

The Secret Mission

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Date: 28 August 2016

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 0 0] Well good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see a number of visitors with us as well as many of our own people this morning.
- And the visitors are especially welcome. If you're able to stay at the end of the service there will be tea and coffee served. All are welcome and it would be good to have the chance to meet with you.
- The Gallic service this evening will be at 6 and God willing that will be taken by Mr Donald McSween. He's got a bad chest this morning. Please pray for Donald McSween over the course of this day.
- And at half past seven in the class we've had an eight o'clock English fellowship. Tonight we're having a fellowship at half past seven just immediately after the Gallic service. And we'll hear back from some of the young people about the recent trip that they had to Nepal.
- And we also will have the opportunity to hear a wee bit from the young folks who are preparing to leave and head to university and to work in different places.
- [1 : 0 4] So we want to pray for them and hear from them before they go. Various things in the course of the week. As usual we reach Bible study, first group fellowship, road to recovery and prayer meeting in the usual places at the usual time.
- And the services next Lord's Day will be at 11 and 6, God willing, taken by Dr Angus McEllar and John McSween.
- Both these services are bilingual services. I expect to be at communion services in Kamali over the course of next weekend and we value your prayers for that.
- A couple more things to just note for future dates. Kirk Session meeting a week on Tuesday at the Manus at half past seven. Please take note of that. And also for your dining the 10th to the 11th of September.
- On the 11th of September, David Meredith, the mission director of the Pre-Church, will be taking the morning service. And on the 10th, the evening of the 10th, we hope to have a meeting where he'll speak to us about the various missions that the Pre-Church is involved with.
- [2 : 1 8] That we can pray into and support in different ways. And we hope to maybe have some food, a congregational meal in advance of David speaking.
- Tea or coffee rota, you can note the details about that. And man's refurbishment, there's a number of tasks which would be beneficial to have help with at the new man's. And if you've got spare time, there are various things.
- Yeah, it's all up there. So please take note of that. And if you're able to spare some time with that, that would be of great help. And Sunday school also, you can see there, it's planned to send a list of our Sunday school children and their dates of birth to the Compass magazine for the birthday section.

If you don't wish your child to be included, please speak to Kirsty or Manny. One more thing is that those who were requested completed PVG forms, I'm sure you'll have them with you this morning.

And if you can go and meet Manny for that box that is at the table or at the side at the end of the service, we can hopefully get that all in order. Let's pause for a moment and let's pray.

[3 : 29] Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this new day.

We thank you for your day. And the gift of this is to us as your people. As a day where we are called and we are enabled to come aside from all the busyness and all that packs our week.

The activity, our mental and physical. And Lord, we thank you that we are called to be still and to know that you are God and that you are with us.

So clear our minds, we pray, of anything that may be preoccupying us, anything that might be a distraction. And enable us to focus upon Christ, to fix our eyes upon Christ.

And to be in the spirit in worship on Lord's Day. Lead us, we pray. Accept us in Christ. Cleanse us from sin.

[4 : 32] Empty us of anything that is a preoccupation upon ourselves. And lift our eyes, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing from the Psalms.

Psalms 84 and verses 1 to 9. I think it's a double tune that we sing this psalm through. So Psalms 84, verses 1 to 9.

We sing about how lovely is the dwelling place of God as he went to us. And we stand to sing. Amen. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord, afford to be.

The tabernacle's of thy days. How blessed Lord they be.

My thirsty soul, Lord, for thee. In which thy course you see.

[5 : 42] My very heart and flesh triad. O living God for thee.

Behold the sparrow findeth her heart. And her sweat into rest.

The swan of all, so far herself. Had her chest said her nest.

In thine own orchard's west she's saved. Her young was born may bring.

O thou almighty Lord of hosts. Who art my God and King.

[6 : 41] Blessed are they in thy house that well they ever give thee praise.

Blessed is the man who set the heart. In whose heart are thy grace.

Who once in the battle make us fail. Then in you day the wells.

Of soul of rain that falleth out. The poor with water fills.

So they prostrate and weary go. Still awkward unto strength.

[7 : 39] Until its eye on day appear. Before the Lord at then.

Lord God of hosts my prayer here. O Jacob's God in here.

See God as in. Look on the face. Of thine anointed ear.

Together. Together. Again let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Amen. Our Heavenly Father we thank you for your word that we come together under the authority of to sing and to read and to meditate upon.

Lord. And we thank you for these psalms. These prayers from the heart of the psalmist. These prayers which are gifted to us. We thank you that so often we can take these psalms.

