

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

A Conquering, Courageous Faith, Part 1

Scripture: Hebrews 11:30-31

Code: 90-388

We have been going through the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and we're going to return to that tonight, but by no means are we going to complete the text before us and I had no intention of doing that because it opens up to us so much Old Testament scripture.

Hebrews chapter 11, this is known as the faith chapter, stretches into the beginning of chapter 12, as we will see. We have been reminded all the way through this chapter that anyone who has a relationship with God has that relationship based on faith and not of works. We have started all the way back in the book of Genesis to see the examples of faith, or as they're often known, the heroes of faith. And we progressed through the patriarchs, arrived at Moses and that took us through the books, the early books of the Bible known as the Pentateuch.

As we come to verse 30 and following, we pick up the account in Joshua and Judges and references are made to people who lived in the time of the writing of 1 and 2 Samuel and then 1 and 2 Kings. And we sweep all the way from there in these final verses through the prophets, you could say all the way up to John the Baptist. So from verse 30 where we are introduced to the walls of Jericho, the entry into the promised land, we go all the way through the prophets in just those few verses. Obviously not covering all of them, but representative names are given that sweep through that period.

This is important. This is critically important to the writer of the book of Hebrews. What is important to him is to convey to his readers that salvation is by faith alone. You will understand that those people living in the first century in the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews had been influenced by Judaism and the Judaism that had developed much earlier than that but was in full force then was a Judaism that taught that salvation is earned by works and ceremony and ritual, morality.

And the message of the New Testament is that by the deeds of the flesh no person will be justified. We're saved by grace through faith, that not of yourselves, not of works lest any man should boast, as the New Testament epistles inform us. There is no way to come to God by works, by effort on one's own...moral effort, spiritual effort, religious effort. You hear people today who are proud to say they're religious or perhaps more popularly proud to say they are spiritual. That gains them nothing with God, no matter how extensive their efforts are at religion or spirituality, or morality, or ceremony, they achieve absolutely nothing because even the best that men can do their righteousnesses are filthy rags to God.

So the message of the New Testament is the message that salvation is by faith alone. That is a message that is a dramatic change for the Jewish hearers and so it needs to be defended as the true Word of God lest they think that this is some kind of new message, that the gospel of grace and faith is some aberration, that it is something opposed to the Old Testament. And so the writer of Hebrews gives us this jewel of a book that not only was beneficial to the Jews to whom it was written but for all who will read it through all time to reinforce the fact that salvation by faith alone is not something that the New Testament invents but is the age-old and only way that anyone has ever been reconciled to God.

And so, the chapter wants to send that message unmistakably that salvation is by faith alone. And that's why it begins in verse 3, "By faith..." and verse 4, "By faith..." and verse 5, "By faith..." and verse 7, "By faith..." and verse 8 "By faith," and verse 9, "By faith," and verse 11 "By faith," and on and on it goes. And what is remarkable about this book is its historical reach. The only way to be saved even in the earliest era of human history was by faith and so the first person mentioned is Abel. Abel was told by God that if he wanted to come to God he had to bring a sacrifice and it had to be an animal. Death was required by God. Abel didn't question God, he did exactly what God told him. He obeyed God and by faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice.

This is sort of an initial look at salvation by sacrifice, all of which, of course, points to Christ. Abel was not saved by his works. On the other hand, Cain made an effort at a relationship to God by bringing that which he had produced and it was useless.

And then the story in this chapter moves to Enoch. Enoch is the one who walked right into the presence of God and didn't die. He never questioned God either. He lived such a life of obedience, such a holy life that he did not see death. He was taken up, it says, because he was so pleasing to God. And he pleased God because he did what God commanded him to do.

And then there was Noah. Noah's relationship to God was a relationship of faith. He demonstrated faith in the Word of God revealed to him by building a boat in the middle of the desert, a massive, massive ship. Over a period of 120 years he proclaimed this God who asked him to do this strange task as the true and living God, though he was mocked by his contemporaries through all those years. He believed that one day it would rain and there would be water to float that boat because God said that.

