

“THE WALK OF SHAME TO THE HALL OF FAME”

The Story of Rahab

ser5042, Women Who Made a Difference, Pt 2

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Happy Mother’s Day to all the beautiful mothers out there!

I am so blessed today to share this Mother’s Day message the Lord has put on my heart!

(HOOK)

The very first message I ever preached here at Gloucester was on Mother’s Day six years ago. When Pastor Bruce asked me to do the Mother’s Day message, I was so scared. We had been taking turns sharing a message in staff prayer. The message I did that day was about great faith. When I was finished PB said, “I think we have our Mother’s Day speaker.”

I thanked him but said I needed to pray about it. The next week in church PB announced that I was the Mother’s Day speaker. And then He said to everyone, “Gina was hesitant at first, but I told her she would be fine, and she would be our speaker if she wanted to keep her job.”

PB, do you remember what I called you in my sermon that year? I called you a spiritual gangster! And after all these years, my opinion stays the same. You are still a spiritual gangster!

What I have learned over all these years is that sometimes we need a spiritual gangster like PB in our lives. You see, before I preached here, I used to preach to my Word on the Street kids. Teens filled my living room every Thursday night and I was so comfortable telling God stories from my couch with my coffee in hand.

But God wanted me to get out of my comfort zone and trust Him in ways I could never have imagined.

I've learned so much from my spiritual gangster pastor and boss, Joseph Bruce Sofia! I will be eternally grateful for it. I love you PB. Thank you for pushing me to preach the Word of God and for teaching me so much by just watching you.

Would you all pray with me for the message?

From the series *Women Who Made a Difference*, the title of our message today is "From the Walk of Shame to the Hall of Fame." The story of Rahab.

One of the great things about the Bible is that it tells the honest story about everyone. The Bible is the book of truth.

So, a little background on Rahab the prostitute. She was the harlot of Jericho. It bothers me that most of the time she is mentioned in the Bible she is referred to as Rahab the prostitute. I once heard a message saying that God doesn't put labels on people, but He does. I believe the labels are to show us that God uses sinful, regular people like you and me. Amen?

Rahab is one of the great women of the Bible and she is included in the book of Hebrews, God's Hall of Fame!

(BOOK)

Hebrews 11:31 "By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. "

She could not have received a higher compliment from a God who is only pleased by the action of faith.

In James she is an example of someone justified by God and declared righteous by putting her faith into action!

James 2:25 "In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?"

The best of all for Rahab the harlot is that she is in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Rahab the prostitute is Jesus' Great-Great-Great Grandmother. Let's take a look...

Matthew 1:5-6 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David.

Mathew 1:16 And Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

I love that we have Rahab the prostitute in the family line of Jesus and we end with the Virgin Mary.

Rahab and Mary. Two extremes in one way, but so much alike in another way. Both women completely trusted God with their lives and both women were honored by God for it! Rahab went from the walk of shame to the Hall of Fame! God's Hall of Fame!

We will look at her story. But first, I would like to share a story about my own walk of shame.

Since its Mother's Day, I want to share a picture of my four beautiful daughters. Lizzie, Daana, Ashley, and Mary and of course, my grandson Christopher, who is going to be a big brother this coming November!

All my girls are in their 20's now and all of my girls grew up in church. While they all grew up in church, I would not say they were always church girls. The one truth I would always share with my daughters when they felt any kind of shame was that God has forgiven them and it didn't matter what anyone else thought because God's opinion is the only one that matters! Amen? Then I would ask two questions.

1. Are you truly sorry for your sin?
2. Did you ask God to forgive you?

Then we would pray for the Holy Spirit to help them live for Jesus! Now we walk with coffee in hand and our heads held

high. We are daughters of the one true KING. And I would show them the walk. Head held high, coffee in hand!

Shame only has the power that we give it! Each of my girls really love Jesus today and that's all this Mama cares about.

So back to my own walk of shame, I actually shared this story a few months ago at Fearless Women. If you aren't familiar with it, we have a women's ministry called Fearless Women. My daughter Ashley, some other great women leaders, and I lead it every other Monday evening at 7pm, here in the JMSC. Our next meeting is tomorrow evening. Please join us. It's for women of all ages.

I have never shared this story in mixed company, but it's Mother's Day and I want to give all the moms some good dinner conversation.

(Tell Story of Haiti and my walk of Shame.)

Church Family, shame only has the power that we give it. You know, that's how some of us wear our past sin. It's humiliating to us that people may know of our past sins and sometimes we walk around like everyone can see it.

I want to speak to someone today. God has forgiven you. It doesn't matter what others think. Walk with your head held high, with your coffee in hand, ready for God to do amazing things in your life. Can I get an Amen?

We all have had our walk of shame in some way or another but we can't let it hold us back Rahab the Harlot surely didn't!

(LOOK)

Let's get back to her story...

Joshua 2:1-7 1. Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, "Go look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

2. The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." 3. So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you, entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

The Israelites were camped on the east side of the Jordan river. Joshua had sent the spies in. They ended up at Rahab's place. Rahab had some kind of prominence in the city because she was also the keeper of the inn. The King heard the spies were there. Let's see what happened.