[8 : 43] And we have that sense that you are giving us the words that we cannot find to articulate ourselves. They are the words of our own hearts.

And so Lord we pray that as we have sung you would accept us in the words of the psalmist. We thank you for the blessing of being able to come into your house.

Into that place where God dwells. And we know that that is not a structure. It's not a building. That we are your people. That we are your people. Come together in the name of Jesus.

We thank you that we have your assurance. Whether we are smaller number or vast a number. That you will be with us. And that you will be with us to bless. Our souls apart from me are thirsty.

And although we may try to find satisfaction in different activities and pursuits and relationships. Although we may seek satisfaction from the world at large.

[9 : 53] And from looking inside ourselves even. We know Lord from experience and we know from the truth of your word. That our souls find no rest, no satisfaction, no quenching.

Until we come and bow before you. And trust Christ as our Saviour and as our Lord and our King. And so we pray that we would indeed be found with those who are putting our whole faith in Jesus.

And knowing the blessing that there is. And walking close with you. As our Father. And with Jesus as our Lord and our Master and our Guide.

We confess Lord our sin. We confess as ever the sin that we see ever before us. In thought and word and deed.

We ask Lord that you would cleanse us in the blood of Christ. That you would wash us. That you would purify us. That you would make us acceptable in Christ.

[11 : 04] And as we seek to draw near to you. That you would be drawn near to us. Bless each one here. Each home represented. Those in the area living in this part of your world.

And those who are visiting with us today. We pray your blessing. Especially upon them. And the fellowships that they represent. May they know refreshment. May they know your presence with them.

And we ask Lord that you would indeed bless them. As we pray that you would bless each one of us. Lord you know our needs. You know the things that concern us.

That trouble us. You know the needs of a world that is so broken. Again we see violence. We see unrest. We see bloodshed. We see Syria.

And different countries in the world. Too numerous to list even. And Lord. Although we are helpless in one sense. This morning. To be able to stretch out physically.

[12 : 09] We thank you that we can bring these countries. And these situations. To you in prayer. And we ask Lord for your healing. Your redeeming touch. We pray for your people especially.

Your church. And especially where there is acute persecution. Help these brothers and sisters in Christ. We pray. Make them strong. Be their shield.

And their salvation. And we pray. In these countries where. There is the deepest darkness. That the light of Christ would shine. Especially in these countries that we.

Have thought of in past months. Where Islam is so dominant. Lord God. We pray. That Jesus would be seen. And that. As we. Lead of so much violence.

In the name of one religion. We pray that Christ. Would be all the more wonderful. And beautiful. To those who are introduced to him. To help us. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. Not just for the world.

[13 : 09] We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. That you would grant repentance. That they would be turning back to you.

We pray for those. That you have allowed to be in authority over us. We ask that they would be to you. And that you would give them wisdom. you would give them wisdom and that you would give them faith.

And Lord, we pray for ourselves, you know the week that we've had, you know the week that we are going into and we ask that you would meet us at the point of our need. Lord, for those preparing to leave home, be with them, go before them, set them at ease, enable them to trust you and those that they'll leave behind, we pray that you would enable them also to trust you and to know your presence and your peace.

Those, Lord, who are waiting for procedures, who are dealing with the news of impending surgery, even we, we ask, Lord, that you would uphold them.

We pray for those who are struggling with ill health and who don't know what is required to be able to bring relief and we ask that you would comfort them and that you would give insight to those who look after them.

[14 : 30] We pray for those who would love to be here but who are tied up with responsibilities in the working world and we pray that your blessing would be upon them and that they would be salt and light wherever you are able to be in the course of this day.

And we ask, Lord, that you would be with us in this service, that all that is done and said and thought would be glorified to you. And, Lord, that you would meet with us and we pray all these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, would you like to follow up for days? How is everybody today? All fine. We've got visitors with us today.

What are your names? Jack. Pardon? Jack. Jack. Jack. Sophie.

Sophie. And? And it's a secret. It's good to have you. Nice to have you with us this morning. How was the usuals? How was the first week in school? Was this the first week in school or was this the second week?

[15 : 34] This was the first week. How was it all? Was it good? Good, middle or bad? See, you don't get the vantage point I get.

Whenever I ask a question, good morning to the latecomers, good to have you. Whenever I ask a question, you see as the children prepare to speak, you see the heads of the parents going down in earnest prayer.