So whether you're talking about Abel, Enoch or Noah, they responded to the Word of God in obedience. And then we came to Abraham and Abraham, the father of the nation Israel, the first of the patriarchs believed God, left Ur, spent his life as a nomad and a wanderer and never in his entire life did he receive what was promised to come through him. He died without ever realizing the promise. He passed on the Abrahamic Covenant with all its promises to his son Isaac. God reiterated

the same promise of a great nation of influence across the world of salvation, of blessing. God passed it on to Isaac and Isaac never saw it realized and Isaac passed it on to Jacob and Jacob never saw it realized. And Jacob passed it on to Joseph and Joseph never saw it realized. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph all died without ever having received the promise. So they continued to walk with God, to trust God by faith, not by sight. And we've gone through that in detail.

The message here is, those who were related to God are related to God because they came to Him by faith and they continue to live by faith. Life may be difficult. What God requires may be bizarre, it may be against the grain of your own nature, your own will. It may be contrary to culture. It may seem unreasonable. It may cause suffering. It may bring human mockery upon your heart. It may mean separation from the world. It may cost you your ambitions. It may even cost you your life. But you do it because God said to do it. That's what marks the people of God. They obey God. That's what a relationship to God is about, it's about obedience. You obey His call to salvation and repentance and faith. You obey His call to a life of obedience. It has always been that way.

And so, we have trekked together through the Pentateuch, from Abel to Abraham and his progeny, the patriarchs. And we have seen, as the writer helps us, with just brief statements that explode in our minds the whole account in the Pentateuch, how that always a person's relationship to God is based on faith. Faith that is real stands every test. It is therefore tested and demonstrated in crises, in crises.

Now this message is so important, let's go back just looking at the actual book of Hebrews and the writer of Hebrews and what he has in mind. Some years before this letter was written, and we don't know who its writer is, but some years before it was written, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ had come to some Jews. We don't know where they are. Some were in the land of Israel in some community, some region, some town. The gospel has come to them and it has come to them by the Apostles themselves. It is clear that the Apostles were the messengers because in chapter 2 and verse 3, they are warned not to neglect a great salvation which was at first spoken through the Lord but it was confirmed to us by those who heard. God also testifying with them by signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Signs and wonders belong to the Apostles. They were authenticating marks to the Apostles.

So this community of Jewish people heard the gospel preached from the Apostles and it was validated and verified by signs and wonders and empowerment through the Holy Spirit. Some in the Jewish community embraced that gospel fully. They believed in that gospel. They came to Christ. They left behind the Old Covenant. They stepped into the wonderful realm of the New Covenant.

Others, however, in that Jewish community had heard it. They made some kind of an intellectual commitment to its veracity but no heart commitment to it. They were outwardly identified with this local group of true believing Jews, but they had fallen short of genuine salvation so that through this book repeatedly, chapter 2, chapter 4, chapter 5, chapter 6, chapter 10, there are warnings to this

group of intellectually convinced Jews hanging on the fringe of the church that they have to come all the way to salvation. Do not neglect the salvation. That's what it is in chapter 2. "Don't neglect so great a salvation." Don't stop short of that.

In chapters 4 and 5 it's "Come all the way to rest." "Come all the way to rest." In chapter 6 it's "Don't fall away because if you fall away with full revelation, it's impossible to be renewed to repentance." And in chapter 10 it's a warning that if you reject the gospel with the knowledge you have, you crucify the Son of God and you put Him to open shame. And how far greater will the judgment, the eternal punishment be on someone who does that?"

So the warning passage has come throughout this epistle. To those who are there in the congregation, they will hear this epistle when it is read. They need to be warned. And so do any others in any generation who have intellectually assented to the gospel but have never made the affirmation, the assensus(?), as the Latin word would indicate it, where they ascend to this truth with all their hearts.

One perhaps very, very strong and compelling motivation for them to embrace the gospel is to assure them that it is not a new message, but it is the same old message that God will reconcile with sinners only one way, and that is by faith. And in any generation with just a meager amount of revelation, as would be true in the day of Abel and Enoch and a little more in the time of Noah and a little more in the time of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, at any point in history a relationship with God was predicated on believing what God had revealed. And the most important element that He had revealed is that men are sinners and they need a sacrifice. And that was the first revelation to Cain and Abel...Abel obeyed it, Cain did not.

The message then of Hebrews 11 is that the way of salvation has always been by faith. Don't fall back into Judaism. Don't fall back into old Judaistic patterns. Be willing to break with the priesthood which is now obliterated when the temple veil was rent from top to bottom, the priesthood was over. The Holy of Holies was thrown wide open for anyone and everyone.

Make the break. The message of the book is "Come all the way to Christ. Drop the old stuff, come to Christ, come to Him, come to God by faith." That is the only way. That, of course, has been the Christian gospel and the Christian message.

