



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 11:31; Joshua 2:1–24; James 2:25

“Rahab and the Power of Faith”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee again for the opportunity that is ours to study the Scriptures together. We thank Thee for the great men and women of faith, who have gone before us and who have left us an example, whose faith we desire to follow. And we pray that as we study this evening there may be much in what we read in the word of God that speaks very plainly and clearly to us who live now thousands of years later than those of whom we are speaking. We thank Thee for the applicability of the word of God and how it fits us in the particular place in which we are in the unfolding of the history of salvation. We thank Thee for the confidence that we have; we thank Thee that the Scriptures make it plain that it comes to us from the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us and convinces us of them. We pray that He may be our teacher this evening; that our Lord Jesus may be exalted and our Father in Heaven may be glorified. We commit our time together and each of us, Lord, with our many needs, we bring them before Thee, as well. May Thy hand be upon us, for spiritual good.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Now, Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 4 in verse 13, “Till I come give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine,” and so I want to do a bit of reading, first of all, this evening and I want you to turn with me to Joshua chapter 2, verse 1 through verse 24, and I want to

read this entire chapter. I think it will mean a whole lot more to us in the light of the message that follows. Joshua 2, in verse 1.

“Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country.” So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country.” Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them.” But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof. Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate. Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men, “I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For 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 the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father’s house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.” So the men answered her, “Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be,

when the Lord has given us the land that we will deal kindly and truly with you.” Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall.”

Now, incidentally, there were two walls in Jericho. The outer wall was about six feet thick and then the inner wall was twelve feet thick; so, you can understand how a house could be built there; and her house was on the wall.

“And she said to them, “Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way.””

Today, I saw those mountains and you would have, too, if you had seen the evening news because at least channel 8’s evening news was focused on Jericho and in the distance, you could see the Quarantania Mountains, which encircle or at least to the west of the city of Jericho. It’s very, very up to date. So, you can think of it as you think of the location of Jericho.

“So the men said to her, “We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father’s household to your own home. So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, for we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear.” Then she said, “According to your words, so be it.” And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window. They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought them all along the way, but did not find them. So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the

son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. And they said to Joshua, “Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.””

Now, most of you know the story, of course, of the children of Israel crossing through the Jordan River and then coming up and destroying the city of Jericho. Well, let’s turn over to chapter 6, and I’ll read verse 22 through verse 25.

“But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, “Go into the harlot’s house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her.” And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.”

Now, there are two passages I’d like to read in the New Testament. The first is in James chapter 2 in verse 25. Paul said, give attention to reading, so follow along here, also. Verse 25 of James chapter 2. Now, notice the context. James is supporting the idea that justification is by works. So he says, “Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?”

Now, let’s turn back to the Epistle to the Hebrews chapter 11, and see what our author here has to say about the event that we’ve been reading about. In chapter 11 in verse 30, we read.

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”

Now, we could talk a whole lot about the things that have been said about women. They are curious, talkative, puzzling, meddlers, naggers, and the things that they say about men, that men are logical, thoughtful, concerned, careful. Neither one of these things are really true, of course, of the males or females. But we do have one woman here, who stands out among many and not just one. The Bible is fairer and more scientific than men and women are about the opposite sexes. Some of its great heroes are men and some of its great heroes are women of faith. Just think for example, Sarah, Deborah, Hannah, Mary, Priscilla, and then there are many others that you could add to that list. The Bible is filled with the stories of faithful women who have believed the word of God at great personal cost to them.

Rahab was such a woman. For the love of Jehovah, she renounced her nationality, she abandoned her associations, and she united herself with the people of God. The very fact that she, by herself, in her home, gathered her family together, knowing that Jericho was going to be destroyed, abandoning the attitude that a citizen would ordinarily do go out to help ones own people, she did just the opposite because from now on, she was identified as one of the children of Israel; that is, one who now is a converted Jewish woman, converted woman, converted Gentile woman not Jewish woman.

The story of Jericho, if I may just briefly recount it, falls into two parts. There is the preparation for the conquest. The spies, of course, are sent in. You remember that as the children of Israel went through the Jordan River and came, ultimately, to the city of Jericho, they stayed there for seven days and for seven days the children of Israel circled the city. They said nothing. They kept absolutely quiet. Can you imagine a body of Jewish people keeping quiet for that long? They kept quiet for those days and finally on the final day, the seventh day, of course, the time came for

them to shout. And they shouted and the Scriptures tell us that the walls fell down. And what happen was that they took the city and then, ultimately, burned the city, after having delivered Rahab and her family from the death that would have been hers.

