

Living by Faith

Lesson 8: Faith That Crosses the Sea and Brings Down Walls -- Hebrews

11:29-31

Stand for a moment at the edge of the Red Sea. Behind you, the dust of Pharaoh's chariots is climbing into the sky, and you can already hear the wheels. In front of you stretches water you cannot cross, deep and cold and final. There is no boat, no bridge, no plan that makes sense. And then the sea opens. Walls of water stand up on your right hand and on your left, and a path of dry ground runs straight through the middle of the impossible. You walk into it, your heart pounding, trusting that what God has opened, God will hold. By faith the people passed through. The Egyptians, trying the same path without faith, were swallowed up.

Now stand outside the walls of Jericho. They are thick and high, the proudest fortress in the land, and God's battle plan sounds like foolishness. No siege engines. No ladders. No clever assault. Just march around the city once a day for six days, and on the seventh day march around it seven times, blow the trumpets, and shout. That is the whole strategy. Picture a soldier wondering on the third silent lap whether any of this could possibly work. But on the seventh day, after the seventh circle, the shout went up, and the walls did not crack or lean. They fell down flat. By faith they fell, after the people had done exactly what God said.

And look closely at one window in that doomed city. A scarlet cord hangs from it, bright against the gray stone. Inside lives Rahab, a woman with a past everyone in Jericho knew, a prostitute, an outsider, a person the world would never have chosen. Yet she had heard what the God of Israel had done at the Red Sea, and she believed He was the true God of heaven and earth. So she risked her life to hide His spies and tie that cord in her window as a sign of her trust. When the walls fell, every house collapsed except the one with the scarlet cord. By faith Rahab did not perish with the disobedient. Grace had found her, and faith had taken hold.

These three scenes are about more than ancient history. They press a question into your own life. Will you trust God enough to step into the sea He opens, even when you cannot see the bottom? Will you obey when His way looks like foolishness to everyone watching? And do you believe that grace can reach even you, whatever your past, if you will turn to Him in trusting obedience? The same God who parted the water, dropped the walls, and saved a woman by a scarlet cord is at work still, forming faith like that in ordinary people like us.

Group Discussion: Rahab was an outsider with a sinful past, and yet she is held up in Scripture as a hero of faith. What does her story say to the way we sometimes decide who is too far gone, too unlikely, or too unworthy to come to God?

Personal Reflection: Think of a time God asked you to do something that did not seem to make sense by ordinary reasoning. How did you respond, and what did the outcome teach you about trusting His way over your own?

Read Hebrews 11:29–31

Study Questions

1. Verse 29 says, 'By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.' The Israelites and the Egyptians walked into the very same parted sea, yet one group was saved and the other destroyed. What made the difference between them, and what does this teach us about the nature of saving faith?
2. When have you faced your own Red Sea, a situation that seemed to have no way through? What did that moment reveal about where your trust was actually placed?
3. Verse 30 says, 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.' God's plan for taking Jericho was to march, not to fight. Why do you think God gave such an unusual command, and what does the falling of the walls reveal about whose power actually won the victory (compare Joshua 6:2, 16)?
4. Are there areas in your life where you tend to rely on your own strength, cleverness, or planning rather than on God? Where might He be asking you to trust His power instead of your method?
5. Notice the rhythm of Jericho: the people marched in obedience for seven days, and then God brought the walls down. How do human obedience and divine power work together

here, so that the victory is clearly God's and yet the people still had to do exactly what He said?

6. What is one act of obedience God has clearly called you to that you have been putting off? What would it look like to take that step this week, even before you can see the result?

7. Verse 31 says, 'By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.' Rahab was a Gentile outsider with a shameful past. What does it tell us about the grace and reach of God that she is included by name among these heroes of faith (compare Joshua 2:11)?

8. Is there anything in your past that whispers you are too flawed or too far gone to be fully used or fully loved by God? How does Rahab's story speak directly to that lie?

9. The same chapter that praises Rahab's faith is matched by James 2:25, which says, 'In the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?' Rahab did not merely believe in her heart that the God of Israel was the true God; she acted on that belief at the risk of her life, hiding the spies and tying the scarlet cord in her window. How does this teach us that the faith God honors is an active, obedient faith rather than belief alone, and how does this confront the popular idea that we are saved by 'faith only' apart from obeying God? Connect this to the way the gospel itself calls us to respond, including commands that the world may call foolish, such as being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (compare 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

10. Looking back over Hebrews 11:29-31 as a whole, the crossing of the sea, the falling of the walls, and the rescue of Rahab, name one concrete way Jesus is forming an obedient, trusting faith in you right now. What is one step of trust or obedience He is calling you to take this week?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Joshua 6, the full account of the fall of Jericho and the rescue of Rahab and her household, where obedience and God's power meet; James 2:25, Rahab justified by works when she acted on her faith and welcomed the spies; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, the message of the cross as foolishness to the perishing but the power of God to those being saved; Joshua 2:8-11, Rahab's confession that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; Exodus 14:21-31, the parting of the Red Sea, where Israel passed through and the Egyptians were drowned.