

## Rahab – “God Seeks the Broken”

### *The God Who Seeks*

Joshua 2

01/21/2024

### Introduction

#### Pray.

**One of the things that has always appealed to me about Christianity, one of the things that has always made this whole Jesus thing more believable, is the people that are included in the storyline of the Scriptures.**

The characters of the Bible help make Christianity more believable for me. Because if I was trying to make up a world religion, I would not include some of the individuals the Biblical authors include as fundamental in the narrative of the story.

*For example:*

- **Noah** – Yes, he is the one who worships God, God calls him to build the ark. Celebrates being the one God who used to build the ark by getting drunk and passing out naked in his tent in front of his kids.
- **Abraham** – God starts his whole world redemption plan – a people for Himself in a place. He’s also a Liar. Misogynist. A self-protective and passive husband who willingly hands his wife over to Pharaoh so that he can save his own skin.
- **Moses** – The one who leads Gods’ people out of slavery in Egypt! Also...a murderer, a coward, a people-pleaser, and (as we saw last week) a runaway.
- **Peter** – One of the 3 closest of Jesus’ disciples. And also denies Jesus 3x at his moment of greatest need and even after the resurrection, as a leader in the early church, struggles to welcome non-Jewish people into the Church.

And all of those examples and many more, to be honest...give me so much hope. I love the stories of the Bible, because they are not and cannot be read as – “Awesome people doing awesome things for God that you should emulate if you too want your life to be awesome.”

**The stories of the Bible are constant reminders of the grace and pursuit of God for messed up, addicted, hurting, down and out, causing pain and receiving pain people like you and like me.**

And that’s part of what we’ve been aiming to highlight over the course of this series – God’s tremendous grace and mercy to seek and save and redeem humanity. The story of humanity is not us seeking God, but God seeking us.

And we’re going to see that really clearly in our story today in **Joshua 2**.

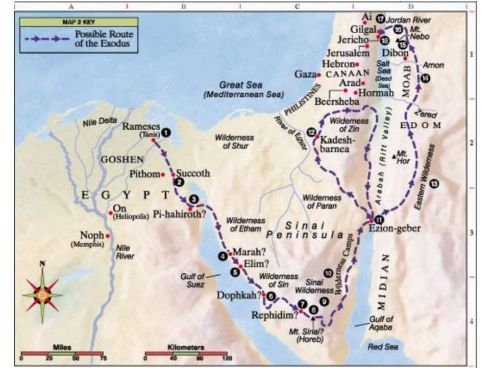
And here’s what we’ll hone in on – **God seeks the broken.**

### Background to Joshua 2

**Backstory:**

- Now, if you remember last week in Exodus 3, when God called Moses out of hiding in Mideon (you remember burning bush, all that) he said (Ex 3:17) that he was going to use Moses to lead his people *out* of Egypt *and bring them to the land of Canaan*. What is known in the Scriptures as “the Promised Land”.
- So Moses goes, does the back and forth with Pharaoh, 10 plagues all that.

- Pharaoh lets the Israelites go, and shortly thereafter they make it to the edge of Canaan for the first time...Numbers 13.
  - It doesn't go so hot – Moses sends 12 spies. 10 come back and are like “no way. People are too big.”
  - 2 of them have faith – God has given us this land. Those two? **Caleb and Joshua.**
  - The people listen to the 10. They don't try to enter the land.
  - God punishes them. No one from that generation is allowed to enter into the promised land except...Caleb and Joshua.
- Fast forward 40 years later, 1446 BC God shows up in the burning bush, now 1406 BC they are back at the edge of the Promised Land once more.
  - Moses has passed away.
  - **Joshua is now in charge.**
  - And that's where we pick it up today – **Joshua 2:1.**



### Jericho + Rahab

**1 And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there.**

Alright, let me clear up some details for us.

First, let's talk about Jericho.

Jericho, the city that Joshua sends these 2 men to spy out, is a fortified military city that sits on the eastern side of the land of Canaan. And it's well known at this time for its vices and brutality.

