and enter the promised land. And God had said, Moses, you may see the promised land, but you won't enter it now. Of course, I always like to remind my heart and you like to remind yours.

I'm not telling you anything. You all know it, that Moses did enter the promised land. Oh, thank God he did.

And I tell you, he entered the promised land without having to cross Jordan, and without having to fight Jericho, and without having the defeat of Ai. He entered the promised land in the company of the one that years before, as a young man of forty, he had chosen. The seventeenth chapter of Matthew tells me that right in the middle of the promised land, on snow-capped Mount Hermon, the Lord climbed with his disciples and was transfigured before their sight.

And there appeared with him Moses and Elijah. So Moses got there, but at this time he was not to enter. There on that depot he languished in death, and God buried him.

Oh, what a funeral that was. God buried him, and Joshua became the general in his stead. Joshua heard the words of God, the little chorus that we sometimes sing, Be thou strong and very courageous, for I have commanded thee, Be not afraid, be not dismayed, thou shalt have victory, For I will be with thee whatever tide, captain and leader, Hallelujah, friend and guide, friend and guide.

Joshua, oh, I say, he was facing this promised land. But he was a wise man. There is one thing about the story of Joshua that always amazes me.

It is this, that while the children of Israel went round for some 38 years in the wilderness, their clothes never wore out. You know, that's good, isn't it? That's good. What a God we've got.

You see, they couldn't pop down to Sears. Oh, I beg your pardon, sister, what was your firm name? That's it. They couldn't pop down there and get some new clothes.

Oh, no, no, no. But God cared for them and God made it so that their clothes didn't wear out. But I want to tell you something.

No need to tell you, you know it. If you were wearing the same suit today as you wore 38 years ago, you'd stand out like a sore thumb, wouldn't you? Oh, it would be worse than that, sister. That's true.

Of course, you was a little bit stouter then as well. You'd have a job to get into it. I only know this.

Joshua, he said, we're going into a promised land. I want to send some spies in there to spy out, to see what's happening. I want to know what's going on.

And two men came forward and they went to spy out the land. But they were still in the same clothes as they'd worn 38 years before. They were out of fashion.

No wonder everyone took notice of them. No wonder everyone knew when they came into the city that they were strangers. And the moment they got through the gates, they looked for somewhere to stay and they saw the house of Rahab.

And into the house they went. But the king of Jericho knew about it. Well, of course he would.

Someone ran and said, hey, there's some queer-looking fellows come in the city. Do you know they're so old-fashioned? I'd better go no further, had I. Better go no further. But he heard they'd gone into the home of Rahab.

And you remember what happened, how he sent soldiers down and Rahab told that deliberate lie. She said they're not here any longer. But they were.

But she'd hid them, and I rather like this, don't you? She'd hid them under the flats which was laid in order. Please, I never want to find excuse for sin. But there's one thing about Rahab.

She could never plead that she was starving, that she'd turn to the profession that she was occupied with because of her condition and because she was starving and hungry. Rahab was a businesswoman. She was a weaver of flats.

That flat from the housetop was laid in order. It was set out in a proper way. She was going to make linen.

She was going to sell it. She was a woman of business. But she still liked her sin.

But she hid these men. And I want to talk a bit about this woman. I'm not offering any excuses for her.

I'm just pointing out to you what sort of woman she was. As wretched as a woman could be. But there was something that she learned.

Now, I don't want just to talk about Rahab, of course. I want to talk about the one who became Rahab's God. Because that's what you came to listen to.

Rahab can't hurt you. And Rahab can't help you. But I've got a God who can help you.

And I want to point out, if I may please tonight, three things in the story of Rahab about God. The first thing I want to say is this. Isn't it wonderful that in the story we hear God speaking? We hear God speaking.

Verse 10 says this, Rahab's words, We have heard. We have heard. God is speaking.

