

Hymns: (Prelude New 23rd Psalm) 26 Trust and Obey 8 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Scripture: Psalm 23

Big idea: The Righteous Judge

Our scripture text for today is: **Joshua 1:7-2:24**

Introduction

Good Morning! Well, the Tokyo Summer Olympics just finished up a few hours ago. Did you see the amazing things those athletes did? That 14-year-old girl from China stole the show with her perfect dives. It's a shame that to see it we had to endure a constant barrage of commercials and stories by the network aimed at proclaiming their morally-twisted, globalist agenda.

What about the judges? Even the judges seemed to favor certain individuals over others. Two gymnasts – even teammates – doing the exact same routine with the *chosen one* falling or stumbling and still beating or nearly matching the score of a competitor who had superior execution. At least with swimming and running that kind of bias was not possible. Still, it seems so **unfair** to athletes who devoted their lives to excelling and who performed nearly flawlessly, only to have their dreams dashed by biased judges.

The Apostle Paul wrote frequently in the Bible relating our lives to running a race, fighting a fight, striving to master a skill, and receiving a crown. Today we're going to continue the journey we started last time as we move on into the book of Joshua. As we do, we can keep in mind some of these ideas of fighting, justice, and receiving a reward. We've got a lot to cover, so let's get started.

Last time, we started with a summary of a lot of history that brought us to the time of Joshua. Joshua came out slavery in Egypt, distinguished himself as a military leader, became Moses' right-hand man and then his successor. Joshua was one of two men who spied out the Promised Land and brought back a good report. The rest of Israel feared and were judged by God to wander in the wilderness for forty years and die there.

Joshua, whose name means *Jehovah is salvation* received his instructions from the LORD and the precious promise that we ended with last time. We learned that we too can claim the promise that the LORD will never leave us nor forsake us. Therefore, we need never fear. We also saw the LORD promise to Joshua that He would be with him as He was with Moses. We cannot claim that promise as our own as we will likely not be parting waters and working other miracles.

Joshua's mission was to enter the Promised Land, utterly destroy those living there, and divide the land among nine and a half tribes. But wait! Israel had **twelve** tribes started by the twelve sons of Jacob. What about the other two-and-a-half tribes? At their request, Moses gave them land on the east side of the Jordan River with one condition. What was that condition? That's where we start today.

If we wanted to weave the prosperity gospel into this text we could try to appropriate the last part of chapter one, verse seven. We will not do that because it was given to Joshua as a promise to Israel. You do these things and you will receive tremendous blessing and if not, you will be cursed. That's not for us today. That was for Israel. He proceeds in verse eight with more conditional prosperity for reading

and meditating on the word of the LORD. Certainly, these practices benefit Christian living, but they do not come to us with the promise of physical blessing, we are promised all spiritual blessings though (Ephesians 1:3).

Verse 9: The LORD repeats the fight song to *be strong and of good courage. Do not be discouraged or dismayed*. Why? Because *the LORD is with you....* That's where we ended last time. Now Joshua speaks.

Joshua 1

[10] Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

[11] Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare [food]; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God give[s] you to possess it.

God has given them this land. He's repeating the charge that God gave him in verse two from last time:

[2] Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan,

[12] And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying,

There's those two-and-a-half tribes we mentioned just a few minutes earlier.

[13] Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest,

They defeated the people on the east side of the Jordan. They received that land when they asked for it, and Moses agreed to give it to them.

and hath given you this land.

[14] Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan;

They're still on the east side of the Jordan. They have not crossed over yet.

but ye shall pass before your brethren armed,

You will go over the river with the rest of us and help us fight. It's only right. All of Israel helped you get the land that Moses gave you. Now you must go over to the Promised Land and help your brothers take that land.

They were in agreement with that. They agreed that was the right thing to do.

...

[16] *And they answered Joshua, saying, All that [y]ou [have] commande[d] us we will do,*

They are very definite here.

and wh[er]ever [y]ou send[] us, we will go.

[17] ... *as we [list]ened unto Moses ... [we] will [list]en []to [you]:*

They're giving him authority and they're in complete agreement.

[18] ...

And beyond that, anyone in our ranks who disobeys these orders will be executed. That's pretty severe discipline, but armies have done that in the past. They cap it off with the fight song:

be strong and of a good courage.

Joshua 2

This is the story of Rahab and the spies.

[1] *And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim*

That's a city near the Jordan river on the east side where it enters the Dead Sea and across the river from Jericho.

two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

Let's stop there and think about this. The spies went into the city. What is the one business that we know about in that city? It's prostitution. The whole city is wicked – which is why they're being judged. This is just a reflection of that. The one business is harlotry.

[2] *And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in h[ere] to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.*

How did they find out? These spies were supposed to be coming in secretly. They had to go in through the gate. Perhaps their clothing or their speech tipped them off. Perhaps they overheard something or maybe they had their own spies. We don't know, but somehow this spy thing didn't work out as they had planned.

