

THE JOSHUA SERIES

“The Red Cord”

January 13, 2008

Pastor Mark Ashton

We are in the midst of a spiritual adventure; an adventure through the book of Joshua, which includes experiencing the scriptures through things like our visual typography up there, through the devotional guide that you're hopefully going through every day, through small groups, through teaching on Sunday morning, and through the memorization of the scripture. I know that people all the way from senior citizens down to little kids have been memorizing our verse of the week last week, which was Joshua chapter 1 verse 9. Just to demonstrate that it really is possible, here's my four year old daughter, Haiven, who's going to say for us Joshua 1:9.

**Haiven Ashton:** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged. For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Not bad, huh? So here's what we're going to do. We're all going to say that verse together with Haiven, for those of you who memorized it this week. We're going to say it all together. Whether you're in Access or in the sanctuary, we're all going to say it out loud together now. Are you ready?

**Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged. For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.**

Let's hear it for Haiven, huh? You know if a four year old can do it, you can do it.

Well, we are, as you may have guessed by now, we're here in person in Access and live via video into the sanctuary this morning. So, everybody say “Good morning sanctuary!” Great to be all together at the same time on the same note. This week we're together by video. Next week we'll be physically together in the same room. Next week's message is a real important message, not only covering Joshua 3, but taking an important look forward to what we're going to be doing as a church in the year 2008. Because of it's importance and because of the opportunity to be unified in worship with Tim and Steve and David all leading worship together there with the best of all our worship teams, next week we're going to be doing it combined in our largest room, which is the sanctuary. So, for those of you here in Access, take the fifty steps down the hallway and we'll be meeting in the sanctuary as one large church kicking off the next year and commissioning our Sarpy County people from all of our different services all in one day.

In addition to that, many of you this week received in your email inbox on Friday a survey called the “Reveal Spiritual Growth Survey”. The Elders and the pastors of this church take your spiritual growth really seriously and because of that we've wanted to do a church-wide spiritual growth and engagement survey. If you signed up for that in December on those sign up cards, you will have already received an email, and we'd encourage you to take that survey. If you'd like to take the survey, but didn't get the email, just go to our home site, [www.cccomaha.org](http://www.cccomaha.org),

and click on the front page and there's a link to the "Reveal Spiritual Life Survey" and you can give us your feedback about the church and spiritual growth. It's very comprehensive, so it takes about 20 minutes for you to be able to go through all of the things that need to be surveyed. But just so you know, it's completely anonymous, your email won't be shared outside of Christ Community Church, and it's very important. The pastors and the Elders will take this data very seriously and it will help us to chart the course for the next generation of what we're doing here at Christ Community Church. So if you'd do that, that would be fantastic. Let's pray together.

God, thanks that we get to gather together in your name this morning with your people. Thank you that you've given us the story of Joshua and for the things that we're going to learn. We just want to invite you to be present in a powerful and life changing way this morning. Work in our hearts. Set us up for the things that you want us to think and to believe and to do with our lives and we pray God that you would make that a reality this morning in our service. We pray in the powerful name of Jesus. Amen.

Well, go ahead and turn in your Bibles to Joshua chapter 2. It's page 152 in your church Bibles. For those of you who weren't here last week, we pick up the story of Joshua in a moment where the entire nation of Israel, a million people, are sitting on the east side of the Jordan River. Moses has just died and Joshua is about to take the people of Israel across the Jordan River onto the west side in the Promised Land that God had promised to the people of Israel for the last 500 years. Joshua is on the brink of actually doing that. So, in this moment what happens is Joshua sends out some spies to check out the first city that they're going to need to take over, the city of Jericho, and that's where we begin reading in Joshua chapter 2. It says this, verse 1:

1 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.

Now, let's just stop right here at this moment of the text. Joshua sends the spies to go into the land. What he wants them to find out is just basic military intelligence – just scope out the land. He's not trying to make a decision about whether or not to go into the land. That had already happened by God's command and Joshua was confident of it. Besides, a generation before Joshua was one of those spies who went to check out the land. Israel made a decision in the wake of that that cost them 40 years of wandering in the desert. You could be sure that Joshua was not going to make that mistake again. So, Joshua sends these spies to go in and bring back whatever military intelligence they can bring back in the midst of being there. So the spies wind up going to a prostitute's house by the name of Rahab.

