

Heroes & Idols: What's the Difference?

We were made to worship. We were also made to have heroes. Worship is the devotion and praise we give to God alone. A hero is a person whose devotion and praise of God is admirable and serves as an example for us. The challenge is not to fall into idolatry by worshipping a hero in the place of God.

I confess I'm prone to hero worship. When I was two years old it was John Wayne. Then it was the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Since then it has been athletes, musicians, authors, preachers, even off-the-grid, crazy beard, bathe in the river, lumberjack types. Yes, I've got problems, namely, the sin of idolatry. But it's not just me. All people are tempted at times to turn heroes into idols to praise and exalt. Idolatry is any worship of the creature, the created, rather than the creator.

Most of my heroes today have spent their lives in obscurity. The name Robert Leslie means nothing to you, but Robert is one of the most mature Christians I have known. Too often we imagine deeply spiritual people as otherworldly, caught up in mystic visions and ecstatic experiences. Yet, Robert Leslie has never, as far as I know, had a beatific vision, or spoke in the tongues of angels, or anything of the like. Nor has Robert ever gone on a spiritual retreat or conference. Nor has he ever gone on any pilgrimages. He has never lit candles at the waters of Lourdes in France, or sat in the chapels in Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In fact most onlookers would find Robert's life dull. He prefers not to travel beyond ten miles from his home, and to spend most of his waking hours outside doing manual labor.

Robert's sanctuaries, his holy places, are the pastures where he can name every grass, weed, and calf born, the home where he washes his

hands upon coming indoors in the same basin his parents used before him, and above all his garden. Robert works in his garden every day, and God has worked upon Robert every day in much the same way Robert has worked on his garden, slowly, gradually, little bit by little bit.

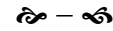
Do not misunderstand me. I am not juxtaposing nature with church. Robert is a man of his local church. He faithfully serves and worships with his brothers and sisters preferring challenging, serious, and even stern sermons. A sermon on hell is always greatly appreciated by him. And Robert is a man of God's Word having particular passages stored in his heart ready to be of use at any time.

The chief reality though of Robert's spiritual life is that it is not a roller coaster of high mountain tops and deep valleys, but of steady plodding, tilling, pruning day in and day out. By the time I met Robert and became his pastor he was already in his eighties. And after spending some time with him it became clear to me that Robert grew to be a man of discernment, peace, and gentleness inch by inch, weed pulled by weed pulled. Robert held babies with a tenderness I'd never before seen from a man and he quieted their cries seemingly with the deep quiet of his own soul. When Robert's wife of over sixty years died he was cut deep and yet he had a peace about him, the peace Paul says in Philippians 4 is beyond all understanding. How? How did Robert become such a man? Well, he would be the first to tell you that, as with a garden, it doesn't happen overnight. It is a long labor of love.

Robert doesn't know of any Christian fashions or trends. He's likely never heard of a "quiet time." He doesn't know what WWJD stands for. He never read A Purpose Driven

Heroes

In this issue we focus on "Heroes" – those men and women of faith who lead, encourage, and inspire us to draw closer to God.



"Growing up my parents were always pushing biographies into my hands, real-to-life tales of heroes - historical and biblical. Biographies built within my heart an expectation that I was meant to do something worthwhile with the life I had waiting before me and evidence, actual evidence, that all sorts of worthy options awaited me."

-Sarah Clarkson

"Anyone who does anything to help a child in his life is a hero to me."

-Fred Rogers

"Oh God, here's my Bible, here's my money, here's me, use me, God"

-Gladys Aylward

"All heroes are shadows of Christ"

-John Piper

"Imitate me as I imitate Christ."

-Apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 11:1

Life. And Robert would, with calm assurance, tell you that you don't need to either. A local church, a Bible, much prayer, discipline, stillness of heart, and faith is all that is required. So, brothers and sisters, let's plod every day. Let's, by God's grace, pull the weeds in our souls one by one as the Spirit reveals them. It's not glamorous, but it is good work, a daily work, a holy work. God meets us and shapes us in the daily, seemingly mundane, joys, duties, and stresses of life. The key is to surrender to his hoe, and be stilled by His own deep quiet.