This chapter had an introduction in chapter 10 and verse 38. "My righteous ones shall live by faith," or that very common understanding of it taken from Habakkuk, "The just shall live by faith." You've got to live by faith, the only way you can have spiritual life. And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.

Then the writer of Hebrews says, "We are not of those who shrink back to destruction but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul." Come to God by faith, that's the message of Hebrews. That's the message that not only sweeps through this chapter, but is reiterated with powerful force at the beginning of chapter 12, which we will see.

Now as we come to the text before us, in verse 30, we have marched our way up to the walls of Jericho, historically. And we now come to some illustrations of faith that are really remarkable. And here we see the courage of faith. That is a component of faith that you could actually identify sort of the pinnacle of faith. I guess you could say that the validating of anybody's faith is what it will endure. If it's true faith, it will obey at any price...at any price. It will demonstrate courage in the face of any opposition, any threat, any suffering. True faith does not draw back. It does not fold up. It does not collapse.

We have seen the life of faith with Abel. The walk of faith with Enoch. The work of faith with Noah. The pattern of faith with Abraham. The victory of faith with the patriarchs. We've seen the choices that faith makes with Moses who chooses rather to suffer the reproach of Christ with his people than to enjoy the pleasures of sin that he has as one of the elite in Egypt.

Now we come, in a sense, to the pinnacle of faith and that's the courage of faith. True faith is, most of all, courageous. That's where it really demonstrates itself. Any kind of faith in God, any kind of professed faith in Christ that crumbles under certain pressures is not a true faith. This is demonstrated to us in the teaching of our Lord in the sermon on the soils where He describes some people who on the surface look like they're open to receiving the message and the seed goes in to what He calls the rocky soil and for a little while it springs up and it looks like a wonderful response and even classifies it as the fact that the Word, or the Word of the gospel is received with joy. But then, He says, when the sun comes out, the roots on that kind of soil can't penetrate to go down deep and get the water because there's rockbed right below the surface, and so the sun burns the plant and it dies, never having borne fruit. And Jesus says the sun symbolizes *thlipsis*, pressure, persecution. That's the test. That's the test.

Or it may be that kind of soil that's full of weeds and thorns, never letting go of the love of the world, the love of this age, the love of riches and eventually that chokes out the Word. There are all kinds of temporary believers. Then there are pressures that come upon all of us that inevitably reveal who's real and who is not.

So let's look at some of those who were tested and demonstrated the kind of faith...the kind of courage, I should say, that true faith possesses. Verses 30 and 31, we may not get pass this. "By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith, Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient after she had welcomed the spies in peace."

Now, as I said, we're moving in the history of the Old Testament, out of the Pentateuch and in to Joshua. First we're reminded of the walls of Jericho, *teichos* in the Greek, referring to an outer wall, the great massive city wall that surrounded the city of Jericho. Up to this point, the writer has been citing as examples of faith the great men before and after the Flood, up until Israel left Egypt. Moses being the one drawn out of the experience in Egypt and the one who led them out. They came out of the land of Egypt, they were on their way to the promised land.

Now we're in to the promised land and we're going to meet some of the heroes of life in the promised land. By the way, there's an omission. There's an omission of 40 years of unbelief while they wandered in the wilderness and the generation of doubters died out. Now we find the generation that is able to go into the land and the story is given to us in Joshua chapter 6 .

So let's go back to that for a moment. You're familiar with it, Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel. They had been told that the children of Israel were near by. They were massive, some would estimate that originally when they came out of Egypt there were as many as two million. We don't know exactly how many were left by the time they were ready to enter the land of Canaan but they were formidable.

Jericho had already been spied out, you remember that earlier in Joshua chapter 2? And Jericho was not on lock-down because of the sons of Israel. No one went out, no one came in. "And the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I've given Jericho into your hand with its king and its valiant warriors. You shall march around the city, all the men who are circling the city once, just do that for six days. And seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark, then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall be that when they make a large blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout and the wall of the city will fall down flat and the people will go up every man straight ahead."

Just natural human skepticism would say. "Could you go over that again?" What?? We're going to conquer how? We're going to march around the wall once a day for six days and on the seventh day we're going to march around the wall and the seventh time we're going to shout at the top of our voice and the walls are just going to fall out flat?

