

The Scarlet Line

Josh 2:21

1

21 She said, "According to your words, so be it." So she sent them away, and they departed; and she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

2

The occasion of this passage is the spies that Joshua sent into Jericho have been found out and have taken refuge in the house of Rahab, the harlot. When the men of the city come looking for them she sends them away, telling them that while the spies had come to her they had left and she didn't know where they had gone. She tells the spies that she had heard what the Lord had done for the Israelites at the Red Sea. She had heard of God helping the Israelites to defeat the kings of the Amorites, Og and Sihon, and she relates how that news had frightened the people of Jericho. And she acknowledges that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the Earth. She then demands a pledge from the spies that the Israelites will spare her and her family when they take Jericho. The spies...

Josh 2:14

3

14 So the men said to her, "Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it shall come about when the Lord gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."

She then lets them down through a window by a rope. They give her the scarlet cord to hang out the window so that all will know which her family's house is.

It seems like every detail in a conversion like that of the harlot Rahab is worthy of notice.

The Hebrew writer quotes her as an instance of justification by faith...

Heb 11:31

4

31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

The apostle James selected her as an illustration of the fact that faith is always attended by good works...

James 2:22-25

5

22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

James gives an excellent illustration of how faith works together with works to justify a man. Hebrews tells us that Rahab was justified by faith, but James explains how it is that faith is manifested in works, resulting in justification, so that both faith and works were what justified

Rahab, just as they do for man today, the point being that if both James and the Hebrew writer found an example in Rahab, then I think that possibly, so might you and I. There were many things that had a hand in the salvation of Rahab and her family, and if the hiding of the spies under the flax had some significance, then so did the hanging out of the scarlet line.

So, the two spies Rahab had concealed made an agreement with her that she should hang a scarlet line in the window where she had let them down, that they might know, in the day of battle, the house where she dwelt. She fulfilled their request, and displayed the cord.

There are some thoughts then that I want to look from that scarlet cord...

- 6) 1) An Obedient Believer
- 2) A Covenant
- 3) A Confession

I recognize that these may seem obvious, but remember...

2 Peter 1:10-11 7

10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; **11** for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Peter instructs those he is writing to be diligent to practice the things of faith to make certain their calling and entrance into the eternal kingdom. Now note...

2 Peter 1:12-13 8

12 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. **13** I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

Yes the points may seem to be obvious, but as Peter says, we all need to be continually reminded.

So our first point...

- 9) 1) An obedient believer

She was told to tie the scarlet thread in the window, and she did it; there was an urgent obedience on the part of Rahab. She put a scarlet cord out her window so that it was visible. Scarlet, no other color, that was the instruction.

Obedience to God is not seen only in what might be considered to be the big things, attending services, taking the Lord's Supper, giving, the things that the world sees, but real obedience to God must be seen in the every-day things of life. Love always attends to the little things, and in doing so, makes the little things great. The world looks at the faithful, obedient child of God and labels him as...

10

Legalistic

This term is meant to be derogatory; but, quite frankly, I take pride in the fact that others recognize that I am making my best effort to obey God in all His commands, and not just the ones that suit my fancy. I see examples recorded in the scriptures that help me to understand the importance of faithful obedience to God...

Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10 show that when God commands, He expects that command to be obeyed explicitly.

We are told to take the Lord's supper on the first day of the week, Acts 20:7. That excludes any other day of the week, period. It tells us how often to take it, on the first day of the week. That would seem to pretty clear, but there are those who would have us to believe that to come to that conclusion is to be legalistic, straining at the word and applying law where it doesn't need to be applied.

We are told to sing in Eph. 5 and Col. 3. But the world wants to have bands and orchestras, pianos and organs, things that in no way qualify as...

11

Singing

But we are legalistic when we demand that God's word be obeyed to its letter and not to the opinion of man. The true child of God may be viewed by the world as being too precise, but the God that the true child serves can only be viewed as a precise God that demands faithful allegiance to Him and to His Word. It might have seemed to be a little mistake, excused by frustration and anger when he struck the rock in Numbers 20, but because Moses did not obey God by speaking to the rock, as he had been commanded to do, he was not allowed to enter the land of Canaan.