Robert is a hero of mine. He is the best kind of hero, one who will let you know of his own frailties, display courageous faith, and in it all point you to the one we worship.

-Pastor Matt Peery

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Mt. 5:16)

In tribute to Bill Reiner, a man who let his spiritual light shine

During World War II, Bill was assigned to the naval carrier USS Intrepid. One night a fellow shipmate sat down beside him and witnessed to him. In 1943 on a ship in the South Pacific, Bill came to know Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

After the war he married Bonnie, whose influence helped him grow spiritually. The apostle Paul speaks of helping others to grow spiritually in Colossians 1:9-10, “We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.” Bill’s spiritual growth and his Christian faith were evident in every part of his life.

One of Bill’s many talents was his musical ability which he put to good use. Although he could not read music, he was able to play the saxophone and other horn type instruments. He had a beautiful voice and sang often with his wife Bonnie. He was also the choir director at the church they attended. Another talent that Bill had was his athletic ability. If you happened to brush up against him, you couldn’t miss (or help but be intimidated by!) his muscular frame. He really enjoyed hauling square hay bales with the neighbor boys. I remember one time when one of the boys challenged, “Hey, Bill. Can you throw a bale up to the loft from the barn floor?” Without comment, he heaved the bale up and into the loft in one swift motion. For church league softball, the opposing team would usually walk Bill who was known for his home run hits. (Before World War II, he even played minor league baseball for the St. Louis Browns.) Although he had many talents, Bill never bragged or showboated; he was a truly humble man.

In November of 1951, Bill, an avid deer hunter, returned to hunt the land where he’d grown up - a sparsely populated rural area. It started to snow and Bill kept hunting. After a while, he took down a big deer. Carrying the deer on his back in deep snow, he started the long trip out of the woods. The snow storm quickly intensified and created

white-out conditions. He lost his way but finally came across an old house where he found a very poor family with 11 children. Bill and that family were snowbound for several days, and all they had to eat was the deer he’d carried in. Bill and that family were convinced that God had led him to their house in order to provide food for them. The same God who can feed the Israelites with quail and manna can also feed a large, hungry family in a snowstorm.

God blessed Bill and Bonnie with three children. They faithfully invested in the spiritual and physical well-being of their children and devoted themselves to the wisdom of Proverbs to “train up a child in the way he should go.” They prayed before every meal and they always had a devotional before supper. They were very involved with the church, and he served as the Sunday School superintendent. They sang together for weddings and funerals.

Bill and Bonnie were very much in love and did everything together. Then one morning, tragedy struck. Bonnie went down to the basement of their old farmhouse to do laundry. The pilot light on the gas water heater was out. When she tried to light it, an explosion and fire broke out. Bonnie passed away a few days later - a loss that rippled through the entire community. After the shock of losing his wife and the mother of his three young children, there was time for mourning. (Matthew 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”) It was Bill’s faith in God that carried him through this terrible tragedy. He did not blame God and his commitment to the Lord did not waiver. Bill set a faith example for all who knew him.

After a few years, the Lord led Bill to another Christian woman to marry. He joined her home church and faithfully served the Lord as an ordained deacon, choir director and treasurer. He continued serving the community by singing at weddings and funerals.

Bill truly loved people, and everyone who knew him loved him. He

worked as a post office clerk, and because of his friendly personality, customers always wanted him to wait on them. Often, he would bring strangers home with him for a decent meal. (Believe me, some of them had very questionable character.) He wanted to serve the Lord in any way that he could, and it did not matter to Bill about a person’s social status, politics, education, skin color, gender or age. He treated everybody the same.

His grandchildren remember sitting on his lap and putting their hand next to his hearing aid just to hear the humming noise it would make. Ever patient, he would just smile and enjoy the moment. And, they would tell you Grandpa Reiner could always be counted on to laugh the loudest at cartoons.