Something to show you this morning. What's that? A pound. A pound? You try taking that to Brownie and convincing him it's a pound.

That's not a pound, what is it? It's a penny. It's a penny. John Roddy's got it figured. It's a penny. One penny. It's a one penny.

It's one penny. What do you think of this? Are you amazed by this one penny? No. Not really, no. I'm amazed for a hundred pennies. A hundred pennies.

[16 : 45] This is just one penny. What colour is it? Brown. It's just brown, really, isn't it? It's just brown. It's just brown. And this is quite an old penny.

It's quite a dirty penny. And if you were out on the street and you were walking along and it was pouring rain and you saw this at the side of the pavement and it was all messy and dirty, I don't even know if you'd bother to stop and pick up the penny.

What do you think? Do you think you would? No. Probably not. Yes. John Roddy probably would, yes. He's going to go far. But it's just a penny.

And most people would look at this and they would say, well, you know, it's not that pretty. It's not that shiny. It's not that valuable.

Not very excited about a penny. But, do you know something? Show you a wee trick.

[17 : 55] You know what that stuff is? Yeah! Yes. Coca-Cola. Yeah. Well, I heard about a trick that you can do or a test that you can do.

And what you do is you take an old penny, just like that one, and you put a wee bit of Coca-Cola in a glass and you just leave the penny in the glass overnight and then, when you take it out, I'm told it's different.

So when I put this penny that's in this glass in here, it was actually dirtier than this penny that I'm holding in my hand. It was browner and it was duller and it just wasn't a very nice-looking penny.

I wonder what it looks like now. What do you think of that?

A wee bit shiny. Not just a wee bit shiny. It's very shiny. It's not. It's very shiny. Come here and have a wee look at this penny.

[19 : 11] What's that? Does that look shiny for you? That looks, looks very shiny, isn't it? It looks very shiny.

It looks very shiny. You should think of the same as you're honest. And see that compared to the opening. If I was to put these two penny side by side, would you think they're just the same?

Or does one look quite different to the other? They look very different. One looks very shiny and one looks still very dull.

Dull. Okay, sit down. Dull. And I reckon even though it's worth the same money, if you saw this penny in the street or if somebody gave you this penny back and you're changing the shop, you would put this in your hand with all the other pennies and think, wow, that's a nice looking penny.

That's a shiny looking penny. Now boys and girls, in a wee while, we're going to be reading from the Bible and we're reading from Joshua chapter 2.

[20 : 30] And in the story in Joshua chapter 2, there was a lady in the story and her name was Rahab. And you know, a lot of people would have looked at Rahab and they would have said, she's a bit like the bad penny.

Her life does not look very clean. She wasn't being very kind to people. She wasn't living a life that would have made God happy.

But you know what? God loved her. And God sent his people to go and seek her.

He chose her. And he took her and her life, which looked not very clean. And through trusting him and through Jesus, who would come later, God made her like shiny, sparkly, wonderfully clean.

And he made her very useful so that she could do jobs for her. And I want to say that to you boys and girls because have you ever have you ever had a week and you've not been the best behaved?

[21 : 58] Have you ever had a week and you've thought, well, I haven't been perfect all week. No admissions here, eh? Have you ever gone to bed at night and thought, I feel a wee bit bad?

Put your hand up if you've gone to bed some nights and you've thought, hmm, I didn't do the best job today. Right up! Put your hand up if you've ever felt guilty.

Put your hand up if you've ever done a wrong thing. Boys, get your hands right up because you just told lies.

That's a wrong thing. You know, sometimes the devil comes along and he says to us, you are so bad that God could never love you and he could never save you and he'll never use you.

you're like a bad penny. But if we look to Jesus and if we trust in Jesus, his blood washes away how much of our sins?

[23 : 05] A wee bit or a medium bit? All of it! All of it! All of it! And even though we're small and even though we might think, well, I can't do very much, if we're trusting in Jesus, he can still use us.

and he can use anyone. So don't ever look at anyone else either and think, they are so bad! They could never be loved by God.

God chose Rahab and he saved Rahab and he used Rahab and you can ask your mums and dads and the people who took you to church today about Rahab later in the afternoon and they can tell you some more.

Let's pray just now. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you love us and we thank you that even though we make you sad by the way that we live our lives, even though we have so much sin in our hearts and our minds and the things that we do, still, when we look to Jesus, he is able to wash us clean and he is able to make us fit, not just for heaven, but for useful works in this world.

