

MAKING CHANGE JOSHUA 2

VIDEO ... STAR TREK'S MONOLOGUE (38 SEC)

I was never a 'treky'. Star Trek was never my thing. I know that for many ... they would not miss an episode of Star Trek. If it was on TV ... they were planted right in front of it and did not leave until the show was over. The only thing I ever got out of those shows was what we just saw on video ... "to boldly go where no man has never gone before." For us to go where we have never been before demands the courage to change from where we have been to where we are going. Not an easy thing to do. BUT ... many times ... absolutely necessary.

This morning we want to take a look at a woman who did just that. She went where she had never been before. And it changed everything for her.

The Israelites are still on the banks of the Jordan River. They are making final preparations to cross over the river and begin their conquering of the Promised Land. The first city they are going to have to battle is the city of Jericho. As little kids, we would sing a song about Jericho in Sunday School. The words went like this ...

VIDEO ... BATTLE OF JERICHO (35 SEC)

Archaeologists have done a great deal of research at Jericho. They tell us the city covered about eight acres, with inner and outer walls surrounding the city. The inner wall was twelve feet thick, the outer wall six feet thick, and there were houses upon the walls. The walls stood about thirty feet high, and excavations show that these walls were "violently destroyed." Of the many people who lived in Jericho, we know the name of only one—Rahab.

Turn with me to **JOSHUA 2** and let's take a look at the change that took place in the life of Rahab.

Remember ... we are presently in a sermon series titled "Facing the Future." It is about how to handle changes that take place in our lives as we move forward into the future with Christ.

The **FIRST** week we asked the question ... “What God is up to.” We were reminded that God is a God on the move and when he moves ... change happens. So ... as followers of Christ we need to

- Anticipate Change
- Prepare for Change
- Embrace Change

LAST week we learned how to “Face Change with Courage.”

- We were reminded that God has plans for our future
- We were reminded that God will walk with us in the midst of those changes
- We were reminded that to be successful in the midst of change we have to do it God’s way.

TODAY I want us to take a careful look at the change that took place in the life of a lady named Rahab.

1 ... SHE WAS LOST ... SO WERE WE

If you and known Rahab ... there would have been no question at all that she was a lost person ... living a very paganistic life.

Listen to **VERSE 1 ... Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. “Go, look over the land,” he said, “especially Jericho.” So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.**

What does this verse tell us about Rahab? ... she was a prostitute. That is not a vocation that you expect holy people to engage in. She was lost!

BUT ... you might be thinking ... why would the two spies go to a prostitute’s house? Not a whole lot of holiness going on there either ... right? The fact is that most Inn Keepers were prostitutes. The Inns were not like they are today. You can go to a hotel today and find all kinds of entertainment on the TV ... some good ... some bad. The entertainment in those days was the Inn Keeper.

The spies had come into town and found a hotel to stay in while they were there ... and it was owned by a prostitute named Rahab.

But back to the point here ... Rahab was lost! Rahab needed God in her life! AND ... it would be very easy for us to sit here this morning and agree ... She was a sinner who needed God. She needed to make a big change in her life.

BUT ... listen to **ROMANS 3:23 ...** ²³ **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** The fact is ... none of us may have ever been a prostitute ... but all of us have been sinners. All of us need God in our lives!

2 ... SHE WAS CONDEMNED ... SO WERE WE

God was clear as to what the Israelites were to do to the people who were living in the Promised Land. They were condemned ... they were to be destroyed.

Listen to **DEUTERONOMY 7:16 ...** ¹⁶ **You must destroy all the peoples the LORD your God gives over to you. Do not look on them with pity and do not serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.**

Why would God want them destroyed? Because they had not chosen God Jehovah as their God. They were worshipping other gods and Yahweh did not want his people to leave him and worship other gods as well.

Even if the people of Canaan ... the Promised Land did not realize it ... they were condemned. That included Rahab.

Friends ... if we have not yet committed our lives to Christ ... we too are condemned! I have already read to you that we all have sinned. Listen to what the results of that sin is ... **ROMANS 6:23 ...** ²³ **For the wages of sin is death.** Rahab's condemnation was no different than yours and mine! If we are not worshipping God Jehovah ... if we are worshipping other gods ... then condemnation is our sentence.

3 ... SHE WAS GIVEN GRACE ... SO WERE WE

Look at **DEUTERONOMY 7:1-2 ...** When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—² and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally.

That is the condemnation part ... but listen to **GENESIS 15:13 ...** ¹⁶ In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

God waited for over 400 years for the nations in Canaan to make a change ... to turn away from their gods and turn to him. That my friends is grace! And it is that same grace that he shows today! I cannot tell you how many times I have heard people ask ... “Why doesn’t God just come and get this all over with?” And that is a great question ... but the answer is ... at least in part ... because he is showing grace on those who have not turned away from their own gods and turned to him! He waits because of his grace.