**To say it was a wicked city is probably an understatement. It was a city full of evil and every form of vile practice.**

- We read about some of their pagan rituals in Deuteronomy 18, and they include:
  - The burning of infant children as sacrifices to their false gods.
  - Giant orgies that would regularly include the sexual assault of both women and men from other nations they had conquered.
  - All sorts of divination and fortune telling and necromancing.
  - I could keep going but you get the point.

It is a horrendously evil place, in every way shape and form. That's Jericho.

The second thing I want to get clear on is who exactly is Rahab.

The text very clearly refers to her as a prostitute. And this is no small detail. In fact, every other time she shows up in the Scriptures except for one, she is referred to as a prostitute. In Heb 11, what some refer to as “the hall of faith” – a who's who list of OT people, Rahab makes it in and the text says – “by faith, the prostitute Rahab...”. It doesn't say “by faith the murderer David.” “By faith the runaway Moses.”

- And on the one hand it's like...come on. Maybe a different qualifier can follow her throughout history.
- But on the other hand – it means God through His Word is trying to emphasize this specific fact – there's a beauty of what he is about to do in this story that comes from the fact that a prostitute is included in God's plan.

**Because while we don't know exactly what Rahab's story is, we can do our best to assume some things based on what we know about ancient Canaan.**

- You see in this part of the world at the time, women as a whole were treated as 2nd class citizens.
  - Most weren't allowed to work, or participate in the local economy.
  - You had citizenship and the rights that came with it through your marriage, as a sort of de-facto citizenship via your husband.

So if that is how women are treated, can you imagine the kind of treatment a female prostitute would have to endure?

- We also know it's very likely Rahab would not have chosen this life on her own.
  - This is not simply as one commentator I won't name says it – the story of a woman who wanted a freer life, a life of thrill and excitement away from the drab monotony of the home.
  - Instead it's much more likely, as was common practice in Canaan and other ancient cultures, for her to have been sold into this life in order for the family to pay off a debt they could not afford to pay.

And then it's probably been a few years since all of that has taken place, and one can only imagine the cumulative effect of abuse and mistreatment and pain and suffering on the human soul. The collective toll on Rahab's heart.

The way this sort of lifestyle would harden a person, and shrink their ability to give and receive love.

**This is what we're encountering as we enter this scene in Joshua 2 – as we're introduced to the place of Jericho and the person of Rahab.**

**And I don't know of a better word to describe it than simply – **brokenness**.**

And here's what I mean by that...

- The word the Scriptures use for God's design of how the world should work is the Hebrew word **shalom**.
  - Shalom is best translated as flourishing, or wholeness, or rightness.
  - Things are in shalom when things are as they should be.
  - **Specifically, there is flourishing present in what the Bible would say are our 3 main relationships:**
    - **Flourishing in our relationship with God.**
    - **Flourishing in our relationship with others.**
    - **Flourishing in our relationship with ourselves.**
- Now, one of the consequences, or results, of sin – is that the world no longer operates in a default setting of shalom. The world is now **broken**.
  - Humanity is not flourishing in relationship with God, rather we are His enemies who want to rebel and run our own lives.
  - Humanity is not flourishing in our relationship with others – we constantly mistreat one another, lie to one another, hurt and harm one another.
  - Humanity is not flourishing in our relationship to ourselves – meaning not that there's an absence of self-love but rather at the innermost core of our being we are not as we should be.
    - Sin is not simply something we do, it is also, clearly laid out in the Scriptures, as a kind of disease of the soul. An illness within ourselves that is constantly deforming us away from Christ-likeness.
    - Ignatius of Antioch (1st century church father, mentored by apostle John) says that apart from Christ our souls are "diseased with ungodliness and wicked lusts."

*And so when I say this setting in Joshua 2 is full of brokenness, I'm referring to that very "not-rightness". Things in Jericho, things with Rahab, are not as they should be.*

*It's messed up both out here in the surrounding circumstances and in here, the hearts of the people. Let's see what God does...*

#### **V2-7**

2 And it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." 3 Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." 4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. 5 And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." 6 But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. 7 So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

#### **God Seeking Jericho + Rahab**

*Now, why would Rahab do this? Why would she put herself at great risk to protect two men who are part of a nation who is coming to conquer her people? Let's see what the story tells us...*

#### **V8-11**

8 Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof 9 and said to the men, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. 10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. 11 And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

Notice the contrast of language in verse 9 as compared to 10 and 11.