I want to say this to you. Sarah Madden, in 1980, in this day of our Lord, in September, God is still speaking. You would have thought that the last place in the world God would have spoken is in a city like Jericho, to a person like Rahab.

And yet, God spoke. And friend, I want to say that as I look around this whole world of ours, with all its apostasy, with all its apathy, with all its vanity, isn't it wonderful that God's got something to say? I want to say that not only is God speaking in this story, but oh hallelujah, God is saving in this story. He's saving.

Stretching out His hand to meet the need of the vilest offender. God speaks and God saves. And I thank God, God is saving in our death.

But you know what I'm going to say now, don't you? God is not only speaking, and God is not only saving, but oh hallelujah, God is satisfying. And He did it in the day of Rahab, and He's doing it in our death. He's satisfying.

First of all, God speaks. Why, she says, we have heard. But how does God speak? And I'm going to suggest to you that the story tells us God speaks in two ways.

Two glorious ways. First of all, He speaks in love. We have heard, what have you heard? We have heard how God dried up the waters of the Red Sea.

We have heard how He delivered the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. We have learned of His love. That by shed blood, the children of Israel were delivered from the curse of Thaler.

But God not only speaks through love, sir, but you remember this, that the God who speaks through love also speaks through power. For we have heard not only how He dried up the waters of the Red Sea, but we have heard what He did to Sion and Og, whom He utterly destroyed. We have heard about those kings who held up their hands and said to Moses and the children of Israel, you are not going to pass through our land, you are not going to come here.

But we saw that the God that delivers from Egypt takes men and women to the wilderness scene and brings them to the very edge of Jordan and brings them to the very borderland of the promised land and is going to take them on through into that blessed abode. God still speaks with love. And God still speaks with power in our day.

Speaks with love. Do you know of any place where the love of God is spoken for more than the place where by His shed blood He has made deliverance for men and women? I go back to Egypt and I see again the story to which I have made reference on a number of occasions. I see the story of a God who tells the people to go to their flock and to take out a land without spot and without blemish.

And isn't it interesting? Oh, you know it to be true. You have learned it in Sunday school. But isn't it interesting? They were told to take that land out on the tenth day.

But they were told they must not slay the land until the fourteenth day. Oh, God is teaching a lesson, isn't He? God is saying, I want you to take that land. It has got to be without spot and without blemish.

I want you to bring it forth. But I want you to hold that land to the fourteenth day to see if there is any blemish. To make sure that what you chose out of the flock was correct.

Have you never wondered why? If God could bring forth the Lord Jesus, why He didn't bring Him forth as a full grown man? When God in the beginning of time made Adam, and please, I believe God made Adam, He made him a full grown man. Why didn't He make the second Adam a full grown man? Why was he born as a babe? Why did he live as a boy? Tell me why, why? Did this blessed Saviour of ours have to dwell thirty-three and a half years in this scene? I'll tell you why. That men might behold Him and see that He was the sinless spotless Son of God.

It's easy to stand up and say that someone is sinless. It's not so easy to prove it, is it? And the Lord Jesus for thirty-three and a half years moved in this scene. And yet moving in this scene, He proved Himself to be what God claimed Him to be, His beloved Son.

But He proved Himself to be what we need, a sinless spotless Son of God. And then He went to hell, and He laid down His life for us. No man taken it from Him.

He layeth it down in Himself. He had power to lay it down, and He had power to take it again. For this commandment He received of the Father, and Jesus Christ, because of His love to you, He laid down His life.

And oh, blessed be His name. For just as Ray had heard of the love of God in that day that passed, how He dried up the Red Sea, so you and I have heard of that love, haven't we? You want that? Don't you feel thrilled? I know you do. To be able to say this, He loved me and gave Himself for me.

But not only does He speak through love, but praise God, He speaks through power. For the God that delivers us from the penalty of sin, and brings us, as it were, out of our Egypt, is the God who delivers us from the power of sin. Oh, siren and hog, they're going to stop the children of Israel going through that wilderness scene.