It's very interesting that the two who are supposed to have been the two spies, according to Jewish tradition were Caleb and Phinehas, and what is interesting about it, for those who study the Bible at least more minutely than some others do; in Joshua chapter 2 in verse, let me see, it's about verse 2.

“And it was told the king of Jericho saying, “Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country.” So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country.” Then the woman took the two men and hid him.”

Isn't that interesting? That's what the Hebrew text says. Took out, as he says, she took the two men and hid “him.” Now, it's characteristic of not only Jewish interpreters but a lot of Gentile interpreters today and not only past interpreters but present interpreters to use the strangest things to erect the greatest mountain pieces of doctrine upon them. We all know people like that. They are very much a part of the Church of God, who make more out of little things than ought to be made out of them, and make themselves foolish by so doing.

Well, now, the Jewish commentators, in order to understand this, conceived this idea, that since Caleb and Phinehas were the two individuals, how are we going to explain the “him.” Well, they couldn't have any luck with the Caleb, because obviously there isn't anything about him that's significant, but you remember, that Phinehas was a priest. Now, it is stated in the Old Testament that the priest was the messenger of the Lord. Now, it so happens in the Hebrew text that the term for messenger and the term for angel is the same term. So angels were messengers.

We had, in the first chapter of Hebrews, verse 13, remember, “Are they not all ministering angels sent forth?” So that, Phinehas, therefore, being an angel, and also being upon occasion a man, had the power to transform himself into a spirit, and that’s precisely what happened here. So we read in that text that the two men were there and Rahab went up and hid “him,” well, she hid Caleb. That’s why Caleb is the one.

Now, I don’t know whether you accept that or not. There are some perhaps parallels in which a singular is used for a plural. Perhaps that would be wiser. We don’t really know precisely and finally why it is that we read “she hid him.” I don’t know that one was so fat that he couldn’t get under those pieces of flax that were up there. But, nevertheless, we’ll pass on. It’s not all that important.

The children of Israel, Joshua had instructed them to send the two men to spy out the city. The conquest we know a great deal more about, not simply from the Bible, but because Garstang, one of the great archaeologists of the past generation, spent a lot of time on the ruins of the city of Jericho. And what the Old Testament said about Jericho was undoubtedly true. It was an impregnable city and if you remember it was called by Moses, himself, when he refers to the land, as one of those cities with walls up to heaven. So it was an impregnable city. And the searching of the ruins of Jericho have underlined the fact that there is evidence that Jericho was burned. And not only is there evidence that Jericho was burned, but there is evidence that Jericho was burned with life going on in the city at that time. There were provisions of various types of grain that were found and could be seen by the archaeologists when they examined the ruins. So that what we do know at least, is that the Old Testament is in harmony with what is stated in Joshua chapter 2 and chapter 6.

Now, one other thing that perhaps should be noted. Garstang believed as a result that this was probably the result of an earthquake. Now, of course, we don’t have any reason for saying it was not an earthquake. It may well have been an earthquake that resulted in, ultimately, the burning of the city. That may have been God’s method. What we know is that according to Scripture, God destroyed the city and if he destroyed it by the earthquake, well that makes perfectly good sense.

And Garstang and the biblical interpreters would be at least in harmony. It’s a remarkable thing that after these thousands of years, what is found in the ruins of Jericho is in harmony with what we read in the book of Joshua. So Garstang and the archaeologists may say it was by an earthquake.

Hebrews tells us it was by faith. That is, “By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish.” “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.”

Now, what I want to do tonight is something that’s a little bit different. I’d like to use the destruction of Jericho as a picture of what biblical salvation is from the standpoint of the Old Testament. The Bible expositors from the early church fathers on have seen the story of the destruction of Jericho as a typical story. That is, that it’s an event that historically happened in ancient times, but there is illustrated in it various aspects of the work of divine salvation.