4. But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. 5. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." 6. (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) 7. So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the

Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

Rahab must have heard many stories about The God of Israel and she believed what she heard. She somehow developed her own faith in this God. She heard enough about God to want Him as her own.

Have you learned enough about God to trust him with your life? With the lives of you children? The lives of your family? Rahab did and let's see how it turned out for her.

Joshua 6:25 But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

Rahab saved the spies and she asked them to spare here family and they agreed to protect Rahab and her entire family. They told her to place a scarlet thread from her window. They burned down the city with everyone in it but they took Rahab and her family out of the city and they are brought to safety.

Why did God choose a harlot, a prostitute to become such a heroine? Three words.

(TOOK)

Faith, Courage and Obedience.

No fear, no shame, no guilt! *Faith, Courage and Obedience.*

Rahab was known as the Harlot of Jericho, but what about now? Who is she now?

She is one of the great women of the Bible!

We can change the course of our life any time we want. But it will take *Faith, Courage, and Obedience* to our Lord Jesus Christ!

Rahab clearly is the heroine of this story. If not for Rahab there would be no marching around Jericho, no walls tumbling down and no victory for Joshua and his men. It all started with Rahab.

When God looked down on Rahab, He didn't see Jericho's prostitute. That is what she did but that is not who she was.

God saw a brave woman who recognized God's might and power. God saw a woman who was willing to risk everything because she trusted Him.

God saw a woman who honored her word. God saw a woman whose descendants would include a man after God's own heart, King David. God saw His son Jesus as part of her family line. There is no honor greater than that!

Rahab went from the walk of shame to God's hall of fame because of three words... *Faith, Courage, and Obedience*.

I am going to end with a personal story of how, two weeks ago, I began to lose my courage. It was Monday night, and we had

our Fearless Women gathering. We had the best worship and fellowship. Ashley and I were on cloud nine as we always are after spending the night with all these amazing women who love Jesus!

I have shared how Ashley has been seizure-free for four years and how I lived in fear during her middle school and high school years when she would have seizures.

I've shared how I would always pray God's Word over her. But I would be praying so loudly that one day, God said to me, in my spirit, "Gina you don't have to yell, I can hear you."

I would yell out to God like He couldn't hear me because I was so scared. I shared how Jesus taught me that He was there right in the middle of her seizures, only I didn't see Him because of my fear and emotions.

Four years free.

When we got home that night, Ashley and I were sitting at the kitchen table. Out of nowhere, Ashley stood up and a horrible scream came from her and she fell to the floor in a grand mal seizure. When she fell, she hit her head on the chair and was cut near her eyebrow and the blood was running into her eyes. I thought the blood was coming out of her eyes. And the fear overtook me.

I started praying the Word of God over her...loudly. Praying again like God couldn't hear me. But He did. He always does!

The seizure finally stopped but she lay there with her eyes open. She looked like she was not breathing for what seemed like forever, so I started praying this prayer from **Psalm 118:17**. **I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done.** Ashley, you will live and not die in Jesus name. God has a long, long life here on the earth for you. We will glorify God!

She started moving again and I held her as the ambulance came. She started calling on Jesus. For me it was the best feeling in the world because I knew she was here in the present again.

My fears will return to me again, I'm sure. Moms and Dads, you know what all this feels like. The enemy is doing his best to put that fear back into me.

Faith, Courage and Obedience. I had lost my courage. But I know where to find it, Church Family! I find it on my knees in prayer.

1 Timothy 1:7 But God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of Love and of Power and of sound mind!

I am scared, I know some of you are scared of the future. I am too. We have real feelings and that's okay. I may be scared but I will fight for my kids. I will do it afraid and so will you.

The Holy Spirit is in us and we will fight declaring God's Word over their lives, every day. We will fight for our children through the power of God!

Remember this today Mom's, the Holy Spirit always wins!

If you don't feel like a perfect mother today, join the crowd. I was not perfect with my girls, we yelled, we screamed, we fought, but we prayed! My girls and I aren't perfect but we trust the Perfect One, Jesus!

Let's be like Rahab on this Mother's Day, Let's throw off the shame, the guilt, the fear, and believe God has us. We can walk in *Faith, Courage, and Obedience*, but only through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us!

Rahab trusted God with her life. We can do the same. Read God's word, worship, and get back into our war rooms to fight this battle on our knees in prayer! Prayer is the key! Not just a prayer in passing, but a real battlefield war room prayer!

If you are wondering how to even begin to have this faith and courage, it starts with a relationship with Jesus Christ. He is our courage! Read Revelation 3:20.

If you want that relationship with Jesus. It's as easy as **A B C**.

- **Admit** you are a sinner.
- **Believe** God sent His only son, Jesus Christ, to die on a cross and take our place for our sin. He was sinless but our sin was upon Him.
- **Commit** your life to Jesus Christ.

If you would like this relationship pray this prayer.

Dear God, thank you for loving me, I believe you sent Jesus Christ, your only son, to die on the cross for my sins. I admit I am a sinner. Please forgive me.

Jesus, please come into my heart and be my Lord and personal Savior.

Holy Spirit, fill me now. Help me live my life for Jesus Christ. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer, please let us know. We want to give you a Bible and help you live out your walk with God.