

## Would You Return To The Hiding Place?

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Identity, Purpose, Belonging / Courage / Joshua 2:1-14

### Notes

pg. 137 in Who Am I Lord? (About Mary trusting and obedience to Joseph's dreams)

Pg. 153 Who Am I Lord? (Simon)

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In 1922, there was a lady who became the first woman to be licensed as a watchmaker in the Netherlands. Over the next decade, in addition to working in her father's shop, she established a youth club for teenage girls, which provided religious instruction and classes in the performing arts, sewing, and handicrafts. She and her family were Calvinist Christians in the Dutch Reformed Church, and their faith inspired them to serve their society, which they did by offering shelter, food and money to those who were in need. Some important tenets of their faith included the fact that the Jews were precious to God and that all people are created equal.

In May 1940, the Germans invaded the Netherlands. In 1942, a woman appeared at this young lady's home with a suitcase in hand and told them that she was a Jew, her husband had been arrested several months earlier, her son had gone into hiding and authorities had recently visited

her so she was afraid to go back. She had heard that this family had previously helped their Jewish neighbors and asked if they could help her too. They did. As the young lady told the woman, "In this household, God's people are always welcome." The family became very active in the Dutch underground, hiding refugees and honouring the Jewish Sabbath. Their work became known by the Dutch Resistance, who sent an architect to their home to build a secret room. This was the beginning of what was labelled "The Hiding Place." It was a bedroom behind a false wall and would hold 6 people. A ventilation system was installed for the occupants. A buzzer could be heard in the house to warn the refugees to get into the room as quickly as possible during security sweeps through the neighborhood. Her involvement in the Dutch resistance grew beyond gathering stolen ration cards and harboring Jews in her home. She soon became part of the Dutch underground resistance network and oversaw a network of smuggling Jews to safe places. All in all, it is estimated that around 800 Jews were saved by her efforts.

On 28 February 1944, a Dutch informant told the Nazis what the family was doing. They were arrested and sent to Prison. The group of six people hidden by the family, made up of both Jews and resistance workers, remained undiscovered. The lady received a letter one day in prison stating, "All the watches in your cabinet are safe," meaning

that the refugees had managed to escape and were safe. Her father died in prison ten days later. Her and her sister were then sent to a concentration camp where they held worship services after the hard days at work by using a Bible that they had managed to smuggle in. Through the two sisters' teachings and examples of unfailing charity, many of the prisoners there converted to Christianity. Her sister died on 16 December 1944 at the age of 59. Before she died, the lady told her sister, "There is no pit so deep that He [God] is not deeper still." Twelve days later, the lady was released. Afterward, she was told that her release was because of a clerical error and that a week later, all the women in her age group were sent to the gas chambers.

Tomorrow is Remembrance Day. A time to remember the sacrifice of so many, those who left and never returned, and those who returned but were never the same. Fighting for justice and peace throughout the world for all.

The passage for today comes from Joshua 2: 1-14.

So let's look at what has happened to this point. The Israelites have been wandering in the desert for 40 years under the leadership of Moses, when God has told Moses that he is not going to enter the promised land, due to one of his actions and thus Joshua takes over as leader. They are on the brink of entering the Promised land but before

they can cross the Jordan River and conquer Jericho, Joshua sends 2 spies to scout out the area.

Rahab, labelled as a prostitute, is an unlikely one when you think of it to be included as a main character in the story of a conquest, but as God proves over and over again he can do extraordinary things through ordinary people. In most cases, all God asks is a willingness to serve his purposes. God offers humanity the opportunity to play a part in fulfilling his purposes. Rahab becomes a poster child for hospitality, mercy, faith, patience, and repentance through her dealings with Joshua's spies.

The story is of Rahab, a woman whose courage God used to bring the Israelites into the promised land. In a world often filled with fear and uncertainty, her actions remind us of the power of bravery and the impact one person can have.

The first 8 verses speak to Rahab's faith in action:

Joshua tells the spies to go check out the land, especially Jericho. When they enter Jericho they go to Rahab, a Canannite woman, whose house was likely a way station, inn, tavern, or a combination of these. It would have been a logical place for spies to frequent, as a public gathering place and a potential source of information. The king of Jericho is informed by people that the Israelite spies are in the city and so he sends a message to Rahab demanding that she deliver up the spies. Rahab must have known

about the spies' mission for she had hidden them prior to the king's agents' arriving at her home. She misled the king's agents by lying about what she knew of the spies and so the agents leave in pursuit of the spies heading in the direction towards the Jordan, where the spies would most likely be returning to report to Joshua. Since Rahab reported that the spies had just escaped before the gates were to close (v. 5a), the pursuers must have thought that they were hot on their trail. It also reinforces the picture of Jericho as a heavily guarded city and explains why Rahab let the spies out of the city through her window (v. 15) rather than escorting them out of the gate.

Rahab knew that harboring the spies was dangerous. You can tell from her reaction to the agents. If the king found out, she could face severe punishment or worse. But instead of succumbing to fear, Rahab made a bold decision in hiding the spies, misleading the agents and demonstrating an incredible act of bravery.

The last 6 verses of this passage demonstrate Rahab's faith in words.

As Rahab says in Joshua 2:9–11 “I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you. 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 that were

beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you. The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below.”