Now, at this moment you begin thinking – what are these guys doing going to a prostitute's house of all places? Are they thinking – hey, we've got a three day pass from the military, so let's have a little bit of fun? Were they thinking – what happens in Jericho, stays in Jericho? Well, every indication from the text is that they didn't have that in mind at all. But by going to a prostitute's house, you're going to a place where men frequently go without any suspicious questions being asked, particularly foreign men could come and go without many questions being asked. My guess is that they were hoping for a sense of anonymity as they go about gathering whatever information that they have.

So, when they go there they meet this woman by the name Rahab. What do we know about Rahab? What do we know about her past? Well, what we know about Rahab's past is really not a lot, but there are a few things we can guess. Later on in the narrative we'll learn that there is flax being dried up on her roof. In that day flax would have been made into linen garments that primarily would have been the clothing of wealthy people. So it's possible that Rahab's day job was making clothes for the wealthy in her community. We can also guess a little bit about Rahab's past, not that we know from the text or that we know for sure, but just because of her particular occupation. It's likely that Rahab was quite poor because, in general, rich girls don't go into that type of work. It's probable that she was young and unmarried. It's probable that she had a tough upbringing. She's not living in the house of her father, as most young single girls would be during that day if they weren't married. Perhaps there had been some kind of falling out or abuse in her background with her family. We don't know, but we know we find her young, single, alone, poor, and a prostitute in this moment. We know a lot more about Rahab's present in this passage than we know about her past. Let's take a read through the next six verses or so and we'll be reading verses 2 through 8:

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, the men 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.

We learn about the situation that, although the spies had hoped to have some anonymity, the King of Jericho found out exactly where they were and quickly he sent people to come and get the spies, presumably to grill them and possibly to kill them. They were quickly discovered, but Rahab sees this coming and Rahab makes a gutsy move – a decision that happens in a moment and she decides that she's going to side with the two spies of Israel over the King of Jericho. It's a tough decision and she makes it in an instant. She comes up with a plan at the front of her mind as these men are coming to the door, "Yes" she says, "they were here", affirming the information that, of course, they already knew. "But" she tells them "they went outside. They left. They wanted to get out of the city before the gates shut." And then she gives them this sense of urgency. "If you go after them fast maybe you can catch them." That way they wouldn't search inside her house to try and find if anything is there. So they run out of the gates and they try and find the men. Rahab made a gutsy choice to be on the side of Israel and the God of Israel rather than on the side of the King of Jericho. Make no mistake, Rahab put her life on the line for these men.

Well, after she made her choice she snuck upstairs to tell the spies what was going on in her mind and why she might make such a crazy move that could possibly cost her her life. Beginning at verse 8 it says this:

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 [*for YHWH – we know that whenever you see L-O-R-D in capitals it's the personal name of God, YHWH*]

8 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof 9 and said to them, "I know that the YHWH 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. 10 We have heard how the YHWH dried up the water of the Red Sea 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. 11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the YHWH your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

Now, let's stop right there in the middle of Rahab's monologue for a moment and check it more carefully. It's worth inspecting closely because this monologue by Rahab is one of the longest monologues we see anywhere in the Bible that's been given by a woman, so it must have a high amount of significance. If you're to diagram these last few verses that are considered to be Rahab's confession, what you'll find is there is a clear structure. It starts at point A, moves to point B, then C, back to B, and back to point A again. Rahab wants to emphasize a couple of things with great clarity and here's what the structure looks like. She begins with the idea of God and notice that she knows the personal name of God. She knows YHWH's name. The Israelites haven't come across the Jordan River, but she's heard of his fame already, and she knows that YHWH is going to win the battle. Before it even happens she says, "I believe that YHWH is going to take over this entire land. He's already given it to you." And that's where she begins her confession, it begins with God. Then she moves to the only piece of military information that the spies actually pick up during their outing here and that is "our hearts are melting in fear because of you." Why would the hearts of the people of Jericho be melting about this nation that's on the other side of the Jordan River? Well, she's heard about their reputation. The proof of who YHWH is, is in what she's already heard, so we see that in point C where she says, "We heard about how the Red Sea was dried up in front of you. We heard about Sihon and Og and how you defeated those men on the other side of the river."