I would conclude that obedience to this command would be an act of faith, wouldn't you? It seems such a strange thing. And, of course, you know the story. It's exactly what they did.

They did it and the chronicle is given of each day and then you come down to verse 20, the people shouted, the priests blew the trumpets. When the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout, the wall fell down flat so that the people went up into the city, every man

straight ahead and they took the city. They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey with the edge of the sword. It was a massive slaughter.

So here we are at the entrance into the land of Canaan, the land of promise, and there's a demonstration of faith. Faith on the part of Joshua who is the leader and faith on the part of the people. Moses is gone. Joshua is the new leader. They have crossed the Jordan and in crossing the Jordan they are now sandwiched between the Jordan and Jericho and Jericho is kind of a frontier fortress, guarding the southern part of Canaan. And this is their first obstacle and is the test of their faith. Are they going to believe God when God tells them what He wants them to do? Jericho was a strong city, it was barred, it was fortified to take it. It seemed an impossible task, it was fortified on purpose because it was the guardian city of the southern part of the land of Israel. It is one of the cities that scarred the spies and caused them to say, back in Deuteronomy 1:28, "The people is greater and taller than we, cities are great and walled up to heaven." And, of course, they got punished for that, that's the reason they had to wander around for four decades, because of their unbelief. But Jericho had to be captured. It is the gateway to the land and the people obeyed and it fell exactly as God said it would. God commanded them six days, go around each day, on the seventh day go around seven times, the seventh time it will collapse. That's exactly what it did.

Maybe they seemed a little embarrassed while all the Jerichoites up on the top of the wall watched them walk around and then leave six days in a row. It appeared ridiculous. Surely they were puzzled as well as frustrated. This didn't seem a right approach at all. But they obeyed the Word of God. They learned not to disobey because the consequences were so severe.

You know this tells us, or reminds us that God delights in slaying the pride of men, doesn't it? Not only the pride of the Jews who probably thought they could conquer Jericho just by their sheer force, even though they had no army and they had no weapons. But even more so, God delights in slaying the pride of men with regard to the Philistines. They, thinking back, how they were defeated by a shepherd boy and a stone, and here in the land of Canaan, suffers its first defeat when people simply walk around its walls and blow a horn and shout.

But the people exhibit faith. That is the testimony of Scripture. That is the testimony of God.

There are four degrees of faith, just to kind of expand that a little bit. There is faith which receives...faith which receives. "And the empty-handed beggars come and receive what God has to give." That's one component of faith. Then there's faith which reckons. It's the simplest faith to receive the gift, it's the next level of faith to reckon that God has made promises and we can count on God to fulfill His promises. At the point of salvation, you have a kind of a beggar faith, he comes to receive the gift, she comes to receive the gift. The next level of faith begins to understand that with this gift are massive promises that stretch into the endless eons of eternity, full of promise. Faith

reckons that God will fulfill those promises. Then there is faith that risks. Because these promises grip the heart and are held with confidence, faith begins to dare to be obedient in any circumstance. And then lastly, there's faith that rests. Throughout suffering it is unmoved. But always faith rules the life of a true believer.

For centuries the children of Israel had been a nation of slaves in Egypt and for 40 years nomads in the desert, their great leader was dead. They were without a military experience, they were without an army, devoid of artillery, no weapons but the living God was for them and they had come to believe in Him and faith gained the victory.

That allows me to just give you one thing that I want you to file in your mind, the demonstration of faith is always obedience. The demonstration of faith is always obedience. Faith and obedience are inseparable. When it says to come to the Christ and put your faith in Him, that's a command and if you do that, that's an act of obedience. "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him." The proclamation of the gospel is in itself a command, repent, believe, that's command mode. And any person who embraces Christ in an act of repentance and faith is obeying the gospel. That's why the Bible talks about that and Romans 1 talks about the need to obey the gospel. The gospel is a command, it is a command to repent and believe. Salvation comes to those who obey. And everything after that in the life of faith is obeying what God has commanded. Obeying what God has demanded.

So faith is demonstrated in obedience. The kind of obedience that has courage, the kind of obedience that will occur no matter what the price, no matter what the cost, and that's what we're going to learn in this last section. We've already seen it in the earlier heroes of the faith, but here in particular it's about the courage of faith, that faith can't be broken no matter how dire the circumstances are. It endures. It expects triumph. It expects victory.

