

## Rahab: Beautiful Brokenness - Joshua 2

### Kintsugi - The Art of Mending What is Broken

My Sister-in-law gave me a clay bowl she made herself.

One day it dropped and it broke into several pieces.

I was very sad.

My beautiful bowl was broken.

But maybe, just maybe, I could fix it.

So I got some glue, gathered up all the pieces, and slowly put it back together.

And guess what?

All the pieces fit.

But the lines where it was broken remained.

This did not make the bowl ugly, no, it made it more beautiful to me.

It reminds me that what is broken can be mended.

And you know that is why Jesus came into our world.

We are broken people with broken families and broken hearts.

But he came to mend us, heal us, save us.

In Japan, they have an art called kintsukuroi

It means "To mend with Gold."

To make something more beautiful through mending brokenness.

May God mend us all with gold.

### Joshua 2

Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "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 and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

**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.

**8** Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof **9** and said to them, "I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. **10** We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea[a] for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.[b] **11** When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

**12** "Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign **13** that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death."

**14** "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land."

**15** So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. **16** She said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."

**17** Now the men had said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us **18** unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. **19** If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them. **20** But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

**21** "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say."

So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

**22** When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them. **23** Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them. **24** They said to Joshua, "The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us."

## A Beautiful Brokenness

### Broken

This is not a pretty story.

Rehab was a prostitute.

In that day and age there were two kinds of prostitutes.

The ones who worked in the pagan temples where sex was a part of  
the worship of these pagan gods  
along with child sacrifice  
and other forms of appeasement.

These temple priestesses were regulated by the state religion.

For Canaan was already settled by city states.

And every city had their gods and goddesses.

The other kind often were made up of widows or girls and women  
whose families had become destitute.

The desperation of poverty would drive them to sell their bodies  
for money, for food.

They had no status, and were simply used.

The bottom of society.

Rahab was not a temple prostitute.

She was the other kind.

There is a reason why her dwelling was up against the wall in Jericho.

As far from the centre of the city as possible.

We also know she was this kind of prostitute  
because of the Hebrew word that is used in the Bible.

And so, with a single word, we know not just what she did,  
we know what kind of life she lived.

She was broken, perhaps longing for a different life.

It's easy to judge someone for their moral failings  
when you don't know their story.

When you don't know why.

The word for this is mercy.

## **Rumours of God**

So one day she hears about a wandering tribe from the desert.

She heard about their God.

A God who took a bunch of slaves from Egypt and saved them.

The God who promised to settle them in Canaan.

A God who lead them in victory against the the local armies.

Rahab knew Jericho was next.

And this was confirmed when she bumps into the Israelite spies  
who are hiding from the authorities.

We are not told why she helps them but she does.

Maybe she has no love for the established powers of her city.

Maybe she is afraid of the Israelites.

Maybe she saw the same desperation in them that she felt.

What we do know is that she believes that the God of Israel is real.

That he is the judge of nations.

That nothing will stop him.

And perhaps in the back of her mind, this God who free slaves,  
might have mercy on her, a broken woman.

Moreover, he might save her family.

This is significant.

She has a father, mother, brothers and sisters who she cares for.

Is she the protector of her family, is this why she did what she did?

Why she sold herself?

To try to give them a better life?

And so she changes her allegiance from a system that only hurt her  
to a God who seemed real enough.

She willingly risks her life on this belief, on this hope.

And so she shelters the spies.

## **Deal or No Deal?**

It is only after they are safe that she asks them to save her.

If I were trying to make a deal,

I would have done it when they still needed shelter, not after!

This tells you something both about her and the spies.

Their good will is not coerced.

She protects them without condition.

And they in return with a promise under no compulsion.

This is not about making a deal - this is grace and mercy at work.

In fact, here we see something even more remarkable.

God had commanded Jericho be completely destroyed.

Every living thing is to be killed.

The City is to be cleansed.

Now there is another discussion here regarding why God does this.

And we know later that Achan,

who keeps some precious things for himself causes suffering  
for Israel and his entire family.

But God does not pursue this matter regarding Rahab.

It is as if because she declared her allegiance and belief  
that her status has changed.

God enters into the relationship and promise between his people  
and Rahab.

She has become one of his people.

### **Kintsugi**

Remember Kintsugi?

The Art of Mending with Gold.

The taking of what is broken and repairing it.

Highlighting this brokenness with gold, making it more beautiful.

You see, Rahab's story does not end here.

She marries a fellow named Salmon.

They have a baby named Boaz.

Boaz marries a foreign Moabite widow named Ruth.

Boaz and Ruth have a son named Jesse.

Jesse is the father of King David.

And we know that from the line of David will come Jesus.

The saviour of the whole world.

Who fills all our suffering and brokenness with gold.

### **A Woman of Beauty**

in 1994 I took a trip to Chicago with a class from Regent Carey.

We were studying urban ministry and attended an urban ministry conference there.

As a part of the conference, we took the elevated train to the Southside of Chicago.

To give you an idea as to where we went, our group consisted of 3  
two Chinese guys, a little Korean lady, a huge hulking Ugandan  
fellow and two caucasian men.

Almost as soon as we got out of the train station, a police car pull up  
to us and asks us what we were doing there and where we were  
going.

So we told the officers and for the rest of our walk to where we were  
going, the police car followed us in order to protect us.

Well, it was there that I met a woman we all learned to admire.

She was once a prostitute who came to know God.

Through a ministry to prostitutes her life was changed.

And that day we were visiting her because she ran a house for  
women who were in the process of leaving that life.

She was a woman of beauty because we saw the gold in her  
scars she shared with us.

Through her we saw God.

### **Bring your Brokenness**

Every person has a different story.

We all have our sufferings and sins.

It is not for us to compare one suffering with another  
or one sin with another.

But if there is a sin or matter of hurt or brokenness in your life

I want to give you the opportunity to ask God for help.

I want you to remember this request through a simple act.

I want to ask you to come and put your hand on the cross.

Like Rahab, to ask for mercy.

This is not a deal - I do this and I get that.

No.

Mercy is about trust, allegiance - no deals.

I believe you are God.

Save me.

Help me.

If you want to bring and intercession for someone else, do that.

But take a moment.

Know what you want and bring it.

We need you Jesus.

Amen.