**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** What does it take to have the courage to go first? In a world that so often tries to pressure us onto certain paths, how do we blaze our own trail? How do we walk the straight and narrow path that Jesus set before us? Lean in as we learn from some of the heroes of the faith of what it means to be #TRAILBLAZERS.

**Week Overview:** Rahab was the unlikeliest of candidates to be used by God. And yet, she possessed enough faith to not only pave the way and blaze the trail, but to stay the course. Her obedience put her in the faith hall of fame and in the line of the Savior of the world.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):** Harlot 🡪 Prostitute.

**Tension (what’s the struggle):** God can use anyone. But how?

**Text:** Joshua 2, Matthew 1:5/16, Hebrews 11:31

**THP**: #TRAILBLAZERS PAVE THE WAY & STAY THE COURSE.

**Supporting Points:**

Rahab—in faith—conceals the spies. (Heb. 11:31) (James 2:25)

Trust 🡪 Deliverance (2 Peter 3:9)

By faith, we pave the way!

By faith, we stay the course.

God’s victory highlights his strengths and our weakness.

**Application (call to action)**:

By faith, we obey. We don’t compromise, even if other Christians are.

By faith, we are saved.

Gospel presentation.

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

*THP/Main Points – Bold*

**Intro:**

Northview Students, make some noise!! How we feeling tonight?!

I’m super pumped to jump into week 3 of our series that we’ve been in throughout the month of August entitled, “#TRAILBLAZERS.” This collection of talks is serving as the foundation of what we’re trying to instill inside each of us as we enter into this new school year. See, it’s easy to follow the trend. It’s easy to fall in line. It’s easy to just “do” what everybody else is doing. But, I believe—and we collectively here at Northview Students believe—that you were made for so much more. That God has instilled inside of you gifts and abilities that only YOU possess. And if you are to experience the world and this life to its fullest, if this world is going to experience YOU to its fullest, then it’s going to require you taking a different path, running a different race, blazing a new trail.

And so tonight, I want to read to you the story of a woman who was an epic Trailblazer. She was given the choice to blaze a trail never before seen and it led to her stepping into a future that solidified a legacy that’s still talked about today. Oh, also…she was a harlot…which is the nice way of saying she was a prostitute.

Will you pray with me?

*Prayer.*

*Amen.*

 **Tension:**

If you have a Bible, go ahead and turn with me to Joshua chapter 2 (repeat). This is such a powerful story. But, before we get into it, I want to give you a little bit of context because we’re going to read this and if you’re not familiar with the story, then your immediate assumption will be like, “what’s the big deal? A lady helped two spies. Good for her.” But that’s not even scratching the surface of what this story entails.

So, chapter 2, and I’m going to read starting right in verse 1 and it says this, it says,

*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.*

Pause. A prostitute? Why would they go to a PROSTITUTE’S house?! What are they thinking? But you have to realize the context. These spies are smart. The city of Jericho is under strict guard—looking specifically for enemies of war—A.K.A. the Israelites. A prostitute house unfortunately was a revolving door in those times—with many people coming in and out. This was the PERFECT place for these spies to hide out and remain under cover.

So the KING of Jericho sends a message to Rahab and says, “listen, I heard these men came to stay in your house, you need to turn them over to me. They’re spies. But Rahab says, “well, they came, but they left. I think they went towards the city gate. But Rahab was lying. The men were actually hiding on the roof! It’s crazy stuff but it begs the question, “why did she hide them?” I mean, these guys are the ENEMY. They’re the opposition. They’re EVIL—according to her culture. But, Rahab took them in. She put her own life on the line to take in and protect these men. Why? Verse 8 tells us, it says,

***8****Before the spies lay down for the night, she (Rahab) 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*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5880a)*] 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*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5880b)*]*

This is incredible! Rahab—this Pagan prostitute—knows who God is. She says that their entire land is MELTING IN FEAR because of what God has done through the Israelites. And so, she chooses to serve God and do whatever she can to ensure that His people are victorious. Can you imagine? Meeting a person with such a dirty stigma attached to them and then them revealing that they are in fact, a Christian?! Rahab says in verse 11,

***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.*

She’s declaring it! She believes it! So, what are we supposed to do with this story? What are we supposed to take away? And as I was praying over and studying this passage, I simply felt the Holy Spirit say, “this passage is for every person who has ever believed that God COULDN’T use them.”

You might walk in here tonight and you believe you’re too broken, too messed up, too fractured, too dirty to EVER be used by God and God is looking back at you tonight saying, “ENOUGH! Do you believe in me? Do you trust me? Will you submit your life to me?” Because if you will, I will use you to change the world. God’s showing us that he can use anyone! That ANYONE can be a way-maker, a trailblazer. But how? How? If we keep reading, verse 12, it says,

***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.”*

So, not only is Rahab on the hook for even taking these men in, but then she has the AUDACITY to strike a deal with these men! She says, “Look! I took you in. I protected you. I’m with you. I’m on your side. But now, I need you to help me. When you inevitably come in and attack our land, protect my family. Spare my household. Pour your blessing upon us.” The men say, “deal.”