Now, the work of divine salvation does not receive its fullest exposition until the New Testament is written, and we are not in any case indicating that we are to find in the Old Testament precisely the things that the New Testament says about our salvation. What we are thinking about is illustration; types were illustrative of biblical truths. Now, types were also predetermined. That is, they were determined by God in order to illustrate what he would do through his plan of salvation, through the history of salvation.

So it has been the feeling of the expositors of the Bible, from the beginning, that this is typical. So it’s not something I’m doing, it’s something that was done as early as the 1st century, with reference to the Old Testament events. For example, Bishop Clement, of the city of Rome, at the end of the 1st Century, A.D. 95, said this about Jericho and Rahab. “And they proceeded,” these are his words, from 1 Clement 12:7. “And they proceeded to give her a sign, and that she should hang out a scarlet thread from her house, foreshowing,” notice the very term that Bible expositors today use, “foreshowing that all who believe and hope on God shall have redemption through the blood of the Lord.” So right in the 1st century, we have the first of the expositors of this age, talking about typology.

I underline this because in many of our theological seminaries today and some of our evangelical theological seminaries, they speak very lowly, poorly of typology, thinking that it is something that is imagination or carries imagination too far. But I just want to show that so far as the Bible is concerned, if we are to understand it, we must understand that there is such a thing as typology and it will help to clarify the meaning of many passages. And, furthermore, it will underline the fact that the divine revelation is purposeful. That is, that God’s hand has been in all of the events of human history. We shouldn’t be surprised that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who deals with us through the cross of the Lord Jesus, should not give many indications of the way in which he would deal in ancient times as the unfolding story of redemption develops.

So we are looking at this, then, as a typical thing, and I would like first of all to suggest that what we have here, in the story of Rahab and Jericho is a picture of what might be called a picture of condemnation.

Now, Jericho is a city that is under destruction; that is, God has determined that it is going to be destroyed, and as a result of that, the city abides as a city that is soon to be destroyed. Rahab is one of the citizens of the city of Jericho and in this condemned city, she too stood with the others as condemned men and women. That, of course, reminds us of what this world is like, for that is what we all are naturally as we are born. We are part of a condemned world. We are condemned men or we are condemned women. The Bible makes it very plain that by virtue of the one sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden, all have sinned.

Now, that text, there’s been a great deal of discussion over it, I’m just going to tell you what I think it means. That text says that when Adam sinned, he acted as our representative. And so when he sinned, we sinned in our representative. Just as in a reverse way when the Lord Jesus died on Calvary’s cross, he acted for those whom he represented, his elect people of God. The principle of representation is fundamental to the understanding of the word of God.

Now, in the case of Jericho, we have then a picture of condemnation, a condemned people who stand under the judgment of God just as all human beings are condemned by virtue of being

descendants of Adam and stand under God’s judgment. The text that comes to mind is 1 John 5:19, where John says, “The whole world stands under the wicked one.” The wicked one embraces the whole world, because they all belong to him. There are many others texts, of course, that say the same thing and we don’t want to go into much detail there.

I’d like to move now to Jericho as a picture of salvation. It’s a well-rounded picture, I think; the story of Rahab and Jericho, of God’s way of pardon. First of all, the means of faith in the word of God. Secondly, the basis is that which is ultimately represented by the blood of Jesus Christ, and finally, the result of it is that the sinner is brought to safety, as was illustrated in the case of Rahab’s deliverance from the burning city.

Well, let’s stop for a moment and talk about the means. Faith in the word of God. Look again at chapter 2 in verse 10 of the book of Joshua. Rahab is giving her testimony now to the men who have come, the spies.

“She said to them, ‘I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For 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 the two kings of the Amorites who are on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.’”

What a magnificent expression of faith had been brought to this woman. The story had been told her of the Exodus. She had, undoubtedly, followed the history of the children of Israel for those years. And then, now, recently, not too far away, Sihon and Og had been destroyed. And now, they were at the Jordan, ready to cross over. And, it’s not surprising then, that having reflected upon this, she should say, “I know that the Lord has given you the land.” They evidently had

published that news to the people around. The Lord has given us this land. It's going to be our land, and we are the ones who came out of Egypt. We are the ones who came through the sea, by the virtue of the power of God. We are the ones who have destroyed Sihon and Og, and we are soon to come in and take the land.