We thank you for the story of Rahab. We thank you that you loved her, you chose her and you used her and Lord, we pray that you would help us as you speak to us to trust you and help us, we pray, in this week to come to be useful for you in the jobs that you'll have us to do and we pray these things in Jesus' name.

[24 : 46] Amen. We're going to sing now and the words are on the screen, they're also in Mission Phase, the black book from number 296. 296, I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene.

Well, if you turn your Bibles please to Joshua chapter 2. Joshua chapter 2, as we continue in our studies in this book, last week we looked at the situation that Israel were in on the threshold of the promised land.

Moses, their leader, is dead and the Lord takes hold of Joshua and encourages Joshua to lead the people into the land that he promised to give them and to be strong and to be courageous and to trust him.

So Joshua chapter 2 I'm reading from verse 1. This is God's word. Then Joshua, son of Nun, secretly sent two spies to 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. The king of Jericho was told, look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.

[26 : 11] 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. 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. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly.

You may catch up with them. But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof. So the men sent out the pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan.

As soon as the pursuers had gone, the gate was shut. Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, I know that the Lord has given this land to you 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.

We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to Simon and all the two kings of the Ammonites east of the Jordan whom you completely destroyed.

[27 : 23] When we heard it, our hearts sank and everyone's courage failed because of you for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on earth below. 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 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. Our lives for your lives the men assured.

If you don't tell what we are doing we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land. So she let them down by a rope through the window for the house she lived in was part of the city wall.

Now she said to them go to the hill so that the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return and then go on your way. The men said to her this oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless when we enter the land you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you lent us down and unless you have brought your father and your mother your brothers and all your family into your house if anyone goes outside your house into the street his blood will be on his own head we will not be responsible.

As if anyone who is in the house with you his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on her but if you tell what we are doing we will be released from the oath you made us swear.

[28 : 53] Agree she replied let it be as you say so she sent them away and departed and she tied the scarlet cord in the window. 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.

Then the two men started back they went down out of the hills forwarding the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them.

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.

Amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us. It's good to have the Reverend E.M.T. Campbell with us this morning. He's just newly retired but we can't have him becoming too relaxed so he's time to come and lead us in prayer in Galilee.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[30 : 25] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[32 : 54] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[35 : 24] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[38 : 16] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. hey.

And who is, thank you. Thank you. May you.

[41 : 48] Well, I would expect the next scene to be a scene where the children of Israel have their swords above their heads. They're giving out this confident roar.

And they're charging into battle. They're charging to take this land that they've been so unconditionally promised. That's not what happens.

We hear no roars. We see no dust flying. We see Joshua rather taking two people very quietly, discreetly aside.

And sending them off on what we can only call the secret mission. And that's the first point. The first point is the secret mission. We see it in verse 1.

Then Joshua, with all the backdrop there of the promises and the anticipation of taking the land. Verse 1.

[42 : 51] Then Joshua, son of Nun, secretly sent two spies from Shekin. Go look over the land, he said. Especially Jericho. So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab.

And stayed there. Now the obvious question in my mind here is why? Why the secret mission? Why the need for it?

When God has made it so abundantly clear. When God has given them such firm assurances of, I will give you the land.

Looking back over chapter 1. That firm promise. I will give you the land. No one will be able to stand against you. I will be with you. So be strong. Be courageous. Be very courageous.

Don't be terrified. Don't be discouraged. Don't be courageous. Don't be strong. Don't be courageous. Why didn't they just go? Why didn't they just take the land?

[43 : 53] Why didn't they just... Back on? For use of a better phrase. Why is there a need for this secret reconnaissance mission?

That's my question. Maybe it's yours too. And some commentators ask that question. And they answer it by very scoldingly saying of Joshua.

There was no need. God had told them to proceed. They should have just proceeded. There was no need for the secret mission. Joshua here is losing his nerve.

Joshua here is doubting God's word. That's what one commentator aptly named Hawk says. But that's not what the text says.

Now Joshua equally may have been filled not with fear, but with courage and faith. Joshua in proceeding in these terms of the secret mission and the reconnaissance exercise, He may just have been planning the route into the land.

[45 : 07] Working out the logistics of it. Working out the best points of attack. If you're a Christian, it won't take you long for somebody to come to you and say, I don't understand you.

You've got this blind faith. That's not usually true. Faith is not blind. Living by faith is living in such a way that we are trusting the word of God.

And this is a word that we can pick up. And we can read it. And we can study it. And we can meditate upon it.

