

Intro. When we talk about the word “faith,” we need to remember how God defines it. Hebrews 11:1 says “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” So our faith in the Lord is real, there is substance to it, even though we don’t see God. In the movie “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade,” Indiana was forced to overcome 3 obstacles to reach the Holy Grail & save his dying father’s life. The 3rd obstacle he comes to is shown here (play video clip). Just as Indiana Jones had to move forward with faith to reach the grail, so the Lord calls us as a church to keep “Moving Forward: With Faith” to fulfill His mission for us. Today we look at Joshua 2 & how God caused His people to move forward with faith.

Theme: Faith

Background: After Moses led Israel out of Egypt through Yahweh’s 10 Plagues & then the crossing of the Red Sea, Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because of their disobedience. Once Moses & the previous generation died, God used Joshua to lead Israel into the Promised Land.

Overview of the Narrative:

- As any good general would try to discover as much about the enemy as possible, that’s what Joshua did by sending two spies. He had no idea God would perform the miracle of tearing down the walls, but even with the walls down, Israel still had to enter Jericho to fight against its inhabitants.
- Rahab is a well-known prostitute in town, so it may not have been unusual to see a couple of strange men go into her house. Apparently someone spotted them, for word came to the king (Jericho was a city-state) & he sent men to find the Israelites. Although Rahab had hidden the men on the roof among bundles of flax, she said they had already left town, so they went to the Jordan River in search of them.
- Rahab then went to the spies & told them how she & the other inhabitants had heard of Yahweh’s mighty deeds & how the people of Jericho were discouraged in fighting the Israelites (kind of like the Cleveland Cavaliers about to play the Golden State Warriors without 3 of their best players).
- She made a covenant with the spies as she placed her faith in Yahweh & they swore protection to her if she kept their mission secret. They gave her a scarlet cord as a sign & escaped out her window (her house was part of the wall of the city)
- They hid for 3 days until the search team had given up & they returned to Joshua with the news & Joshua knew Yahweh was giving the land to them, because the inhabitants were discouraged

➤ **2 lessons we learn about Moving Forward With Faith:**

I. When confronted with life or death issues, faithfully choose the lesser of two evils (2:4-14)

- Rahab willingly lied to spare the Israelite spies so they could return to Joshua with their report & take the city (nobody was expecting the Lord to do the kind of miracle he did, but they needed to overthrow the inhabitants of the land)
- Rahab’s lie, as the lesser of two evils, was a demonstration of her faith in Yahweh, the God of Israel & the God of heaven & earth, that she wanted to belong to Yahweh’s people rather than her own people
- James 2:25 teaches Rahab’s hiding of the spies & sending them out a different way, deceiving her own people, was a demonstration of her faith (she was justified by her works which proved her faith)

Illus: In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie Ten Boom tells how her male relatives hid from the Nazis during WWII under a floor in her apartment. When the Nazis questioned a family member about where she was hiding the Jews, she would say, “They are under the table.” The Nazis lifted the tablecloth, to which the girl would laugh & the soldiers didn’t want to look foolish, so they left. This little girl refused to do anything but tell the truth.

Illus: On numerous occasions, police officers have made bargains with guys holding up a bank & innocent people that if they simply come out, they won't get in trouble, only to throw them to the ground & handcuff them on their surrender on the belief the lie to get them to surrender is a lesser evil than innocent people getting shot & killed

Illus: What about a Christian in the Middle East who gets kidnapped by Muslim terrorists who say, "Either renounce Christ or die." Would it be better for them to fake it & renounce Christ so they could live? No, because the lesser of two evils in that case is death, for the greatest evil is to renounce faith in the Lord, the greatest allegiance one should have (even greater than family ties)

Illus: We see Israelite midwives lie to Pharaoh saying they couldn't kill the male babies at birth because the Israelite women would give birth too quickly & the midwives didn't have time to get there & carry out Pharaoh's orders to kill all the male babies (Exodus 1:15-21)

II. When you covenant with the Lord by faith, He will save you from your sins (2:1, 9-20)

- Notice how Rahab is consistently referred to as Rahab "the prostitute" (2:1; 6:22, 25; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25; except for Matthew 1:5)—her sin was so well-known (publicly) that it was part of her identification
 - We don't know how she became a prostitute—if it was a form of sex-slavery to a master or simply the way she made her living
 - The scarlet cord/rope (tiqwah) probably conveyed a couple of ideas—it had an erotic meaning of sexuality as seen in Tamar's disguise as a prostitute (Genesis 38:12-30) & Solomon's Song of Songs 4:3 & Jeremiah's preaching against Israel's vain beautification (4:30), but the word also sounds like the Hebrew word for "hope" (tiqwah), so it may have also been a pun of putting her hope in the rope (a sign of the promise from the spies not to harm her or her family as she trusts in Yahweh)
- Illus: Just as Israel was spared by the Death Angel in Egypt whenever they applied the blood of a lamb to their doorposts, in a similar way Rahab would use the scarlet cord so her family could be spared. We also know God has provided Jesus Christ as the perfect Lamb whose shed blood for your sins is your only hope for deliverance from the coming destruction
- Rahab expressed more faith as a Canaanite with her belief in Yahweh & His power to save than the 10 Israelite spies 40 years earlier who didn't think they could take the Promised Land
 - Covenant language with Rahab (see Hebrews 11:31) & Joshua 2 (kindly & faithfully, vv. 14-15—she became a member of the faith spiritually that day & was saved physically shortly thereafter when Jericho was destroyed
 - If you don't know the rest of this story, here's a spoiler alert! In chapter 6, Joshua leads Israel to Jericho & they defeat everyone but they spare Rahab & her family—they are physically saved from destruction, but it's because she had made a covenant with the Israelite spies, having acted on faith in the Lord
 - Now I cannot promise you your best life now—you may be a believer & go through suffering & you may die from that suffering, but just because God may not save you physically doesn't mean He won't save you spiritually & one day reunite your glorified body with your soul

Conc. In "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (play first 10 seconds of theme song), Indiana accomplished the mission & found the holy grail & filled it with water to save his father. He was able to move forward in the mission because he acted by faith. The only way you as an individual & our church corporately can be "Moving Forward" is "With Faith." We must trust the Lord, depending on Him to work among us & in us & through us. We enter into the people of God "With Faith" in Jesus Christ & we continue to live as the people of God "With Faith." Have you trusted in the Lord for salvation? If so, then keep trusting Him. If not, then why not trust Him today?