I am not a worldly-wise traveler, as this story will reveal in short order. But I can be a little bold.

This last February, I had the great joy of going to Hawaii. My first time and it was SO GOOD. But I learned getting to Hawaii can be a bit tricky, with a few connecting flights,

depending on where you start from.

 We landed at the Denver airport, to catch a flight to San Francisco, which would take me to that magical island. Taxied the runway, ramp lowered, seatbelt sign came off, and then that massive people jam happened.

You know, EVERYONE trying to stand in the isle and grabbing their stuff from overhead compartments.

When I hear a woman, a bit ahead of me in the people jam, who was very agitated and anxious. She began talking loudly, urgently, over all the heads ahead of her and over all the noise; desperately trying to explain to the staff of her need for help.

She had one of those very scary short layovers, maybe 20 minutes to get off the plane, across the airport, to her next gate. Everyone’s greatest fear, right?

After she shared, I noticed no one budged, no one made room for her to get off quicker. And I got a little miffed, like how rude. And then I did something that totally surprised me and maybe others, I raised my voice and said something like,

**“Hey, make room for woman needing to get through to her next gate/connecting flight!”**

I was surprised by my outburst. Surprised by how much I wanted to help her.

The poor woman dashed off in a panic, but caught a ride on one of those security carts. Poor thing!

I was caught up in the flow of a slow disembarking. Finally able to get to a spot to wait for my phone to update. I had no cares in the world because I am on vacation.

Peacefully watching my phone get wifi, for my airline app to update, to see my next gate and layover time. Information loaded.

Wait! NO!

I discovered I was on the same flight at that other woman! And the race was on! Running across the Denver airport with less than 15 minutes to get to my gate, twice as crazy as that other woman.

Thankfully, I slid right into the moving line, just as they were boarding my section of the plane.

Not really a seasoned traveler. But I had been a bit bold for that other woman.

Sometimes we need to be bold in this world. Fortune favors the bold! But boldness is an absolute necessity when serving God and God’s purposes.

Boldness is a key theme in the book of Joshua as well as a big theme of Rahab’s story.

In the chapter right before this one, the first chapter of Joshua, in verse 6, God commands Joshua to be bold. God said, **“Be strong and courageous…!”** Very next verse**, “Be strong and very courageous…!**

And then in verse 9 God repeated it, **“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”**

Five times in four verses, God emphasizes being bold. God wants us to be bold.

Biblically, boldness is not an individual attribute or act born from character strength. That would be a worldly view of boldness more along the lines of the heroes of the Marvel world.

Boldness that is of the flesh, puff us up. We get a big head. Walk around like this…(hands on hips), our capes flowing out dramatically behind us.

But God-empowered boldness, is different. When God helps us be bold for God’s purposes, we are NOT strutting around with hands on hips. Instead, we are gentle with others, and humble.

Boldness does require effort on our part, but our strength of faith comes from WHO God is and not from who we are. That is probably the most important sentence of this whole sermon.

God had been trying to teach the Israelites this for some time. God is saying…be bold, because I am strong. Be bold because I have your back!

Be bold in your faith and trust in me, because I will help you overcome the difficulty! I will save you.

When have we been bold as a church in our ministry efforts, for the sake of others? Tell me more. In what ways is God calling us to follow in the footsteps of Rahab, to stir up our boldness for God’s work? Let’s dream together!

You have been sharing your stories with me, and it has been so helpful. Through that I am getting a clearer picture of how hard the Pandemic hit this church.

We are still reeling a bit from how difficult that experience was for us here. Very understandable.

But dear friends, we are going to need to move forward. And we are going to need bold faith to do it. Making this is a message for all of us, for each one of us.

We are going to need to be bold to pull together more fully, bold faith to hear how God is calling us to lean into our futures with excitement and hope. Be bold!

This story of Rahab is a wonderful example of boldness and bold faith. We have a Biblical example to encourage us as we grow in boldness, boldly believing God has good plans for us.

