

**Joshua 2:1–21, 6:20–25**

Families typically have several favourite stories they tell. It may be how Grandpa came to this country with ten dollars in his pocket. Or of an relative who fought at Vimy ridge. It may be the story of a romance, or a child's rescue, or a unique accomplishment.

They are personal stories... Vacations, canoe trips, missions trips, victories, events, a rescue! The stories we remember—and tell—often can shape us. They explain **where** we've come from. They shed light on **who we are**. They speak of the values that guide our steps in life. That is one of the reasons the Bible is so important, or should be, because **it is** the story of all of us.

We are tracking some inspiring and powerful Bible stories, which present the variety and sweeping scope of the Bible as a unified whole, yet with a consistent theme: **redemption!** We'll enjoy short video clips from *The Bible* miniseries to help us visualize and experience the story.

And the story we'll focus on today is that of Rahab, kind of hidden away in the first chapters of **the sixth book** of the Bible—Joshua. Stephanie, the young woman who portrayed Rahab, admits **she knew little of Rahab** prior to this part. But in order to fully appreciate Rahab's story, we must understand the backstory, which involves the Exodus—the deliverance of God's people from slavery in Egypt.

As **Joshua** begins, the background is this: God's people had been delivered from slavery in Egypt, led through the Red Sea, and had wandered in the Sinai wilderness for forty years. There, they had received God's Law and coalesced as a nation ... but they were still nomads. Their deliverance was not yet complete. The Promised Land was not yet theirs. In order for that to happen, they had to conquer the most heavily fortified city in the entire land.

[Video clip, Rahab and the Scarlet Cord. \(available on Netflix\)](#)

One of the last few lines in the clip—**“you'll be passed over”**—is a reference to the Exodus, forty years earlier that God's people had since celebrated every year in the Passover. It is a

recognition that something like that is happening again, for Rahab and her family, as recorded in the first chapters of the book of Joshua. And, as I've said, that story is not just Rahab's story; ***it is yours and mine, too***, at least in several ways and the first is this:

1. My personal story doesn't start well (Joshua 2:1–3).

***Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.***

***The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land" (NIV).***

Now, Jericho was a brilliant strategic choice. It is apparently one of the world's oldest-known fortified cities. It was considered ***impregnable***. Its defeat would have made headlines, and would have struck fear into the hearts of all around. The reasoning would be: *If JERICHO can be defeated, we don't stand a chance!* But Rahab, on the other hand, ***seems like a strange choice***. She is referred to as a "prostitute" (innkeeper) in the Bible account. That is not a great start to her story. It may have been understandable, from the spies' viewpoint. Two men entering her house/inn may not have excited much suspicion; and the location of her house on the city wall may have made escape a little easier. But still ... she was a prostitute (Heb.11, James 2)

How would you like for ***your autobiography*** to start out like that? How would you like for ***your story*** to be preserved forever with those words? Well, guess what? It just might. Not just your story but all of ours... Dress it up however you like, that's how every personal story begins.

Maybe not as a prostitute, but as a sinner of one kind or another. The Bible says,

**All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** (Romans 3:23, NIV).

Quick mini-Bible-word study. You know what the original (Greek) word for "*all*" in that verse means? It means, "all." Amazing, isn't it? *All* have sinned. Not some—all—every last one of us.

Bad as that is, it gets worse. Jesus said:

***“Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin” (John 8:34, NIV).***

Your sin may seem more “respectable” than mine, but it’s still sin, and it’s still slavery ... according to Jesus. That’s a **sad** story. But it’s not the **whole** story. Because there is another way in which her story is true of you and me, and that is:

2. My story involves a choice (Joshua 2:4–14).

Look at the text again. Joshua 2:4–14 goes on to say this:

***But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.” (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.***

***Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, “I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.***

***“Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death.”***

***“Our lives for your lives!” the men assured her. “If you don’t tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land” (NIV).***

Now, it is easy to read a story like this without fully appreciating it. Let's take a minute to put ourselves in Rahab's shoes. ***She faced a decision.*** She could have turned the spies away. She could have turned them in. She didn't have to help them. The safe choice probably would have been to stay out of the line of fire. ***I don't want to get involved...***

But given a choice, she chose the Lord's side. Think about it... Our God is a God who specializes in setting captives free! He shatters our bonds. He **can** deliver us from sin.

Like Rahab, each of us faces a decision, too. **Sin or salvation? Slavery or freedom?**

One more part of Rahab's story will become your story, too, and that is:

3. My story is marked by a scarlet cord (Joshua 2:15–21, 6:20–25).

Joshua 2, beginning at verse 15:

***So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. She said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."***

***Now the men had said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them. But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."***

***"Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say."***

***So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window (NIV).***

A scarlet cord. **Red**, like blood. Hanging outside the city wall. Do you know how the story ends? Israel's army surrounded the city and marched around it every day, for six days. Then, on the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times. And, when they had done so, the sixth chapter of Joshua records the result: *(Joshua fought the battle of Jericho)*

*When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. ... **But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day (Joshua 6:20, 25).***

“Rahab was saved, rescued/ spared. And she not only found a place of acceptance among the people of God, but she became the great-grandmother of King David ... from whose royal line Jesus the Messiah came. Her testimony was stunning, “The Lord your God **is God** in heaven above and earth below...”

No matter **how bad** you think you are, no matter how **hopeless** your situation, **you can be set free**. You can be made acceptable in his sight, because, as the Bible says:

***Jesus ... suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood (Hebrews 13:12, NIV).***

The choice, however, is yours. Freedom is in front of you. It can be yours by means of a simple prayer, which I invite you to pray with me now if you have never done so:

“Lord Jesus, thank you for suffering in the way you did—  
for shedding your blood to secure my salvation. I confess my sin, and turn to You,  
and believe that your sacrifice on the cross as payment for all the wrong things I've  
done. I ask you to come into my life, and to take charge from this moment on, amen.”

If you've prayed that prayer, the Bible says you have passed from **slavery to freedom**

and have been set free to experience your rightful heritage as a child of God. And I would welcome the opportunity to meet you (prayer room) after this service concludes.

If you do know Christ, my challenge today is a couple of things. As you consider the details (events and chapters) being written into your story, every month, year; consider how your story will be told from either of two perspectives: **a.** what has happened to you or **b.** what you have done. The first is relatively passive, the second active. Are you an engaged '**doer**' or more of a passive '**responder**' going along *with the flow*... just caught up in everything going on around me... Don't let your story be little more than a whole lot of things that have happened 'to you.' Rahab made a choice and acted on it! That's what faith does! That's the confidence and enthusiasm that freedom in Christ brings... Also; be determined, pursue the discipline of a life victorious that reflects freedom and your rescue from sin! How would your story read? Two people I know have put theirs to paper... Sometimes called our memoirs!

"Lord God, thank you for the freedom that is ours in Christ Jesus. Please help us—each one—to live actively, enthusiastically, in that freedom by the power of your Holy Spirit. Thank you for saving us from sin, day by day and moment by moment. Thank you for delivering us from the sin that so easily **entangles** us and **freeing** us from the habits and addictions that drag us down and bind us in ways that are contrary to your will for us. Help us to live in our rightful heritage as children of God, in Jesus' name, amen."