They're going to stop them enjoying the presence of God. They're going to stop them entering into the Promised Land. Why, these miserable Israelites.

They were never taught to fight in Egypt. They don't know what it means to hold a sword in their hand. We'll stop them.

You say, Grant, what God did to siren and hog? Is there someone here tonight and you're saying to me, Oh, Mr. Preacher, I would trust Christ. I would take Him as my Savior. But you don't know what I've got to do if I trust the Lord.

I have difficulties so great. I have enemies so strong. Maybe you have.

I wouldn't belittle you at all. I only know this, the greater is He that is for us than he that is against us. I only know this, that siren and hog would have destroyed Moses and the children of Israel.

But they couldn't destroy Moses' God and what God did to the two kings of the Ammonites. Now, I don't want to go into a long Bible exposition of the Ammonites, but you will remember that they were giants. You will remember that they were skilled in all manner of fighting.

If ever there is anyone who speaks to us of the flesh, it's the Ammonites. And if you'll trust Jesus Christ, there's not a power in heaven or earth or hell that can keep you from glory. He'll get you there.

God speaks in love and praise. God, He speaks in power. God speaks, and He's speaking to you tonight.

But God not only speaks, but God says, I see this dear woman who listened to what God had to say and listened to what God had done. And the wonder is this, that she was saved. But you know, the salvation of God can't be expressed in one word, can it? I mean, how could I express the salvation of God in one word? The salvation of God's too big.

Would you notice that the salvation of God to Rahab was seen in three ways? First of all, she had a spiritual salvation, and that's where it stuck. She had a spiritual salvation. This is what she dared to say, verse 11, for the Lord your God, He is God.

Now please, if salvation doesn't put a man in right relationship with the Almighty, it's not salvation. I believe it's important that you shall be, sir, in right relationship with your wife, with your neighbor, with your family. I believe that it's right that you should be in right relationship with your country.

I believe, madam, that you should be in right relationship with those that are around you, with your husband and your family and your neighbors. But you will never be in right relationship with any one of them until you get this matter of being in right relationship with God, until you get that right. I said the other evening, and I want to repeat it, a man is what he is before God and nothing else.

A woman is what she is before God and nothing else. I sometimes express it this way, as you know. I sometimes say that after much reading of the word of God I have done very much thought to what men have made in the way of suggestion.

I have come and came to this conclusion years ago, and I've never had reason to change my mind. I have come to this conclusion that the heart of the world problem is the problem of the heart. May I repeat? The heart of the world problem is the problem of the heart.

And until we get this matter of the heart problem put right, we'll never get this matter of the world problem put right. That's where it starts. And isn't it wonderful that the first thing we're told about Rahab is that she said, the Lord, He is God.

The Lord, your Lord, is God. Friends, have you got the matter of relationship with God put right? The book of Proverbs puts it this way, it says in the most wonderful of words, this is what it says, a woman that feareth the Lord, a woman that feareth the Lord, shall be praised. And Rahab came to fear the Lord.

When you think of what God has done in the gift of His Son, when you think of Calvary, oh friend, is there anything that'll hold you back from getting right with God? The way is open. You're invited. Would you notice she was not only saved spiritually, but she was saved morally.

Now she is always called Rahab the harlot. But I love those words in the sixth chapter of Joshua, don't you? She's no longer a young woman. But I love those words in the sixth chapter of Joshua.

And this is what the twenty-fifth verse says, and she dwelt in Israel even unto this day. Here was a woman that was received. Now please, please, I don't want to go off into a long theological discourse, I just want to remind you of your Sunday school lesson.

You will remember that as a person who was not an Israelite, she was under the law of Moses, not permitted to come into the Israel of God for the fifth generation. She couldn't be recognized in Israel. Her children couldn't be recognized in Israel.

