

⁸But before the men lay down, Rahab came up to them on the roof. ⁹She said to the men, “I know that the LORD has given you the land. Because of you, terror has fallen upon us, and all the inhabitants of the land are melting in fear before you. ¹⁰Indeed, we have heard that the LORD dried up the waters of the Red Sea in front of you when you came out of Egypt, and we heard what you did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan—to Sihon and to Og. We heard that you devoted them to destruction. ¹¹We heard, and our hearts melted, and no one’s courage could hold up anymore against you, because the LORD your God is God in the heavens above and on the earth below. ¹²So now, please swear to me by the LORD that since I have shown kindness to you, you in turn will show kindness to my father’s house. Give me a trustworthy sign ¹³that you will preserve the lives of my father and mother and my brothers and sisters and everyone who belongs to them, and that you will spare our lives.”

¹⁴The men said to her, “If you do not reveal what we are doing, our lives are pledged for your lives, even to the point of death. Then when the LORD gives us the land, we will show mercy and faithfulness to you.”

¹⁵She let them down through the window with a rope, since her house was built into the city wall, and she was living inside the wall.

¹⁶She said to them, “To the hill country! Get moving, so the pursuers do not catch up with you. Hide there for three days until the pursuers return, and then you can go on your way.”

¹⁷The men said to her, “When we come into the land, we will be free from this oath that you made us swear ¹⁸unless you tie this bright red cord in the window through which you let us down, and you gather your father and mother, your brothers, and your father’s entire household into your house. ¹⁹If any one of them goes outside the doors of your house, his blood will be on his own head, and we will be free of guilt. Anyone who is with you in the house, his blood will be on our heads if a hand is laid on him. ²⁰If you reveal what we are doing, we will be free from the oath that you made us swear.”

²¹She said, “It will be done just as you have said!” Then she sent them out, and they went away. She tied the bright red cord in the window. (EHV)

Theme: God’s Grace Is for All People

1. He graciously saved Rahab the Prostitute
2. He graciously saves us.

What are some of the most morally reprehensible jobs that someone could have? The list, of course is long. Hitman, adult film star, sex trafficker, drug dealer, abortion clinic doctor—all those jobs fit the bill. What about a prostitute? It maybe not on the same level of immorality as some that we just mentioned, it is far from a noble profession. It is shameful, disgusting, and inexcusable in the eyes of the Lord. But it’s not unforgivable; for God’s grace is for all people.

The time had finally come. After wandering the wilderness for 40 years, the time had come for the Israelites to enter into the Promised Land of Canaan. They camped on the east side of the Jordan River, and the first city to be attacked was Jericho. But before that would happen, Joshua, who took over for Moses as the leader of the people, sent two spies to check out the land. And so, they entered the city of Jericho and they went into the house of a prostitute named Rahab.

This was reasonable for them to do—not commit adultery with her, that certainly wasn’t their intention, but to hide out. Sadly, it was probably fairly common for travelers to stop by this prostitute’s place, which was located on the city wall—there probably was a good amount of

traffic going to and from her house. It was the best place to go if they wanted to remain unnoticed.

But the spies didn't remain unnoticed. They were seen and soon men started looking for them. So Rahab took the spies to the top of her house, flat roofs were often used as workplaces, and she hid them among some stalks of flax. She didn't tell anyone where they were, but instead sent the pursuers in another direction and let the spies escape by a rope through her window. First, she cut a deal—she saved them, so they should save her—her and her entire household. A smart move on her part—she knew that the Israelites were going to destroy the city. And if she hadn't made the deal, she would have perished along with everyone else living in Jericho when the walls came crashing down.

So it's not surprising that she made this deal. What is surprising though is the reason why she made this deal! It wasn't because she put two and two together—they all knew what happened to Pharaoh's army, as we read last week—the Lord parted the waters of the Red Sea; and while the Israelites passed through on dry ground, the walls of water came crashing down on the Egyptians, killing Pharaoh's entire army. And she knew what happened to area kings when they tried to get in the way of the Israelites—they were destroyed. So, it wasn't hard to figure out what was next and come up with a plan to save herself and her family. But that wasn't the reason why she made the deal; the true reason is astonishing—it was her faith that led to do what she did!

Perhaps her best confession of faith in our text is found in verse 11, **the Lord your God is God in the heavens above and on the earth below**. She also knew and believed that the Lord had given them the victory over their enemies—it wasn't the sheer size of their army, but the Lord. How amazing is that! The other people of Jericho had heard the same stories as Rahab, but they weren't believers. But the Lord worked through what Rahab heard and worked faith into the heart of this prostitute! She believed in the Lord and knew that the Lord was fighting for the Israelites, and so there was no chance for Jericho.

And there are two passages in the New Testament that tell us that Rahab was a believer. One is found in Hebrews 11, **By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with the unbelievers, because she welcomed the spies in peace**. The other is found in James 2, **wasn't Rahab the prostitute shown to be righteous by works when she welcomed the spies and sent them out another way?** Her faith in the Lord led her to put her faith on display and save the two Israelite spies.

