

Just Call Me Rahab

1 Peter 1:17-21

I. Scripture reading: 1 Peter 1

II. Review... Last week we began our look into the reality of our identity as *redeemed strangers*. We took a look at the fact that our Father God is also our *impartial judge*, because we need to understand that even as His children, God will hold us accountable for our deeds. Knowing this, we are meant to be *a strange people*.

III. Just Call Me Rahab... We are foreigners and strangers in this world. We belong to another kingdom and another country that is centered around a King who dwells in glory quite apart from us. Yet He is near to this earth and its people, and still we find ourselves living lives here on earth that in many respects resemble the lives of those who call this world their home. I am convinced that one of the greatest illustrations of our chosen strangeness in this world is found in the story of a sinful pagan woman named Rahab who made some very difficult but important decisions. (see story of Rahab, Israel and Jericho in Joshua 2-6). Rahab called the city of Jericho 'home'. As far as we know, it was the only home she had known. Why did she betray her people and her city to help Israelite spies? It was because she had heard the message about their God and their destiny, and she believed it. That obedient faith became righteousness to her (James 2:25). She watched her world crumble around her knowing that she had been saved and that those who trusted with her had been saved through her obedient faith. Believing the message as firmly as she did, she had two choices: abandon the condemned world she knew and be saved, or cling to that condemned world and be condemned with it. She chose wisely. We are those who have made that same choice: abandon the condemned world we have known as home in order to be rescued by God's kindness and power in Christ.

IV. What's the Difference? "...and she lives among the Israelites to this day" (Joshua 6:24-25) When Rahab walked out of the rubble that was her former home, she joined a foreign people and began to follow a foreign God. She chose to make herself one with those people and to submissively follow that God. She took part in the covenant renewal for all of Israel (Joshua 8:30-35). Do you think there was much difference between the life she once knew and the life she came to know in the camp of Israel? Of course! Just as there is meant to be a tremendous difference between the lives we once knew as citizens of this condemned world and the lives we now live as disciples of Jesus and citizens of God's eternal kingdom. In marriage, in competition, in entertainment, in finances, in forgiving, in partying and mourning – in every way we are to find ourselves changing because we are conforming more and more to this new way of life. The Church, like Israel of old, must keep her distinctive life of hearing and obeying the Word of our God. When we lose our distinctive life of submission and obedience, we will lose our identity as the light of the world and the salt of the earth. As our Master said, "No one lights a light and puts it under a bowl," and, "If the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?" Let's listen carefully to the heart of our Master (read John 15:18-19, 17:11,14-18). Now, let's listen to the word of the Master's servants who called the first disciples of history to remember their proper relationship with the world (read 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:-5).

V. Conclusion: I am Rahab... Just as we see dramatically illustrated in the movie *Sparticus* and in the TV series *Robin Hood*, those who believe in the cause and conviction of a person can proudly proclaim, I am... Well, I have come to believe in the cause of a woman named Rahab, and I identify with her. More than that, I can say confidently, I am Noah, I am Abraham, I am Ruth, I am Joseph, I am Daniel, etc. I am one with all those who have forsaken their lives in the sinful world in order to become citizens of God's great and enduring kingdom. We are strangers, now let us live like it!