

### **3.10.19**

#### **Saving the Saved**

#### **Introduction and Explanation**

**Beginning - Having Critical Conversations**

**Recognition - How Did I Get Here?**

**Solutions - How Do I Get There?**

**Resolutions - Why Is It So Important to Stay Where I'm Supposed to Be?**

Luke 15:4-7

**"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.**

John 10:10-15

**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares**

**nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.**

Romans 15:1-3

**We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.**

James 5:15-17

**And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.**

## **Introduction and Explanation**

One of our founding leaders once said, "a large part of our ministry is saving the saved." Twenty years later, I am fully understanding the depth and width of what turns out to be a very prophetic observation. The term saving the saved is just that - a term used to describe "lost sheep or lost souls" who have lost their way and now find themselves floundering and being devoured by life - either knowingly or unknowingly. Who are these 'lost sheep'? **As I said, they are the believers who know the way but have somehow lost their will and love for living that way.** Believing in Jesus, but

no longer following Jesus. That is the simple version of saving the saved, but you and I understand the explanations and circumstances for the many lost souls who find themselves empty of spiritual joy and genuine passion for following Jesus are much more complex, crippling and culturally connected. Here are a few that we need to address together over the next five weeks.

- **Circumstances and Difficulty of Life - Too Much, Too Often, Too Busy, Too Hard**
- **Cultural Crisis of Faith - The Collateral Damage of Two Generations of Faith-less and Faith-last**
- **Willful Act of Rebellion - Angry at God, Waiting on God, Confused by God, So I'm not Gonna' Do it By God**

Regardless of where these souls identify - the reality is that either by life circumstance or by life choice they have lost their way and need to be claimed, loved and corrected. This is the center of contention for saving the saved, or simply put - rescuing the perishing.

A second reality exists for these souls as well - and it is the single hope and truth within the delicate process of saving the saved. Here it is...

**Though many find themselves distanced, damaged and estranged from faith, family, church, and even from themselves - though they more often than not seem lost to us - they are not lost to God. He knows who they**

**are, where they are and has cleared the way for them to find their faith, fire, and fellowship in Him.**

Romans 8:35-39

**Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?**

**As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."**

**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

At times, the lost souls seem helpless, apathetic, disinterested or even resistant and resentful. That is because they have lost their way - but God has not lost them, God is faithful. What must become evident is our shared calling and ministry to reach in love and teach in love - praying in love until they have found their way back to spiritual health well-being.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who**

**through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

The implications and clarity of this call to ministry and truth is not only compelling, but overpowering - in the best way. The questions that surround this ministry are not only obvious but fair.

**Are they lost and know they are lost? Seeking somehow to rekindle and ignite the fire of their faith, to rediscover their missing passion for following Jesus, and their love for the very God who saved them?**

**Are they lost and just simply content with abusing and misusing the grace of a God whom they know loves them and has paid a great price to reveal that love to them while forever continuing to make a place for them at His table?**

**Are they completely overwhelmed and overcome with the life draining drama of "Too Much, Too Often, Too Busy, Too Hard"?**

**Has the crippling confusion of a toxic cultural that redefines faith, family and worship, incentivizes identity politics and correctness, exploits opioid an oblivion, naturalizes gender neutrality, and kills its post birth babies finally shaken and shattered their hope and faith in God?**

I believe this is the time to reach out and start the difficult conversations with anyone who feels they are trending or drifting away from the very things they have believed in. These are extremely healthy conversations for the church of Jesus to have with its believers. But, more than just talk is needed - **it is time to save the saved**. Over the next five weeks let's have that conversation without fear, failure or push-back. Join me at Reunion, to do just that!

**3.17.19**  
**Saving the Saved**  
**Beginning - Having Critical Conversations**

II Samuel 12:1-9

**And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb a fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight?"**

Psalms 139:23-24

**Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!**

Proverbs 11:14, 15:22,

**Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisors they succeed.**

Jeremiah 7:23-26

**But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.' But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.**

Introduction

I would like to explore two central questions in the process of saving the saved. But first things first - there must be a beginning. I believe we begin



by acknowledging that something is there. The very next step is to engage and connect in meaningful and mutual dialogue over what is "there" means. By that I mean asking the right questions. Honest and difficult questions intended to move the process from discovering and to recovering. This is and always has been a biblical process that God has intended for the spiritual health and well-being of those who love and serve Him.