Now, I may wonder at this point, how did Rahab get that information? I mean, how did she hear about these things? It could be that because of her personal profession she was able to catch wind from foreign men all the time. Maybe in the darkness of the night they whispered to her, "Forty years ago . . .", or they heard about something that happened forty years ago, "Did you hear how YHWH, the God of the Israelites parted the Red Sea and all those people went through the Red Sea on dry land?" "Did you hear that there's a million people wandering through the desert?" "Did you hear about how the Israelite nation has defeated the kings on the other side of the river?" And after hearing these things about the Israelite nation, Rahab begins to believe in the God of the Israelites. The proof is there in point C and then she goes back to point B once again and she says, "Our hearts melted when we heard about these things. Everyone's courage

failed because of you.” Then she finishes her confession going back to God. It starts with God, it ends with God, and she says, “YHWH is God of heaven and earth.” In other words she’s saying, “This is not just a local tribal deity. This is the God of the heavens and the earth, the God who runs everything, the ultimate God of the universe.” The key of what she’s saying, the nut, is that, “I believe in YHWH, the God of Israel, over and opposed to the god of the Canaanites or the Amorites”, or whoever was worshipped in Jericho at that point. She believes in the God of Israel. Not only that, but she says, “I’ll give information to you spies, to help you accomplish your mission, and I know, I’ve heard about the proof that your God is real and that he’s going to take over this land.”

Her confession is not complex. It’s not sophisticated. It’s not theologically savvy. It’s just an honest statement of belief and repentance. “I believe in YHWH and I’ll believe in him as opposed to any other god.” Not only that, but Rahab puts her life on the line. She acted on it, even if it was contrary to her old belief system. From the moment that Rahab makes her confession, she is a risks taking kind of disciple of YHWH, the God of the Israelites. Because of this she is shown mercy by the Israelites. She asks explicitly for it at the end of her monologue. She makes a confession that she believes in YHWH and she wants to follow him and then she asks for mercy. Verse 12:

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."

She asks for mercy on her family and who knows what kind of dysfunctional background there is, but Rahab puts herself in the kind of place where she says, “I want my whole family to be saved, my siblings and everything.” I think it’s responsible to note that Rahab is probably at least partially motivated by wanting to save her own life and save the life of her family as she can see that her whole city is about to be destroyed. And the men say, “Alright, we’ll agree with you” and they put two conditions on the fact of her being able to be saved and we read about those beginning at verse 14 and we’ll read all the way to the end of the chapter.

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 Now she had 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 The men 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 anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone

who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. 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."

The spies do what they say they were going to do. They hide out in the wilderness for three days, presumably the same three days that the Israelites are preparing to cross the Jordan River. Then they say to Joshua, the only key piece of information that they bring back that we know of, is that the people's hearts are melting in fear, which would have bolstered the confidence of the Israelites on the other side of the river. Their mission was accomplished, but God's mission was all about what was happening in the life of Rahab. These two men go back and they say when Rahab says, "Will you save my life?", they say, "We will on two conditions. Condition number one, everybody has to be inside your house - your father, your brothers, your siblings. If they are off running around the city, we can't guarantee what the army is going to do to them. Their blood is on your head. But if they are in your house, we'll assure that they will be protected, their blood will be on our head." That's the first condition – that everyone will be in the house.

Now, for those of you who know the story of Joshua and how the city of Jericho winds up getting defeated, you know it's a very commonly known story. The Israelites wind up going across the river and marching around the city of Jericho once a day for seven days. On the seventh day they march around the city seven times. Now, in this moment, at the end of that, they all shout and the walls of Jericho come tumbling down. The spies have the ability to guarantee Rahab natural protection, the protection of the army. They probably went back and told Joshua, "Hey protect Rahab." Joshua told the entire army, "Protect the house with the scarlet cord going through it" and they could give that protection. But did you notice in the story where Rahab's house was? The house was right on the edge of the walls of the city. Meaning that the walls that were going to tumble down would come tumbling down right on the top of the heads of Rahab and her family in that house, unless, unless, there was a supernatural protection from God. The walls coming tumbling down was a supernatural act of God and he would have had to make it happen in such a way that all of the walls tumble down of Jericho, except for this one little section that's protected by the scarlet cord hanging down the window. See, the protection she needed was not just the protection of people, it was the very protection of God and they gave that to her.

