

The Faith of a Harlot

Sunday, September 19, 2021

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Hebrews 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

- I. It is amazing how God covers all the bases in his Word.
 - A. In this chapter we are given many of the great examples of faith in the history of mankind.
 - 1. We have read about Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Issac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and many more.

Hebrews 11:32-34 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

- B. Right in the middle of it all we hear “by faith the harlot Rahab...”
 - 1. These five little words should cause us to pause and take a closer look at what we are reading here.
- C. The word “harlot” is mentioned 48 times in the Bible and always in a negative way, but it almost always mentioned in connection with Rahab, who is among those who through faith “obtained a good report.”
 - 1. Rahab is mentioned eight times referring – 5 times has the word “harlot” associated with her name. (3 times as a place)
- D. Obviously, God wanted us to remember what she was and where she came from.
 - 1. God did not hide anything from us about these people He is holding before us as examples of faith.
 - 2. In fact, He mentioned them repeatedly so that we would not miss the fact that even the worst sinners can be redeemed and adopted into God’s family.
 - 3. In those “boring” genealogies we can find Rahab again and again, along with some others.

Matthew 1:5-6 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

- 4. In two verses of the lineage of Christ we find a harlot, a Moabite, and an adulteress.
- 5. In all this geneology this is the only time that the wife is mentioned; the rest of the generations only the father’s name is mentioned.
- 6. So the only mothers mentioned were a harlot, a Moabite, and an adulteress.

Matthew 21:31-32 ... Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

7. Among those harlots was one named Mary Magdalene, who was the first person Jesus revealed himself to after his resurrection.

II. Now we are not going the route with this that most people do because most people miss the point here.

- A. We have all read the poem that talks about the person getting to heaven and finding it full of sinners, while many of those who were known as Christians here were not there.
- B. That poem is a distortion of the truth we find here and there will be souls in hell for eternity because they were deceived by it.
- C. The Bible is very clear that habitual, practicing sinners will not be in heaven, no matter what they profess.
 1. But there will be many there who at one time were some of the worst sinners in the world, but they did not die in that state.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

- D. This is the truth that God is showing us here with Rahab the harlot.

III. The subject here is faith, true faith, saving faith, the kind of faith that brings forth a new birth, a spiritual birth.

- A. The point made here is that Rahab the harlot believed God and joined the ranks of those who “obtained a good report through faith.”
- B. The Scripture gives us her profession of faith:

Joshua 2:9-11 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 ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon 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 in earth beneath.**

- C. The Scripture gives us the proof of her faith, as it does with all the others:

Joshua 6:25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

James 2:25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot **justified** by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

- D. God wanted to make sure that we do not get too exclusive in our views of who can be saved.
 1. Because we are prone to that if we are not very careful.
- E. God truly does save old sinners and make them into new creatures.
- F. God truly does forgive sin and give new life.
- G. People can really, truly be changed from the worst kind of sinners to have a pure heart, pure mind, and sanctified life.
- H. Rahab did not continue to live as a harlot.

1. She married Salmon, who was the son of Naason, who was the head of the tribe of Judah, and the brother of Aaron's wife.
2. She married into one of the leading families of Israel and became the mother of Boaz, whose godly character we read about in the book of Ruth.
3. She did not remain an outsider, or an outcast, but joined the fellowship of God's people and became one of them.

I. Christ does this with all sinners who through faith come to Him.

[Ephesians 5:27](#) That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

1. The Bride of Christ is made up of nothing but soiled sinners who have been made clean through faith in Him and his sacrifice for their sin.
2. He has promised not to remember the sins of our past.

[Hebrews 10:16-17](#) This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

3. People may remember, but with the passing of time and the new life continues those past sins become like a dream or story that is hard to imagine anymore.

J. Rahab is not remembered because she was a harlot, but because she believed in God and gave up her sin and her old life and became a part of God's family.

1. The fact that she was a harlot the first part of her life is only mentioned for our sakes, so that we remember that Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.

One night in a church service a young woman felt the tug of God at her heart. She responded to God's call and accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior. The young woman had a very rough past, involving alcohol, drugs, and prostitution. But, the change in her was evident. As time went on she became a faithful member of the church. She eventually became involved in teaching young children. It was not very long until this faithful young woman had caught the eye and heart of the pastor's son. The relationship grew and they began to make wedding plans. This is when the problem began. You see, about one half of the church did not think that a woman with a past such as hers was suitable for a pastor's son. The church began to argue and fight about the matter. So they decided to have a meeting. As the people made their arguments and tensions increased, the meeting was getting completely out of hand. The young woman became very upset about all the things being brought up about her past. As she began to cry the pastor's son stood to speak. He could not bear the pain it was causing his wife to be. He began to speak and his statement was this:

My fiancee's past is not what is on trial here. What you are questioning is the ability of the blood of Jesus to wash away sin. Today you have put the blood of Jesus on trial. So, does it wash away sin or not?

Too often, even as Christians, we bring up the past and use it as a weapon against our brothers and sisters. Forgiveness is a very foundational part of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If the blood of Jesus does not cleanse the other person completely, then it cannot cleanse us completely. If that is the case, then we are all in a lot of trouble.

K. We must be careful not to cheapen salvation to the point that we do not expect a changed life or this matter of Rahab the harlot will be a stumbling block.