

A Faith Talk That Matches Your Faith Walk

*By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies,
was not killed with those who were disobedient.*

Hebrews 11:29-31

I am an insecure, imperfect, young, follower of Christ. I do not get everything right, nor do I always say (or write) the right thing. But for some reason, God has given me a platform to speak His truth into people's lives. Me – that imperfect, insecure, young girl. He chose me.

Fortunately, I'm not alone. The next woman that we come to in the Hall of Faith is Rahab, a woman of not-so-great occupation, but great faith.

Before the Israelites crossed over the Jordan River, Joshua sent two spies to check out the city of Jericho. Joshua chapter 2 records that the spies “went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.” (Joshua 2:1, NIV)

The first thing we learn about Rahab is that she is a prostitute. Not the most ringing endorsement for a woman who ends up in the genealogy of King David, and therefore Christ, but it's certainly not the last thing we learn about her.

Read Joshua 2:1-24. What other characteristics about Rahab stand out to you?

One of the first things that struck me about this story was that the writer of Joshua doesn't initially give any reason that Rahab would hide the spies. We're left wondering why she would risk her life for two men she didn't know, and who were enemies of her city. Why she would lie for them, protect them. And then we come to her confession to the spies in verse 9. “I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear of you,” (Joshua 2:9, NIV) she tells the spies. It's not surprising, really, that word of the Israelites has spread to the city. After all, thousands of people

just crossed over the river into their land, with quite the reputation preceding them. “We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.” (Joshua 2:10, NIV)

Even though they didn't have cell phones or Twitter, it seems that word traveled quickly across the Jordan River, for the city of Jericho had heard of everything the Lord had done for His people. And it made them quake in fear. But for Rahab, the fear that the rest of the city felt wasn't what she fixated on. It was faith.

“When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.” (Joshua 2:11, NIV) Rahab's faith in the God of Israel is clear from her statement to the spies. Instead of cowering in fear of the God of Israel, she placed her faith in Him, ultimately leading her an unparalleled importance in the lineage of Christ.

But Rahab doesn't stop there. She continues speaking to the spies, asking for protection when they take the city. And then, she doesn't just shove them out the door, saying, “Good luck out there, hope you don't get caught.” Instead, she lets them down the city wall by a rope and advises them to spend three days in the hills until those pursuing them had returned to the city. Rahab, though her occupation wasn't the greatest, showed by these actions that her faith talk matched her faith walk. And when the Israelites took the city of Jericho, Rahab and her family were spared according the oath of the spies (Joshua 6:22). But Rahab's story doesn't end there.

Turn to Matthew chapter 1, a well-known chapter but not often read. Read verses 5 and 6.

Rahab's son was Boaz, whose story we know from the book of Ruth. Ruth, a Moabite woman who returned to the Lord's people with her mother-in-law, Naomi, ends up marrying Boaz, and they have a son named Obed, whose son was Jesse. And Jesse's youngest son was David, king of Israel. The rest of Matthew chapter 1 goes on to detail the remaining people in the lineage of Jesus, the Christ.

Amazing, isn't it, that a prostitute from Jericho whose faith talk matched her faith walk ends up being such an important woman in the lineage of David and of Christ? It was her faith that inspired her deeds that God used to enact amazing things.

Read James 2:18-26.

Recognize any names in this passage? “In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?” (James 2:25, NIV) *Even* Rahab the prostitute, James says. Even the most unlikely person, Rahab, a prostitute, for goodness sakes, God considered righteous because of her faith and the deeds that that faith inspired.

Rahab is a reminder to me that God can use even the most broken people for His divine purposes. That no matter what we have been or where we are, God can use us, and our faith in Him. And not just our faith talk. We've got to have a faith walk that matches that faith talk.

What does that last verse in James 2 say? “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” (James 2:26, NIV) If our faith is all talk, and no walk, we're not really living it. Likewise, if our faith is all walk but no talk, we're still not really living it. So, here's my question – for me and for you, today. Does your faith talk match your faith walk? Are you living what you say that you believe? Are you living in your actions for the One in whom you have placed your faith?

None of us is perfect. And there are times that my faith walk isn't going to match my faith talk. But as far as the east is from the west has He removed our transgressions from us. And His grace covers us. But I hope and pray, in the words of Beth Moore at the conclusion of her study of James that this is true in my life after studying Rahab's faith talk and faith walk today: “I hope to refuse myself the luxury of ever again having a faith talk that exceeds my faith walk. What I live is what I believe. Period.” (James:Mercy Triumphs, Beth Moore)

When your faith walk doesn't match your faith talk this week, take heart, for He has overcome the world. But never stop striving to have your faith talk match your faith walk, for God uses even the most unlikely people for His glory. He even used Rahab, a prostitute.