And we know what happened—it is one of the most memorial portions of the Old Testament. The Israelites marched around the city of Jericho for six days; and on the seventh day after marching around seven times they blew their trumpets and shouted, and the Lord caused the massive walls of Jericho to come crashing down, the Israelites rushed into the city to kill every survivor. And chapter six explicitly tells us that Rahab and her entire household were spared. And not only that, but she and her household then lived with the Israelites—they didn't leave her to fend for herself, but they essentially adopted her as a Jew. And, on top of that, Matthew 1:5 tells us that she married an Israelite named, Salmon and together they had Boaz, who married Ruth—the great-grandparents of King David. So Rahab was the great-great-grandmother of David, and that makes her an ancestor of Jesus. A Canaanite prostitute is part of our Savior's line!

What grace and mercy the Lord had shown to Rahab. She didn't deserve any of it. She was a prostitute! She partook of some shameful and detestable actions, she was a foreigner, a Canaanite, enemies of the Jews. And yet the Lord in his love and mercy heaped grace upon grace for her.

First he brought her to faith, then he saved her from physical death when her city was destroyed, then he allowed this foreign woman to live with his people, made her part of the Savior's line, and then saved her soul eternally! Grace upon grace! What love, mercy, and grace the Lord has

shown this Canaanite woman of ill-repute, that not only would she be saved, but that she would be an ancestor of our one and only Savior!

A prostitute wasn't the only horrible sinner who tasted God's grace. Moses was a murderer, David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband killed in an effort to cover it up, and Paul persecuted Christians. Not only were these men forgiven and are in heaven, but God used these three men greatly in his Church—they are some of the most prominent believers in the Bible. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, David is known as Great King David, who wrote many Psalms, and was a descendent of Christ, Paul became the Apostle to the Gentiles and wrote 13 letters of the New Testament. Like Rahab the prostitute, none of them deserved God's grace, and yet God's grace came to them.

What about you? You're not a murderer (as far as I know, none of you have ever murdered anyone)! You're not a persecutor of Christians, or sex trafficker, or a prostitute. But, of course, you're still in equal need of the Lord's grace. Because we are all born as sinners with a desperate need for God's grace.

While you may not have prostituted yourself, you are still guilty of breaking the sixth commandment with every lustful thought and act. You are just as guilty of breaking the fifth commandment as the murderer with every hateful thought and word. You may not have persecuted Christians, but you have often failed to share your faith, defend the truth of God's Word, or stick up for those who were.

Not a single one of us deserves grace, not a single one of us has earned God's favor—but the exact opposite. We all deserve his wrath and punishment. But grace is exactly what you have received!

Maybe you think back to some of the things you have done in the past—whether it was something you did way back when you were young or relatively recently—and you hang your head in shame. Guilt fills your heart when you think about it, you are embarrassed about it, and still to this very day it weighs heavily upon your heart. Or maybe it's not one particular act, but a bunch of them—you've done so many sinful things throughout your life and you wonder how you ever could have done such things against the Lord. And doubts come into your heart, how can God love me? How can he ever forgive me for what I've done—I don't deserve any mercy and grace.

And that would be true. You don't deserve God's grace; and yet it's yours! Rahab didn't deserve it either, and look at the Lord's grace for her! He has the same undeserved love for you! If he was loving enough to forgive, bring to faith, and save—both physically and eternally a Canaanite prostitute, then he is also loving enough to forgive, bring to faith, and save eternally a sinner like you!

And he accomplished all of this through that descendent of Rahab the prostitute! He is true God from eternity, but he became a man, born of a Virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit—true God and true man at the same time so that he could serve as our substitute for our salvation. He served as our substitute on the cross, taking our sins upon himself, suffering their eternal punishment, and shedding his blood to pay for our sins, wiping us clean by that innocent blood shed for us.

God also became our brother so that we would become heirs of God along with Christ and inherit the precious gift of salvation won for us by the God-man by his life, death, and resurrection! This is nothing but a gift of God's grace—received through faith in him, another gift of God's grace worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the gospel! Grace, upon grace, upon grace!

And one more thing—God gives this grace to you, a Gentile, at least most of us are Gentiles, just like Rahab! You're not a Jew, you aren't part of God's chosen nation, the descendants of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But like Rahab, who was welcomed into the family of the Israelites, so you too were welcomed into God's family through faith in Christ.

Through baptism the Lord welcomed you into his family through faith in the Son. Even though you were born as a child of the devil and as an enemy of God, he brought you to faith and adopted you as his own dear child whom he loves. And so you are a brother or sister of Christ—who will inherit the priceless gift of salvation, as Paul points out in Romans 8, **if we are children, we are also heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.** Grace upon grace upon grace for you, and all people!

That grace is for all people, despite our many and horrible sins. God has forgiven murders and adulterers, and persecutors, and prostitutes. And you. You are guilty in one way or another of those same sins—and so many more, not deserving of God's love and mercy. But as we see in Rahab, and so many other times in Scripture, there is no sin too great, and no amount of sins too numerous that they cannot be forgiven! For each and every sin has been placed on Christ's shoulders and paid for by his holy precious blood! God's grace, his undeserved love, is for you just as it was for Rahab, and all people. Amen.