Her children's children couldn't be recognized in Israel. Her children's children's children couldn't be recognized in Israel. Her children's children's children's children's children's children's children's children couldn't be recognized in Israel.

Five generations had to pass before any of her family could be received into Israel. That's the law of Moses. Isn't it grand God's bigger than the law of Moses? Not only was she received into Israel, but in the sixth chapter, she dwelt in Israel until this day.

Oh my friend, I've got a God who will save you spiritually, and when He saves you spiritually, He'll save you morally. And if He doesn't do that, I wonder whether He'll ever save you spiritually. Would you notice something more? She was not only the recipient of moral salvation, she was not only the recipient of spiritual salvation, but hallelujah, she became the recipient of physical salvation.

I'm not going to talk tonight about hanging out with Scarlet Thread. No, I'm not going to talk about it. I only know this.

When she believed in God, and when she was morally saved, the walls of Jericho tumbled down, but her house was still standing. Oh, that's the sort of hurricane to have. That's the sort of earthquake.

I only know this, that praise God, when the judgment of God came on the city of Jericho, she was delivered. And one day, the judgment of God is going to fall on this sea. How will you fare? Do you know, my friend, there were a few old texts that, when I was a young man, it seemed to me that every preacher preached from.

And I never hear them today. I don't often preach from them myself. I do sometimes, but not often.

But when I was a young fellow first converted, it seemed to me almost every other Sunday a brother would stand up and give out his text, How shall most men in the dwellings of Jordan work? And, oh, he'd give it to them. And then the next week they'd stand up, you know, and they'd look around and they'd cry, Oh, man of God, there's death in the pot! It'd make you sit up. When was the last time you heard those texts preached from? I want to tell you this.

They're still real. How will you fare in the dwellings of Jordan? I want to say this. Oh, man of God, there is death in the pot.

Yet, praise the Lord if you know Jesus Christ. If you've trusted Him. If you've listened to the love and power of God as expressed at Calvary, and you've taken Him as your Savior, and you've sought indeed to allow the Spirit of God to change your morality, you'll have a salvation that's so real that it'll be a physical salvation.

Because one day, the body of every believer who's passed on is going to be raised. And, sir, don't you forget it's going to be this body. You know, I get lots of folk come to me and they say, Mr. Ford, what body is it we're going to have in the Resurrection? What body are we going to have? Well, I'll tell you what body we're going to have.

And if you don't agree with me, you'll be wrong. Now, here we are. Here we are.

I'll tell you what body we're going to have. It's going to be this body. Changed! But please, it doesn't say He will change our body.

It says He will change our body. And we may go back to the dust, but the God who made man from the dust from the beginning can make it again. And He's going to take this body, and I don't care if it's gone back to the dust.

He's going to make a new body. Now please, I'll tell you why I say this. If you don't believe that, you'll be wrong.

Because this is fundamental. If you don't believe that, you know what's happening. The devil's going to make a new body.

The devil said to Jesus Christ, You defeated me concerning the soul and the spirit of a man, and I defeated you concerning his body. I made you make a new one all over again. But hallelujah, the devil defeated him.

Completely defeated him. He hasn't got one victory. One day God's going to raise those bodies to the sea, or wherever they are.

And if they've gone back to the dust, having passed through the fire, He'll raise them again. It'll be this body. Brethren, sisters, God not only speaks, and God not only says, but don't forget God's satisfied.

He's satisfied. It just makes you feel you can cry hallelujah. You see, he gave to Rahab a new home.

I mean, that's the first thing he gave, wasn't it? A new home. Now, I can't prove this to you, but if you've got any Jewish friends, you ask them. And they will tell you that the Jewish faith teaches that Rahab married one of the spies.

Now, I know who she married. She married a man named Mr. Sorma. The Bible says so.

Tells me it may. But it doesn't tell me he was one of the spies. But the Jewish faith tells us it's one of the spies.