Romans 12:9-19

**Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.**

**Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.**

Galatians 6:1-5

**Brothers and Sisters, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep**

**watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.**

The New Testament teaching for the Church of Jesus here is plain. This teaching is entirely relevant and needed for the ministry of reconciliation and restoration - saving the saved. It's time to reach out and start the difficult conversations with anyone who feels they are trending or drifting away from the very things they have believed in. These are extremely healthy conversations for the church of Jesus to have with its believers. But, more than just talk is needed - love is needed, attention is needed, compassion is needed, prayer and hope are needed. As we are saying, it is time to save the saved.

### **Why do we have such difficulty with having difficult conversations?**

There was once a time where the tough stuff in life was something we had to face in person. There was not choice with difficult conversations - that is the way it was, and for good reason. Talking to a parent over poor behavior, a teacher about a bad grade, a police officer about speeding violation, or a pastor about our struggle with sin were all usually difficult, but healthy and above all necessary for the process of emotional and social maturity and growth as a person. Whether it was behavior,

expectations, sin, breakups, getting fired, or handling a problem or conflict, there wasn't the opportunity to send it via text, email, Instagram or Facebook - we had to engage in the conversation no matter how difficult.

Now, most folks know it's still a pretty rude and a poor move to handle these things anyplace but in person, the opportunity has always been there to do it - but we don't because we have given ourselves a choice, an out. The problem isn't usually the opportunity or the availability, but rather a lack of consideration for the face to face conversation as the best platform.

A decent example of this is online dating. Its rapid growth trend has allowed for people who don't enjoy or trust traditional settings (church, social and recreational activities, bars, clubs, etc.) to meet, and also replaces that difficult feeling of going up to a stranger around strangers and talking to them. The dreaded face to face engagement of mutual and meaningful dialogue. Instead, you're connected with a face on a screen with some words that pop up. You have no idea who they are (or if it's even them), so you feel free to say whatever comes to mind. For some, this can be a great place to teach themselves how to be more comfortable starting a conversation. For others, it's a fantasy free-for-all that has potentially led us away from one of our most precious gifts as human beings - the gift of attention and discernment.

Although, most online connections are pretty good, nothing replaces being able to see a person's body language, facial expressions, and gestures

that make a world of difference in building a trusting and honest relationship. Which in turn opens the door to having difficult conversations that can save the saved when they need to be saved.

Perhaps one of the biggest differences in why current culture struggles with difficult face-to-face dialogue is because we have had for a while the ability to edit a message. Even for the most simple or silly of conversations, the millennial generations have always had the time to think something over before responding. This not only removes a sense of vulnerability and honesty but the raw emotion and reality that often lead to it. In the moment response and responsibility in all of its flawed glory and humanity.

I get it, this ability has its advantages in that we get to come off in our best light - even our in our selfies and pics. If we take a moment to think about it that's not always the most human or honest approach. As humans we're supposed to have flaws (physical, emotional, situational) and make mistakes with what we sometimes say and how we look. These flaws and errors contribute to us being stronger mentally and maturing emotionally. As much as we hate regrets, we do have a certain sense of healthy-pride and purpose in them. They're a catalyst for our growth both emotionally and spiritually, which is critically necessary to navigate the day to day realities of life without unraveling.

Metrics is something everyone in the digital world obsesses over. At no other point in history have we had access to such a broad audience right

at our fingertips, which is a great thing for brands to build on. Yet, this platform sometimes makes us overlook the quality of relationships versus the quantity of how many we have. He or she is successful because they have 5k followers, 3k likes, 10k YT hits. In this short-term world that obviously means something - but in the long-term world of faith and forever it apparently means very little. Jesus only had 12 followers.

### **Our Most Difficult Conversation?**

When did we stop talking about the expectations and realities of real life, genuine love and our need for saving grace and faith in a forever God? The answer is simple. When we decided that we were great and God was not - so much. When we decided that humility and reality were no longer necessary virtues for navigation and success in life. When we decided every 6-year old playing club soccer wearing Reynaldo cleats was great, when we decided everyone passes and no one fails is great, when we decided everyone wins and no loses is great, when we decided that it was great that not every generation had work for their way of life, but could actually live off the hard work and sacrifice of the generation before them. When we decided that church was not so great when the word of God challenged and instructs on how we live our lives.

God is GREAT - God is GOOD, and sometimes we are not so great and not so good. That is precisely why we need to have the difficult and unpleasant conversations that the Holy Spirit uses to convict our troubled hearts and challenge our conflicted thinking. This encourages and

challenges us to be better - to do better - to live better - to love better and to save the saved.