It's a singular example of faith, because think of it? Rahab is a Gentile. So far as I know, there was no one in that city who knew much about the word of God or had been instructed in anything that we know as being the word of God. It's true she gathered her family in her house. How she did it? I don't know, whether they just did it because they didn't have any other hope and this was, at least, a door of hope for them. But, so far as we know, she was nothing but a condemned member of the family of the Canaanites, who were in the land. No family instruction. And, nevertheless, in spite of that, she has come to a faith in the word of God through word that had reached her.

You cannot help but contrast that with the church today. The Christian church is astonishing. In the Christian church, and many of the evangelical churches, the word of God is preached, it is preached faithfully and clearly, and it's very difficult in Christian churches for those who sit in the churches to respond to the word of God in our day. Many of our children have departed from the word of God. Many of the children of this generation, which is our generation and above us, older than we, have departed from the faith. All over this land where the word of God was preached, there are countless millions who have had a contact with the gospel but who have not responded. Here is a woman who is in among the heathen of her day, has heard a word and has responded to it. No family instruction. It's remarkable, isn't it? It also indicates how important it is for us to give instruction to our family and to our children.

She was not in a believing country. Grace to a harlot in an idol loving city. It's remarkable. She had little help to knowing the truths of the word of God. She did not have the inspired Bible. Many of us who are members of Protestant churches or Roman Catholic churches. We know we have a Bible. It's back on such and such a table or it's back in such and such a drawer in one of the

chests that’s part of your home. You haven’t looked at it in a long time. I’m speaking generally. I know you people are Bible students. When morning gets up, you read your Bible and when evening comes, you read your Bible and you read it constantly through the week. And so when you come on Sunday, you are filled with the knowledge of the word of God. Maybe, reading through the Bible, constantly, two, three times a year.

She didn’t have any inspired Bible. She had no prophets, so far as we know. No man like Elijah, no man like Jonah, or any other of the great prophets, to teach her the things of the word of God. Where she found out the message that she had known, that simple message, we don’t know. Perhaps in the marketplace, for that’s where everybody gathered.

We have so many reasons to be ashamed of the fact that we have not taken advantage of the opportunities that we have. There are many people sitting in our evangelical churches, I hope and pray it’s not true of Believers Chapel, who affirm that they believe the word of God, affirm that they are Christians and have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, but who rarely really study the Scripture.

I know, you may come on Sunday and have someone open up the Bible but as far as the week is concerned, what’s stated on Sunday lasts for a little while, but Monday through Saturday very little contact with the word of God. That’s characteristic of so many of believers in evangelical churches today.

She was a very unlikely prospect, was she not? The Bible says she was a harlot. Well, that’s God’s way of letting us know that the gospel comes to people who are naturally all unlikely prospects.

There is a parable that our Lord tells in chapter 21 of the Gospel of Matthew, which may illustrate what we are talking about. But it’s Matthew chapter 21 in verse 28 through verse 31, and he is talking with Jewish people, particularly the priests and the elders, and he said, “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Our Lord then

asks the question, ‘Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said to Him, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots,’ He could have said, ‘Like Rahab, harlots like Rahab, ‘enter the kingdom of God before you.’”

What an unlikely prospect. As a matter of fact, everybody in the family of God is an unlikely prospect, for the simple reason of being born in sin, born in rebellion against God, born in lack of knowledge of God, all of the things that characterize us as children of Adam.

She had a very difficult object of faith. People love to talk today about the God of love. I heard that, I must said that’s so that every time I hear it I must say, that when I hear of the God of love, and I know that the person who does not believe in the Christian God is talking the language of a Christian, it really disturbs me in my heart. God of love? How can you talk about a God of love if you do not at the same time talk about the cross of Jesus Christ? That’s the definition, so the Apostle John told us, of the love of God. It’s that he offered his Son, as propitiation for our sins. But the individuals today who talk about God as a God of love many of them, I don’t whether most or not, but many of them are not even professing believing Christians. They may be unbelieving philosophers or whatever, but God of love is a phrase that comes on their lips.

But, in a Christian church, the vast majority of professing believers in the Christian church today do not understand what the love of God is, according to Scripture. And, in fact, react negatively to it. Our theological seminaries are filled with professors, who tell us that the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ is something that we cannot believe, and yet can use the term ‘God of love.’