Look at verse 10+11, let's do a little Bible study. What does Rahab say?

- V10 – "**We** have heard..."
- V11 – "As soon as **we** heard it..."

***Who is she talking about there? The people of Jericho.***

The entire city has heard reports of what God has done for the Israelites. The mighty deeds and power of God – To part the Red Sea so they could walk across on dry ground, to deliver them from the hand of these two wicked kings Sihon and Og.

***News and stories of the power of the Lord and the miraculous works of His hands have spread across the world and reached Canaan.***

Just like God promised Moses it would happen. In Exodus 9, God tells Pharaoh through Moses – everything I am doing to deliver my people from slavery in your land of Egypt is to "show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth."

And that has come true – the power and glory of God has spread among the nations. And the Canaanites have heard what the God of Israel has done – and they rightly are afraid. Rahab says in v11 – “when we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man.” AKA – the courage has left the city.

*Don't miss what this means – This is God seeking the broken city of Jericho.*

**God uses the stories of His power for the Israelites to seek the broken people of Jericho.**

The fact that they hear of the power and might of the one true God is God seeking them...that they might realize “he is the one true God” and they might repent and turn from their wicked ways. Turn from their idolatry and worship of false gods. Turn from their sexual immorality.

***Turn from their brokenness and turn to the one true Yawheh who is Lord.***

This is so often how our God works. He does miraculous things in one person's life as a way of seeking out others who do not know Him. He shows up in power here, so that others might see it, hear about what He's done, and want to worship Him as well.

That's part of our desire for these videos we've been showing before each sermon – that we would hear these stories and not go “ah, that cute and quaint. Golf clap.” But that we would hear in the stories of our church family, the power and mighty and glory of God, and we might let those stories lead us to worship.

***But notice the contrast between how the king responds, and how Rahab responds.***

The king knows the stories, and he sends his guards – get these men. Deal with this threat.

Look instead how Rahab responds, v9 – **“I know that the Lord has given you the land...”**

**We** have heard the stories...I know what they mean.

And then look at v12 – **for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.**

All of Jericho has heard the stories. God has sought them out in their brokenness through the stories of his powerful and glorious name. ***Only Rahab responds in faith.***

“I've heard the stories,” Rahab says, “And I know the Lord is God.”

***And her faith leads her to act...She hides the spies. And here's what she asks for in return.***

**V12-21**

**12 Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign 13 that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” 14 And the men said to her, “Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the Lord gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.” 15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. 16 And she said to them, “Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way.” 17 The men said to her, “We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. 18 Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let**

**us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. 19 Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. 20 But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear." 21 And she said, "According to your words, so be it." Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.**

Rahab puts her faith in the one true God.  
She saves the lives of these 2 men.

They honor this agreement – she ties the scarlet cord in the window.

- A few chapters later in Joshua 6 when the Israelites come in and conquer Jericho, Rahab and her whole family are saved.
- And Joshua 6 says Rahab lives out the rest of her life as a part of the nation of Israel.

***And her story becomes marked in the history of God's people.***

- From Rahab's lineage comes Ruth. King David. And eventually the Christ, Jesus Son of God.
- She's in the Hebrews 11 hall of faith.
- James 2 she's mentioned as the clear example of a living active faith.

**Rahab. A story and a life full of brokenness...**

- She's separated from God, she's not a part of God's people.
- Abused. Mistreated – all of this brokenness in her relationships with others.
- Prostitute. Sex-Worker – brokenness in her own soul.

A broken life. A broken heart. A broken place. God seeks her out. Chases her down. Draws her to Himself. Saves her and her entire family. Brings them into the family of God. And uses her in His redemption story, not just for the Israelites in this moment in time, but for the whole world.