Our family, when our children were much younger, had the opportunity to go to the grave of Robert Moffat, great missionary. We stood by his grave there in an obscure graveyard that only Christian people would know even existed. Patricia was there with me and our children. And I've read enough about Robert Moffat to have a great appreciation for his life. But one of the things that's so stunning about him is he labored for years and years and years among a certain group of people who never saw one single convert, not one. Some of his far-distant friends in England wrote a letter and asked if they could somehow send him a gift, that they wanted a gift to give to him to encourage him and demonstrate their love. He wrote back and said, "I would like a full communion set." Full communion set?

It arrived months and months later. By the time it arrived, there were twelve converted sitting together having communion. This is a man of great faith who anticipated the fulfillment of the promise of God that was latent in the call of God to go to this land. Struggles were immense in his life and ministry. True faith has the courage to believe God in impossible conflict with ridiculous orders and incredible

promises. And the experience at Jericho is an illustration of that kind of faith...to do what seems ridiculous, unnecessary, foolish. But what marks faith is obedience...obedience

We often talk about that when you say, "Well how do you know when someone's a Christian?" Anybody who's a Christian obeys the Word of God, that's the pattern of their life. Perfect obedience? No. It's not the perfection of their life but it is the direction of their life.

We have then a more personal illustration in verse 31. "By faith, Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace." Interesting that the word "disobedient" is there, it's the opposite of faith demonstrated from the same Old Testament account, by the way. The Holy Spirit chooses the next illustration of faith, conquering faith, courageous faith and it belonged, of all people, to a prostitute. A prostitute in the hall of fame? Well we know one thing, if there were any Jews still believing you got in the Kingdom of God by works, it would be hard to figure out how Rahab got in to this list. She's a shocker. She sort of blasts the sensibilities of the Jews in the community who are still hanging on to the notion that salvation is given to those who earn it. She's a Canaanite, not even a Jew. She's a Gentile. She's an Amorite. And the Amorites, their whole seed was devoted to utter destruction being cursed by God.

But Rahab believed God. And one of the staggering, staggering realities about Rahab is she ended up in the Messianic line. Now there were, of course, in Jericho unbelievers who perished, disobedient. People of Jericho didn't believe, they didn't obey. This implies that the truth of God had been deposited in their midst. They must have received the Word of God to believe or not to believe, to obey or not to obey. Some translations say they believed not, but it's *apeitheo* which means disobedient. They must have heard the truth about the true and living God. Maybe they heard the story about them being delivered out of Egypt. Maybe the message from the spies had been given to some people and been spread. They sought no mercy from this God, they sought no grace from this God. They sought no forgiveness from this God. They had no interest in obeying Him whatsoever. As a result, the whole city was wiped out, as I read. All the animals, all the people died by the edge of the sword. Except Rahab.

Why? "Rahab welcomed the spies in peace." Welcomed, *dechomai*, to welcome with hospitality. Her story is worth looking at. Go back to Joshua, we'll take a brief look at it. Chapter 2, "Joshua sent two men as spies into the land. 'Go view the land especially Jericho.' They went, came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab and lodged there. It was told the king of Jericho, saying, 'Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.' And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab saying, 'Bring out the men who have come to you, have entered your house for they have come to search out all the land.'" They're coming to spy on us because they're going to conquer us.

“But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, ‘Yes, the men came to me but I didn’t know where they were from.’ It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark that the men went out. ‘I don’t know where the men went. Pursue them quickly for you will overtake them.’”

Was that the truth? No, it was a lie. Was it necessary? No, it’s never necessary. Would God have protected the spies if she had told the truth? Absolutely. We would have just had a different story of how God protected the spies. This doesn’t justify the lie, but we can commend her for her courage in the case of hiding them. So she chases away the people who are looking for them, telling them that they have to hurry because they’re out of town and they’re going to have to run if they want to catch them. In the meantime, verse 6, she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stocks of flax which he had laid in order on the roof. So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan, to the fords.” They’re chasing them and, of course, they’re back in Jericho on her roof underneath the flax. “As soon as they who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate. Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof and said to them, ‘I know that the Lord has given you the land.’” Wow. “And that the terror of you has fallen on us and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you, for we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came into Egypt and what you did to the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, Sihon and Og, two amazing stories, whom you utterly destroyed. When we heard it, our hearts melted, no courage remained in any man any longer because of you for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”

She believed in the true and living God and she believed fully in all the revelation that was available to her. “Now therefore, please swear to me by the Lord since I have dealt kindly with you that you also will deal kindly with my father’s household and give me a pledge of truth and spare my father, mother, brother, sisters, all who belong to them, deliver our lives from death.’ So the men said to her, ‘Our life for yours, if you do not tell this business of ours, it shall come about when the Lord gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.’”