The entire community knew Bill as a Christian man who genuinely cared about others. He would tell anyone who would listen about his Savior Jesus. He greeted everyone with a smile and a hug. One day driving home from church, his family even caught him waving at some cattle in the field. They all had a good laugh, and Bill laughed the loudest. Without a doubt, Bill was present in each moment; he spent little time thinking about the past, and he did not worry about the future. He was satisfied with living each moment to the fullest for the Lord.

I was blessed to know Bill from my childhood until he passed away. He often sang the song “I am Satisfied with Jesus.” The essence of that song is that I am satisfied with Jesus, but is Jesus satisfied with me? His life was a living testimony to Christ and as a result many people were led to Christ. I know that the Lord has told him, “Well done, my faithful servant.” Bill has had more Christian influence on me than anyone, and I know others who would say the same. If Bill were alive today, he would not want me to write this article or want the praise. He wanted all praise to go to Jesus.

Bill truly let the light of Jesus shine through him.

Footnote

Judy is Bill’s oldest daughter and she has many of his characteristics. When Judy smiles you can get a glimpse of Bill.

-Pat Dunn

Heroines Among the Heroes

The women of Hebrews 11 & Rahab, the Unlikely Heroine

In Hebrews 11 we are given a list of historical figures who are good examples of how God uses faith in people's lives to accomplish His will. We find that these examples all point to works of faith, fruit of the spirit, not simply internal beliefs. The point the author of Hebrews makes is that faith produces fruit, and that fruit is the accomplishment of God's will as He exercises it through us mortal, fallable humans. This work of faith, and the examples of it, are not limited to men, but among the "Heroes of the Faith" listed in Hebrews 11 are several women. As God intended from the beginning, all of us, male and female, are made in the image of God, and as the apostle Paul said in Galatians 3:28-29, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." With this in mind, let's take a look at the perhaps often-overlooked "Heroines of the Faith" listed in Hebrews 11.

WHAT IS A HERO? - From the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a hero is a person who is admired for great or brave acts or fine qualities. I would add to that definition that it is a person who is willing to act even in the face of human fear and weakness. According to the writer of the book of Hebrews, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Heb 11:1 ESV) With this in mind, these heroes and heroines had assurance and conviction in God's Word and Promise that carried them through difficult times.

LIST OF HEROINES - Interestingly, this list of heroes and heroines is prefaced by ourselves, when the passage says, "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible." (Heb 11:3) By believing and living by the world-view that God is the perfect creator of all that exists,

we are made able by His infinite power to live heroically.

Sarah - Among the list of heroes of the faith, let's highlight the women of faith, some of whom are not even Hebrews themselves. After Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, comes Sarah who, "By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised." (Heb 11:11) Even though Sarah laughed at the prospect of conceiving a child at 90 years old (Gen 18:12), she was faithful and delivered Isaac according to God's promise, recognizing that nothing is too hard for Yahweh to accomplish (v. 14). Is Sarah credited with heroism because she was so great in herself? No! She laughed at God's prospect, yet in spite of that she carried through on God's promise and delivered Isaac, praise be to God.

Jochebed - After mentioning Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, Moses' mother Jochebed is mentioned (though not by name): "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict." (Heb 11:23) She respected the value of human life conferred by God who created mankind in His image, following the law of God rather than the law of man, which in this case went against God's law.

The widow of Zeraphath and the Shunammite woman - There are stories of faithful, "Women [who] received back their dead by resurrection..." (Heb 11:35) The widow of Zarephath upon the resurrection of her son testified to the prophet Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth." (1Ki 17:24) Then there is also the Shunammite woman who helped the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4), and whose son God raised from the dead

through Elisha when she turned to God in her distress. (2 Kings 4:27)

Deborah - Even in mentioning Barak (Heb 11:32), by implication we are referencing the story behind Barak's experience: Trusting in direction from a woman judge, Deborah (Judges 4), and insisting that she be with him in battle even though he would not get the glory for himself (Judges 4:8-9). In this, Deborah was faithful to speak, act, and judge according to God's direction, not by her own wisdom or desire, seeking no power for herself but to honor and praise God.

