

**Unlikely Heroes Series**  
**Unusual Help from an Unlikely Place**  
**September 13, 2020**

**Scripture: Joshua 2:1-15**

**2:1** Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove.<sup>[a]</sup> He instructed them, “Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho.” So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night. **2** But someone told the king of Jericho, “Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.” **3** So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: “Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land.” **4** Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, “Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn’t know where they were from.” **5** They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don’t know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them.” **6** (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.) **7** So the king’s men went looking for the spies along the road leading to the shallow crossings of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king’s men had left, the gate of Jericho was shut. **8** Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them. **9** “I know the LORD has given you this land,” she told them. “We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. **10** For we have heard how the LORD made a dry path for you through the Red Sea<sup>[b]</sup> when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed.<sup>[c]</sup> **11** No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below. **12** “Now swear to me by the LORD that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that **13** when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families.” **14** “We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety,” the men agreed. “If you don’t betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the LORD gives us the land.” **15** Then, since Rahab’s house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window.

### **Sermon Summary**

The historical context of our scriptures situates the fledgling nation of Israel at the crossroads of *so close and yet so far* as they stood at the border of the Promised Land. The formidable walls of Jericho and the mighty army stationed there threatened the hopes of God’s people. Camped at the small-town *Acacia Grove* along the Jordan River, Joshua faced seemingly impossible odds as he devised a plan to send two men as spies into Jericho. However, the mission was compromised when the King of Jericho was alerted to the presence of the Israeli spies. Facing certain imprisonment and probable death the spies turned to their Canaanite hostess Rahab who was a known prostitute and citizen of Jericho.

Rehab defied the orders of the King of Jericho to “bring out the men who have come into your house.” She devised a plan to misdirect the King and help the Israeli spies escape to bring Joshua the reconnaissance report needed to overthrow Jericho. Rehab was an unlikely heroine helping God’s people in an unlikely place. Her willingness to facilitate the plan of God demonstrates the following:

- I. **God accomplishes sacred work with ordinary people.** Some biblical commentators wanted to coverup the fact that Rehab is identified as a harlot in the bible. They thought it detracted from the story and wanted to present her in a more dignified occupation. But the fact the Rehab was a harlot is central to the fact that God uses ordinary and marginalized people. God pushes through man's self-righteousness to cause a prostitute to prophesize. Therefore, we shouldn't dismiss anyone whom God has chosen.
2. **The sovereign will of an extraordinary God** is demonstrated in God using Rehab to help the spies and ultimately Joshua and Israel fulfilment of acquiring the Promised Land. We must walk by faith knowing God is sovereign.
3. **The saving work of a forgiving Father.** Rahab's faith reveals God's forgiving love. She sacrificed herself to save the lives of strangers. Similarly, Jesus sacrificed Himself to save us. Rehab is a heroin of faith and blood ancestor to our Lord and Savior.

### **Discussion:**

1. How does Rehab's occupation influence your perception of her in this story?
2. Do you feel prostitutes can be used by God today?
3. Rehab betrays her own people to help an invading army; what do you think this says about Rahab's character?
4. Would you consider betraying your family to help strangers whom you thought were working for God? Why or why not?
5. What experiences have you had with God blessing you in unlikely places?
6. Rehab is an ancestor of Jesus; is this a justification from God? Explain.