

Joshua: Walk the Line - Forgiveness

September 9, 2007 | Joshua 2:1-24

Introduction:

- I have a compulsion to only make one trip not matter what...it's either efficiency or laziness...one or the other
 - with groceries
 - with luggage
- It's hard to move...hard to operate...I sure couldn't help anyone else...not with everything I'm carrying.

- I believe that sin has the same effect. That the burden of sin and the guilt and conviction it brings is meant to spur us on to ask forgiveness, to grow our faith...but some of us struggle to let go of the sins we've committed and it can be crippling and overwhelming and lead to inaction, self-loathing and even giving up on God...because you just never *felt* it.

Big Idea: God is big enough to forgive us, even when we feel like we can't forgive ourselves.

PRAYER

Joshua 2:1-24

1) Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove, He instructed them, "Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho." So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night.

- Isn't it interesting that he just sent out two and did so secretly.
- Approx. 40 years earlier, Moses had selected the 12 spies with only 2 bringing a good report
- In each conquest event of the OT, spies are sent out. You would think that they would go for strategic purposes. What's the best approach for an attack? Where are their weakest lines of defense? The spies were sent to bring back a report of what God could do in the land and what God had made of the promised land.
- They arrive in Jericho, and head for the house of a prostitute, a lady of ill repute, a harlot...regardless of her own setting (she was in a city that was certainly okay with this type of behavior), it was not an acceptable behavior by God.
- Some of your footnotes make mention that she might have been an innkeeper, perhaps it's a feeble attempt to clean her up a little, especially because of her being a part of the genealogy of Christ. But we have to trust the accounts of the author of Hebrews and James as they are very open about what she was.
- Here is the tension in the story:

- She is a sinner to the extreme
- She belongs to a people and land that God will conquer
- She is not a part of God's chosen people
- But... God uses her in an incredible way...to save his people...to inspire His people...to come into the land He had promised.

Big Idea: God is big enough to forgive us, even when we feel like we can't forgive ourselves.

2) But someone told the king of Jericho, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." 3) So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: "Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land." 4) Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, "Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from. 5) They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them." 6) (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.) 7) So the king's men went looking for the spies along the road leading to the shallow crossings of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king's men had left, the gate of Jericho was shut.

- Rahab makes her decision...she has left her people and she "all in" on the Israelites and their God.
- Risking her life she lies to the king's men, sending them on a wild goose chase
- James 2:25 (read)
- How did she come to that decision? What caused her to gamble with her life and livelihood. In her heart of hearts did she believe that by being good to God's people would save her?

Big Idea: God is big enough to forgive us, even when we feel like we can't forgive ourselves.

8) Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them. 9) "I know the Lord has given you this land," she told them. "We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. 10) For we have heard how the Lord made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed. 11) No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the Lord your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.

- Somehow...she knows! And, she's afraid and then she tells the spies exactly what they wanted to hear, "We are all afraid of you...living in terror!"
- Last week, we heard the words "Be strong and courageous" to Joshua and God's people...while at the same time, the people they would conquer were losing all courage to fight!

- She makes the statement that would redeem her and her family...The Lord your God is the supreme God! Redemption! Forgiveness! Salvation!

12) "Now swear to me by the Lord that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that 13) when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families." 14) "We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety," the men agreed. "If you don't betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the Lord gives us the land."

- She makes her request.

- You have to know that if Joshua chose two spies, they would be godly, faithful, good men. Men of integrity, of strength and courage.

- Her reward for saving them would again be her and her families salvation.

- I can't help but think that these men are being directed by the spirit of God!

- Rahab knew what kind of guys these were from the beginning

15) Then, since Rahab's house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window. 16) "Escape to the hill country," she told them. "Hide there for three days from the men searching for you. Then, when they have returned, you can go on your way." 17) Before they left, the men told her, "We will be bound by the oath we have taken only if you follow these instructions. 18) When we come into the land, you must leave this scarlet rope hanging from the window through which you let us down. And all your family members—your father, mother, brothers, and all your relatives—must be here inside the house. 19) If they go out into the street and are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on people inside this house, we will accept the responsibility for their death. 20) If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in any way."

- Joshua's men, God's men, set the terms by which she and her family will be saved...something that would signify not her innocence, but her redemption!

Rahab has purchase her life and families life by her faith in God and willingness to help his people.

- The scarlet cord, some say symbolizes the blood that the Israelites would place on their door post the night of the Passover.

- I just bet that she stuffed that house to the gills. Wouldn't you do anything to convince your family and relatives to come into the house and be saved? I wish we had that sense of urgency.

21) "I accept your terms," she replied. And she sent them on their way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window.

22) The spies went up into the hill country and stayed there three days. The men who were chasing them searched everywhere along the road, but they finally returned without success. 23) Then the two spies came down from the hill country, crossed the Jordan River, and reported to Joshua all that had happened to them. 24) "The Lord has given us the whole land," they said, "for all the people in the land are terrified of us."

- Rahab agrees, the men get away and give their report to Joshua.
- It's amazing that the Book of Joshua, a book designed to tell us of the conquest of all these people groups who had taken up residence in the promised land...the very first story, is not about God's wrath, but His mercy. The very first story told in this book...is about redemption...Rahab and her family were "redeem" because of her faith. God was able to use her in an incredible way, she would go on to live with His people, she was forgiven.

We've got to look a couple more scriptures to understand more about Rahab:

- Joshua 6:17, 22-25
 - Her family is placed near the camp (not in the camp to keep from defiling it)
 - She didn't receive a backhanded salvation, a shortened redemption...her family became a part of the Israelite nation...living among them!
- Matthew 1:5, "**Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab).**"
 - In the lineage of Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, you find Rahab
- Hebrews 11:31, ***It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.***
- How does this prostitute, harlot, pagan woman get placed in the lineage of Christ, in the Faith Hall of Fame, in the writings of James!
- Because God has the power to forgive and redeem anyone for anything if they will just place their trust in Him and do His will!

Big Idea: God is big enough to forgive us, even when we feel like we can't forgive ourselves.

- Church camp invitations - kids that come night after night to rededicate.

How should this incredible story of redemption affect us? What should our response be? 3 Things you should know:

- #1 - God is big enough to forgive me for anything
- #2 - God puts back together the person who is broken
- #3 - God will do incredible things in our lives when we dump the baggage

Conclusion:

- There's nothing you or I could do that God hasn't already forgiven a million times before!
- 1 John 1:9