

Joshua 2 : Grace in Unexpected Places

Intro

- Something ever go way DIFFERENT than planned—New Year's Eve date w/ Tay in college, forgot wallet, she had to pay and drive home!
- Joshua—you would expect that what we see happen immediately in Joshua 2 is the listing of exploits and actions of mighty men/women of faith; warriors for the Lord. Instead, right at the beginning of this story of God's people taking their land of promise, we meet the unlikeliest of people—Rahab, a prostitute!

God's Sovereignty Does Not Negate Our Responsibility (v.1a)

- Yes, God is sovereign. Yes, he had already promised them the Land. Yet, it was still Joshua's responsibility to lead in wisdom—he sent the spies to scope the land and provide report.
 - Joshua learned his lesson—he only sent 2 spies (Moses sent 12 and only 2 came back with a faith-filled report!)
- 1a—Inside our responsibility, we act wisely according to God's Word. Joshua had just been commanded not to turn away from the Book of the Law and in it is the example of Moses sending spies to the Land (Joshua being one).
 - When inside a difficult decision/predicament/situation—look to the clear instruction, commands and examples of Scripture and FOLLOW/OBEY!
 - Our responsibility is in OBEDIENCE, not RESULTS/God's secret will!
 - Joshua didn't know that God would actually give them Jericho without any military engagement at all! All he knew was the example of the Word and he obeyed!
- A Life in God's Will Is Not a Life Without Trials (2-7)
 - These men try to sneak into Jericho and, before they've even made it 12 hours, the King knows and sends for their heads.
 - Caution—don't clean this up! This is serious business! Had the king gotten his hands on them, they were DONE! Yet, they were obeying the Lord and Joshua! Certainly, God could have led them in and out in perfect obscurity and safety? Why allow them to be found out? Why put them in danger!?
 - In your life, God is primarily concerned with HIS GLORY not our SAFETY! He is working all things to make himself more FAMOUS not to make us more SECURE!

God's Grace Shines Brightest Against the Darkness of Our Sin (1b, 8-14)

- v.4-7—Grace completely changes everything! Grace got hold of Rahab and now, she's willing to risk everything, even her own life, to be a part of what God is doing among his people!
 - Why skip 1b and not bring up Rahab's name until now!?
 - The first 2 points (v.1-7) are more connected to the story at LARGE than this particular story
 - Highlight the purpose of Chapter 2—God's Unexpected GRACE! Chapter 2 is COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY in terms of articulating Israel's entrance into the land! Nothing, in terms of that conquest, is significant in this chapter! This chapter is about the BEAUTY OF GOD'S SAVING GRACE!!
 - Joshua 6:25—“Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day.”
 - God, in his grace, takes a pagan, idolatrous prostitute and makes her a part of his chosen family and includes her in the inheritance of the Land!
 - God, in his grace through Jesus, takes us sin-loving, idol-worshipping sinners and makes us a part of his family and grants to us an eternal, unending inheritance!
 - 8-11—Rahab confesses FAITH in God—she has as much faith as any in Israel
 - “fear of you has fallen upon us”—the entire land had heard about Israel's God and they were in FEAR of him but had no desire to KNOW him! Rahab was different—her fear crushed her heart and led her to desire to KNOW and FOLLOW the true God!
 - “the Lord dried up the water...the Lord you God, he is God”—confessions of faith!!

- 12-14—In light of her confessed FAITH in God, she pleads for them to treat her as family!
 - “kindly and faithfully” = hesed = covenant faithfulness! God’s covenant faithfulness is landing on Rahab, the most unexpected of subjects!
- Unexpected Grace—1b—Who is being shown this grace!?!?“prostitute, whose name was Rahab”—debatable if Rahab was STILL a practicing prostitute but regardless she still bore the reputation, shame and name of “prostitute”.
 - Are you there? Alcoholic? Eating disorder? Mental disorder? Depressed? Abortion? Felon? Divorced? Unfaithful? Adulterous? Angry? Jealous? Bitter?
 - God’s BRIGHT/BEAUTIFUL grace shines directly into the darkness, pain and ugliness of our past and our sin and when it does...IT CHANGES EVERYTHING!

There is Only One Place to Find Saving Grace (15-21)

- “scarlet cord”—can’t help but compare it to Passover. In Passover, the Israelites remembered the night when, because of RED blood smeared on the door, the death angel passed over. Now, for Rahab, the sign for Israel of who to spare was a SCARLET cord hanging in the door! A cord declaring, we are by FAITH, a part of God’s family!
- Unbeliever—you are in the direct line of SURE DESTRUCTION! Your only hope of rescue is to set the scarlet cord of FAITH in Jesus Christ outside the window of your life! Will you?
- Caution—we WILL be tempted to abandon ship and make a run for our own deliverance and this passage is warning us and urging us NOT to do that!
 - There is only ONE place and ONE way for rescue!
- Satan’s word over us—“your past (or present) is all you are and all you’ll ever be!”
- Jesus’ words—“such were some of you but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Experiencing God’s Saving Grace Invigorates Us for Mission (22-24)

- 38 years earlier, the spies returned with their eyes fixated on the size of their enemies, not on the power of their great God.
- These spies get back to camp and they had experienced the deliverance of God, they had heard of how the fear of God had already melted the hearts of the people and they returned ZEALOUS and CONFIDENT in their mission!
- When we see God’s transforming work in our own hearts and in the hearts and lives of people around us and realize that NOTHING..no habit, no barrier, no label, no disease, no tendency is too strong for our God, we are INVIGORATED by faith for the mission!
 - Why do I say they experienced God’s saving grace with Rahab?
 - Hebrews 11:31 —By FAITH Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient!
- The faith that SAVES is a faith that ACTS! There is no such thing as real faith that is dead, immobile! NO! Faith without works is dead and useless and fake! Even for Rahab!
- Application:
 - The church and the people of God is not a CLUB for the CLEAN but a REFUGE for sinners saved by GRACE!
 - Picture of Christ:
 - Spies: “our life for yours”...they were looking for a scarlet cord in the window as a sign of faith by which they would provide physical rescue
 - Jesus: “my life for yours”...provides his scarlet blood as the source of our salvation to provide for us spiritual rescue by grace! Jesus is the Truer and Better Israel who, to unsuspecting, undeserving, unexpected sinners, comes with beautiful, saving grace!
 - Are you experiencing the unexpected, beautiful, life-changing, sin-erasing grace of God?
 - Are you sharing that grace with those around you?