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R is for REDEMPTION (Joshua 2:1-21) "Rahab"

### **Introduction:**

In 144 AD, the church father Marcion was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church in Rome, Italy, because he believed to a DUAL authorship of the Bible. He simply could not reconcile how there could be one God who authored both the Old and the New Testament because of the God of the Old Testament seemed to be of such anger and wrath and the God of the New Testament appeared to be a God of love and grace.

For example, he would look at a passage like Mark 10:14 where the Son of God said, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of heaven."

Then he would look at a passage like Joshua 6:21, where God says the city is devoted for destruction. The old men, the young men, the women, the cattle. Everything is destined for destruction. Marcion could not understand how there could be one author of both testaments. Therefore, he denied the Old Testament in terms of using and preaching from it, but embraced the New Testament.

Could we be modern day Marcionites? We embrace the NT. We do not deny the Old Testament, but many tend to ignore it.

- Taken 2 ½ years to move through the Old Testament this time around

Result: I believe that for every New Testament doctrine there is an Old Testament PICTURE.

The New Testament Doctrine for this sermon is REDEMPTION, and the OT picture is a rather dubious and doubtful and suspicious one, a prostitute by the name of Rahab.

### **Point #1 Your MESS is your Message (wait for slide)**

- Rahab the prostitute. She carries that designation. She can't seem to shake it.
- She becomes one of the great great great great great grandmothers of Jesus (Matthew 1), and yet she still has residing in her resume Rahab the prostitute. She is in the HALL of Faith (Hebrews 11:31, one would think that if she is in the hall of the FAME of FAITH that somehow or another this dubious title would be dropped. But she is introduced by faith, "Rahab the prostitute. Welcomed the spies and did not die with the disobedient of the city." It's a dubious title.
- Remember **Naaman** who was a leper, but even after he has been cleansed of his leprosy and has dipped 7 times in the Jordan River and comes up clean, we still call him Naaman the leper.

- We still refer to **Ruth** as Ruth the Moabite.
- We still call **Thomas** the DOUBTING one even though in John 11:16, he says, “Let us also go and die with him.”
- We still refer to **Mary Magdalene** as the woman out of whom Jesus has cast seven devils even though she is the FIRST human being to ever see the resurrected Lord on resurrection morning!
- We still refer to Zacchaeus as the tax collector, even after Jesus sees him up in the tree and calls him to come down from the tree, and Jesus takes and renegotiates his life and calls him a son of Abraham, and we still call him Zacchaeus the tax collector. Sing songs about him.

### **ILLUSTRATION**

It is the words of Lucimarian Tolliver Roberts, the mother of Robin Roberts, one of the anchorwomen on *Good Morning America*. Lucimarian Tolliver Roberts died on August 28, 2012. She did live to see her daughter Robin under go a bone marrow transplant to eradicate the cancer that she had, breast cancer. God used it to save Robin's life. But the one thing she said to her daughter before she left this earth. . . was, “Robin, cancer has made a MESS of your life but make your mess your message.”

SLIDE now. . .

- ALL of us know what MESS is, right? I know we want a Savior that's not bloody but you can't spell MESSIAH without mess. He has come to get us out of mess. “And they shall call his name Jesus.” Matthew 1:21, “for he shall save his people FROM their sin.”
- If you've been abused and accused, God can use you.
- If you have been duped, bagged and befuddled, God can use you.
- If you've been criticized and castigated, God can use you.
- If you've been defeated and depleted, God can use you.

**All of us have Mess in our lives,** (let's be honest) but God will make your mess your message!

We must stop lamenting, spending too much time on what we might have lost. Save some time to THANK God for what we've got left because it's not just what you've lost, it's what you've got left that counts.

RAHAB'S life is a MESS, but God makes her mess her message and she becomes testimony to all of us of what God can do to REDEEM our situation. Not only from sin, but redeem our lives from destruction and embarrassment.

**Point #2 When the Doors are Shut, God opens a Window** (wait for slide)

- The TWO spies come to Rahab the prostitute's house. I am not going to speculate there.
- Someone spotted them & reported this to the king of Jericho who sent his members of the JPD (Jericho Police Department), to Rahab's house to ask Rahab about their whereabouts.

She said, "Yes, they came here, but I don't know where they went. They have left. I can't tell you exactly where they are now but if you will take and pursue them immediately you will be able to overtake them." That is a LIE!

Did God need it? NO, because he had already promised Abraham the land and God had already said to Joshua "as I was with Moses, I'm going to be with you. And every place you put your foot down is going to already be yours."

- God doesn't need our help and God doesn't need our lies, but what God will do is TRANSCEND our lies and still work out His purpose.

\* Please, don't be too hard on Rahab, she has faith but it's being developed. It is flawed. Welcome to the Bible.

So when she sends these members of the JPD to search for the spies outside of the walls, she goes up to the top of the roof and removes the flaps and says to these spies, "I have told the members of the Jericho Police that you have left, and I have saved your life. What are you going to do for me?"

They said to her, "if you will take and put a SCARLET cord outside of your window, then when we attack the city you and all of those in your household will be spared."

Here is a woman, Rahab, in Joshua 2:10, who KNOWS what God has done. In fact, without Instagram, texting, twitting, and cell phones, the WHOLE city of Jericho knows it!

They know they were on the docket for destruction. What does she do? She begins to negotiate how her family could be saved because she "believes" Jericho was going to fall.

- The TEXT says in 2:7, that the gates would be shut. Verse 5 says that the gates WERE shut. In 6:1, we see that the gates would be shut.

Now, if the gates are shut so that no one can go out, HOW will these spies escape?

