



The Harlot of Jericho and the Two Spies | James Tissot | c. 1896-1902

December 10

Thursday

Joshua 2.1-21

On every family tree you can find lemons if you search. Some might be hidden away, like my grandfather's first wife. Others hang out in fairly plain sight, like Jesus' ancestress Rahab—assuming the woman of Matthew 1.5 is that also of Joshua 2 and of Hebrews 11.

Rahab (her name can mean "broad," "turbulent," "arrogant," or possibly "raging") lived in Jericho when that city stood as the foremost obstacle to Israel's conquest. She practiced the world's "oldest profession:" suggesting she was probably a widow or single mom, driven by economic need. Male guests were known to frequent her house. One day, a pair of them happened to be Hebrew spies. They promised immunity to Rahab and her kin if and when their army scored in triumph. Trusting these foreigners and the might of their God, she turned against neighbors and the gods she'd always known. Rahab's actions were risky—read about them for yourself—but in the end her faith was well-placed.

According to Joshua 6.25, Rahab "lives among the Israelites to this day." Sounds like her family became resident aliens...except that Matthew goes on to say she bore a son named Boaz, who became the father of Obed, grandfather of Jesse, and great-grandfather of King David! Hence, her place among the family of Jesus—though it was rather unusual to list female names at all.

Hardly the last time that faithful foreigners would bless and be commingled among people of God.

Help me, dear Lord, to recognize this day your presence and operation among persons I don't prefer. Thank you for grace that is so amazing as to bind us all sinners beneath the cross of Christ.

Pastor Ted Wright

Rahab