This has been a difficult process for me as well. I have learned that one of the best pieces of advice I could give in this conversation is to throw out all your pre-set pre-determined terms and instead think of them as interactions and affirmations and not connections and engagements of meaningful and mutual dialogue. It is not void of value or merit, but instead of 'engagement,' you're having a conversation. Instead of 'retention,' you're catching someone's attention by reminding them you care. And instead of 'networking' or 'connections,' you have conversations with friends. I know this sounds almost insulting, but sometimes it's necessary to be reminded of the core roots to humanity and to the purposes of God into why these difficult conversations were made to have and necessary to our spiritual and emotional health and healing.

### **3.24.19 Saving the Saved**

#### **Recognition - How Did I Get Here?**

#### **Tale of Two Kings and a Prophet**

#### **King Belshazzar and Daniel**

Daniel 5:13-31

**Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, "You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."**

**Then Daniel answered and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and**

feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored. "Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. And this is the writing that was inscribed: Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. This is the interpretation of the matter: Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. That very night



**Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.**

## **King Darius and Daniel**

**Daniel 6:10-26**

**When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, "O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." Then they answered and said before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."**

**Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and**

**Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."**

**Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.**

**Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm." Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their**

**children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces. Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.**

### **Recognizing Spiritual Apathy - Our Condition and Our Concessions?**

Have you ever done something out of character? Something inconsistent with what you believe or how you think and then thought to yourself...

"What did I just do? That's not the real me. That's not who I really am."

And, have you ever looked up one day feeling rotten about your life and miserable with yourself and asked, "Why am I still doing this? Is this the real me? Is this who I really am?"

You would be surprised how common and just how frequent that scenario happens for many good people - a good many Christian people. I think it is fair say that a great deal of that type processing was illustrated in our tale of two kings. I think everybody understands - that process is real.

Our teaching today is focused around that process and of course answering a simple recognition question "How did I get here?" The honest answer is always the best answer, and we answer it best by pushing forward into the process.

- **Recognizing our Spiritual Apathy.**
- **Identifying the Cause of our Rotten Condition.**
- **Assessing the Nature and Damage of those Concessions We Made Along the Way.**

That my friends is as real as it gets - and it is certainly no small thing. My prayer is that we can have some honest conversation and make some much needed connections with that process.

To begin, in order for us to answer such a question as "How did I get here?" It will require our willingness to hear from God the truth of His Word. You and I must allow our conscience and heart to be accessed by God's Holy Spirit (either for the first time or maybe just one more time). As we talked last week if we cannot have difficult conversations and make significant face to face connections because we feel threatened and attacked by every truthful challenge, every personal critique or uncomfortable observation then we will struggle here to ever recognize how we got to the place where we have gotten this rotten. The following is a biblical process that leads to recognition of spiritual apathy and the ways of it.

**One** - Know this, the Holy Spirit (the intimate and personal presence of God in you) is going to speak to you (not if, but when) about who you are in Christ, and where you are in Christ. That too, is real.

John 14:26-26

**These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.**

**Two** - When we hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us about us we and respond openly and affirmatively, the Spirit will then go on to reveal the truth we need to hear, and we will freely receive the grace that He has abundantly and already provided.

John 16:13

**When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.**

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

**My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

**Three** - When we openly and affirmatively give access to the Holy Spirit to speak and reveal truth to us - about us, we are then able to easily

recognize our spiritual apathy, clearly identify the cause or causes of our condition, and decisively go about assessing the nature of our concessions so we decisively correcting and redirecting the spiritual apathy that got us where we are. From there we get up from that place - dust ourself off - and start all over again in Christ Jesus!

Lamentations 3:22-24

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

**"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."**

## **Conclusion**

So from the Tale of Two Kings we can see a logical reasoning for once again allowing the Holy Spirit access to our conscience. Both Kings in our story faced spiritual apathy leading to rotten a condition, making horrible and costly concessions. Through the day-to-day life and faithful witness of Daniel the Prophet, the Spirit of God spoke to both Kings in dramatic fashion to reveal the truth to both of them about who they were, how they got to the place they were. Both knew God, both had opportunity to openly and affirmatively respond to God. One did - the other did not.

Now it is our turn to use the process of the revealed truth of God, spoken to us by His Spirit through His word to not only save the saved, but possibly even save ourselves.

