



Rahab

Hebrews 11:31 *“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”*

By faith a harlot is honored in the Bible. I have found the arguments over Rahab to be interesting. One side loves to point out that God approves of prostitution and lying under certain circumstances. How so? It is because God allowed it in the Bible. If it is in the Bible then it must be God sanctioned. This is a flawed logic. Rahab may have found herself in prostitution. Yet, there is no evidence she loved it or that God liked her profession. Honestly, I question people's motives. What if she was forced into it? What if God was saving her from it? Rehabs faith might have been greater just because the world was stacked against her.

Paul puts Rahab in the same place as Moses and David. What! It is true! Paul mentions several people that (by faith) have encouraged the nation. God allowed her story to be included in scripture. We can say the same about David and Moses. That also includes all three in their sins. There is very little recorded about Rahab. Think about it? This harlot is mentioned in the line of Jesus. The Bible is always accused of belittling women. That is simply not true. This woman (regardless of her work) had good works.

I think the controversy that surrounds Rahab creates a mystery about her. Some call her a harlot because of the words meaning. A few scholars have questioned if she could have been an

innkeeper that had a brothel? Yet, the Bible says she was a prostitute. Most humans hate that insinuation within the line of Jesus. God honors the woman and not the work. She lied! Yes, she lied but Rahab did so to protect the spies. This woman risked her life for a God she barely knew. She is not Jewish but somehow Rahab became a follower of the living God. How did she know God? The only thing we know is that she heard of the Jewish God and believed. I can relate because it happened to me too. By faith we believed. The same could be said of the centurion who was also not Jewish.

Matthew 8:10 *“When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.”*

James 2:25 *“likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?”*

It is amazing that James puts Rahab in the same faith as Abraham. In both instances God used ordinary people for extraordinary things. We think of Abraham as a saint and great. Yet, this was a flawed man who came from the pagan world. I link them together because they are outside of the Hebrew and Jewish religion. Abraham is called the father of the religion but the Muslims claim that too. Abraham was not Jewish but he believed in the Jewish God. The same can be said of Rahab. Two people that somehow met God. How? Yet, by faith they were willing to leave their homeland to follow that God. To do extraordinary things for God.

James says that Rahab is justified by her works. As a harlot? The works that Paul is talking about is saving the spies. Paul also is mentioning her work as leaving her homeland and joining the Jewish nation. Do we know that? Yes, she obviously marries into the Jewish culture and raises children that will ultimately be the offspring linked to Jesus. It also mentions that she

received the spies with peace. I come back to her risking it all. The men of Jerico were looking for the spies. What if she would have been caught harboring them? We could assume they might have killed her. Yet, by faith she believed that God was worth it.

James wrote verse 25 directly because of verse 18 *“But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from works, and I by my works will show you faith.”*

Works is measured to show the amount of faith. Some will call it the fruit of their labors. It has nothing to do with your profession. Instead, it is all about your actions and character. A good lawyer has discernment, morals, and cunning. Yet, how does their faith in God play a role? It is hard to do in politics and prostitution. Yet, we could be known for our works outside a profession. Rahab was caught in a bad place and a bad profession. Yet, by faith she found a way to honor God. I would contend that God helped her find a way out of her profession! Paul could see it. So could James see it. I believe that Matthew honored her faith by including Rahab in the genealogy of Jesus regardless of her former profession.