LESSON: (slide 2 now) When all the doors have been shut, God has opened up a WINDOW.

I don't care how many GATES & DOORS have been slammed in your face, if you are a person of faith, God can take you through the window!

- Joshua had already had 40 years of experience on what God was going to ultimately do.

This passage compels us to look back at the Passover because this red scarlet cord is emblematic, it's symbolic, it's metaphorical of SALVATION. (the red blood of the lamb placed on the 2 sides posts and overhead of door)

I look at this passage, and I am not only reminded to look back at the Passover but I am reminded to look Forward at the Lord's Supper.

I also need to look at this passage in light of eternity future. There at the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19:7-9, Jesus will gather with his saints and will drink of, if you will, the fruit of the vine because everything will now be fulfilled!

Please don't look at this passage in isolation (all Scripture). I've got to see this passage in light of REMDEPTIVE history, salvation history from Genesis to Revelation. It is a passage about God's AMAZING Grace.

R rated for REDEMPTION!

### **Point # 3 God Uses the Unlikely**

- Text says in Joshua 6 that God spared Rahab. Spared a prostitute. Oh, how much He loves.
- I hear the Apostle Paul saying in Romans 8:32, "He who spared not his own Son but gave him up for us all, shall he not FREELY with him give us all things?"
- I have been spared because He was not. I've been saved because He was crucified. Because He died I can escape eternal death and separation from God!
- God will use the unlikely Rahab (not a divinity student or pastor or teacher) to GLORIFY Himself to let us know that all of us at some time have been Rahab's but he wants to give us REDEMPTION.

- The spies entered her house. Why her house? I always ask that. She got a chance to talk to the spies. She got a chance to TESTIFY and to confess her BELIEF, TRUST, FAITH In God.
- Then she told the spies, “Now, go back and stay in the hills for three existences.” That took some time. Gave her time to guess what? Evangelize. Tell her story. The most difficult people to evangelize are in our own house.
- She had TIME when the spies got back to Joshua, they stayed on the east side of the Jordan River for a while, they crossed, they got to Gilgal. They had to wait until they got healed of circumcision.
- Then God said, “Now, I want you to march around the wall one time for six days, then on the seventh day march around seven times.”
- My calculation, Rahab had about 3 weeks to witness, evangelize, tell people about God, so that when the spies came not only did she get saved but ALL of those who were in her house.

How many was that? God uses the Unlikely. I love it.

#### **Point #4 The POWER of Forgiveness**

- James says Rahab as justified by works. Paul says she was justified by faith. Both cannot be right can they?

Yes they can. Stay with me. it's a sequence. It's putting the indicative first. It's who I have become by faith. Because of my faith in him, he justifies me. He enables me to believe by faith, a because of that I show my justification by affirmation through my works. Hold on.\

I'm justified by faith, alone but because I am justified by faith, through grace alone, but grace is really never alone. . .when you get saved you don't work to be saved, you work because you are saved. You don't work for salvation, you work FROM salvation.

What is that work? I am not talking behavioristic here. . .that work is loving God and loving others. . .part of that loving is FORGIVING. . .  
Rahab embraced that and shared it.

Illustration: Moving from the cerebral to the expression. Took me almost 4 years.

- When you forgive it keeps you from being IMMOBILIZED. When you forgive it keeps you from being PARALYZED.

That is part of the “work” God wants us to express. . .from begin saved.

### **Point # 5 Embrace the Mystery (quit trying to make sense of God)**

- The THIRTEENTH revolution had now been made and Joshua had instructed the people when the 13<sup>th</sup> revolution has been made, SHOUT.

In Joshua 6:20, the Bible says that the walls fell down flat. It was a cataclysmic catastrophe.

I struggle with that when it comes to logistics.

- If Rahab lived in the wall, her house was part of the wall, and the wall fell down flat. How did the spies rescue Rahab, her mother, father, family, and anyone else she had in the house? Doesn't make sense to me.
- Guess what? God is not always logical in human terms. God is SUPRA-Logical. If God's name is at stake because the offer has been made, the guarantee has been made in the name of God, that if Rahab's house was in the wall and the wall fell down flat, it seems to me---can't prove it (faith)---that God did some SELECTIVE demolition and kept that section of the wall standing.

It is ONE of several questions I have on my list to raise during the Millinium.

- I have stopped trying to figure out God. At this point in my life I have stopped trying to demystifying the mystery of God. His ways are not mine and I do not begin to understand all there is to understand. I will have eternity to tackle that.
- You know what I am impressed most about this morning?

That at times in life when it appeared that EVERYTHING around me was falling and crumbling, I was still standing. I am still standing by Faith in His amazing redemptive Grace.

I don't know how He does it, but I'm still standing among all the danger, difficulties, challenges, and attacks.

RAHAB received MERCY while the city was a recipient of MISERY. Choice.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Illustration of Henry Ford and Charlie Steinmetz-- \$10,000 for tinkering. \$9,900 for know where to tinker.

- God KNOWS Where to tinker, God knows How to tinker, and God know When to tinker.

I believe that, have faith in that, because one day on Friday the generator of salvation got started on the Cross and put in the grave. There was no production on Friday, and no production on Sabbath and no production on Saturday night.

Then Sunday morning God THREW the switch and Jesus rose from the dead with all power in His hand.

- One of these days (I don't know or worry about when) He is going to TINKER one more time. The dead in Christ shall rise, and those who are alive shall be caught up to meet him in the air. So shall we ever be with the Lord.

We are all rated R for redemption!

## **Reflection**

How has this sermon fed you spiritually?

Has it in anyway helped you better understand Scripture?

Are there any Biblical principles you would like to develop more?

What do you think is the main application of this sermon?