The second condition that they gave, besides being in the house, that you have to have a scarlet cord hanging down your window. Now, at first pass this makes very pragmatic sense, doesn't it? When the army comes by they've got to figure out which is the family that we spare. So, when they come in they would have all heard this, they march around the city seven times, as they look

up they say, “Oh yeah, there’s that scarlet cord that Joshua and the spies were talking about. We won’t attack that family, we’ll attack everybody else.” It’s got a very pragmatic use.

But at second pass, that scarlet cord is a picture of God’s big story for this world; the big story of a God who has mercy on people that were headed for disaster; that anybody who trusts in him can avoid the disaster that’s coming to them by their trust in him. The scarlet cord would be a reminder of that. Here’s how it might have worked in the minds of the army as they came in and they marched around Jericho and they saw that cord hanging there. I can’t help but wonder if their minds did a rewind back, some of them, to a time when they were children in Egypt, some of them to the story that their parents told them about what happened just about 40 years ago to that day. The story where the angel of death had gone over every house in Egypt, the houses of the Egyptians and the houses of the Israelites and killed each of the first born children that were in every single one of those houses, except the houses that had the blood of a lamb that had been killed and put on the top and then dripping down the sides of the doorframes. I can’t help but wonder if that army, in their mind, they went back and said, “You know that scarlet cord dripping out the window reminds me a lot of the doorframes that we had and the protection that we had by something else that was red, the blood of the lamb that protected us from the wrath of God – just like this scarlet cord is protecting her from the wrath of the army.”

Maybe their minds kept on going backwards as they thought about what they would see in the tabernacle with the killing of a lamb or a goat in order to protect them from God’s wrath against their very own sin. It was a sacrifice of atonement and they would watch the blood of the lamb dripping down the side of the altar after it was killed. Maybe their minds even went back to the thought of their ancestor Abraham and the time he was up on Mount Moriah and instead of killing his son, a ram was provided for sacrifice and there would have been blood that dripped down that night, blood that dripped down that rock as a sacrifice was provided on behalf of Isaac and so he was also spared wrath by a substitute.

My guess is that when Joshua wrote this story and when the spies gave the scarlet cord and they included that in as a detail, none of them had this master plan in their mind. But I think God did, because he was writing a much bigger story that would have this theme of blood, of scarlet, of dripping down the side of a wall, dripping down the side of an altar, dripping down the side of a knife. This theme would eventually lead the people of God to believe in one more sacrifice where the blood of God’s son was dripping down the side of a hard, rough Roman cross as the God of the universe himself comes and dies in order to bring us protection from the wrath that we deserve because of our own wrongdoing. The whole story is being woven together and the scarlet cord is a symbol, not only of what’s happening in that moment, but of what’s happening throughout salvation history, of the big story of what God is doing in this world.

So Rahab’s story is not just Rahab’s story. It’s my story and it’s your story. All of us have to answer the question in our lifetime, will I hang the scarlet cord out my window, the scarlet cord of the blood of Jesus? Will I trust in that ultimately as the thing that brings me salvation? In hearing that, you get two guarantees. There’s a human guarantee that would be like for me saying, “Hey, God will save you.” Or from a friend who cares about you and brought you this message, “Hey, God will take care of you if you trust in Jesus.” But, in addition to that you need a supernatural guarantee. That supernatural guarantee came when God visited the planet in the

person of Jesus, died on our behalf, and rose from the dead. Just like Rahab, God wants you to know your past doesn't matter. You may have done all kinds of terrible things, but the question is, not have you earned it, or are you good enough, because none of us are. The question is, will you trust God? Will you become a RISKS type disciple putting your life on the line from day one, the same way that Rahab did? Will you place your faith in Jesus? Rahab was saved by faith in the little knowledge that she had. God says, "Whatever knowledge you have, place your faith in me and you too can be saved."

