

Faith **worshiping** | **Abel**

Faith **walking** | **Enoch**

Faith **working** | **Noah**

Faith **willing** | **Abraham**

Faith **waiting** | **Sarah**

Faith **well-tried** | **Abraham**

Faith **winning** | **Moses**

In **Rahab** we see faith that is **welcoming**

That is to say, welcoming of the purposes of God

- She recognized that God was doing something in her lifetime and locale
- She believed (had faith) that God was true and right and good
- She **welcomed** God's purposes in her life—**by faith**

- Very few Christians actually do this
 - You can see this when by just looking at any local church
 - 10% of the people do 90% of the work
 - You can tell by how many Christians in the world are involved in ministry
 - There are about 2,149,761,000 Christians in the world (2.2 billion)
 - About 11,982,000 are involved in Christian ministry¹ (less than 12 million) (clergy and lay)
 - This means that about 99.45% of all Christians are **not** involved in ministry (.55% are)
 - And yet the Bible teaches that every member is a minister
 - A doctrine known as the priesthood of the saints (1 Peter 2:4-10)
 - Explicit and foundational, and yet so few do it
 - **So many miss the mission of God**

In the few decades of the Book of Joshua (Rahab's time), God was up to something extraordinary

- In the last few decades of our time, God has been up to something extraordinary
 - More people have been reached with the Gospel in the last 50 years than in the previous 1,900!
 - God is doing something spectacular in our time!
 - But there are still 3-6,000+ unreached people groups in the world
 - Evangelical Christianity is currently the fastest growing religious movement in the world today. (Double that of Islam's! More than triple the world's population growth rate!²)
 - God is doing something spectacular in our time!
 - But about 27% of the world's population still needs to hear
 - About 1 million churches have been planted in the last 15 years
 - God is doing something spectacular in our time!
 - But we need millions more!

¹ International Bulletin of Missionary Research, January 2009. David B. Barret & Todd M. Johnson
www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/globalchristianity/resources.php

² Jason Mandryk, *The State of The Gospel in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement Reader* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009), 362.

- God is on the move accomplishing His purposes in the world (and in your world)
 - But, are you, by faith, welcoming His purposes?
 - Believing certain things about God that cause you to re-think how you live?

Background to the Rahab story:

- The Exodus
- The Unbelief
- The Wandering
- The New Leader
- The Crossing
- The Walls

The main idea we want to grasp here is that God's purpose was moving forward

- To bless all the nations (Cf. Genesis 12:1-3)
- And be glorified in every nation (Cf. Revelation 7:9)
- By first revealing Himself **to**, and then **through, a nation** as the faithful God
 - In Joshua, He was asserting Himself over against the pagan beliefs and gods and practices of the regions, which held people in bondage

God's purpose was moving forward...

- But throughout history God has chosen to work **through people** rather than independent of people
- And in some cases it even appears as though God will, or will not, do certain things depending on human participation
 - Ezekiel 22:30
I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.
 - Exodus 32
- God looks for people that He can work through
 - **Noah, Abraham, Moses, Peter, Paul... Rahab, and You!**

What made Rahab ready and suitable for God's purposes? What makes us ready and suitable?

- Lets go to the story and see if we can find out—**Joshua 2**

Joshua 2:1

- Rahab was a prostitute
- So, was it her moral character that made her ready and suitable for God's purposes? No
- Though Scripture teaches us that God is concerned about our moral character

Joshua 2:2-7

- Rahab lied. She was a lying prostitute.
- So, was it her ministry methodology that made her ready and suitable for God's purposes? No
- Though Scripture teaches that God is concerned with out ministry methods

If it wasn't her moral character or her ministry methodology

- Why was this woman chosen, from the population of an entire city/state, to be powerfully used in God's purposes?

Joshua 2:8-11

- Rahab believed God. She had faith!
- She was a lying prostitute...
 - She didn't have morals down quite yet and she wasn't well trained in the right approach to ministry
 - Should she have been a prostitute? No
 - Should she have lied? Maybe not
 - But remember, she did not know the Word of God
 - She came from a culture that, among other things, often put live babies in jars and built them into their city walls for foundation sacrifices³
 - Cut her a little slack (God did)
 - But she believed God and came to fear God
 - Rahab had faith

Look how profound her statements of faith were:

- v. 9 "I know that the Lord has given you the land"
- v. 11 "The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath"
 - Statements of exaltation and surrender

Where did this faith come from?

- v. 10 "For we have heard..."
- v. 11 "And when we heard..."
- Cf. Romans 10:17
So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

She had heard what God had done and: (1) recognized who He was, and (2) submitted to His purposes

- Notice, the whole town had heard
 - Not all believed or had faith
- This is true of believers and non-believers today
 - What makes the difference?
 - I'm not sure... but will you believe?
 - But it is sometimes surprising to us who actually has faith
- Matthew 21:31-32 (Jesus speaking to the chief priests and the elders)
...Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.
For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him...

Because of that faith, she welcomed the purpose of God

³ John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Hebrews)* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 364.

What are the purposes of God in our lives?

- The same as they have always been: To be glorified among and bless all the nations
- Happens in a macro and in a micro sense

Why don't we welcome the purposes of God?