The message that frequently goes out today is “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” That’s a magnificent message. I have no objection to that message at all. It is a magnificent message.

But even that message, part from the ministering work of the Holy Spirit, is insufficient to bring a man to the knowledge of our Lord. The people who cite John 3:16 are often people who do not believe in the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Now, I want you to note the gospel message she believed. It’s not really. It’s a message cannot compare with what we preach today: John 3:16. Verse 9, “I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the Lord did all of this and our hearts have melted,” and so, in effect, she said, “The message that I have believed is not that God is a god of love, or that Yahweh is a God of love, or that God so loved the world that He’s going to give His only begotten Son.” The message that Rahab heard and the message that she believed is simply, Israel is going to destroy Jericho. What a message. Israel’s going to destroy Jericho. That seems like a very incomplete message, doesn’t it? Is that a saving message? Well, yes, it is a saving message, for those times.

Because she goes on. She says, “For the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath.” So the God who is God in heaven and on earth, that God is going to destroy Jericho. And Rahab had believed it. How did she believe it? She believed it the same way you believe it, if you are a Christian. She believed it because the Holy Spirit of God had convinced her heart that this was truth. That Yahweh was the true God. That Yahweh was the God of heaven and the God of earth, and that He is the One True God, and that His work is the work of God in heaven. So what a difficult object of believing faith to accept? Israel is going to destroy Jericho. And she, a citizen of Jericho, but bound up in it, ultimately, is a truth of a sovereign God and the purposes of that sovereign God.

One of the interesting things about this, of course, is the arrangement that was made between Rahab and the spies, induced by them. And so, she asked, “Swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father’s house, and give me a true token.” And then she goes on to say, and talks about her family. And finally, in verse 14, “So the men answered her, ‘Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the Lord has given us the land, that we will deal kindly with you.’” Then they give her the token. Verse 17, “So the men said to her: ‘We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have

made us swear, 18 unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down.”

Isn't that interesting? This what did she call it? This, they call it this line of scarlet cord in the window. Now, look at that just for a moment? It's not “unless you bind a thread.” It's not “if you bind a blue thread.” But it's “unless you bind ‘this scarlet thread’ in your window.”

And, furthermore, they had to bind it in such a way that it was seen outside the window. So the specific object that signified the faith was the scarlet thread, seen by all. In a sense, when Rahab hung that piece of scarlet cloth outside her window, on the wall, it was her testimony to her faith in the God of Israel. So not “a thread” not “a blue thread” but “this scarlet thread” out of the window.

The kind of faith that Rahab had was a very personal kind of faith. And so, consequently, she's not the kind of person who says, “because my father was a Christian, I think I ought to be saved, too.” Or “My father had me baptized when I was an infant,” and that kind of thing. Rahab had a very personal kind of faith. And the faith that she had was signified by this special token and the oath that stood behind it.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews talks a good bit about oath, because he's talking about Abraham and the promises that God gave to him, and the promises that God swore to Abraham by an oath. And so here an oath is given and the result is the binding of “the scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down.”

So this undoubtedly is a reference back to the things that have preceded already in the word of God. I'd like for you to notice, first of all, of course, it's the word not the appearances that really count, because Jericho was one of those great walled up cities, cities walled up to heaven.

Notice, also, it is not the amount of the faith, but the reality of the faith, that matters. I can just imagine that there may have been members of Rahab's family because, remember, she asked not only for herself, she asked for her father, her mother, her brothers, her sisters and all that they have, all their relatives, and wanted them all gathered in that house. You can see, right then, that new life

has been working in her because that’s characteristic of the Christian is to be concerned for his own family.

Any Christian who has been converted and has no concern for his own family, does not bring them before the Lord in prayer, does not seek opportunity to say something to them concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, his faith is a very doubtful kind of faith. The very first thing that she’s concerned about is her family.

I remember a story, I’ve told it before, maybe most of you have heard it, some of you may not have. I was in a conference in Tennessee and there was a lady there who came with a little boy and he was about four or five years of age. And we were discussing some things in the hall in the conference and she mentioned that her young boy had been converted recently. And she said an interesting thing happened. She said, “The moment that he was converted,” in her talking to him, “The first thing he said, after he had received Christ as his personal savior was, ‘Is daddy saved, too?’” Isn’t that interesting? ‘Is daddy saved, too?’

