



MERCY IN THE MESS

THE PROMISED LAND WEEK 8 | AMANDA BEGGS

Sometimes God brings us into the wilderness but our shame keeps us there.

Mercy meets us in the mess and redeems what sin destroys.

Joshua 2:1-3

And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. And it was told to the king of Jericho, “Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.”

Joshua 2:9-11

She...said to the men, “I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

Joshua 2:12-14

Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father’s house, and give me a sure sign that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” And the men said to her, “Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the Lord gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.”

Rahab’s story is our story too:

- Before Jesus we were outsiders.
- Our pasts are marked with moments of fear and shame.
- We know what it’s like to be stuck in a mess.

Mercy meets us in the mess and redeems what sin destroys.

Framework for returning to the gospel:

- **Believe:** Trust that God is who He says He is—supreme, above all, over all.
- **Turn:** Shift your allegiance from yourself to Christ.
- **Ask:** Ask Him to meet you right there, in the middle of the mess, and make you new.

Life with God isn't a one-time decision; it's a daily response to mercy.

BELIEVE: TRUST GOD IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS

Belief isn't about perfection, it's about perspective. It is seeing God rightly and ourselves clearly.

Joshua 2:11

...for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

→ Rahab saw God rightly, and herself clearly. She knew and believed no amount of self-reliance could rescue her.

Question: How do you see God? Would you stake your life on your belief?

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

We can be immoral dead people or moral dead people. Either way, we are dead.

TURN: CHANGE OF ALLEGIANCE FROM SELF TO CHRIST

James 2:12-19

Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

→ To believe in God means our faith takes action and is integrated into our behavior.

James 2:25-26

And 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? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

→ The most shocking thing about Rahab is not her background, it's her allegiance.

Proverbs 29:25

The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.

Question: Whose approval are you chasing?

Fear Traps

- **You can't say no:** Your schedule is full, your margin is gone. It might not be service—it might be a need to be liked.
- **You're a people pleaser:** If everyone likes you, maybe it's not kindness—it's control.
- **You avoid hard conversations:** Is “keeping the peace” really just fear of rejection?
- **Applause traps you, criticism crushes you:** When people's opinions build your identity, their disapproval will break it.
- **You second-guess yourself constantly:** You replay emails and conversations, fearing disapproval.
- **You compare yourself to others:** You're constantly looking around to see how you measure up.

When you live for God's approval, you'll never be enslaved by anyone else's. That's the freedom Rahab found—and it's the freedom still offered to us today.

ASK: ASK GOD TO COME INTO YOUR MESS AND GIVE YOU MERCY

God's love is uninfluenced. It's uncaused, unpurchased, and unconditional.

Question: Do you believe that there is nothing you could do to make God love you more, and nothing you could do to make Him love you less?

Rahab asked, “save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.”

Ephesians 2:4-5,8-9

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

It's not the strength of your faith that saves you—it's the strength of the One you place your faith in. Even the weakest faith in Jesus still saves.

“That God is rich in mercy means that your regions of deepest shame and regret are not hotels through which divine mercy passes but homes in which divine mercy abides. It means the things about you that make you cringe most, make him hug hardest. It means his mercy is not calculating and cautious, like ours. It is

unrestrained, flood-like, sweeping, magnanimous. It means our haunting shame is not a problem for him, but the very thing he loves most to work with. It means our sins do not cause his love to take a hit. Our sins cause his love to surge forward all the more.” - Dane Ortlund

Joshua 6:25

But Rahab the prostitute, and her father’s household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

God’s mercy doesn’t stop at rescue. He is rich in mercy—saving us not only from death but for life: redemption, restoration, purpose, and legacy.

→ Rahab got married, had children, and was part of the royal line of King David and eventually, Jesus.