Rahab - I skipped Rahab (Heb 11:31) because I want to focus on her for the rest of this article. Rahab was not even an Israelite but was likely a Canaanite, and a resident of Jericho, having a house along the wall of the city. (Jos 2:15) When Rahab is mentioned, she is often referred to a "Rahab the prostitute" (Jos 2:1), which highlights her dark background. Before God led Joshua and Israel across the Jordan River and told them to defeat Jericho (Joshua 6:2), why did Joshua send spies into Jericho? Was there any information they gathered that was of value to the move against Jericho? Did anything they learn affect the strategy employed by the Israelis as directed by God? Not in any significant way. The spies were sent by God as a way to test and offer salvation to Rahab and her family. Why? In God's love, wisdom, and mercy He was calling Rahab to a new life to serve His purpose.

While talking to the spies, Rahab made a profound profession of faith in God when she said in Joshua 2:11, "...for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." Of all the people in Jericho, all who heard the same story that Rahab heard of the power of Yahweh, the God of Israel (Jos 2:9-10), she was the only one who responded to who God is, committing herself and her family into God's hand for deliverance as her act of worship (vss. 12, 13). She carefully followed the instructions God gave her by His

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My Heroes of the Faith

When I look back on my life and reflect on those believers who most impacted my walk with Christ, I find that I cannot narrow it down to just one person.

My father became a believer when I was around 3-4 years old. It was a drastic change in our family and we immediately began attending church regularly. My first "hero of the faith" was my beginner Sunday School teacher, Ruth Throne. I will always remember how safe I felt in her Sunday School Class. She always welcomed me with a hug and never raised her voice as she worked with us. Mrs. Throne faithfully taught us how much God loved us and helped us memorize Scriptures, most of which I can still quote today. Coming from a home where yelling and physical abuse was somewhat common, she introduced me to a loving God and gave me a glimpse of how to work with children. To this day, my very favorite age to work with is preschoolers as I know from experience what a profound difference those early years of Sunday School can make in the life of a person.

My second hero of the faith was a deacon in the same church. His name was Howard Jones. Brother Howard was the man who led my dad to Christ. When I was 2 years old, I had a baby brother who died of crib death. My parents did not have the money for a funeral and this local Baptist church stepped in and paid for the funeral. The Sunday after the funeral, this deacon felt led by God to come by and visit my family rather than going to church. That visit changed the direction of my family's life. My dad became a believer and even though everything didn't change overnight in my family and there were still difficulties, it opened up a new world for us. Although I was quite young, I was able to observe the way Brother Howard faithfully disciplined and walked alongside my dad in his new faith.

Another hero of the faith for me, was my mother-in-law. Ken and I began dating when I was 17. From the first time I met his mom, Kathleen, she embraced me and loved me like her own daughter. Watching her faithfully serve as a pastor's wife and mom was a great example for me. She and my father-in-law always welcomed us "home" whenever we needed a listening ear or whenever we needed to get away from

the stresses of life. It was an inspiration for me to have her in my life as I learned the ropes of being a mom and wife.

The last person I would like to mention as a hero of the faith in my life is Ken. We got married when I was 18. I met Ken at his ordination service on July 9, 1978. He stole my heart that day as I listened to him answer the questions during the interrogation. I could tell that he was a Godly, trustworthy man of integrity. As we have walked through 42 years of marriage, he has never wavered in his belief in God and his faithfulness to God. When there was a period where I did question my faith, he consistently reminded me that God is faithful and unchanging.

All of these "heroes" are mere humans, just like you and me. None of them are perfect, just as I am not perfect, but they have all made life changing impacts on my life and I am sure in the lives of others.

May each of us faithfully serve our God in a way that we are a "hero" of the faith to those God puts in our path.

-Shyre McCune

Delores – A Life of Service Rooted in God's Word

As I think of people who have made a deep spiritual impact in my life, many names and faces flood over me. People who have taught and modeled God's grace with a heart of service. Sunday School teachers, pastors, friends, family members and even the saints of history that put pen to paper. So many godly people just doing normal things that God uses to affect others. One such person in our family is Delores Vineyard (Joy's mother). I say, "is" although Delores passed away from a very aggressive cancer in 2007, yet she is still serving and praising the Lord.