Faith is not only reading the word, but living out the word. Moving forward in obedience to the word that God gives us. Whilst using the common sense and the intelligence that he gives us.

One commentator, Matthew Hendon, says this. He says, Faith in God's promise ought not to supersede, but encourage our diligence in the use of proper means.

[46 : 24] And that's, I believe, what Joshua was doing here. The truth is, we don't actually know what was going through Joshua's mind when he calls two men aside. Two young men, it says, in the original language.

And says to him, I want you to go and scout out the land. We don't know what was in his head. We don't know what he was feeling in his heart. We're not told that. And so to speculate, in many ways, is to have the wrong focus.

It's to miss the point. So what I think we should do here is we should turn our gaze away from Joshua. And think about the character of God.

Joshua's God. Israel's God. Our God. In all of this. And there's two things, I believe, that we can learn at least. About the character of God.

As we think about this secret mission. And the first thing is that God is sympathetic to our needs. And the second thing is that God is a God who seeks us.

[47 : 28] In order to save us. So first of all, we see through this secret mission that God is sympathetic to our needs. Now, whether Joshua was having doubts or not at this point.

I think it's fair to assume, looking at Israel as a nation and looking at their track record, that they would have been filled with apprehension of what they were being asked to do.

The promised land is there, but between them and the promised land is this mile-long, fast-flowing, treacherous River Jordan. And they had to cross it.

And there was no bridge. And there was no ferry. How were they going to do it? And then maybe they were thinking back to, I think it was 38 years previous, where there had been a reconnaissance exercise once before with 12 people.

And the reports came back from that exercise that this was a land, yes, that it was fruitful and it was appealing. And it was a land that would be good to enter.

[48 : 31] But how would you do it, said 10 of the 12 who came back with the reports. There's giants in the land. It's full of danger. Maybe that was going through the minds of the people in Israel also.

If we get over this river, what are we going to find there? And then there was always the enemy. There was enemy nations always just ready to punch and ready to attack.

And so they would have been watching their back. I think it's fair to assume that the nation would have been fearful. And I think it's fair to assume that they likely would have needed reassurance at this critical point.

And this secret mission is the means of such reassurance. The Lord, whether or not he instructed them to go to the promised land, to Jericho, we don't know.

But he allowed them. He allowed them to go to Jericho. He allowed them to bring back this encouraging report so that their faith in his promises would be strengthened.

[49 : 42] And so that they could actually proceed at the right time with confidence in him. Dear Ralph Davis, the commentator, he says this.

The problem is not that God's promises are not sure, but that we need to feel sure of them. His words should be sufficient to bolster us.

But because of the weakness of our faith, he graciously stoops down and by a plethora of signs, evidences and providences, makes us feel assured of his already sure worth.

Why does a husband tell his wife regularly that he loves her? When already he has a ring on his finger and he's married her.

And the assumption would surely be that he does love her. Well, he tells his wife that he loves her because he wants her to know and feel assured of that love.

[50 : 52] Before the first day of school, when our wee ones, as they were this week, may have been a wee bit jumpy, a wee bit nervous about going in for the first time.

If the wee one is nervous in the house and she's eating her breakfast at the prospect of going to school, a parent doesn't harshly scold them for nerves. But will patiently and lovingly give them reassurance.

And the secret mission that we see here in Joshua 2 shows us that our God is not impatient. He is not insensitive to our needs.

He knows us. He understands us. He sees what's in our hearts. He understands how fragile our faith can sometimes be and how quickly we can become fearful and worried.

And just as he was sympathetic to the needs of Israel as a nation at this critical point, he's sympathetic to our needs.

[52 : 06] It's good to know. First, you think about the young ones. Just preparing to head off to university. He's a God who knows us. He's a God who knows our needs.

He's a God who has promised he will be with us. And as we wait upon him, he gives us that assurance. And that courage. Hebrews 4 and verse 15 and 16, speaking of Jesus, says, For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses.

But we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, So that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

What does the hymn go like? What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege we have to carry. Everything to God in prayer.

He's sympathetic to our needs. He understands. Jesus left heaven to come to earth. There's nothing that you go through that he hasn't experienced. And he is sympathetic to our needs.

[53 : 27] The second thing we see here in the secret mission is that God seeks us in order to save us. And speaking personally, I think this is actually the primary reason for the secret mission.

I may be wrong. But I think that the Lord has, in instructing or allowing this secret mission, he has set his sights on a poor lost sinner that needs to be saved.

