

Whispering Courage into Flame

Joshua 2: 14-24

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Joshua 2 seems like a detour from the larger story, but God has purposes for this detour - to seek and save Rahab and to reveal His greatness. We will explore the story in two parts:

Part 1: Hushed Promises

Rahab, courageously sheltered the two spies on her rooftop and skillfully outwitted the Jericho authorities as they departed. In a whispered plea, she beseeched the spies to spare her life and the lives of her family. In response, the spies vowed that no harm would befall anyone in her household, under the condition that she maintained their secrecy and ensured her family remained within her home during Israel's assault. As a symbol of their agreement, a scarlet cord was tied to the window of her dwelling.

Part 2: Hearty Exclamation

The spies followed Rahab's instructions to avoid Jericho police, before returning to Joshua's camp. The first thing they said to Joshua was, *'Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands'*. These brave individuals keenly discerned the hand of God at work and His divine plan unfolding. This declaration served as a powerful and inspirational beginning for Israel as they embarked on their conquest.

This passage offers three key insights to consider:

1. No Courage, No Greatness

God's magnificence shone brilliantly when He guided the spies on an unexpected path to rescue Rahab and her family. The report given to Joshua was not about the weakness of the land, but the greatness of God, who is mighty to save and strong to deliver. Choosing courage for this mission allowed the spies to witness God's greatness firsthand, an experience they would have missed otherwise.

The only way we get to behold His greatness is through courage: courage to repent and say Yes to God. Repentance is taking a detour, even a U-turn. Those who draw closest to God, behold His glory, and share in His greatness as His children are the courageous ones (Rev. 21:7)! Conversely, those who resist courage - constructing their lives on the seemingly safe paths of this world - will be eventually cast out of God's presence & away from enjoying His greatness (Rev. 21:8).

2. Follow the Scarlet Cord

The scarlet cord points immediately to the miraculous, Passover-like rescue that God orchestrated for Rahab's household. The scarlet cord also points forward to Rahab's generations of faithfulness (Matt. 1:5). But more than that, from Rahab would come Jesus - whose life would truly declare: "My life for yours, even to death!" In dying for sinners past, present, and future - Jesus is the

True Passover Lamb, the True Hiding Place. In the story of Joshua 2, God's intervention to save Rahab and her family is a symbolic precursor to the salvation offered to all through Jesus Christ. Rahab's request for her family's safety was part of a larger divine plan, with the scarlet cord she used as a signal representing the future salvation through Jesus.

When we feel unable to be courageous, follow the scarlet cord. It tells us the story of how that same courage that flowed in Rahab and Jesus, now flows powerfully through all who believe in Jesus.

3. Commit to Courage

a) Embrace God's detours for your life:

Embrace the purposes God has for you, in the painful detour of suffering. Embrace the detour of unfulfilled desires for God's sake. Embrace the full detour of the Christian life. The Cross demands a complete U-Turn in our lives.

b) Embrace God's mission:

God is the Savior of the world. He goes the distance to bring the lost to Himself. We need to embrace God's mission - that all would hear the gospel and enter His kingdom. Let's take courage to pray for the lost, to give to missions and the Church Planting Fund, and to go (whether in reaching our loved ones or the nations through missions).

c) Embrace God's greatness:

Why would we want to courageously repent, obey and say YES to God? Because we want to behold more of the greatness of God. The courage of Christ flows in all who believe in Jesus. Commit to courage!