Delores lived a life of service, of which I was blessed to experience fifteen years. If a Proverbs 31 wife is possible then she pulled it off. She seemed to effortlessly portray the fruit of the Spirit. Her joyful spirit did not just spring up out of nothing. Her service was rooted in God's Word and done with a heart for others. She was

raised in church and was there whenever the doors were open (of course she was the one many times unlocking them).

Delores had a favorite recliner next to a side table and lamp where her worn Bible would be read every night. Usually after everyone else was asleep, not out of some duty or rule keeping, she just couldn't go to bed without hearing from God in his Word.

I remember her playing the piano at home and everyone singing Southern Gospel favorites after dinner (the same piano is played by my oldest son, and we still gather around it to sing along). Well, I said we sang after dinner, but we were usually so full we could barely breathe. She was a wonderful cook. That was her job, it was also her ministry. She always fixed meals for people in need.

Three weeks after her husband passed away, she made sure to have turkey and all the fixings ready for a few families on Christmas Eve. When asked, she said, "It takes the focus off of my woes." Two weeks before she passed away, she busily cooked meats, casseroles and other dishes and filled up her freezers. She said it was for her kids and grandkids in the days ahead. The day before Delores passed away, there were 30 people in the house at one time, singing, praying, and reading scripture. Even with a large gathering, feeding this many was no problem since we had food already prepared.

People that knew Delores longer would tell me about her. How she would have two kids up front with her and another five or six under the topper of a pickup truck heading to VBS. Others telling how she taught them about Jesus in Sunday School. One older lady that Joy and I know well even said Delores saved her life. We asked, "How so?" She said Delores pushed and prodded her to fellowship with others. When her husband passed, she closed up inside, never leaving her house and entered into a deep depression. She said, "Delores just wouldn't let me waste away".

We had Delores' funeral at church, according to her wishes and she insisted that the gospel would be preached, and it was. We all have people that we admire and want to emulate. People that we want to follow as they follow Christ. For me one of those is Delores Vineyard.

-Toby Parker

Gladys Aylward - "Christians Never Retreat!"

Gladys Aylward was a British Missionary to China. I was blessed to discover her book by Janet and George Bengé, Gladys Aylward The Adventure of a Lifetime, several years ago. I was amazed at the tenacity and perseverance she exhibited as she felt the call on her heart to go to China. She knew no Chinese, knew no person in China and was the wrong age. She was rejected as a missionary by her friends, family and the church, yet she continued because she knew God had called her to serve. She allowed no one or no thing to stand in her way. Gladys stated "...If God has called you to China or any other place and you are sure in your heart, let nothing deter you...remember it is God who has called you and it is the same as when He called Moses or Samuel."

Her journey was loaded with peril. Most of the journey to arrive in China was so dangerous the average person would have fled back home to the comfort of familiarity. Gladys did not flee. She was called by God and that was enough for her!

When Gladys eventually made it to a small village in the mountains of China, the children threw rocks at her! Not a pleasant welcome. Again, she remained and began a work that would span decades. Christ was glorified as Gladys slowly grew to speak the language and to love the people. The Chinese people grew to trust and love her.

So much of Gladys Aylward's life is inspiring to me. She didn't back down when the challenges seemed impossible. On one occasion a Chinese government official called for her to come to a local prison. When she arrived, there was a riot going on inside the prison. The officials asked Gladys, five-foot tall Gladys, to go inside and stop the men from killing each other. She was scared but she went inside, with God as her guide she entered the prison and told the men to "stop it!" They saw her and immediately threw down their weapons! Amazing and only possible because of God! She gave God the glory and God was able to reveal himself to the Chinese people!

Gladys continued to live and work for Christ in the small village and surrounding area for many years until the Japanese invaded China and a war

began. She was able to save hundreds of orphans by walking for over five weeks to safety. The children were all under the age of sixteen and many were very small (four and five years old). She had no food or any comforts, but she had a loving God. They were able to find and beg for the food necessary to make the journey. By God's amazing grace, all made it to safety.