This is crazy. How can she trust them? THIS IS THE ENEMY. THEY’RE STRANGERS! How in the world is she supposed to know that what’s she done isn’t going to get her killed not only by the enemy but by her own people?! Harboring enemies of the state is an offense punishable by death in that culture. Is this courage? Stupidity? Reckless belief? No. I believe that Rahab possesses what every Trailblazer ever has needed to possess. Rahab possesses an extraordinary amount of faith and resilience to **THP: pave the way AND stay the course. To not just pave the way, not just blaze the trail, but to STAY. THE. COURSE.**

**Truth:**

Well, how do I stay the course? Life is hard, Micah. This isn’t’ easy. I mean anybody can get hype on a Sunday night. I’ll commit all day long to praising Jesus with my friends inside these walls. Maybe I’ll go into school this week and invite a friend but once they say no, I’m done. Once I get hit with adversity, I’m out. Following Jesus is supposed to make my life cake, why’s it still difficult? This isn’t what I signed up for!

Have you been there before? Where you’ve found yourself in a hard place WITH Jesus in your heart and you can’t wrap your brain around how a GOOD God could let such BAD things happen to you? You say, “yeah I mean Rahab’s story is cool and all, but it’s in the Bible, of course she can stay the course.” Are you forreal? LOOK AT RAHAB’S LIFE!! You don’t think Rahab’s life was hard?!? She was a PROSITUTE. She SOLD her BODY for MONEY. Her land was about to be attacked, her people were about to go to war! Her life wasn’t hard?!

And yet…she had faith to believe that God was up to something. That God was working for her GOOD. Rahab—IN FAITH—concealed the spies. Look at what Hebrews chapter 11—called by Christians the “FAITH HALL OF FAME” says about Rahab. Hebrews 11:31,

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

Rahab believed that TRUST in God would lead to DELIVERANCE from death. That’s exacltly what Peter calls us to do. To TRUST in God so that we might be delivered from sin. 2 Peter 3:9 says, it says,

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

God is desperately pursuing you. What’s it going to take for us to develop a faith like that? Because when we’re able to train up an immense amount of faith in our lives, not only can we **THP: pave the way as Trailblazers but we can stay the course** when things get tough.

**Application:**

So, how do we do that? How do we become a Trailblazer that not only paves the way but is able to stay the course? It is BY FAITH. Right? And I think there’s three really quick takeaways from Rahab’s story that show us how God uses faith to elevate the potential placed inside of us. We just learned from Rahab’s story that you don’t have to be perfect, put-together or complete to be used by God. You simply have to be willing. And when you are willing to place your faith in Jesus, it changes EVERYTHING. He will always be there on the other side to catch you when you choose to jump in after Him.

And so, the first is **1) God’s victory highlights his strengths and our weakness.** It wasn’t Rahab who gave victory to Israel. It wasn’t the spies. God used a prostitute—a woman with a tarnished reputation—to pave the way for Israel’s victory. It was Rahab’s WEAKNESS that highlighted God’s strength.

**2) It is by faith that we obey.** We don’t compromise, even if our friends are, even if other Christians are. We stay true to what God has called us to even if it’s not the “popular” decision. Housing these spies could have gotten Rahab killed. Yet—by faith—she obeyed what she felt God was calling her to do and was saved because of it.

Which leads me to **3) By faith, we experience life to the fullest.** On the other side of the chasm of fear in our lives is a life filled with so much joy, peace, kindness, patience, gentleness and self-control. However, in order to get there, in order to become the person—the man or the woman God intended for us to become—it’s going to require a leap of faith. It’s going to require a daily leap of faith. It’s going to require getting up after getting knocked down and jumping again, knowing—in faith—that GOD IS who He says He is.

**Personal Story:**

*You know, my biggest fear in life is heights…and fast things. So, I hate roller coasters. I hate roller coasters, zip lines, massive hills, anything that I have the potential to be high up and go fast on (that is not enclosed—I’ll ride airplanes), I’m terrified of. And I genuinely believe it all stems from a moment when I was 7 years old, playing basketball in my driveway. I set up a chair in my driveway as I tried my best to emulate Michael Jordan on my 6 foot gorilla goal. And so, I ran—as fast as I could—and in one, smooth motion jumped onto the chair, off the chair, through the air and dunked the basketball. Only, I had so much adrenaline that when I grabbed the rim, my body momentum took me upwards and I flipped upside down and landed on the concrete driveway on my back. Now, I was fine, I didn’t get hurt—thank goodness, but it literally left a scar in me of heights that terrifies me to this day.*

