

You are More – Devotional

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“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace” (Hebrews 11:31).

When we hear the Bible stories of great women of faith, rarely do we hear the name, “Rahab, the Harlot,” yet her story exemplifies God’s grace (unmerited favor) and his mercy (compassion). Where others see the labels, “harlot”, “black sheep of the family”, “not pretty enough” etc., God sees the beauty **within** us, and He is more concerned with our heart’s condition.

In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, we read about the great patriarchs or “Champions of Faith.” We see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to name a few. This passage speaks well of these great men of God and their mighty acts.

We know their stories well, yet nestled and tucked away in verse 31, we see Rahab the harlot, yes, the harlot. If I could put a bookmark right here, I would add that God makes no disclaimer nor makes any excuses for adding Rahab just as she is, a prostitute. Beloved, that is what God does, meets us right where we are, whether rejected, hurt, broken, addicted, misused, abused, or unfairly judged.

Ask the Samaritan woman in John 4, and she would tell you how Jesus made an intentional effort to go meet her in Samaria. As my dear sister Shauna once said. “Not only did Jesus go to “Samaria” to meet her, but He went to meet “Some-Area” of her life (play on words). A woman with issues as deep as the well that she drew from, Jesus made the time to stop and have compassion. No judgment. He found a loving way to tell her the various men in her life weren't the issue, but her thirst for them was. He embraced her right where she was and took the risk of not just speaking to any woman, but a despised Samaritan woman. He encouraged her so much that she ran off and left her waterpot to tell others about Jesus. What a testimony! “Jesus took the time, just for me!”

You see, when we can't forgive ourselves, when we can't muster the strength to meet God, or to pray, when we're too embarrassed to face others, sometimes He meets us. Other times He intentionally yet lovingly sends someone to strengthen and encourage us, right where we are, right in the middle of the ash heap of our lives. While the Bible makes no mention of her name, the Samaritan woman was worthy of honorable mention. Maybe in her anonymity we can all glean something from her story. He sees us and He cares. His mercy extends and we're never too far from its reach.

In Joshua 2 we see Rahab’s story. Two spies were sent secretly by Joshua to view or “preview” this idolatrous land before their planned attack to take it over. They decided to lodge temporarily at Rahab’s house. Why a harlot’s house? I'm glad you asked. A lot of us would have questioned God and possibly aborted the mission to avoid being connected with such a sinful woman. Yet what a perfect place due to the flow of traffic in and out of her home to go incognito on a mission for God.

Her faith is also worthy of honorable mention because she took a great risk hiding these spies, which could have ultimately cost her life and that of her family members. Have you ever taken a

risk involving your faith, even at the risk of the opinion of others? When was the last time you did something courageous for God or for His kingdom? Maybe you saw someone crying on the bus and you knew you should have asked to pray for them. Or maybe you failed to stand up for justice's sake when you saw others being treated unfairly.

A lot of believers hold the keys to answered prayer right in their hands, but they allow the cacophony of sounds within to talk them out of doing what's right. Their inhibitions or fears of not being worthy enough to step up or maybe the fear of their past resurfacing at an inopportune time keeps them from being a voice to someone who's suffering silently.

Rahab was not defined by her sins, but she was defined by her courage and her faith, despite her lifestyle. Quite a few times she was labeled "the harlot," but the good news surfaces in Matthew 1, Jesus' genealogy. Proudly, she's now a part of Jesus' family and she's simply Rahab, no harlot, no labels. Likewise, you are not your past nor are you the label others have placed on you. You see, once you become a part of God's family, the stigma of your past falls off like scales and you now become part of a royal priesthood and a chosen generation (1 Peter 2:9).

God made a promise to Rahab because of her courageous faith and as a result not only was her life spared, but also her entire family (the same people who probably distanced themselves and rejected her). I'm sure she thought of them often, even when they had forgotten her. Their lives were all spared because of an act of faith from the most unlikely source. May we live a life of faith and trust God even when we don't understand.

"Father, thank You for including us in Your family. Thank You for extending Your grace and mercy to us when death should have been our sentence. We're grateful that we are not defined by our past, nor the labels others have placed on us, but we're defined by how You view us through the eyes of love and compassion. May we have courageous faith to truly see those who suffer silently and to help others whose faith is waning without reservation, in Jesus' Name. Amen."