This story in chapter 2 begins with Joshua’s bold initiative. God assured Joshua and the Israelites that God would give them the Promise Land, the land of the Canaanites. Joshua believed God and sent two spies on a recon mission before they went to battle.

In verses 2 and 3, we see that the king of Jericho learns of the spies arrival and sends soldiers to boldly demands Rahab to give up those spies.

Rahab’s response in the next three verses is epic! First, she takes bold action and hides the spies. Putting her life and the life of her family in danger.

Then she engages is this amazingly bold re-direct of the King’s men. She lies about knowing where these spies are. And then she sends the soldiers on a wild goose chase. That we as the readers and listeners love and thoroughly enjoy! Robin Hood moment.

And then in verses 8 through 12, the main part of this story of Rahab, we hear her bold and faith-filled declaration.

She has heard of their God. She is impressed with their god’s power over nature, defeating bigger armies and mighty acts of deliverance. She believes their God’s will win.

She definitively, boldly declares, **“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. 10We have heard how the Lord 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. 11When 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 sees that their God has caused fear to consume her people. Their hearts were melting and they are demoralized.

Rahab recounts how their God had dried up the Red Sea reminding us of God’s plagues, great deliverance in the Passover, and being saved from the Pharoah and the mighty Egyptians.

And Sihon and Og (who were a tribe of giants), were two strategic buffering countries for the Canaanites, east side of the Jordan, with significant armies and had alliances with Canaan. And they had been completely ruined!

And then comes Rahab’s shinning moment, in hiding them. Now she had leverage to be bold, probably equal parts bold and desperate.

In verses 12 and 13, she believed her town was going to be razed to the ground. Up to this point, God had asked his people to completely destroy the enemy…to leave no thing alive. A scorched-earth policy…no man, woman, child or beast would be allowed to live.

So, she askes the spies to promise to protect her and her family from certain destruction and death. In fact, she makes them swear by their God, to show kindness and save her family and the families of her siblings.

And in the last verse, the spies boldly promise her, **“Our lives for your lives!”**

Did you notice how everyone is being bold in this story? Joshua is being bold, the king’s soldiers and the spies are being bold.

But it’s Rahab’s boldness that stands out in such stark contrast. She is our hero of the faith because she had the most to lose.

A woman in a patriarchal culture, outside the norms of what a woman was supposed to be. Not a part of the Hebrew faith. She and her family were the most vulnerable, the most desperate and therefore she was the most bold!

And God admired her bold faith! She boldly advocates for and hides the spies and then asks for their help in a bold and desperate move to survive. She had faith and took a huge risk! And God was very pleased.

In fact, God was so pleased by Rahab’s bold faith, she was ingrafted into Jesus’ lineage in Matthew chapter 1. Only four women mentioned by name: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Mary.

Rahab’s addition into God’s great story of redemption and specifically into the lineage of Jesus, clearly emphasizes how much God valued Rahab’s bold faith and how much God endorsed and honored her in all of history.

Bold faith. She had it and God honored her for it.

Bold faith. We need it.

As we continue to move forward as a church, letting go of all the Pandemic did to us. Yes, it was real and very hard.

And I believe the Lord, who is the author and perfector of our faith, I believe Jesus is writing a new chapter in our faith journey.

This sermon series is not a coincidence. God wants us to remember Rahab and in bold faith, take action that proves we trust God.

I believe the Lord is working in our midst, writing a new chapter. A new chapter in which the ink in his pen is our bold faith. And the sentences he writes are about our bold faith and actions.

Jesus will write how Buffalo United Methodist Church was encouraged by Rahab’s bold faith and how they became heroes of the faith too.

Like Rahab, we were bold and very courageous!

Can I get an amen? AMEN!

**Time of Reflection**

Now dear friends, the sermon is NOT done.

The sermon is to BE done.

As we reflect on Rahab’s bold faith, where might we be feeling stirred by God’s Spirit to respond with bold faith? Maybe bold in prayer, maybe bold in service, maybe bold in donating to the Food Shelf?

In the next few moments, let’s listen for God’s still small voice and God’s guidance.