*And so, I’ll never forget when I was in 7th grade going to father/son camp with my dad and two brothers. I was 13 at the time and my brothers were 10 and 6. It was such a fun time and we made so many memories but none bigger than the day I had to face my biggest fear. The second-to-last day in the afternoon was deemed “free time” by our camp director and so we were able to do whatever we wanted. We were up at SpringHill Camp and if you’ve ever been to SpringHill, you know that there is a MASSIVE zip line in the middle of the property that goes over a lake. And so, during free time, my dad—unbeknownst to me—signed us up to go zip line. I’ll never forget the feeling of terror that overcame me when my dad told me. I came up with any excuse I could for why I shouldn’t go, but it didn’t work.*

*We went to the base of the zipline, we were given instructions, given our helmet and harness and made the dreaded hour long walk to the top of the zip line…I’m kidding. It wasn’t really an hour, but it felt like it. And I remember standing in line and watching boy after boy…some 18 years old and some 8 years old—going down this zipline and having the time of their lives. I thought they were crazy.*

*And so, we get to the top and we’re standing there as our instructor tells us to get on top of the box and to click in. At this point, my mouth is dry, my hearts pounding, my knees are knocking and I’m ready to burst into tears. I am SO afraid of jumping off of this ledge. My brother and my dad are cheering me on which is making me feel more embarrassed and so I yell, “SHUT UP!” and they’re like, “well just do it already, then.” Haha, no more mr. nice guy from them.*

*And so, I jump. And I’m pleased to tell you that I made it to the other side alive. But not only that, not only did I survive the zip line. I THRIVED on it. It was SO fun. I ended up riding it 3 more times that day.*

**Landing:**

Why do I share that story? Because there are some of you in the room tonight who are standing on the edge of the trail that God wants you to blaze and you have to make the decision to step out and pave the way. There’s others of you who took that initial jump and maybe slammed dunked it but along the way, you were met with a great amount of pain, pushback or adversity and it’s crippling you to get up and try again.

But, what I want you to know students—lean in—is this: On the other side of your pain is your purpose. On the other side of your regret is your redemption. On the other side of your fear is your future FULFILLED.

Students, I’m telling you when you choose to—IN FAITH—lean into the promise of God, when you choose to—in faith—pave the way, when you choose—in faith—to stay the course—He will blow your mind 100x over in the ways that he can and will use YOU.

You know, we read Rahab’s story and we think it’s just a cool story. We think, “aw, that’s a neat story about a little sinner lady who God used to help his people.” But, it’s so much more than that y’all. It’s GOD—using this imperfect, broken woman to literally BLAZE THE TRAIL for His Son, our Savior…Jesus Christ. What?! Yes! Rahab paved the way AND stayed the course which allowed God to use her in the course of history to bring Jesus to this Earth.

Have you ever read the geneology of Jesus? The Bible tracks all the way to ABRAHAM—who we learned about in week 1. From one trailblazer to another, they are USED in bringing JESUS to this Earth. Matthew chapter 1, verse 5,

*Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab.* Oh, y’all didn’t catch that? *Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab.*

Now, you’re probably wondering, I see a guy named Salmon and a dude named Boaz. What’s the big deal? Here’s the crazy thing, y’all. Boaz was the father of Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse—ah yes, finally, a name we know how to pronounce! That’s not the best part. The best part is that Jesse was the father of David—like KING DAVID! And centuries later—through the line of David—through the LINE of RAHAB—King David’s great grandmother—JESUS CHRIST is born. God didn’t just use Rahab to blaze the trail for the Israelites to conquer Jericho. God used Rahab to blaze the trail for JESUS TO CONQUER THE WORLD! C’mon!!

And he wants to do the same thing through you.

**Closing:**

So tonight, right now, I want you to know that same power can be instilled in you. God doesn’t just want to use you he’s right now—INVITING you—into the greatest story ever told. Scripture says if you believe within your heart and confess with your mouth—if you declare—IN FAITH—that Jesus is LORD; you will be SAVED. And as his child, you will be used to impact and influence this world in ways no one could imagine.

So tonight, I want to give you that opportunity. With every head bowed, every eye closed, if that’s you…if you’re ready to declare—IN FAITH—that God cannot only use you to pave the way but stay the course and change the world, I just want to ask you for 3 seconds of courage. Just 3 seconds of courage. And on the count of 3, I just want you to outwardly proclaim this inward decision you’re making. No one’s looking around, this is just a chance for you and me to celebrate together. So on the count of 3, if that’ you, just raise your hand. 1…God loves you. 2…Your life will never be the same. 3…if that’s you raise your hand. Amazing.

With every head still bowed, if you just lifted your hand, I want you to pray this prayer with me. You can say it silently or out loud, but you just admitted that you believe within your heart now declare with your mouth that you’re ready for Jesus to be the ruler of your life. Just say this, repeat after me, say, “Jesus. I give you my life.” That’s it. Just say, “Jesus. I give you my life.”

*Prayer.*

*Amen.*

Celebrate.