### **3.31.19 Saving the Saved**

#### **Solutions - How Do I Get There?**

##### **Introduction**

I would like to use the remarkable story of Rahab the prostitute who lived in the wall of the great city of Jericho occupied and ruled by the Canaanites in about 1400 B.C. This was the time that the people of Israel were about to come into the promised land led by Joshua. Jericho and the Canaanites stood in their way. The true story of Rahab is remarkable as one who found enough faith and courage to decisively act in the moment in a way that defines saving the saved. She lived safely in the walls of the safest city in the land and region of Canaan, yet she knew in her heart that her life was crumbling around her and destined for disaster. She was waiting for her salvation moment and it came.

Joshua 2:1-16

**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." But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And when the gate was about to be closed at dark,**

**the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.**

**Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof and 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. 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."**



Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. And she said to them, "Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way." The men said to her, "We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear." And she said, "According to your words, so be it." Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

They departed and went into the hills and remained there three days until the pursuers returned, and the pursuers searched all along the way and found nothing. Then the two men returned. They came down from the hills and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they told him all that had happened to them. And they said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us."

Hebrews 11:30-31

**By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.**

### **Background**

After 40 years of struggle wandering the desert, Israel was finally in position to enter the Promised Land. But they would enter without Moses - he was dead. There was a lot of work and risk that remained. Though the new land of God's promise was fertile and beautiful it was also dangerous. There were numerous Canaanite city-states that randomly occupied the landscape. Each of them were well-fortified, built as a walled fortress with a battle-tested and defensively trained army. To conquer these fortified cities would be a difficult and dangerous task. The city of Jericho was one of these great walled cities - in fact, the greatest of its kind.

But, God who had given and promised this land to Abraham and his descendants remained faithful to His people. He raised and equipped a new leader, Joshua, who had been trained under Moses' leadership for 40 years for this time. Joshua knew that the 2.5 million Israelites plus their flocks and herds needed to cross a flooded river and begin their conquest of the land. The people of God could see the promise of God before them and would not be denied the land of promise. So, Joshua sent two spies to secretly scout the area of imminent war, particularly Jericho—the strategic point to reach the three passes through the wilderness to the

rest of Canaan. God took care of the river crossing for the Israelites, miraculously providing dry ground for them to move through and onto Jericho—a walled city on 10-acres. To walk once around would have taken just over 30 minutes. History tells us that Jericho was one of the architectural and design wonders of its time with primitive forms of indoor plumbing built within its walls and apartment type homes. Surrounding Jericho was a great earthen rampart, or embankment, with a stone retaining wall at its base 12–15 feet high. Above that stood a mud brick wall 6 feet thick, 20 feet high. At the crest of the embankment was a similar 20-foot high mud brick wall reaching to 46 ft. above the ground level below. Humanly speaking, it was impossible for a marching army to penetrate the impregnable fortress of Jericho. Archeological evidence reveals that the mud brick city wall collapsed at the time the city met its end (1400 B.C.) except for a short stretch of the north city wall that did not fall as everywhere else. Also, there were apartment style houses built against and inside the wall as in Joshua 2:15. Excavations showed that the bricks from the collapsed walls formed a ramp against the retaining wall so that the Israelites could climb up over the top as is described in Joshua 6:20. Strategically built closely between two rivers not far from Sea of Galilee the fortress was as formidable as anything of its time. Inside the walls of Jericho there were three different natural well-springs with an endless supply of fresh water. Outside the city walls because of the rivers and rich soil, agriculture flourished. When harvested, it was said that the inhabitants of Jericho at that time could comfortably survive a siege for a year and a half.

## **Conclusion**

Rahab literally lived on the upper-leveled floors of one of those one-room apartments inside the wall of the great city of Jericho. As she looked at her life options, opportunities, and inevitable outcomes, she made conclusions that not only would save herself, but her entire family. She was ready for something bigger and better for her life, and when Joshua's spies came to her she saw her salvation moment. What did she need to do in that moment? She had to decisively and quickly act in faith in order to receive the faith she needed to be saved from her circumstances and consequences. Because of the greatness and momentum of God and His people Rahab could see she had no future in Jericho. Even though it was a fortress, she could know the walls of her life were crumbling down around her - crumbling and bringing destruction to herself and everyone she loved. In her salvation moment she acted in faith and hope not in fear and failure. In the God of Joshua and Israel she found something bigger and more meaningful than herself and her life living in the wall as an object of pleasure for Jericho. Could anyone else in Jericho have come to the same conclusion? Of course - but they didn't - Rahab did.