The Japanese placed a bounty for Gladys's head and she still continued to help orphans. She returned to a dangerous area and was able to rescue more orphans. The second trip was exceedingly dangerous but with God, she continued and was able to get more orphans to safety!

Gladys believed that "Christians never retreat". She knew that she had to continue her work. She had to eventually leave China, but continued to help orphans by living and serving God in Taiwan until her passing in 1970. She is buried in Taipei, Taiwan.

Gladys' inspirational life just screams out to live for and love God with everything we have and everything we are! One final quote which says it all, "Oh God, here's my Bible, here's my money, here's me, use me, God". Gladys Aylward is a true heroine of the faith!

-Mary Malone

Christian, Franz Jagerstatter, who refused to swear an oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler. Jagerstatter's disloyalty to Hitler, came from his deep loyalty to Christ. A Hidden Life is beautifully filmed in the Alps, and displays the goodness of home, faith, and family. At times the film is extremely intense as it depicts the physical, psychological and spiritual suffering Jagerstatter experiences as he stands for Christ. The film reminds us that there are many heroes in the faith who we never hear of in this life. Franz Jagerstatter was a normal man with an abnormal willingness to follow Christ when doing so isolated him from nearly everyone else. His faith and his story inspire us to stand for Christ in the face of opposition however personal that opposition may be, and however gut-wrenching such a stand is. A Hidden Life is not a feel good movie. Nor is it for all ages. It is an important movie though, particularly now when so many are giving their hearts to political ideologies instead of Christ. Jagerstatter was a humble saint. May Christ alone be our Lord as He was his.

-Pastor Matt Peery

When Heroes Fall A Cautionary Tale

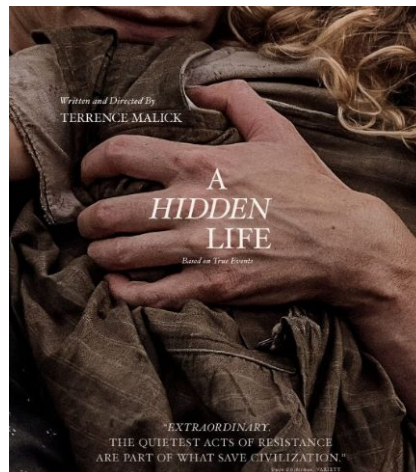
It is tragically a common story. A man or woman of God is used by God in a mighty way. God glorifies Himself through this person. God blesses this person and their service of Him. And then, this same person is found guilty of horrendous sin, shocking so many, damaging people's faith, and causing us to ask, "What happened?"

While tragic, this is nothing new. In recent days it has been the evangelist Ravi Zacharias. But just before him it was mega-church superstar Bill Hybels. And just before him it was the provocative and widely popular preacher Mark Driscoll. This is just in the last few years. Before them it was Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart. And this is not a modern phenomenon. The Puritans burned "witches." Luther's sharp tongue burned more than a few bridges. And before all of them was David.

David's life fits a story line that has become all too common: extremely gifted young man is rapidly elevated to leadership, the man's gifts are used by God in dazzling ways, confidence in God

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Review: "A Hidden Life"



Terrence Malick's films are unlike any others. Watching a film by Malick is to go on a spiritual journey. In his 2019 drama, A Hidden Life, Malick takes his viewers to rural Austria at the outbreak of World War II. The film is based on the true story of Austrian

“When Heroes Fall” (continued from P5)

mutates into arrogance, pride leads to a heinous sin affecting the lives of thousands. For David it was a chain of sins. First, it was not going into battle with his men (2 Sam. 11:1). Then it was his lust for and affair with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:2-4). Then it was having Uriah die in battle (2 Sam. 11:15). When I entered Seminary Mark Driscoll was by far the most listened to, most read, and most talked about preacher by my fellow classmates. His life also fits the storyline of David’s, but his sins were anger, divisiveness, quarreling, tyrannical leadership, and a seemingly complete lack of humility.