We remember Rahab's faith by Hebrews chapter 11 verse 31. These are verses that are the hall of faith, of the great people of faith of the Old Testament, and of all the people that could be included, Rahab the prostitute gets included in here. This becomes our memory verse for this week. It's on the front of your programs. It's in the middle of your Joshua devotional guides and it says this:

"By faith, the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient."

It was her act of faith that saved her physically and later on her act of faith that saved her spiritually.

As you know, the story of Rahab as it unfolds through the rest of the Bible, we learn some cool things, some key things. First of all, we know that the spies went back to Joshua and boosted his confidence and the confidence of the Israelites. We learn about that at the end of the chapter here. If you go into Joshua chapter 6 we find out that Rahab was in fact saved. She was saved for the things that happened in her life. But not only was she saved, not only did the army not destroy her, ultimately Rahab married an Israelite man. She wasn't left alone, but she married a man by the name of Salmon and we find out about this in the genealogy of Matthew chapter 1. It's in one of those chapters of the Bible you always skip because it looks like it's going to be boring. Well, we find out some cool stuff right here. Rahab married Salmon and in the genealogy it says, "Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab". Those of you who know your Bible stories will recognize that name Boaz as the man who became the hero of the book of Ruth. He was the kinsman redeemer of the book of Ruth and that his life became yet another picture of what Jesus was going to be like. The story doesn't stop there because Boaz and Ruth get together and they have a son by the name of Obed. Boaz was the father of Obed, Obed, who's mother was Ruth. Boaz and Ruth have Obed and then Obed becomes the father of Jesse, and Jesse becomes the father of King David. So Rahab, the prostitute was the ancestor of David, the shepherd boy, the Goliath killer, the most powerful king of all of Israel, the one who is known as "a man after God's own heart". And here's the kicker, the story doesn't stop with David because if you keep going down that genealogy, all the way down to the end of the genealogy, it winds up at Jesus. So Rahab, the prostitute, not only symbolizes salvation in the scarlet cord, but she becomes a great, great, great, great (some odd number) grandmother of the one who will wind up saving the world; who will save his own generation; who will save our generation; and who, in fact, will save Rahab's generation.

Now, I want to point out something with this that's a really big deal. Rahab's life represents two big things, salvation and redemption. These words are often times tied together because they



both come to their head in the cross of Jesus, but Rahab's life gives us a great way to delineate the difference between what these two things are. Rahab's salvation is represented by the scarlet cord and the army that comes in and does not wipe her out. Salvation means to be rescued, to be saved, to not be destroyed when you deserve destruction, when destruction is coming. So Rahab's life is a picture of salvation that ultimately became true in the person of Jesus and his death on the cross. But redemption, redemption on the other hand, is when God reclaims something that's been broken or shameful from your past and then puts it back together and uses it for good. Rahab is a picture of redemption.

Did you notice that Rahab, let's just say in her reproductive zone, was the place of her greatest shame. But later on when we find out about her descendants, her reproductive zone was reclaimed to be for her greatest fame. Ultimately, victory for Rahab herself, for the people of Israel, and for the entire world was guaranteed by the fruit of Rahab's womb generations later, and the world was changed because of that. Isn't it just like God to plan this kind of redemption hundreds, even thousands of years in advance, where God would take a person's shame and her pain and her tragedy and morph it into something amazing; that the hope of the world would have its roots in the womb of a prostitute? Isn't it just like God to reclaim something like that?

