

THE FAMILY THAT CAME BACK TO GOD GENESIS 35

Text:

Introduction:

Jacob I suppose is one of the Bibles' most interesting characters written about. He was the son of Isaac and the brother of Esau. Any attempt to describe Jacob almost defies imagination. He was a schemer! He was a supplanter! In fact, Jacob means "supplanter" or "one who takes the place of another." He took the place of Esau. He connived with his father-in-law.

Jacob's family was among the most famous of all the patriarchal families. In fact his sons make up the twelve tribes of Israel. His family not only made history, but also provided the materials for prophecy. Jacob was an unusual man who had an unusual mission in life.

Jacob's family did some things that all families need to do. I call this family "The family who came back to God." God had said, 'Go back to Bethel.' You don't go back to some place unless you have left that place. It is a good thing for families to get right with God. In order

for a family to get right with God, three things are necessary.

1. Certain things have to be given up.
2. You have to be in a certain place.
3. Certain things have to be done.

Let's observe some things that Jacob's family did on their way back to God and back to the house of worship.

1. Jacob Did Away With Idols

(Gen 35:1-2 KJV) "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. {2} Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:"

A. An idol is anything that takes God's place.

1. Anything becomes an idol that takes your devotion, your affection, your love that should be given to God.

(Exo 20:1-6 KJV) "And God spake all these words, saying, {2} I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. {3} Thou shalt have no other gods before me. {4} Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: {5} Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; {6} And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

B. There are many idols that families are worshipping today.

1. Pleasure
2. Family
3. Self

C. The first thing that Jacob's family did was to get rid of all the idols.

D. The first thing that we must do in coming back to God is to get rid of all idols.

2. Jacob Changes His Lifestyle

(Gen 35:2 KJV) "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:"

A. Christians should look, live and love like Christians.

B. Jacob had to call for separation.

1. He wanted them to look right, walk right, live right, and talk right.

C. We to be separated.

1. If we are going to change the world, or reach the world, we are going to have to shine like lights and shake like salt.

2. If you and I are not changing the world, then the world is changing us.

3. Jacob Remembered What God Had Done

(Gen 35:3 KJV) "And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered

me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."

A. Here we see God's deliverance and God's presence.

1. God delivered Jacob when he was distressed.

2. God was with him when he was headed away from his brother Esau.

B. How soon we forget what God has done for us.

1. We need never forget all the things that God has done.

(Psa 103:1-2 KJV) " Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. {2} Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:"

2. The Bible warns of forgetting his blessings.

(Deu 8:11-20 KJV) "Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: {12} Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; {13}

And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; {14} Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; {15} Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; {16} Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; {17} And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. {18} But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. {19} And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. {20} As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God."

3. Jacob Returned To God and the Altar

A. Jacob built an altar and called it Bethel.

1. Bethel means "house of God."

B. But God changed the name to El-Bethel.

2. El-Bethel means “the God of the house of God.

C. It is easy to get caught up in the traditions and trappings of the church and forget who God is.

(2 Tim 3:5 KJV) "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

1. The focus must be on God, not just the house of God

2. The focus must be on the God of holiness, purity, and righteousness.

3. The focus must be on the God who saves, sanctifies, and secures.

4. The focus must be on God who gives us light, life, love, liberty, and power.

5. It must be on the God of the valley as well as the God of the mountain.

Close:

All of our families should follow the example that Jacob followed in getting back to the foundations of faith.

A poet said,

Turn back to where you left Him,
And you will find Him there.
He is waiting by your bedside,
Where you used to kneel in prayer.
He is standing in the chapel,
By that long-abandoned pew.
You are older, wiser, broken;
You're tired of self, 'tis true.
So return to where you left Him:
He's waiting there for you.

Return to Bethel, to the God of the house of God, and to the altar of prayer. Put away the idols in your life. Change your life style. Remember what God has done for you!