

Joshua 2; Matt. 1:5; Rahab, the Mother of Jesus I. The Fearful Expectation II. The Promised Peace

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, this morning as we return to our Advent series, we come to the 2<sup>nd</sup> mother of Jesus listed in Matthew 1- Rahab. As we saw last week, these unexpected mothers lead to unexpected births- each teaching us of God's grace and power! Last week with Tamar we found that it was assumed she was a prostitute- well this week we find a Canaanite woman who actually was a prostitute. In fact, our passage and Joshua as a whole, focuses on this- she is known in redemptive history as Rahab the prostitute. How would you like that to be your name? Well- we know that the mothers of Jesus are not worthy of this honor- as no woman would be- but Jesus is not ashamed to call this woman His mother! It would be like introducing your family like this- my grandfather the drunk and my mother the prostitute. The lineage of Christ is not populated with the outstanding pillars of society- but in this we find the good news! Jesus Christ highlights the past of these men and women in His family tree in order to highlight the fact that His grace is sovereign! That God's mercy is undeserved and salvation is not contingent on man! Rahab the Canaanite prostitute is grafted into the tree of Israel and even becomes the foremother of Jesus. As a prostitute, her home functioned as a sort of inn in Jericho- a common house where men would come and go. So today we see that Jesus Christ puts the fear of God into Jericho in order to save His child.

### **I. The Fearful Expectation**

We begin with the fearful expectation- as you can see the theme of fear runs through our chapter in Joshua. The closest our nation has been to a similar situation is perhaps the beginning of WW2- when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Imagine if the Pacific Fleet was totally sunk- and Japanese fleet is headed towards the California coast. How would you feel if nothing but a little water stood between you and the power of the Red Rising Sun? Well -that is the position that Jericho will find itself in- an invading army is knocking at its door. So the city is on edge to say the least. And a scout party has just been spotted- two men that looked like Hebrews were seen entering the city. So the city council shuts the city gates- the National Guard is patrolling the wall. The spies must be found- so a thorough search is made. Rahab- bring out the men that came to your house- v. 3 says. We must stop these men from bringing our secrets to their base camp- from exposing our defenses. But Rahab

covers for the men, and then the pursuers are sent to find the spies on the road. To stop them before the news of our strengths and weaknesses are uncovered to Joshua. Later on, in chapter 6, we find out more about this city- its wide, strong and tall wall that could support a chariot on its top. The gates that are locked so that no one can go in or go out. Now why were the residents and leaders of this city acting this way? Didn't they trust their walls and their army for defense? Well- as we come to v. 9 we find out about their fearful expectation. They were filled with fear- fear had fallen upon them all. Terror and dread- the army and the citizens were horrified! Paralyzed in their fear! Added to this- their hearts were melting- their strength was sapped -their strength was fading. The strongest men were faint! Their courage was melting like an ice cream cone sitting in the hot summer sun! Their courage was draining out of them. But how does Rahab respond? Well- she responds in fear as well- but her direction takes her towards the LORD. You see, in our passage there are two kinds of fear and two very different responses. On the one hand, we have the fear of the people as a whole. A fear that moves them to hatred- seeking to fight against God and His people. On the other hand, we have a fearful reverence- an awe and wonder at this nation at her doorstep. It is this reverent fear that moves her to petition for peace in v. 12. Now consider what Rahab knew- what she believed. She knew the name of the LORD in v. 8- the covenantal name of Yahweh- the God who is- the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob- the God of Moses and the Law. This is the one, true God she knows. And she knows His works as well as His promises. I know that the LORD has given you this land. I know what the LORD has done in v. 10- His mighty works at the Red Sea and what happened to the Kings of the Amorites. And I know what this God is like- as v. 11 says- that He is the LORD God who made all things! Now this is remarkable- Rahab knows the name of the LORD- the Works of the LORD and the being and nature of the LORD! She knows that her city is going to fall- that she deserves death- but instead of fleeing in fear from the LORD she seeks peace – desiring to flee from the coming wrath by looking for pardon and grace! This is a member of the world- a Canaanite prostitute- who is being grafted into the OT church! She is being saved by grace through faith! Jesus is working in her heart by the Spirit- and bringing her into His fold! Normally a prostitute has no alliance and no principles- but here she shows a solid faith! She seeks to align herself with the God of Israel! Indeed- she is listed in Heb. 11:31 – she is one of great faith because she welcomed these men and