## **Solution Plan - Saving the Saved**

- Make a Pact with God to Be Better and Do Better than You are Being and Doing Today
- Seek to be an Active Part of Something Bigger and More Meaningful than Yourself
- Seek and Desire Kingdom Outcomes For You and the Ones You Love

## 4.7.19

### Saving the Saved

#### Resolutions - Why Is It So Important to Be Where God Wants Me to Be?

Ruth 1

In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up

their voices and wept. And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me." Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back

**empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?" So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.**

## **Introduction**

To answer the question "Why Is It So Important to Be Where God Wants Me"? I am going to use the bible story of Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi. To thumbnail this story does it no justice - but here it is. Naomi lived with her husband Elimelech in the land of Moab - they were from Bethlehem but had moved because of severe famine and lack of economic opportunity. They had two sons - Mahlon and Chilion, they grew into men and they married Moabite women. Naomi's husband Elimelech died. In spite of this she stayed in Moab. Tragedy struck again for Naomi - both her sons became diseased and died as well. Naomi's will and spirit are broken and in her grief she decides she will go home to Bethlehem. Her daughter in-laws Ruth and Orpah are determined to go with her, but Naomi instructs them both to stay with their people and the god of the Moabites. Orpah, embraces Naomi and says goodbye - Ruth on the other hand makes her biblically infamous declaration - **"where you go, I go."**

## **Real Life Application**

To process the very real condition we have described as "saving the saved" the story of Ruth and Naomi becomes the final piece of biblical truth, and the moral reasoning needed for any resolution to be possible. In

a spiritual context a resolution is the vehicle to recovery and restoration. Determined resolutions are a big deal to God. Such as: I resolve to move forward from this place, and to make better choices for my life. A great biblical example of a resolution comes from the book of Joshua.

Joshua 24:15

**And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."**

In a natural context resolutions reveal the intent of our heart and the motive of our thinking for not just behavior but for people, places, and things as well. Resolutions reveal the possibilities for a better version of ourself or of our life in general. We want to be a better person, we want to be in a better place, we want to do something better more important and meaningful with our lives. We want to reach our goals, our purpose and our objectives.

**Just as in a spiritual context - resolutions in a practical context will require faith, fulfillment, and a finish** - that process then requires the courage to risk it and the discipline to do it - to do the work needed to get where you believe you should be. In a day-to-day application that looks like this...



**Any resolution we make fully comes to life when our belief leads to faith - when our work and passion leads to fulfillment - and our determination and relentlessness lead to a strong finish.**

Spiritually, the same principals and processes are needed - it is God's way.

Finally, resolutions are more than good intentions - when correctly acted upon they become the starting place for all of those things uniquely meaningful and significant for our lives. For us to resolve that we will be where God wants us to be is good and important thing. The story of Ruth clearly illustrates that for us.

**Why is it so important to be where God wants me to be?** Think for a moment with me of how many times you and I have been in a good place with God, been good with faith, been good with being and doing what is both right and not wrong, and yet we could not resolve to stay in that place... And so we became as Paul Simon sang: "You know the nearer your destination, the more you're slip-sliding away."

It is important to resolve in ourselves to be where God wants us be because **it is the place where He intends to reveal His word and fulfill His promises to us. Try this sample resolution with me.**

**I RESOLVE...**

**To be who God has called Me to be**

**To be where He has called Me to be when He has called Me to be there**

That should answer all of our questions. To be where God wants us to be when He wants us to be there is the very place where He will reveal Himself to us and fulfill His promises in us.

Our life's journey of faith is all about getting there - resolutions to God help us get there. Getting to that place where He wants us, just so He can do what He wants to do in us. That is why it is so hard for some and so easy for others - just the way it is. But whether it is easy or hard, **it is the place to be.**

## **Conclusion**

Ruth found that place when in her moment of resolution she said to her mother-in-law Naomi:

**"Don't press me to leave you and stop following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God. Where you die, I will die; and there I will be buried. May Adonai bring terrible curses on me, and worse ones as well, if anything but death separates you and me."**

With Ruth in the place where God wanted her to be He fulfilled His word and His promises to her. God used her resolution to put her in a place where she could do and be more than she or anyone else ever thought possible. As an outsider she did not wait for a handout or someone to take care of her, by resolution she moved quickly into the place where God wanted her and from there she earned the respect and love of her new people and her new country. From working relentlessly and passionately in the fields, to resisting the temptation to take the easy way out, by risking everything to be in the one place that no one except Naomi thought she should be (except God). And by being in that place, she found the favor and love of Boaz. **Ruth** and **Boaz** were married, and together they gave birth to a son whose name was Obed, who had a son whose name was Jesse, who had a son whose name was **David**. By seizing her resolution moment to be in the place where God wanted her to be - when he wanted her to be there she became the great-grandmother of the greatest king of Israel - **David**.