Sermon 7/3  **Joshua 2:1-21 Rahab: It’s All about the Risk Deb Winters**

My name is Leah. My mother named me Leah after our ancestor in faith so that I might learn the patience and perseverance of Leah who was unloved by her husband but still made a life for herself and gave birth to Judah who the line of King David came through and your Messiah, Jesus—my mother is part of that line, but that’s a much later part to this story. As for me there is no question I am persistent but, patience is something I am still learning. You may have heard of my mother who in my teen years I did not want to admit I even knew her for you see I know who my mother is, but I have no idea who my father is, nor does she.

My mother was an innkeeper and she made sure ALL her clients’ needs were serviced and because of that her inn was always full. My mother was a good business woman who kept abreast of all that was going on in Jericho and what was good for business.

One night 3 strangers came to stay who my mother recognized right away as being from the Hebrew tribes. In her wisdom she hid them immediately and it was not long before the soldiers of Jericho came looking for them. It is then my mother surprised me for instead of making money on the deal and having the soldiers pay to tell her where they were, she lied to them and said they had already left! I think that’s why the soldiers believed her. They probably thought had she known, she would have made them pay for the information.

I knew better than to say anything and after the soldiers left I snuck up behind her when she went on the roof and heard her tell the Hebrews that she believed in their God, their God and not the gods of Jericho! She was going to let them escape only on a promise that they would save her and our family. She trusted them and their God! How did she know? What told her this God was more powerful? What risk was she taking with our lives and her own?

She did as they asked and tied a crimson cord in the window and then let them go. She gathered the whole family, 40 of us, in the inn and waited, and waited and waited for what seemed like forever. We heard the fear outside grow as the Hebrews began marching around Jericho but after the 3rd and 4th day people began wondering if that was all they were going to do, just march around the city.

My uncles grew weary of just waiting and feeling as if they were hiding in fear when they should have been preparing for battle and helping to fortify the city. What were the neighbors thinking? What were the neighbors taking for their homes while they were away? Why had my mother put us in this position? Who did she think she was making this decision for the whole family? Wouldn’t the walls of Jericho protect us? We were known for our walls!

I know she was my mother and she loved us and thought she was doing what was best, but this was getting ridiculous, 40 of us crammed into the inn. Our food was running out, our water was running low, it was hot and tempers were flaring and my mother stood steadfast telling everyone to stay inside and wait, trust the Hebrews and their God. I wasn’t sure I could take any more and then the 7th day came and then the Hebrews cried with a loud shout and blew their trumpets, a sound I will never forget! And, then there was a loud rumble as I had never heard before and the ground shook and the walls of Jericho fell down—they simply fell down! And then the Hebrews attacked.

I heard the screams and saw people running for their lives with soldiers in hot pursuit and then the 3 Hebrews appeared at what was left of our door. They came back! They kept their word! They ushered us out of what was left of our house to safety. We were the only family to make it out alive of Jericho. My mother was right!

Had the people of Jericho lived, she would have been killed as a traitor. In the eyes of the Hebrew people she was a hero called by God. I look at my mother and wonder how she could have risked so much on a chance encounter. To hear my mother tell the story, she knew right away this was the God for her and she did only what she knew she had to do to protect us and do God’s will. For her, there was no other option!

I pray for me and for you, you are willing to listen and follow God’s voice in your life. I know it is not always a popular stand, some would even consider it risky to follow a God you cannot see. But I have learned over and over again to follow the Hebrew’s God is the only sure path in life. Only follow a leader who seeks to follow God. Amen.