And we thought about her with the children. And we read about her in the passage. Her name is Rahab. Her occupation is she's a prostitute. And some of the commentators tie themselves in knots trying to find a word that distances her from the word prostitute.

But we can't. That's what she was. Now, Israel, as they prepare to enter the land, they are told that they will be given protection.

That God is with them. So that they have to be strong and to be courageous. No one can stand against you. I will be with you, says the Lord. But here's Rahab and her family.

[54 : 42] And they're in the land. And they're assured of no such protection. Because actually, judgment is coming. And so if she's to be saved from the judgment that is coming, somebody needs to go.

And somebody needs to seek it out. And somebody needs to share with her the fact that there can be salvation. And so two are sent into the land. Not, I think, first and foremost to Skype the right.

But to tell Rahab that there is the possibility of salvation. And some might say, well, that seems a bit far-fetched.

Surely, such a difficult and onerous journey wouldn't be instructed or permitted by the Lord for the sake of one poor lost soul.

And yet, that seems very like the Lord that he reveals himself to us in Scripture. Remember the day that Jesus, in John 4, he had to go through Samaria.

[55 : 52] You can read of the passage later. There's a woman who's at the well. Her life is a mess. Her life is just carnage.

She's had five relationships. She's on number six, I think, at this point. She's in the middle of the day, at the well, because she can't bear to be seen in conversation with anyone.

Because she is the one who has the finger pointing at her. Not her. And yet, Jesus determines he has to go through Samaria.

Why? Is that the most direct route to Galilee, which is where he was heading for? No, it wasn't. It's actually a very indirect route to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria.

He's in the middle of the day. Because he had an appointment to keep with one, solitary woman with a bad reputation and a messy life who needed to be saved. The Good Shepherd is well known for leaving the 99 and seeking out a war.

[56 : 59] I wonder if there is one person here today particularly whom God has his sights set on.

I wonder if there is a Rahab here. Someone who needs to be saved from the coming judgment.

Someone who needs that life that is eternal. Someone who needs to be saved from the coming judgment. Someone who needs to be saved from the coming judgment. Someone who keeps on hearing God speaking as he closes in on them.

If that's you, trust him. Trust him. The God who cares for us. The God who is sympathetic to our needs. The God who seeks us in order to save us.

Let him save you. And trust yourself there. So there's the secret mission.

[58 : 10] And that's the majority of the sermon. So we have two more brief points. The second point is the situation. And maybe I watch too many of these political thriller type things.

But you know the script and how these things unfold. There's the secret mission. There's the mission that various people are engaged in. And it's well calculated.

And it's worked out. And it's ongoing. Everything's going to plan. And then all of a sudden in some crisis. Disaster strikes. And the chiefs and the generals.

And the president are called together into what's called the situation room. Now as we move from verse 1 into verse 2. We're alerted to a developing situation.

The mission that has begun so well. Is starting to fall apart. Remember the spies. Somehow they make it over the Georgia. We don't know how. And they proceed into Jericho.

[59 : 10] And they're unharmed. And they find their way into Rahab's house. Undetected. And we might balk at the fact that we're told that these two spies.

They make for Rahab's house. Rahab the prostitute. Why are they going there? Well in actual fact that was the ideal location for them.

Why was it the ideal location? Well firstly. Perhaps not that they knew it. God had plans. For Rahab. So they needed to be there.

But also this was a place where there was a lot of traffic passing through. This was a place where you would hear things that were going on in the land.

This was the ideal place for gathering local gossip. Intelligence. And this was a place that was located. It was built into the city wall.

[60 : 08] And so it was ideal for a quick escape. So if they wanted to know what's happening in this land. How do the people regard us? What are we coming into? That was the place to be. So they were perfectly situated.

All is going well. And then disaster. Their cover is blown. Look at verse 2. The king of Jericho was told. Look.

Some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land. 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. Now we have a situation. And the simple application here.

Is. Is that. When we are involved. In God's work. We can expect situations. We can expect difficult situations.

[61 : 09] When we undertake to go on God's missions. As he calls us to. When we seek to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. When even we try to buy a building.

That we can use. To share the gospel of Jesus Christ. We can expect things not to go smoothly. We can expect complications.

We can expect opposition. We can expect trouble. God's people here. Chapter 1. They are promised. The land.

And they were led into the land. As we will see. As the book develops. That the road there was treacherous. Wasn't trouble free. And going into the New Testament.

From the Old Testament. Jesus made it crystal clear. If we serve him. If we follow him. We will have problems in the world. Mark chapter 8.