So Rahab had the personal kind of faith that cares for others. It’s not a great amount of faith, in the sense of a great understanding of doctrinal things. I can point out, I think, that she understood the past. She understood God as the God of heaven above and earth beneath. She understood, also, something about the Exodus, because she makes reference to that. How God has given you this land and the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. We know, we’ve heard, how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you.

And not only that, because of those promises that were given to you, we know you’re going to inherit the land. So her faith is a faith that looked toward the past, toward the present and toward the future; the same kind of theological kind of faith that you and I have. We look back at the cross. We look back at the creation. We look back at the cross. We think of the Lord as our present companion through this life and then we also look for the glorious promises that we have in the future. Certainly, she didn’t have the understanding that we have of the past. She did not have the understanding of the present, in what Christ did on Calvary’s cross. That was beyond her. And she

did not understand what we understand of the great prophetic word and the promises of the word of God. But, in essence, she had what you and I have.

The basis of the salvation is only suggested by that thread of scarlet that was hanging out of the window, fastened in the window. One thinks of our Lord nailed on the cross, when one thinks of the fastening of the cloth out of her window, one thinks of the nailing of our Lord on the Cross. The scarlet color is derived from a particular kind of worm that is crushed and out of it comes the particular color that from it is made the scarlet thread.

And then also one cannot read this without thinking of the service of the children of Israel observe every year, when the lamb is slain, and the blood is sprinkled on the doorposts and on the top post, and just as that suggested the beginning of life for them, and is something that was to characterize the children of Israel, down through the years, so this may well have been, that may well have been the source of this, the binding of the scarlet cord in the window “through which you let us down.”

Modern culture does not like to think of the blood of Christ, but we as Christians, we rejoice in it. The result is that the sinner is brought to safety. And we read in chapter 6 in verse 25, “And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day.” I don’t want to draw the doctrine of eternal security out of that, because you’ll say, that kind of exegesis is like that one about the singular of the man, Caleb and Phinehas, that you were talking about previously. But it says, “So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.”

Let me just give a couple of interesting things from this, I think. Rahab, of course, being saved from Jericho, which is burning, is a beautiful illustration of the saving of a brand from a burning fire, by virtue of the scarlet thread in the window of one’s heart, if I may make the application.

This, also, is thirdly, a picture of the universal offer of salvation. You notice, in chapter 2 in verse 19, the messengers say to her, “So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your

house into the street, his blood shall be on his head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if a hand is laid on him.”

Beautiful picture of the fact that while the determination of the number of the saved is in the hands of the Lord, his elect people are to be saved. And the non-elect, so far as I can tell, are not going to be saved. But, nevertheless, those who are not saved, the invitation is given to them. All will not come but all who come are received, is the gospel that we preach.

This is a picture of an exclusive salvation, too. There was no salvation anywhere else. In John chapter 10, the Lord Jesus says, “I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, shall go in and out, find pasture, by Me,” because “I am the door.” And the one place of salvation, when Jericho is destroyed, is Rahab’s house on the outside wall of the city. One safe place! Today, there is one safe place and that place is Jesus Christ!

There is a picture of security in this, I think, because these promises that were given to Rahab are promises that are sworn to her, the oath. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as I said earlier, makes a great deal over this and this is called “their oath to her.” The Gospel message is God’s oath to us. We come to him through Christ, we shall be saved; part of the Abrahamic promise. A marvelous picture, also, of the security that we have because of that oath. We are secure in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, there is one interesting thing, I think I have time to talk about it, is that this is a picture not only of salvation, but it’s a picture of salvation and works. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews lays stress on the faith. He says, “By faith Rahab” and so forth. When James gives his instance, he says, “The Scriptures say that Rahab was saved by works.” Was she saved by faith? Was she saved by works? Or, was she saved by a faith that works? Well, the third alternative is obviously what the Scriptures say, and that’s what the Reformers always felt, that faith alone saves but not the faith that is alone, it will be accompanied by works as the result, or issue, of one’s salvation. So James, being the practical man that he was, lays great stress upon the fact that works are to be expected. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is very much concerned about faith, particularly

in this chapter, lays stress upon what Rahab believed. By faith, the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. She received them; it was evidence of her faith in the God of the children of Israel, and so, in her case, in the case of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he lays stress upon the faith.