hoped in their God! She is also listed in James 2:25- as one who was justified by works- she had a living faith made evident in what she did! Do you see the wonder of this woman- Jesus uses her as a model of faith and obedience! The one that Jesus saves He also changes! So she knows of God's justice and mercy- of His power to destroy nations and His power to save His people! And she by faith hopes- relies on this living LORD of all to rescue her from her life of sin and to save her from this city of rebellion! As you can see- coming face to face with God's power always produces fear- either a fear that hates, runs from and rebels against God- or an awe-inspired fear that moves towards humility, trust and reliance- hoping and petitioning for peace! This second response is only possible if Jesus is working in your heart by His Spirit. And by God's grace, Rahab is promised peace!

## **II. The Promised Peace**

Now that Rahab has sent her own, fellow countrymen on a wild goose chase, she sits down with these alien visitors. In v. 12 she asks for peace- that her life would be spared- that on sacred vow and oath to the LORD- she and her family would be delivered from deserved death. She dared to hope for deliverance- one that we have in Christ alone! And the gracious response is found in v. 14. Our life for yours- our flesh and skin for yours. If you do not tell others about our coming and going, we will deal kindly and faithfully with you. We will prove to be truthful and merciful. But she not only secures peace and pardon for herself- she also finds a blessing for her family as well! Note her request in v. 12-13- my fathers house- my family- father, mother, brothers and sisters. She is not only concerned with her own skin- but her whole household! And later in Joshua 6:17 we hear Joshua say- only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be saved! God extends His loving mercy to the family unit as a whole- the household enjoy the blessings of the covenant of peace as well. In this Rahab needs to prove herself faithful. She needs to conceal these events from Israel's foes- and she needs to reveal in part the hope of salvation to her family. She needs to compel her loved ones to remain in her house if they will be saved! In all this we see that Jesus is leading His OT church to show mercy! He graciously saves all those who come to Him in faith! Jesus came to save sinners like this- His saving grace is powerful and effective- to deliver, ransom and change the hardest hearts! What do we know- in what do we trust? Like Rahab- we know

who God is and what He has done! Our hope is based on God's promises and person- Jesus is mighty to save and has promised to deliver those who trust in Him! Come to me- I will never turn you away! Our salvation is so marvelous and free! Jesus delights to show mercy to such as these! Jesus is not ashamed to call Rahab His mother! So Rahab is cut off from the tree of this world and grafted into the vine of Christ. Josh. 6:25 concludes this matter by saying- Rahab lived among Israel to this day. Not only spared, but placed in a position of honor! You see- she is given in marriage to a Hebrew! She ends up marrying Salmon and giving birth to a baby boy named Boaz! Yes children- the very same Boaz that is so generous and crucial in the book of Ruth! That Boaz was the son of Rahab and he becomes the kinsman redeemer! Truly God's ways are so much higher- better than our ways! His grace is able to save and exalt the lowly to a place of honor! So as we come back to our passage in ch. 2- the spies go back to Joshua and report all that has happened. They say to Joshua in v. 24- truly the LORD has given us the land- the inhabitants melted away because of us. Not only do these two men echo the words of Rahab from v. 11- they also confirm what God had promised back in Dt. 2:25- I the LORD will put the dread and fear of you on the people- they will tremble when they hear the report of you. Actually, the words of Rahab echo the words of Moses in Ex. 15:15- the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away- terror and dread fall upon them because the greatness of your arm! So the words of Rahab are used by God to remind Joshua and the Israelites of the promises God had made- thus Israel's faith is strengthened and they too grow in holy fear and reverence of the LORD. Thus confirmed- their faith strengthened- Israel is ready to follow the Lord into victory!

To conclude, our passage today again highlights how the mercy of God is sovereign, gracious and mysterious. Jesus Christ puts the fear of God into Jericho in order to save His child- it is the fear of the LORD that leads to knowledge and life as Rahab found out! We now come to the Lord's Supper- and here at this table we pause in reverence. We come to be fed by a gracious, saving God who nourishes us with the body and blood of the Lamb. We worship with fear and awe- but we also come in faith and trust- knowing that Christ will feed our souls. He will not cast away those who look to Him! At this table we remember who Jesus is and what He has done- and our faith in the LORD grows! We give thanks that our Savior is kind and has dealt faithfully with us!