- **Inconvenience:** This whole thing would rock her world (literally)
 - When the walls came down (Joshua 6)
 - Cf. Peter's fishing business, and Matthew's tax collecting
 - For us it may mean some inconvenience
 - We don't like this
 - 70% of Americans say having a comfortable lifestyle is very important to them (up from 59% in 1991)
 - While only 56% say that making a difference in the world is very important to them
 - And only 45% say being active in church is very important to them⁴
- So there is a cultural value conflict in America
- Our desire for comfort is greater than our desire to be part of God's purposes
- **Risk:** The king would have killed her (Joshua 2)
 - Cf. Moses before Pharaoh
 - Very few people are willing to risk anything for God (we value perceived security)
- **Sin:** Particularly selfishness
 - Rahab's actions were not selfish
 - Concerned about God's purpose and her families well being (vv. 12-13)
 - If her motives were merely selfish or self-preservationist in nature she would have turned the spies into the king (v. 3)
 - Cf. Moses in Hebrews 11:25 who [chose] rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin
 - Cnt. Jonah
- **Misunderstanding:** We are not convinced of God's goodness and wisdom
 - We think that welcoming God's purposes in our life will make us miserable
 - Cf. Peter in Mt. 16
- **Money:** We are seldom satisfied with how much we have and usually not sure how to best use it
 - Philip and 200 denarii (John 6:7); Judas and 300 denarii (Mark 14:5)
 - Only 39% of adults feel that it is important to give money at their church⁵

⁴ <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/14-media/33-survey-details-current-vision-of-the-american-dream>

⁵ <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/35-worship-tops-the-list-of-important-church-based-experiences>

- **Our own agendas:** We just want to do what we want to do
 - Revelation 3:20
 - Life is not about our dreams—It's about God's purposes
 - Which He is willing to accomplish in your life, where you are, right now
 - But are you **welcoming** these—by faith?

I think you want to—most of you!

- 75% of evangelical desire a life in which they make a difference in the world
 - Compared to the national average of 56%⁶
- That starts with your world!
 - And yet over 90% of Christians will never share their faith with anyone
 - Only 44% of adults believe that it is important to share their faith with others⁷

Think about this:

If a Christian leads only one person to Christ each year, but spends the rest of the year in extensive discipleship. By the end of the year, both the original Christian and his convert each lead someone else to Christ, and the process starts all over again. If this simple process continued for 25 more years there would be over 33 million new Christians. Theoretically, the world's population of 6.3 billion people could be reached in less than 34 years.⁸

God is up to something big in our lifetime! And wants to use you for His purposes!

God used and redeemed Rahab's life in an almost unbelievable way:

1. She was one of only two woman in the 'Hall of Faith'
 - Hebrews 11:31
By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.
2. She was one of only two people used in James to exemplify 'living faith'
 - James 2:25-26
And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.
 - Shown to be righteous is the idea (as opposed to being declared righteous)
3. She was one of two non-Jews in the genealogy of Christ
 - Matthew 1:1-6
The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. To Abraham was born Isaac; and to Isaac, Jacob; and to Jacob, Judah and his brothers; and to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar; and to Perez was born Hezron; and to Hezron, Ram; and to Ram was born Amminadab; and to Amminadab, Nahshon; and to Nahshon, Salmon;

⁶ <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/18-congregations/29-survey-reveals-the-life-christians-desire>

⁷ <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/35-worship-tops-the-list-of-important-church-based-experiences>

⁸ <http://www.biblehelp.org/addition.htm>

and to Salmon was born Boaz **by Rahab**; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse;
and to Jesse was born David the King...

- Rahab was the mother of Boaz, which made her the great-great-grandmother of King David, one of the direct ancestors of Joseph, the husband of Mary to whom Jesus was born.

This radically transformed life was the result of simple faith that welcomed God's purposes

- Rahab got way more than she bargained for!

Autobiographical:

- There was the time of waiting
- Then there came a time of surrender (when Kate and I put it on the altar)
- It was a victory over the flesh (the lure of the world)
- Then there came a welcoming... "Lord, we will go anywhere and do anything"
- It was so kind of the Lord to let us stay in Carpinteria

The next time you feel like God can't use you, remember the following people:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ◦ Rahab was a prostitute | ◦ Jonah ran from God |
| ◦ Noah was a drunk | ◦ Naomi was a widow |
| ◦ Abraham was too old | ◦ Job went bankrupt |
| ◦ Isaac was a day dreamer | ◦ John the Baptist ate bugs |
| ◦ Jacob was a liar | ◦ Peter denied Christ |
| ◦ Leah was ugly | ◦ The Disciples fell asleep while praying |
| ◦ Joseph was abused | ◦ Martha worried about everything |
| ◦ Moses couldn't speak well | ◦ Mary Magdalene was demon possessed |
| ◦ Gideon was afraid | ◦ The Samaritan Woman was divorced... more than once |
| ◦ Sampson had long hair and was a womanizer | ◦ Zaccheus was too small |
| ◦ Jeremiah and Timothy were too young | ◦ Paul was too religious |
| ◦ David had an affair/was a murderer | ◦ Timothy had an ulcer |
| ◦ Elijah was suicidal | ◦ Lazarus was dead!!! |
| ◦ Isaiah preached naked | |

No more excuses!

William Carey (1761-1834) Missionary to India and the "father of modern missions"
"Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."