I am glad that God showed his grace on me long enough that I understood the need to have him in my life! If he had not ... my condemnation would have been the same as for those in Canaan. I would have been destroyed ... not just physically but spiritually as well!

But that is not the only grace that God showed the day this passage took place. He showed grace on Rahab because she favored the people of God and Yahweh.

Listen to **VERSES 2-6 ...** ² The king of Jericho was told, “Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.” ³ So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.” ⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. ⁵ At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.” ⁶ (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.)

She knew that the gods of her past were unable to deliver. And she knew that God Yahweh was able to deliver. And she chose to align herself with that God. And we will see that God placed his grace on her.

4 ... SHE HEARD THE WORD ... SO HAVE WE

Listen to **VERSES 9-10 ...** ⁹ and said to them, “I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all

who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. ¹⁰ 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 Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.

The people of Jericho were not ignorant of God Jehovah! They had heard of him and what he was capable of doing. And they were afraid of him. But for most of them ... not afraid enough to change. But there was something different about Rahab. Notice what she calls God in these verses ... LORD. She had heard the word about God being the Lord of life.

You have too! You cannot sit in most churches on a Sunday morning and not here about God Jehovah and his Son Jesus Christ. The question is ... what do you do with what you have heard? Are you one of those who has heard about God ... and maybe even feared God ... but you are doing nothing about it? You refuse to change. OR ... are you like Rahab? You have heard about this God of the Israelite nation ... this God that had so much love for people that he became flesh and came to earth? And you ... like Rahab ... choose to change.

5 ... SHE BELIEVED THE WORD ... AND SO MUST WE

ROMANS 10:17 says ... ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Just because you hear something does not mean that you necessarily believe it. I might tell you that there is a Brink's truck sitting out in the parking lot right now the guards in the truck are ready to give anyone who goes out there \$100,000. Now, you have heard me say that ... but do you believe it? Obviously not because none of you got up and headed to the parking lot.

You can hear something and not believe it. Rahab had heard about the power and the delivery of God Jehovah and she believed it. And fact she believed it enough that she wanted to make a change in her life. She wanted to turn her back on the gods of Jericho and give her life to the God of the Israelites. We call that placing your faith in God.

There is no one in this room here today that has not heard that Jesus Christ died for you ... to pay for the penalty of your sins ... so that you can be set free from that debt to God. Your sins are totally erased when you place your faith in Christ. And

not only that ... because of his resurrection ... not only are you forgiven ... you have heaven waiting! And if you have never heard that before ... you have now. The question is ... what do you do with it? Do you place your faith in what you believe by making a change ... or do you continue to do what you have always done?

6 ... SHE OBEYED THE WORD ... SO MUST WE

JAMES 2:25-26 says ... ²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Listen ... this is important! Lodging the spies and protecting them from the soldiers is not what saved Rahab. Her putting her faith in the God of those spies is what saved her. Protecting the spies was simply Rahab doing what God ... through the Holy Spirit ... told her to do! And because she did that ... she physically showed that she had placed her faith in God.

Listen to **EPHESIANS 2:8-9** ... ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

In the same way that Rahab was saved by faith ... so are we. But just like Rahab ... God tells us ... through his word ... to do something that physically shows our faith in him. Listen to **ACTS 2:37-38** ... ³⁷ When the people heard this, (the gospel) they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

7 ... SHE WAS SAVED ... AND SO SHALL WE BE

Fast forward ahead in the book of Joshua to **JOSHUA 6:22-25** ... ²² Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the prostitute’s house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her.” ²³ So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place

outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴ Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. ²⁵ But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

Remember ... the Israelites were God's children ... and Rahab became a child of God as well! She was saved through the grace of God because she chose to make a change. She chose to follow God Jehovah rather than the gods of Jericho.

HEBREWS 11:30-31 ... ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. ³¹ By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

Listen to me ... when you choose Christ ... you choose salvation! **ACTS 4:12** tells us ... ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

CONCLUSION

Rahab ... a sinner living in a paganistic community made a change ... She chose to leave her life of sin and join with the family of God. It was a change that led to dramatic blessings! Not only was she able to become a child of God but God used here in a mighty way ... Listen to **MATTHEW 1:5** ... **Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab**, You know what that verse is? It is a part of the ancestry of Jesus.

God has the ability to take a life of a complete pagan and turn it into a blessed child of God. And not only do that ... but use it in a way that blesses the whole kingdom.

So listen to the message of a prostitute's life ... turn your back on the gods of your life and place your faith in a God who changes lives and gives them new life and new purpose for the sake of the kingdom.