

Something Better – Hebrews 11:30–40 (ESV)

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. 32 And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. 36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— 38 of whom the world was not worthy— wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab. That's Matthew 1:5. That's the genealogy of Jesus Christ. And if you just heard what we read — if that passage is still sitting in your chest right now — you may have caught her name. Verse 31. Rahab the prostitute. She's in the bloodline Not referenced.

Not honored from a distance. In the bloodline of the Son of God.

Now here's what I want you to sit with before we go anywhere. Hebrews 11 is not an advertisement. Nobody wrote this to sell you something. This is a testimony — a record of what God actually did through actual people who trusted Him when it cost them something. We've met Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. Last week Pastor Kenny walked us through Moses. Different people. Different stories. Same God.

And every single one of them arrives at the same conclusion: God can be trusted.

As we come to the end of the chapter, the pace quickens. It's like the writer is flipping through a family album — one story, one testimony, one name after another — until he lands on the line that holds everything together: *"Since God had provided something better for us."* Something better. That's where we're going today. But to get there, we have to meet someone first.

Faith Welcomes Outsiders Into the Family

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days." Heb. 11:30

The walls fall. Not because Israel was impressive. Because God was faithful. The people obeyed what God said, they walked by faith, and the walls came down. And then immediately—the writer pivots. He moves from the walls of the city to a woman who was living inside those walls.

"By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies." — Hebrews 11:31

Rahab. I want you to understand who this woman actually was. Not just the label—the life.

She wasn't a woman who made one bad decision. In the ancient world, a woman in her position was there because society had used her up and left her on the edge—literally on the edge, because she lived on the wall of the city. Not in the center of town. Not near the marketplace. She was on the perimeter. She was marginal by location and by category.

She was Canaanite—outside the covenant. She was a woman in a world that treated women as property. She was a prostitute in a culture where that made her invisible to respectable people and useful to everyone else. She was not who you would pick. She was not who anyone would pick. And the writer of Hebrews puts her right next to Moses.

Think about that contrast. Last week—Moses. Prince of Egypt. Covenant history going back generations. Raised with every advantage the ancient world could offer. And yet, by faith, Moses walked away from all of it to identify with the people of God. Moses was an insider who chose to become an outsider.

Now we meet Rahab. An outsider who by faith is welcomed into the people of God. Moses was a prince. Rahab was a prostitute. Moses was raised in a palace. Rahab lived on a wall. Moses had covenant history. Rahab had only heard reports of what God had done. And yet Hebrews places them shoulder to shoulder.

Because faith is not about where you started. Faith is about who you trust.

What Was the Foundation of Rahab's Faith?

Here's what's stunning about Rahab. She wasn't rescued because she was morally impressive. She wasn't rescued because she had the right background or the right bloodline or the right religious training. She heard what God had done—and she believed.

"For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt... And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted... for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." — Joshua 2:10–11

The people of Jericho heard the same reports. They responded with fear and resistance. Rahab heard—and she surrendered. She didn't know everything. She didn't have a complete theology. She had a report and a response. And then her faith became visible through obedience.

"And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?" — James 2:25

She welcomed the spies. She protected them. She sent them out another way. She hung the scarlet cord in the window. She gathered her family into the house. The scarlet cord didn't save Rahab. God saved Rahab. But the scarlet cord showed that Rahab trusted God's promise.

Faith is invisible until it becomes obedience.

And here's what I don't want you to miss. Rahab's first instinct after trusting God was not just self-preservation. It was rescue. She immediately pleaded for her father, her mother, her brothers, her sisters, and all who belonged to them. The moment she found grace, she went after her family. She wasn't merely rescued from judgment. She was welcomed into the family of God.

Faith Is Seen In Triumph and In Suffering

After Rahab, the pace accelerates. *"And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets."* — Hebrews 11:32

It's like the writer throws up his hands and says—I could keep going all day. The family of faith is too large to tell completely. There are too many testimonies. Too many moments where ordinary people trusted an extraordinary God and watched Him come through. And then he gives us two categories that I think are more important than we often realize.

First, the faith that triumphs. *"Who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection."* — Hebrews 11:33–35a

These are the stories we love. Kingdoms conquered. Lions silenced. Fires quenched. Dead sons restored to grieving mothers. Weak people made strong. This is the faith we naturally long for. Faith that wins. Faith that sees the breakthrough. And God absolutely works that way.