[62 : 12] John 16. Jesus says. Take up your cross. And follow him. Not take up your cushion. John chapter 15.

Verses 18 and 20. Jesus says. If the world hates you. Keep in mind that it hated me first. If they persecuted me. They will persecute you also. John 16. 13. In this world.

Says Jesus. You will. Will. Will. Have trouble. And the disciples discovered that. Time and time again. And the Apostle Paul. As we've studied in the evenings.

Time and time again. He illustrates that point. First Peter. Is a book that's devoted. To laboring. And. And. Giving. Expositively.

Teaching. On that point. There will be situations. So if the secret mission. Point number one.

[63 : 08] Tells us about a God. Who is patient. And compassionate. And loving. And seeking. The situation. Point number two. Tells us about a God. Who is truthful. Utterly truthful.

And he's. One who hides nothing from us. He is trustworthy. And he tells us. If we follow the course.

That he says. There will be situations. You know. If you're heading off. On a journey. And it's a. A journey. Of some length. And the people.

Who you've spoken to. Before you head off. Say to you. It's a smooth road. It's a nice. Easy journey. It's a. It's a lovely. Scenic route. And then.

Ten miles down the road. You think. The potholes. The. Size of. Craters. And there's. Hairpin bend. And there's. Steep drops.

[64 : 07] And there's. Rough ground. If you're not prepared. For that. You may well. Turn back. But if you're told. From the beginning. Expect a rough ride.

At times. Then you're ready. For that. And you'll. Persevere. Knowing that you're. Actually on the right track. As you hit the rough times.

And that. Is. Something. Of an impression. Of the God. Whom. Israel. Followed. And whom we follow. He's no slick salesman. Who gives us.

Half a truth. He's. Trustworthy. And he tells us. If you follow my way. There will be rough tracks. In seasons.

There will be situations. But I'll be with you. So don't be afraid. Be bold. Be courageous. Keep on. Remember a minister.

[65 : 07] Who. At the door. He always said the same thing. To any Christian. That walked out the door. He'd shake their hand. And he'd say two words. Keep on. Keep on.

Keep on. Keep on. So we have a secret mission. We have a situation. And finally. We have a solution.

We move into. Verse four. For this. So we have the. The solution. Starting to become clear here. The Jericho police. Are at the door. Bang. Bang. Bang. That's woken some up.

They have two photographs. In their hands. You seen these men? The king wants to have an. Urgent meeting. With these men. And then Rahab. Makes a response.

In verse four. She says. Yes. The men came to me. But I did not know. Where they had come from. And then at verse five. At dusk. When it was time. To close the city gate. The men left.

[66 : 07] I don't know. Which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them. But they had taken. She had taken them up to the roof. And hidden them under the stalks of flats.

She had laid out on the roof. So the men set out. In pursuit of the spies. On the road that leads to the forage of the Jordan. And as soon as the pursuers had gone. The gate was shut.

So secret mission. Goes well. Hit problems. There's a situation. It looks bad for these two spies. It looks bad for the nation.

And then Rahab interjects here. And we see a solution starting to be worked out. And we breathe a sigh of relief at this point. And we're thankful.

For the fact that these spies. They're safe now. They're off the hook. God's looked after them. There's been a solution engineered here.

[67 : 09] But the way the solution is engineered. Is problematic for some. And some at the moment. Will be snagged on this. Some at the moment. Even as we think of this. Will have questions.

What's in our mind is. Hang on a minute. Solution yes. But Rahab lied. She told a lie. It might have been a white lie.

It might have been just a wee fib. It might have been for the greater good. It might have had good motivation. But she still lied. So in trying to do the right thing ultimately.

She bore false witness. She lied. She sinned. So we're left with this ethical problem. For some. In our minds. The question of whether. We should applaud Rahab.

For what she did to save the skin of the spies. Or whether we should point the finger. And say Rahab. That was false testimony. Repent. And.

[68 : 11] It probably wants your pride. You can know that the commentators. Spill oceans of ink. Trying to explore. And work this one out. And smooth and iron. Every difficult.

Dilemma that comes from it. But I think if we get stuck on this. We miss the main point. Hill climbers. They're a special breed.

There's some hill climbers. With us this morning. I know. Of at least one or two. Now hill climbers. Love the solitude of the hills. They love going up there. Like a mountain goat.

And they love getting to the summit. But let me tell you. If they get to the summit of a hill. And they find on the summit of that hill. A half drunk bottle of coke.

