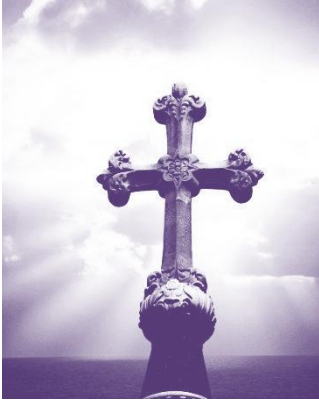


Rahab

“Women in the Genealogy of Christ”



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

Do you remember that Christ healed a woman who just touched his gown? Some thought she was a harlot. Do you remember that he allowed a woman to wash his feet with perfume which some thought was very wasteful? Then you need to add to your stories the story of Rahab, a prostitute.

Rahab was a Canaanite. They were considered idolatrous people who worshipped Baal and other false gods. But Rahab had heard about the God of the Israelites.

Joshua was busy leading the Israelites and his next step was to take the city of Jericho. The story of how the people marched around the city of Jericho with their trumpets is well known, but there were some other incidents that led up to that point. The people of Jericho had heard about the Israelites and they were afraid. God had made sure they knew the Israelites were coming. Word of their other victories had spread just like it would today. God was with them each step of the way. When it came time for them to take the city of Jericho, God told Joshua to send two spies into the city to check it out. When they went, they went to the home of Rahab, a prostitute. (Joshua 2:1) Rahab hid them on the roof under some flax. Why a prostitute? It could have been for many reasons. Perhaps God knew that she now believed in the God of Israel and trusted God her to help the Israelites. Also, her house according to Scripture was on the outside wall of the city with easy access. And, because she was a prostitute, she may not have been held in very good esteem by the other people in the town and would not be suspect. We don't know the answer to these questions, but we do know that Rahab believed and helped the Israelites.

The king of Jericho sent his guards to Rahab's house because he had heard she was hiding the spies. She told a “white lie.” She told the men that they had been there, but they had left before the gate to Jericho was closed that evening and if they wanted to catch them, they would have to leave immediately before they could get too far. Then she went up to the roof and told the two men that she knew their Lord had given them the land and that they were going to be next. She said many of the people were afraid. Then she asked the men to do her a favor. She wanted protection for her and her family. The men told her they would give her protection in return for their safety, but there needed to be some kind of sign to them. They asked her to hang a scarlet thread in the window of the home and their God would spare all that were in her house when they took the city of Jericho.

After that she let them down by a rope and they hid for three days as told until the guards had gone back to Jericho and told the king they could not find the men. The two men went back to Joshua and told him that everything was arranged, and they had promised to spare the home of Rahab and her family.

Sometime, Rahab must have married Salmon and had Boaz because he is listed in the genealogy of Christ as her son by Salmon and then Boaz marries Ruth who is also in the genealogy of Christ. Rahab is mentioned in the New Testament in Hebrews 11:31 and in James 2:25 how she was saved by faith, and how she served God through saving the messengers or spies. Good story for a movie!

God rewarded Rahab for her faith. We are to learn from her and emulate that behavior. But she, like us, made other mistakes. We all have to strive toward purity, and repent when we fail. We can learn from her mistakes as well as from her obedience.

Rahab has faith not only in what God has done, and can do, but faith in what He will do. She had faith that He would spare her family. But we must realize that she acted on faith and her works because of her faith were very strong. Rahab showed her faith by repentance, belief and submission, commitment, obedience, humility. She could have been killed right on the spot by the guards who came to her house if they had found the men she said had left. She put her life on the line for the God of Israel.

There is a well known hymn chorus that we sing. It, I think, could have been the prayer of Rahab. “Melt me. Mold me. Fill me. Use me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.” She was molded and did the Lord's work.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to learn from Rahab that if we say we have faith in You, we then will be willing to do Your will. Sometimes, it may make us unpopular. Sometimes, we may be afraid.

Help us to repent, to believe, to be committed, and to be obedient. Forgive us our sins as they are many as were those of Rahab, and help us to follow the path You have for us. Amen

1. Why do you think people like Rahab are listed in the genealogy of Christ?
2. How does God use you to spread His word? Do you ask to be molded?
3. Is the fact that she is also mentioned in the New Testament important?
4. What can we learn from studying Rahab in how we treat people today?
5. Was it by chance that the spies went to the home of Rahab?

© Gail Kennedy Keffer