And, finally, it is a picture of spiritual blessing. Think now, of Rahab. Think first of the children of Israel saved from Egypt and brought into the land. The Old Testament uses the expression “saved from and brought out and in” particularly “brought out and in” I believe, it’s in Deuteronomy, in Deuteronomy is one of the places it is mentioned, in chapter 6 in verse 23. I didn’t look this up in preparation for this message, but I think that’s what it says. Yes. “Then He brought us out from there that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.” So the children of Israel are brought out of Egypt and brought in to the Promised Land.

Rahab? What a story she could tell now. Born in the land of the Canaanites. A Canaanite herself. God’s message brought to me by the one whom I know now as the Holy Spirit, the third person of the divine Trinity, brought out of the heathenism, the idolatry, the vicious kind of life that characterized that time, and mine, particularly, I, a harlot, brought into the family of God, not only brought into the family of God, but in time, I married Salmon, a prince of Judah, and from the prince of Judah there has come the true prince, and I am one of the great-grand mothers of the Lord Jesus Christ. What an amazing story. What an amazing story. One cannot help but be astonished by the marvelous way in which God works his eternal purposes.

Well it’s great, in Scripture, of course, to read that there are others somewhat similarly in our Lord’s line, Bathsheba, the adulteress. Tamar, the incestuous woman. Rahab. All in our Lord’s line. Our Lord descended from them. The true humanity, apart from sin, of our Lord, underlined by those facts.

Well, Rahab, the harlot, shows that no one need despair. That’s a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,” Paul said.

The dying thief on the cross by the side of our Lord. “Sir, remember me, when you come in your kingdom?” And our Lord said, to the dying thief, “This day, thou shall be with me in Paradise.”

But one must bind the true token, the true token has already been given. No need to plead for it. Grasp our Lord as the bread of life and feed upon him, now and forever.

Unbelief, of course, leads to destruction. How silly all this marching and trumpet playing to the Jerichoites. Don't you know that they had six days of fun on the side of that city? Walking around, looking around at those children of Israel? Who didn't say anything? So far as we know, they didn't say a word for six days. They just marched around. Seventh day, I believe, they go around twice, didn't they? Then they shouted. Oh insults, all of the things that were said to them, you can just imagine those silly, silly things. “The word of the Cross is to them that perish,” Paul said, “foolishness.” Foolishness. But unto us who are being saved, it's the power of God. It always is that way.

Everybody who is outside of Christ today, except for those who are under some form of ministry of the Holy Spirit, bringing them to conviction in him, ultimately despise the things of the word of God.

I received today, from the Book of the Month Club, the regular monthly mailing and in it there is a book advertised by the Book of the Month Club on the history of God, written by a woman: *History of God*. Written by a woman; that means it's more likely to be true, in our day. But, nevertheless, think of it. *The History of God*. Began four thousand years ago.

It's so ridiculous. They're having fun. They speak negatively about Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and so, we have to listen to it. We're not saying anything. We're marching around the city. But the time is coming when we're going to shout and when we shout, things are really going to happen. It's so great to be a member of the body of Christ, and to have the assurance of salvation. So the silliness of our day, the foolish criticism of the Gospel of Christ, that's carried on under the name of religion, we know will pass.

We, like the Jerichoites, ought to realize our condemnation, come to know the true God. That the way of escape is through him who is represented by the scarlet thread. May God enable us to bind it to the window of our heart.

Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these marvelous passages from the word of God that remind us of what a remarkable salvation Thou hast accomplished for us, at great cost to our triune God. We thank Thee, Lord, our Father in Heaven, we praise Thee for the love and grace manifested to us, in the gift of Christ. And we thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, Thou who didst from eternity past, have it upon thine heart to become one with us, apart from sin, and then as our representative, redeem us, making it possible for us to know the forgiveness of our sins and the freedom of the possession of eternal life with Thee. And, for Thee, the third of the persons of the Trinity, our Lord, the Holy Spirit, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the gift of understanding that has come to us, concerning Christ. Lord, if there should be one person in the auditorium who does not know the forgiveness of sins, give them no rest, give them no peace, give them great concern for their own eternal destiny. And then, Lord, cause them to flee to Thee and the Lord Jesus, for eternal salvation.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.