Or a banana skin. Or a crisp bag. They hate it. They absolutely hate it. All this solitude.

[69 : 06] All this beauty. All this natural wonder. And a bag of golden wonder. And so if they get to the summit.

And they find the offending crisp bag. They'd rather it wasn't there. They'll put it in their rucksack. They'll take it home. But they won't let that ruin the whole day. They won't make the whole 12 hour excursion.

About this unwelcome crisp bag. And you know it would be a mistake for us. To make this whole sermon. And our whole thoughts. About Rahab's lie.

As some commentators do. Just to miss the point. The fact is Rahab was human. And Rahab was a sinner. And Rahab was trusting God.

And we're going to see that next week. God willing. And the week after. As we continue in this series. But although she was trusting God. She was still struggling with sin.

[70 : 07] As I am. And as you are of your trust in God. But the amazing. And the encouraging thing is that.

Even in her sinful state. Whilst she was still a sinner. God loved her. And he sought her. A prostitute.

With a shady past. And still a shady present. And yet God chose her. Of all people. And he used her.

Even though he didn't need to. He could have blinded the eyes of the Jericho police. As they searched. The roof of Rahab's house. No problem for God. He could have caused the spies.

In their moment of danger. To just vaporize. And just disappear. And miraculously reappear. In front of Joshua. Like he did with Philip.

[71 : 12] In Acts chapter 8. I think it was. But God chose not to do that. He chose Rahab. He chose. To use. Rahab. She became part. Of the solution. For these. Two spies. Who were saved. From what was.

A dangerous. Almost certainly. Deadly situation. And you know. More than that. As we finish. Rahab.

Was not only a solution. For them. Back then. But Rahab. Becomes part. Of the solution. For your salvation. And mine. In some way.

Because if you flip forward. With me. From Joshua chapter 2. To Matthew chapter 1. In Matthew chapter 1.

[72 : 17] We have a genealogy. We have a. Historical line. And then we. Travel down that line. We see.

Who? We see Rahab. Abraham. The father of Isaac. Isaac. The father of Jacob. Jacob. The father of Judah.

And his brothers. Judah. The father of Perah. Zerah. Whose mother was Tamar. Perah. The father of Hezron. Aram. The father of Abinad. Abinad. Abinad. Abinad. The father of Nashon.

Nashon the father of Salmon. Salmon the father of Boaz. Whose mother. Was Rahab. So here we find Rahab.

The prostitute. In the historical line. That leads all the way. To Jesus. Our saviour. The one who.

[73 : 14] In living. Righteously. Sinlessly. For us. And dying. In our place. On that cross. And rising. From the dead. Became the solution.

The only solution. To the problem. Of your sin. And mine. Rahab. Shows us. That no one. Is beyond the reach. Of God's grace. Rahab shows us. That no one. Is too bad. To be saved. Matthew Henry.

Says. The greatness. Of sin. Is no bar. To pardoning. Mercy. If it be repented of. In time. The greatness.

Of sin. Is no bar. To pardoning mercy. If it be repented of. In time. So if you're here. This morning. And the devil. Is saying to you.

[74 : 12] You're too far gone. You are too bad. You are too ugly. You have too. Bad. A track record. Your reputation. Is in ruins.

You have no right. To come to Christ. You tell him. About Rahab. And the lay.

Of other people. Who everybody else. Wrote off. That God sought. No one is too bad. To be saved.

No one is too good. To need to be saved. I know. You can't do it yourself. Nobody might be pointing. A finger at you. Everyone may be looking.

Up to you. And saying. Look at that life. She's got a maid. Her reputation. His reputation. Is just. Immaculate. Before Christ.

[75 : 12] The best of our works. Are like filthy rides. We need him. His mercy. His grace. No one is too bad. To be saved. No one is too good. To need to be saved.

And no one is too imperfect. To be useful. So Rahab. Points us forward. To Christ. He is our soul's.

Only solution. And he is able. To give us. Protection. From the coming judgment. If we will hide ourselves. In him.

May God bless these thoughts. On his word to us. We are going to sing. Prayerfully. At the complete. Permission.

Praise number. 582. As we are directed. To Christ. And given that. Call that encouragement. To hide. Ourselves.

[76 : 10] In him. Rock of ages. Cleft for me. Let me hide myself. In thee. We thank you father. For your grace. And now we pray.

That the grace. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the love of God. The Father. And the fellowship. Of God the Holy Spirit. Would be with us all. Both now and forevermore. Amen.