But then comes one of the most important words in the passage. *"Others..."* — Hebrews 11:35b *Others.* That one word changes everything. Some escaped. Others endured. Some received deliverance. Others received suffering. Some saw victory in this lifetime. Others held onto faith while everything around them looked like loss.

"Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." — Hebrews 11:35b–38

The world looked at them and saw weakness. God saw faithfulness. The world saw failure. God saw courage. The world saw people worth rejecting and silencing and mistreating. God said—the world was not worthy of them.

The kingdom of God measures success differently than the kingdoms of this world. The world values power, platform, comfort, and control. God values faithfulness. The world celebrates those who win. God honors those who endure.

The world has no value for weakness—so it oppresses the vulnerable. But we follow a Savior who entered our vulnerability, suffered in our place, was rejected, crucified—and through suffering, brought redemption to the entire world. Sometimes faith conquers. Sometimes faith endures. But in both cases, faith trusts God. *And honestly? It often takes more faith to endure than it does to escape.*

Faith Joins Us to a Bigger Promise

After naming the victorious and the suffering, the famous and the forgotten, the writer pulls them all together. *"And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised."* — *Hebrews 11:39* **All these.**

The ones who conquered kingdoms. The ones who wandered in caves. The ones who escaped the sword. The ones who were killed by it. The ones whose names we know. The ones history forgot. All of them were commended through faith. And none of them received the fullness of what was promised in their lifetime. Why?

"Since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." — *Hebrews 11:40* They were all looking ahead to Christ.

Abraham waited. Moses waited. Rahab waited. David waited. The prophets waited. They looked forward to the promise. We look back to the fulfillment. But we are all saved by the same Savior. That means Hebrews 11 is not a collection of isolated heroes. It is the story of a family. The family of faith—waiting for, and now living in, the fulfillment of God's promise in Christ. And Rahab shows us just how far that family story actually goes.

What God Did With Rahab's Story

"And Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab..." — Matthew 1:5 Rahab wasn't only rescued from judgment. She was redeemed into the family of God. And Boaz is her son. When you meet Boaz in the book of Ruth, everything about him is striking. He is wealthy but generous. Powerful but protective. Influential but humble. He doesn't use people — he covers them. Where did that come from?

He grew up knowing his mother's story. Rahab knew what it was like to be used. Boaz became a man who protected. Rahab knew exploitation from the time she was young. Boaz became one of the most famously generous men in all of Scripture.

He didn't inherit Jericho's story. He inherited redemption's story. That's what redemption does. It doesn't just change you — it changes what you pass down. What God redeems in your generation becomes something better in the next. And Rahab's line — through Boaz — leads to Ruth, to Jesse, to David, and to Jesus Christ. The woman on the wall is in the family tree of the King.

Jesus Is the Greater Boaz

Boaz is one of the great pictures of grace in the Old Testament. Generous, protective, redemptive. He looks at Ruth — a Moabite widow with nothing — and says: I will cover you. What was lost, I will restore. He points to someone greater.

But here's what I don't want you to miss. Jesus didn't just act *like* Rahab's story mattered. He carried it in His bloodline. The Son of God, fully divine, entering human history — and He chose a family tree that included a Canaanite prostitute who lived on the wall of Jericho.

He didn't have to. And He did. Which means when Jesus looks at your story — the parts you'd never put on a résumé, the history you hope nobody Googles, the version of you that existed before you found grace — He's not surprised. He's not deterred. He already built your kind of story into His own.

Rahab thought she needed to survive the week. God wrote her into eternity. What began with a scarlet cord hanging from a window on the wall of Jericho ultimately led to a scarlet cross standing on a hill outside Jerusalem. Same grace. Same God. Something better.

Closing

Here's what I want you to carry out of here. You might feel like Rahab. Not the cleaned-up version — the real one. The one who's been used. The one who's lived on the margin, outside the respectable center of things, wondering if there's a place in the family for someone with your history.

Jericho looked at Rahab and saw a category. God looked at Rahab and saw a family member — and then wrote her into the lineage of His own Son. Your past is not too complicated for the King. It's exactly the kind of material He works with.

He doesn't just pull you out of Jericho. He puts you in the story. The real story. The one that was running before you were born and will keep running after you're gone. Rahab was trying to survive the week. God was writing a bloodline that would carry the Savior of the world.

You don't know what God is writing through you right now. But Hebrews 11:40 tells you this: whatever it is, He has provided something better. Not just for the heroes whose names we know. Not just for the ones who conquered kingdoms. For all of these. Including you.