The point in this is that what might seem to be a small action on our part involves far greater principles and speaks to our overall attitude in our faith and obedience.

There is a wall at Disneyland that uses pictures of people that have visited the park that makes a picture of Mickey Mouse in the cartoon Steamboat Willie. The Christians life is a mosaic of small, what might seem to be not so significant obedience's, but that, when combined, makes up the whole of the life. The soldiers of Christ are to be famous for their exact discipline and explicit obedience of God's commandments. That was the oath they took and the pledge they made.

Our next point in this discussion is...

12

2) A Covenant

The spies had made a covenant with Rahab that she should have her life spared, and the lives of her family, if she concealed their secret, and if she tied a scarlet line in the window. This is interesting. The agreement had requirements on both sides. Rahab protected the spies and for that protection asked that she and her family be protected. The spies agreed to that requirement of the agreement with the caveat that she display the scarlet cord. Had she not displayed the cord, the spies, the Israelites would not have been bound by the agreement. That is an important point. For the Israelites to be bound by the agreement, Rahab had to display the cord. Far too many times man demands that God fulfill His promises without ever displaying the cord.

God promises:

13

- A) Forgiveness
- B) Comfort

C) Love

And here is the real truth of the matter; God has already kept every one of His promises to man. Every one. He has made forgiveness possible, if man will just come to him through Christ.

Acts 4:12 14

12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Salvation is there, right in front of man, for the taking.
He has provided comfort through Jesus Christ...

2 Thess 2:16-17 15

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, **17** comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

God sent His Son to become the source of salvation, eternal comfort, and hope, and Christ accomplished that in His death, burial, and resurrection. All any man has to do is...

Acts 8:36-37 16

36 As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, Look! "Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" **37** And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

And God offers love. To all who will love Him...

1 John 4:8-9 17

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. **9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

God has kept His promises, but for man to gain advantage and blessing from them, we must hang the cord. We must come to Him through Christ. We must faithfully obey and we must love him.

The spied offered Rahab a covenant. By tying the cord in her window, she confirmed her part in the agreement and claimed the promise of the covenant that had been offered.

How does man claim the promise of the covenant that God has offered? By faith. By obedience. By love. Therein is our next point...

18 3) A Confession

What is a confession? Jesus says that...

Matt 10:32 19

32 "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

Confession is a statement, an action, anything and everything that shows to other men that we believe in and obey Jesus the Christ and have chosen to obey the one and only Word of God. Confession is the total and unequivocal acceptance of God, Christ, the Word, and living our lives in accordance with that Word. That is confession and confession is what is required on man's part to be accepted by God and found faithful in order to receive forgiveness of our sin so that we might be saved.

By hanging the cord out her window Rahab was making a confession to all who saw it that she believed that the Israelites would overthrow the city and that they would keep their promise to spare she and her family. That is what we saw with the Eunuch when Philip said if you believe you may and the Eunuch said he believed. That is a confession. When you make the right decision when faced with a temptation, that is a confession. When you endure in the face of the trials of the world, that is a confession.

What does the world see when it looks at us? If it can't see a difference between the hordes that profess religion, attend a church service on occasion, know only what they are told about the Bible, because they rarely if ever read it, then maybe the problem isn't with the world. God has given man everything he needs and asks that man be willing to give himself in return. This has always been the case...

Deut 27:9-10

20

9 Then Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying, "Be silent and listen, O Israel! This day you have become a people for the Lord your God. **10** "You shall therefore obey the Lord your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."

Obedience, commitment was to be at the core of the Israelites relationship with God. It is no different for the Christian who wants to live the f=confession of faith made by the Eunuch and by Rahab...

Rom 12:1-2

21

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Rahab shows us a perfect illustration of what it means to believe and to act on that belief. She obeyed, she did what she was told to do. She agreed to and claimed the covenant made by the spies, and she proclaimed her confession to the world when she kept the covenant. And as we have already seen in James 2:25...

22

25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works

Does our faith, confession, and commitment justify us, or does our lack thereof condemn us?