She sent them away, as the rest of the story tells. They, verse 16, are told, “Go to the hill country so that the pursuers will not happen upon you. Hide yourselves there for three days until the pursuers return, then afterward you may go on your way.’ The men said to her, ‘We shall be free from this oath to you which you have made us swear, unless when we come into the land you tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window from which you let us down and gather yourself into the house, your father, your mother, your brothers and your father’s household.’” In other words, they’re not going to know who these people are to spare their life unless they’re all collected in one place and that house is identified, because there are going to be many of them sweeping in. “If you tell this business of ours, then we’re free from the oath which you made us swear.” She said, “According to your words, so be it.’ so she sent them away and they departed. She tied the scarlet cord in the window.

Go over to chapter 6 verse 21. We read this a little bit ago. This last verse is enough in the record of the destruction. Verse 21, "They utterly destroyed everything in the city, man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey with the edge of the sword."

That's just a devastating thing to think about. "Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, 'Go into the harlot's house, bring the woman and all she has out of there, as you have sworn to her.' So the young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father, her mother, her brothers, and all she had. They also brought out all her relatives and placed them outside the camp of Israel. So they burned the city with fire and all that was in it, only the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron they put in the treasury of the house of the Lord. However, Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all she had Joshua spared and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho."

Jericho the city was rejected and destroyed, Rahab and her family were spared. What about the destruction of the Canaanites? Can you legitimize that? Well historians tell us that the destruction of this Canaanite city and all Canaanite culture was a great boon to the welfare of humanity from a purely social perspective. They were so debased.

Believe me, God punishes sin and He has a right to punish it whenever and wherever He desires. And He punishes those who do not believe in Him and do not obey His commands. But in the case of Rahab, she acknowledged faith in the true and living God. She believed and staked her life on it. She put herself in a dangerous, dangerous position, hiding spies on the roof. She staked her life on the fact that this was the true God.

She had a kind of adventurous courage to fling her lot with this deity about which she had only heard from second-hand sources. But she believed in the true God and because of that, she was spared.

According to Matthew chapter 1 verse 5, she is placed into the line of Messiah and here's how it works and this kind of ties in the book of Ruth...Joshua, Judges and Ruth. She's the mother of Boaz, she's the mother of Boaz, the husband of Ruth. She is then the great, great grandmother of King David. How wonderful. Rahab shows the faith that has the courage to stand in the midst of dire danger. That's what faith does. It doesn't crumble because the circumstances are threatening or difficult. True saving faith, true faith that grips God does what is right, obeys God no matter what the price.

This is essentially all wrapped up in the words of Jesus that have become so familiar to us. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." The price might be death...even horrendous death on a cross.

Well, conquering Jericho was just the beginning and they began to settle in the land of Canaan. And in verse 32 we meet six men from the settlement of Canaan to the early monarchy. But we'll learn about them next time.

Lord, we thank You so much for a wonderful, wonderful day. It's been so rich. We thank You for folks who have filled up the prayer room this morning, many of them eager to know the Savior. We thank You for that. We pray that the work that You're doing in their lives will overpower all the remaining malingering longings, hankering for the world and that the work would be completed, that we might rejoice and You might be glorified. Thank You for a wonderful day. Thank You for Keith and Kristin and the good music tonight we enjoyed. We're so blessed as a church, so rich in fellowship. But that which enriches us the most is the vouchsafing, to borrow an old word of the truth which has been planted in our hearts by the blessed Holy Spirit. How rich we are to know that truth, embrace that truth, to live by that truth. May we in every sense demonstrate that true saving faith produces obedient people. May we be known as those who obey the Word of God and do it joyfully with delight.

And for those who may be among us who are lingering on the edges, they have come to an intellectual understanding of the gospel but they're in danger of neglecting this great salvation, forfeiting that eternal rest, falling back, being brought to a far more severe judgment, we pray, Lord, that You will bring them all the way to Christ, all the way to that spiritual perfection that is found only in Him. Use us this week as we serve You and may we in every sense live lives that are overwhelmed with gratitude for the blessings that are ours both now and forever. For which we thank You in the name of Christ, and everyone said...Amen.

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