I want to ask you about yourself as well. I want to ask you about your past and ask the question, what's broken for you and what needs to be reclaimed? I reflected on my own past this week and I thought of no less than seven major events in my life that either have been redeemed or are still in the process of being redeemed by God and him taking something tragic and making good out of it. I don't know what it is for you, but maybe it's similar to Rahab. Maybe for you your point of greatest shame happens in the reproductive zone. Maybe you've been promiscuous with your background. Maybe you've had an abortion. Maybe it was last week. Maybe it was thirty years ago. But it's still a part of the brokenness of your past. Maybe it has nothing to do with your reproductive zone, maybe its financial mismanagement, or anger control. Maybe you've been an abuser in a family situation. Maybe you've been a party to a lawsuit that was unjust. Maybe your life has been the primary cause of a divorce and you've left behind you a trail of broken lives and you know that stuff needs to be redeemed. Maybe it has nothing to do with what you have done, it's the wrong that has been done to you, or just a tragedy that you've experienced in life. Maybe it's the loss of a child that you can't figure out, the death of a spouse. Maybe it's abuse that you faced when you were growing up; a sickness or a disease that you're walking through. Maybe your family was blown up by divorce and you're one of the victims. Maybe you're walking through infertility. I'm not sure what it might be for you in this moment, but I know our world is broken enough that everybody in this room has points of their life that they could say, "I've got a point of pain that needs to be redeemed." The good news this morning is we serve a God who can and does redeem people's lives.

I've got a stack of letters in my office of people from Christ Community Church who have written me to say, "Let me tell you the story of what God is doing in my life" and they talk about something that was shame-filled or painful, or broken and how God is using it right now to change the world, to do amazing things in the lives around them. They might speak of the loss of a child and how many have come to faith in Christ and their eternities have been changed through that. Maybe an abortion survivor becomes an abortion counselor and helps to spare dozens, hundreds of other women the same pain that they've gone through. Maybe someone in

financial trouble decides to be financially honest and they restore relationships and restore businesses as a result of that. An alcoholic that decides to become a leader in Celebrate Recovery. The stories go on and on and on, but what I know is that we serve a God who is a God that redeems the brokenness of the past.

So this morning, I just want to walk us through a prayer, a prayer of the scarlet cord, a prayer of salvation and a prayer of redemption. There are some people who are here today, in Access and in the sanctuary, I know who are saying, "I need to be saved. I've never made that basic confession where I say I believe that God is the God of heaven and earth and I'm going to trust in Jesus and his death on the cross to forgive me and give me new life." I want to give you the opportunity to do that today, to make this your day of salvation where you cross the line from death to life and get the supernatural protection of God. I'm also going to offer up a prayer for people who say, "I know there's a point of pain in my life for which I need redemption." Something that's gone on in your past, or maybe it's real recent, maybe it's in your present, and you say, "Here's a thing of brokenness that I just want to offer up to God and ask, 'God would you redeem this brokenness and make something good out of it? I can't figure out how it's going to happen, but I'm trusting you to make that happen'." And I'll pray a prayer of salvation and redemption and what I'll do is pray a little bit and then leave some silence for you to just fill in the gaps and do your business with God. Anything you need to say in those moments of silence, just say it silently as you pray together there in your seats or in your pews. So let's go ahead and pray to God together in this moment.

God, thank you so much for what you did in the life of Rahab and in the story of Joshua. We love you so much God, and we're thankful for the story of the scarlet cord; for the story of the prostitute who's life was changed; for the story of the God of the universe who goes ahead into a city and reclaims a person's life out of that city and in so doing reclaims a family's life and changes the course of history. Now, God, I want to pray for the people right now who are saying, "I want to be like Rahab and pray a prayer of salvation. A prayer where I acknowledge that YHWH, the God of the universe, really is the God of heaven and earth, and that I'm believing in Jesus' death on the cross to be the very thing that saves me, that's the scarlet cord for my life." If you want to do that now, just pray in this moment of silence and do a little bit of business with God.

God, we're grateful for the people who have marked this day as a day of salvation and we want to pray for the people who are in the midst of a need for redemption as well. God, it's confusing sometimes why pain and brokenness hits our lives at certain angles and at certain times, but we're confident that you can take those broken things and make them new and make them whole. So I pray for people right now who your spirit is at work in their hearts and they've identified something in their minds already that they know needs to be redeemed and as they cry out to you now God and say, "Redeem this thing. It's confusing to me and I need you to make sense of the craziness that's going on in my life", God speak to their hearts right now. As you pray, just go ahead and pray and lay those things out before God, ask him to enter in and change them and change you from the inside out as he redeems the brokenness of your life.

God, we are so thankful to you this morning that you are the God of redemption, the God of salvation, the God who runs the universe and gives us everything. We give praise to you this morning for the way that you do that, in the powerful name of Jesus. And all God's people said, amen.