Her faith was not merely external but it reveals a fundamental change in her belief orientation as she embraced Israel’s God as her own. Israel had a reputation, the Canaanites were afraid of them, but Rahab had faith. Rahab knew that Israel’s God had given her people’s land to Israel and the entire land was afraid. God’s deliverance of the Israelites in their short history (God’s drying up of the Red Sea and the victories over two kings east of the Jordan, Sihon and Og), were a demonstration of his power, that we need to continue to look to today, as we see all that God has delivered in the past as we look to the future. Particularly when fear starts to get in the way.

And there are mentions of Rahab’s faith in the New Testament

Hebrews 11:31 “By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.”

James 2:25 “Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road?”

Remember, Rahab is a foreigner, a Canaanite, not an Israelite. And she says to the spies. The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below. A remarkable statement. She affirmed that her land was being given to the Israelites, and that their God had done really impressive things, but was she also affirming that Israel's God was the God? The Canaanites worshipped many gods, but some believe she was stating that they were not true gods but that Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, was the God. It's also interesting to note that she uses the phrase "in the heavens above and the earth below"—which is found only three times prior to this, all in contexts that affirm God's exclusive claims to sovereignty.

They are found in:

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below (Exod 20:4).

Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other (Deut 4:39).

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below (Deut 5:8).

She was acknowledging that this God she had heard about was the one and only true God, the only one—out

of dozens that she as a good Canaanite knew about—who was worthy of worship and allegiance

Rahab might have been afraid, as all the Canannites were, knowing what they knew about the Israelites and their God, but Rahab must have come to believe in her heart that there was only one true God. Rahab's bravery was rooted in her faith. Her faith motivated her actions, propelling her to take a stand against the prevailing norms.

Rahab becomes an example of a foreigner who responded in faith to Israel's God. She, along with four other women, are in the geneology of Jesus, including Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary, Mary being the only one who was not a foreigner. The rest of the woman become part of Israel, demonstrating the inclusiveness intended in the covenant of Abraham, where God stated that he would bring blessings to the nations - to those who were not descendant of Abraham, like Rahab - through Abraham and his descendants.

Her bravery doesn't just save the spies, it saved her family. Later on, she is given a scarlet cord to hang from her window as a sign. This cord symbolizes hope and salvation—an image that resonates throughout Scripture, foreshadowing the redemption that comes through faith.

Going back to the lady from the beginning story. She

returned to Germany in 1947 and came face to face with one of the concentration camp guards from where her sister died. She was in Germany with the message that God forgives. When she saw the guard it all came back to her, “the huge room with its harsh overhead lights, the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor, the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister’s frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment skin.”

When this lady saw the guard years later he stretched out his hand seeking forgiveness.

“‘Jesus, help me!’ she prayed silently. ‘I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling,’” she said.

She recalled of the following interaction:

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

“I forgive you, brother!” I cried. “With all my heart!”

For a long moment, they grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.

Although bravery, sacrifice and unshakable faith in God marked Corrie Ten Boom's life, perhaps most astonishing was her ability to forgive.

Corrie Ten Boom continued her bravery throughout the rest of her life. I leave you with this last story from her life. She was ministering in a small African country where a new government had come to power. Just that week the new regime had begun secretly, systematically putting Christians to death. As the people gathered at the little church where she was to speak that Sunday, fear and tension was written on every face.

Closing her Bible, Corrie proceeded to relate a conversation that took place between she and her father when she was a little girl. "Daddy," she had said one day, "I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ."

"Tell me," her father wisely responded, "when you take a train trip from Haarlem to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?"

"No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train."

"That is right," he replied, "and so it is with God's strength. Our wise Father in heaven knows when you are going to need things too. Today you do not need the strength to be

a martyr. But as soon as you are called upon for the honor of facing death for Jesus, He will supply the strength you need—just in time.”

“I took great comfort in my father’s advice,” Corrie told her audience. “Later I had to suffer for Jesus in a [Nazi] concentration camp. He indeed gave me all the courage and power I needed.”

God can use anyone for His purposes. No matter our past or our status in society, we are capable of making a difference. God values our hearts and our willingness to act. Our willingness to act in faith not fear. Rahab became part of the lineage of Jesus, illustrating that God’s grace is powerful enough to redeem anyone.

As we reflect, how can we have this same courage in our lives? Are we prepared to trust in God’s promises, even when the path forward can seem so daunting? Our decisions can have lasting effects on those around us.

Like Rahab and Corrie Ten Boom, their bravery didn’t just save one life, but many others. Bravery often involves taking risks. In our lives, we may face situations where standing up for what is right requires courage, whether it’s speaking out against injustice, supporting those in need, or being true to our convictions. Many have died fighting for what they believe in, we must choose faith over fear.

Return to the hiding place and see how far you've come. Take risks for what is right, remember all that God has done when you put your faith and trust in Him, experience his courage and power in you, and know his unending grace, powerful to redeem anyone.

In a world that often seems overwhelming, we can draw inspiration from Rahab and Corrie Ten Boom—two individuals of so many throughout history who acted with faith and courage. Step forward, trusting that God is with you, empowering you to be brave in the face of fear. May we always remember that no matter our circumstances, we can play a significant role in God's unfolding story.

There are so many who have sacrificed for the freedom that we get to experience here in Canada. Let us now remember those who have come before us in this community, sacrificing their life for the lives of their fellow human.