### **God Seeks the Broken**

And so I wonder this morning, let me bring this a bit closer to home for us – **do you think God could do the same thing for you and your brokenness?**

I don't know the specifics of what your "brokenness" might be. What I do know is that you're a human, so I had to guess there's probably more brokenness in your story than you wish there to be.

**Brokenness in your relationship to God.**

- Maybe you've never surrendered to Him as Savior and Lord. You've been going about things on your own. Trying to make your own way, run your own life, be your own king.
- You feel like – "There's no way God could ever want me. There's no way God could ever love me. I've rejected him too much, too strongly, and for too long."

**What about brokenness in your relationships to others?**

- Abuse you have had to endure.
- The pain of loss.
- Parents who didn't love you like you wish they did.
- Siblings who mistreated you.
- Heartache you've had to endure.

- You feel beat up, cast aside, and rejected.

### **The Brokenness you know of in your own soul.**

- You might be well aware of your own sin. Your own shortcomings. Your own failures.
- The way this corrupting disease of sin has pervaded your life.
- No one needs to remind you of the ways you have hurt others, mistreated others, used others.
- The ways you have lost your temper, cut others down, lied to your spouse, hurt your friend, yelled at your kid.
- The addiction you've been carrying on your back for a decade, two decades, three decades.
- The constant gap between who you wish you could be and who you actually are in your holiness.

**And the cumulative weight of all of that feels like this big giant X over your soul and your life.**

**If that's where you are, can I just encourage you this morning?**

**You're at exactly the right place for God to find you. For God to seek you. For God to chase you down and draw you back to Himself.**

*Because here's the crazy good news of the gospel of Jesus: Brokenness in the kingdom of God is not just acceptable, it's required.*

If you feel like "I'm way too broken for God to want me." You're exactly at the right place.

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, Jesus says, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

God seeks the broken. That's the banner of Rahab's life. She's one of the last people you'd expect in the narrative of God. And yet God seeks her out, draws her to Himself, and uses her mightily in His plan of redemption.

**Jen Wilkin – "We should not be surprised to find in Rahab's story a story of redemption, although it is perhaps a little bit of a different story than we may have thought it to be because God is always most pleased to work through the last and the least."**

This is how our God works. There's not just *room* in the kingdom of God for the broken. The kingdom of God is *for* the broken.

### **Rahab and Jesus**

**God seeks Rahab in her brokenness to draw her to Himself...and He is still doing the same thing today.**

You know how I know that? Because Jesus is all over the story of Rahab. Did you see Him? Did you see Jesus in the narrative? The whole OT points to Him, you just gotta have eyes to see it.

Look back with me at v18...

**18 Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. 19 Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head.**

Why was Rahab saved despite all of the brokenness of her life and circumstances?

**Because she was covered by the scarlet cord in the window. The scarlet cord was the banner of protection and salvation over Rahab.**

**How can we be saved and reconciled to God and brought into His Kingdom despite all of the brokenness of what we have done and what has been done to us?**

**Through the covering of the scarlet blood shed on the cross.**

This is at the center of what Christ has come to do and why He has come to die – Christ sheds his blood, on the cross for us – to cover our sin, to cover our shame, to redeem our brokenness. He has come to put the world back together.

- He has come and died and risen to restore our flourishing with God.
- He has come and died and risen to restore our flourishing with others.
- He has come and died and risen to restore flourishing in our souls.

He has come to deal with brokenness.

- The brokenness of sins we've committed.
- The brokenness of sins committed against us.

All of it – can be paid for, dealt with, redeemed, and made new – through the shed blood of Christ – the covering of that scarlet blood.

**1 Peter 3:18-19 – 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.**

**1 John 1:7 – But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.**

Let me close by reading to us the words of this famous hymn, that puts this message so perfectly.

**Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy wounded side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure.  
Save from wrath and make me pure.**

**Not the labor of my hands  
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and Thou alone**

**Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to the cross I cling.**



**Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless look to Thee for grace.  
Wretched to the fount I fly  
Wash me, Savior, or I die**

The scarlet covering of the blood of Christ is offered to all of us.  
He seeks the broken.  
Will we turn to him, as Rahab did, in faith?

**Practice – Confession.**

**Pray.**