

The Sermon - In 10 Sentences Or Less

Perfectly Imperfect Faith 3 - Rahab's Faith:



1. The entire goal of Hebrews 11 is to point us backward to examples of faith in the Old Testament: as we consider those who make the writer's list, may we be able to echo what Philip Yancey said about his own study of the Old Testament, "...In it, I find characters like myself."
2. Because we're focusing on the lesser-known or curious figures in Hebrews 11, we've skipped ahead past Noah, Abraham and his immediate descendants, and Moses to the time of "The Conquest" of the Promised Land under Joshua, and land on Rahab (Heb. 11.31).
3. She hides Hebrew spies in her establishment, lies to keep them safe, does so because of what she's heard about Israel and its God, and is promised survival during the coming assault because of her actions (Joshua 2.1-5, 9-10, 14-15).
4. The first reason Rahab makes "the great cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews (to use the phrase from Heb. 12.1) has nothing to do with what or why, but who: as we see cover to cover in scripture and especially in the life of Jesus, exemplary faith is often in the unlikeliest people.
5. With Rahab in mind, we need to stop looking for faith only where we expect to find it, i.e. church, and open our eyes to encounter out in the wider world among those where we might not expect it.
6. But also we ask - if Rahab, why not us, no matter who we are, what we've done, how much we've doubted, or how far we've drifted?
7. The 2nd reason the list is explicit in the 2nd half of Heb. 11.31, especially when read in light of Joshua 2 in its historical context: faith expresses itself as countercultural risk, in which it protects and befriends those others won't.
8. This too we find in spades in the life and ministry of Jesus, which then leads us to ask of ourselves - Are we willing to put ourselves at risk for the sake of those culture won't, and are we willing to put a priority on those considered marginal or even enemies?
9. The last reason Rahab makes it into Hebrews 11 is that she was willing to believe and take action based merely on what she'd heard about God, not what she herself had seen or experienced: thus, we conclude that faith is sometimes our response to God's reputation.
10. A biblical consideration of Rahab is incomplete without mentioning Jesus' family tree in Matthew: Jesus our Lord was the direct, distant descendent of Rahab the prostitute (Mt. 1.5-6).

Quotes to Remember

1) About costly, countercultural Christian kindness: *“Jesus doesn’t say that people have to be grateful or even treat us well when we help them. His directive is to love others, even enemies. Such love will cost the people of His Kingdom something. It cost Jesus His life...There have been some who have suffered greatly for being people of kindness...It should be no surprise that these things happen. We should expect to be mocked by the world, and called foolish. People think that a life spent pouring out costly love is a waste. In truth, it is a beautiful thing...We never know how God will use our love in a person’s life. In fact, the life that is changed may well be our own.”* (Kevin Blue, in Practical Justice)

2) About seeing God in others, and others believing in Him because of us: *“Where does belief in God start for a lot of folks? It starts from a sense that we “believe in,” we trust some kinds of people...The way they live is the way I want to live...The world they inhabit is one I’d like to live in...This puts quite a responsibility on believing people, of course...We must make God credible to the world...We must occupy a certain place in the world, a place where others can somehow connect with God through us, not with any sense that we are exceptionally holy or virtuous, but simply because we agree to take responsibility for God’s believability.”* (Rowan Williams, in Tokens of Trust: A Introduction to Christian Belief)

3. About Rahab's faith: *"Even though she (Rahab) did not know God well, she knew enough to make the choice to trust in Him, translating her faith into action."* (Ken Boa)

Prayer Focus this Week

We used the following short creed about faith and choice near the end of yesterday's worship services; pray over and through it a few times this week as you seek to emulate Rahab a little more:

From Bruce Prewer (The Uniting Church of Australia):

Faith demands choice. By the grace of Christ, we can choose.

We choose to believe that light is better than darkness, sharing is better than hoarding, truth is better than deceit, mercy is better than revenge, love is better than indifference, and God is better than chaos.

We choose to have faith in the God who is love, and choice will verify itself on the long and narrow road of life.

By grace, we choose faith. Thanks be to God, amen.

More on Rahab

1. Powerful short video offering a corrective to how some male interpreters have viewed the person of Rahab critically: [Redefining the Story of Rahab | Jen Wilkin](#)

2. Introduction to the kind of powerful ministry being done in the name of Rahab to those with a background like Rahab:

[Stop the Human Trafficking Happening Right Here - RAHAB Ministries](#)
[RAHAB - A Ministry of Hope](#)