Driscoll’s fall hits me in a way that David’s does not. Driscoll is not much older than me, from a difficult family background like me, someone I share a culture with and can personally relate to. He is also someone I can honestly say God has used in my life. So, his fall is disorientating to me. It causes me to ask all kinds of unsettling questions. Was God really working in my life, or was I just duped? Is there something inherently wrong with the theology I thought was so Biblical? Am I more like Driscoll than Jesus, and if so what does that say about me and my ministry?

When a hero falls it rattles us. It can shake us to our core. This has been brought all the more home to me by the Christianity Today’s podcast “The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill”, documenting Driscoll’s ministry in founding Mars Hill church in Seattle, its huge growth, wide-ranging influence, and then sudden crash. Listening to the podcast has been a disturbing experience because Driscoll was, and maybe still is, a brave man of God like David. However, he can also be an absolute jerk, and at times a narcissist, a true Napoleon in the pulpit. In brief, he is a man who by all appearances loves God but who is also messed up.

There is good news here. I believe Driscoll’s fall sheds light on David’s fall and the fall of falls by Adam and Eve, and how our enemy would like us to fall. Driscoll was arrogant. While he had an exalted view

of God he also had an exalted view of himself. This was his downfall, and this is at the core of the downfall of humanity. Genesis 3:5 tells us that Adam and Eve were tempted and then desired “to become like God.” Proverbs 16:18 says, “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.” David, like Driscoll, thought too much of himself. The songs praising him for slaying his tens of thousands had gone to his head. God’s blessings conflated his own ego. This is what conceit, a haughty spirit, is. It is to be puffed up with yourself for what God has done.

So, I beg you to do two things. First, have a realistic estimation of me as a person. Do not elevate me too highly. Know that I am a selfish, short-tempered scoundrel saved by and being transformed by God’s grace. I love God, but like all of us, I am still a bit of a mess. Second, pray that I stay humble. God has regard for the lowly. He favors the humble giving them grace. But God opposes the proud bringing them down. Pray the gospel stays sweet to me, that I, a great sinner, am saved by God’s greater grace. (Ps. 138:6; Prov. 3:34, 29:23; Matt. 23:12; Luke 1:52; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5)

-Pastor Matt Peery

“Heroines-Rahab” (continued from P3)

messengers, hanging a red ribbon out her window as a symbol of her faith, foreshadowing salvation through faith by the blood of Jesus. (Jos 2:18-21) Because of Rahab’s faith, and action upon that faith in protecting and helping God’s messengers, while Jericho and its inhabitants were dedicated to destruction, only Rahab and her family were spared (Jos 6:17). “But Rahab the prostitute and her father’s household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.” (Jos 6:25) The faith that God placed in her deeply impacted the history of the world, and the salvation of mankind through Jesus. Why did Rahab’s life

have so much impact? As James points out in James 2:25, “And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?” Her actions not only aided Israel in accomplishing what God sent them to do, she was also the ancestor of King David, and ultimately ancestor of Jesus! As we see in the genealogy recorded by Matthew in chapter 1, verses 5 & 6, “...and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.” This faith could not have been her own, but must have been a gift from God. By her faith, God turned Rahab from a life that we would judge as one of immorality and destruction to something wonderful!

What made Rahab such a heroine?

- 1) She turned her heart to the great creator God Yahweh
- 2) She acknowledged God’s supremacy with her lips
- 3) She trusted God for His mercy
- 4) She sought deliverance by God for not only herself, but for others
- 5) She followed God’s instruction without hesitation
- 6) God saved her and her family, and even blessed her to be the wife of a prominent Israelite

What these heroines and Rahab believed, and more importantly who they knew, changed who they were and what they did. It’s not who we were before we knew Jesus, but who we are NOW in Christ that makes a difference, as evidenced in our actions of faith. Why are these women of faith heroines to me? Because I see Jesus living in them. Above all, God is my hero, and when He works through whomever He chooses, all the credit goes to God. Women of God, sisters in Christ, you are my Heroines of the Faith as you live out the faith of our Lord and Savior Jesus. Praise God that He is not a respecter of persons, but has raised up each one of us, men and women, to be His children sharing equally in His Glory in His Kingdom forever!

- Joe Council