[3] *And the king of Jericho sent []to Rahab,*

Whether these were a couple of soldiers or a couple of thugs, or more than two, we don't

know. Some people came to Rahab and told her:

..., Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into [your] house: for they be come to search out ... the [land].

[4] And the woman

that is Rahab

took the two men, and hid them, and said ..., There came []to me [men], but I [did] not [know where] they [from]:

That's a lie. That's lie number one. This is a prostitute.

[5] And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out:

That's a lie. She hid them in her house. That's lie number two.

wh[ere] the[y] went I [don't know]:

That's a lie. She knew where she hid them in her house.

pursue after them quickly; for y[ou] shall overtake them.

She's leading them on a wild goose chase with lie number four.

[6] But she had brought them

This is where she hid them.

up to the roof of the house, and hid them [under some] stalks of flax, which she had laid [out to dry on] the roof.

That was a common way of drying flax back then. The men that had come to get the spies took her advice and did what she said.

[7] And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords:

That is the place where they crossed through the river.

and as soon as they [went out the gate], the[gatekeeper] shut the gate.

Nobody is coming in and no one is going out.

*[8] And before the [spies went to bed], she came up unto them upon the roof;
[9] And she said [to the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your
terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land*

She's referring to Jericho.

faint because of you.

*[10] For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when y[ou]
came out of Egypt; and what y[ou] did [to the two kings of the Amorites, ... on the other side
[of] Jordan,*

Jericho is on the west. The east is where the two-and-a-half tribes got their land, and this is where they got it from:

Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

These people are fearful.

*[11] And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain
any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven
above, and in earth beneath.*

Here's a lying prostitute giving her testimony of faith in the LORD. Isn't that interesting. A sinner was saved. Actually, we're all sort of that way if you think about it.

There's also an interesting sidelight here. If you recall back in the New Testament there was another woman who encountered the LORD who also was of shaky moral character. As told in John chapter four, she ended up proclaiming that Jesus was the Christ, and not only that just like John the Baptist, she went before Him into her country and proclaimed Jesus was the Christ to her people. This was the Samaritan woman who met Jesus at Jacob's well.

Now let's return to our story of Rahab in Jericho.

[12] Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD,

This is Rahab's plan. She knew she was a dead woman as Jericho was soon to be wiped out.

since I have shewed you kindness,

She protected the spies from being captured by the king's men.

that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

That is, an oath that they will help her.

She's asking them for an oath that they will protect her and her family.

[13] ... that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

She was afraid of dying. She's a smart woman. She came up with this plan for her and her family to be saved.

[14] And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

The spies agreed to the deal with the condition that if she let her countrymen in on this , the oath is no longer binding.

[15] Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

The gate is closed. How are these guys going to get out? It just so happens that she lived in a house in the wall with a window. This permitted the spies to escape the city without being seen. Convenient? As we will see in a few minutes, this was a demonstration of God's providence.

[16] And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

[17] And the men said []to her, ...

We have a good deal here, but remember you cannot tell anybody. And remember when we come, make sure you have a scarlet rope in your window to mark your place. Make sure all of your family and you are in the house with the rope. Only the people in the house will be spared. All others are toast.

[21] And she said, According []to your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

[22] And they went, and came []to the mountain, and [stayed] there three days,

By then, the pursuers had returned to Jericho. At that point, they went down the mountain, they crossed over the Jordan river, returned to Joshua, and told him the things that had happened to them.

[24] And they said []to Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for

even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

Application

So there we have the story of the spies and Rahab.

But as Paul Harvey so frequently said, “Now, the rest of the story.”

You’re about to learn this story was not at all about spying out the land. As we will see in future weeks, the LORD would to conquer Jericho by His own means.

Instead, it was about saving the life of Rahab.

You see, the Bible has much more to say about this woman Rahab. Despite her sins, Rahab was a woman of **faith**. She was honored for her faith by being included in the heroes of faith listing in Hebrews chapter 11. But even more consequential, Rahab is mentioned in Matthew 1:5.

As planned, Rahab was rescued before Jericho was destroyed. She settled in the Promised Land and married a Jew named Salmon. They had a son named Boaz. Boaz married Ruth. They had son named Obed. Obed had a son named Jesse who had a son named David. Yes, Rahab was the great great grandmother of King David. Without Rahab the line to David would have been broken and more importantly, the line of Christ would never have materialized.

“Now you know, the rest of the story.”

By the providence of God the life of Rahab was preserved. And not only was her physical life saved, but by her faith she received eternal life. Despite her sin, the LORD values faith far above man’s futile attempts at self righteousness. The Bible says: *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saves us.*

But how can faith reconcile any human contaminated by a sin nature to God? After all, isn’t God just. Yes, that is true. That is an unchanging part of a Holy God. It’s been said:

- Justice getting **what** you deserve – the wages of sin is death
- Mercy **not** getting what you deserve – according to His mercy He saves us
- Grace getting what you **don’t** deserve – by grace are you saved through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ whose substitutionary death satisfied God’s justice and enabled us to receive His grace.

Benediction

The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)