



Judgment

Judgment marched past Rahab's window on hundreds of thousands of dirty feet.

She reached up and tugged on the scarlet cord that hung from her window. Still secure. Good. And she watched as the armies of Israel marched around the walls of Jericho.

Behind her, Rahab's mother trembled. "Daughter, are you sure?"

Rahab closed her eyes and nodded. She looked back at her family, crowded into her tiny home, sitting on her dirty bed.

She remembered the faces of those spies, stained with sweat and dark from the sun. Oh, she'd known exactly who they were. That's why she hid them when the king of Jericho came looking for them. And that's why she begged them that night, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We've heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea. We've heard what you did to the kings on the way here – they're completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted, and everyone's courage failed because of you. For the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below. Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you'll show kindness to me, to my family, because I've shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you'll spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you'll save us from death."

"Our lives for your lives," the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we're doing, we'll treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us this land."

And she had let them out through that very window. And the men had told her, “This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him.”

“Agreed,” she’d said. “Let it be as you say.”

And that was the last she’d seen them. Weeks ago.

And then, the people! So many of them, camped around Jericho! The city was shut up tight. She couldn’t go out to them if she wanted. All Rahab could do was watch as the judgment of her city grew closer and closer. And all she could do was trust their promise.

And then the people marched around the city.

And that first day, when the people had marched around, she’d expected judgment to come at any time. She’d expected them to attack.

But nothing happened.

And then, the second day, they marched around the city again, and she waited. Her family braced.

And nothing happened.

Then the third day. Then the fourth day. And on the fifth day her father said, “I need to go to the market. We’re running out of food.”

Rahab cried out, “No! They said that if you leave my house, your blood will be on your head! Stay here. Stay safe!”

And her father grumbled.

On day six, her family grew restless. “Why are we waiting here? Why are we waiting in the house of this prostitute?” her brother-in-law said. “It’s obvious these people will never actually attack!”

Rahab closed her eyes tight. She had only their promise to depend on.

Day seven dawned.

And the people of Israel marched around the city. And then they marched around it again. And again!

And now her family crowded around the window. They could taste it in the air: something was different.

And then, after the seventh time around the city, all the people of Israel shouted. And all of Rahab's family trembled. And then the ground trembled. And then the walls trembled. And the walls of Jericho came tumbling down!

But not Rahab's house. Inside the house with the scarlet cord it was safe.

And the fighting started, but then the two spies came to her door. They were safe from the judgment that landed on the rest of the city of Jericho.

Now my brothers, my sisters, you who are listening:

Judgment is coming for you as well. But you are safe. Not because of anything you've done or offered, but because Jesus has promised. And just like the spies kept their promise and kept Rahab safe, Jesus will keep you safe on the day of judgment.

And on that day you will be judged, "Not guilty." Not because you're innocent, but because Jesus has separated you from your transgressions, as far as the East is from the West.

That day of judgment is coming, but you have nothing to fear.

And this story is true.

Joshua 2, 5:13-27
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