The man she married was a man who knew all about her. Knew what she was. Rahab the harlot.

But one day he said to her, will you marry me? Oh, yes please, he said, yes please. She was given a new home. And that's what Jesus always does.

He blocks out our sin, never to remember it anymore, and hallelujah, he gives us a new home. She was not only given a new home, but hallelujah, she was given a new happiness. New happiness.

Any of you grandparents here, you know this, don't you? That you could whip out those photographs quicker than anyone in the world, can't you? You know, that boasting pocket you've got, rah, out in the country. And sure enough, I don't know really whether there's a greater joy that comes to a grandfather and a grandmother than to have their grandchildren. I can talk about my grandchildren, you know, till, well I can.

I can. She was given a new home. She was given a new happiness.

For she married Solomon. You know what I'm going to say, don't you? You know what I'm going to say. That one day into the home of Rahab and Solomon was born a little boy.

You know who he was. Isn't it interesting that Ruth had two mother-in-laws. You know who the second mother-in-law of Ruth was, don't you? It was Rahab the harlot.

Because Rahab and Solomon had a son and his name was, what was his name? Boaz. His name was Boaz. And one day, Boaz married Ruth.

And one day into the home of Boaz and Ruth was born a little boy. And they called his name, pardon? That's it. We got sisters.

We got. I can hear you now then. I can't hear you when you whisper.

His name was Obed. Did I say a new happiness? I'd like to see no Rahab, wouldn't you? I wonder if they had prams in those days. She wasn't ashamed.

This was her grandson. Listen. If she hadn't have met the Lord, she'd have never married Solomon.

Never had Obed. Great grandson, that would have been, wouldn't it? I'm getting muddled up today. One day into the home of Obed there was born a little boy and they called his name, Jesse.

Jesse. See where we're getting, huh? One day into the home of Jesse there was born a little boy and they called his name, David. That's better.

You know, you're speaking with a little more confidence now. They called his name David. And one day there was born into the home of David, great David's greater son.

And they called his name, Jesus. And when Matthew takes us back through Joseph in the history of the Christ, he goes right back to Rahab. A happiness! Oh, listen, let me tell you something.

Let me tell you something. My son has never done it. My daughter has never done it.

I've longed that they would. But if one day my son was to come into me and say, Dad, we're going to the mission field. If one day my daughter was to come in and say, Dad, we're going to the mission field.

I die a happy man. I could not think that any honor could be greater than this. A son or a daughter would give themselves to the mission field.

I don't know how to express it. A greater honor? Of course, she didn't know it. But she knows it now.

She knows it now. That of her seed, of her, there came forth after the manner of man, the Christ of God. What an honor! What a satisfaction! Nothing in the world could satisfy anyone like that.

Sir and Madam, if you'll trust Christ in me, who knows what God will do with you and through you? Who knows what God will do with your family? Maybe one day I'll come up to you and slip the arm under your shoulder and say, Hey, I saw your son over in Kuala Lumpur or in Timbuktu or somewhere. Wouldn't that be lovely? You'd stick your chest like that. That's the satisfaction, God.

Friend, God speaks. God saves. God satisfies.

He changes homes and changes lives and changes nations and hallelujah, changes worlds. But it's got to start by your listening, by your trusting. Would you do that tonight? Please, God, you will.

I'm going to close with prayer and I'm going to ask my good friend Hurley if he'll come up and close the meeting with a song. We won't mind and the Lord won't mind him coming up while we're praying. We'll pray.

Oh, God and Father, thank you for these stories. We remember Paul writes to the church at Rome and says these things were written aforetime for our learning. Some kinds are very dull at learning but help us learn tonight that you speak, that you say, that you satisfy.

God grant that we may listen to thy voice, may trust thee for salvation and committing our lives to thee so seek to live for thee and for others that we can say, satisfy. Answer then our prayer and as our brother brings to us the closing challenge, grant that we may respond to it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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