

BY FAITH JACOB BLESSED THE SONS OF JOSEPH HEBREWS 11:21

Text: Hebrews 11:21

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²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.

Introduction:

As we stated last week, at times we ask why God would include an individual like Jacob in this list of individuals with great faith.

As we look at these that we would consider patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I think it's interesting to consider a few facts about these individuals.

It's said of Abraham in 4 different places the Abram or Abraham built an altar.

Genesis 12:7

⁷ And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

Genesis 12:8

⁸ And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and

called upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis 13:8

⁸ And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren.

Genesis 22:9

⁹ And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

God greatly blessed the life of Abraham, with great possessions and live stock.

Genesis 13:1-4

¹ And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. ² And Abram *was* very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. ³ And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; ⁴ Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

Isaac, Abraham's son however is only recorded of building one altar.

Genesis 26:25

²⁵ And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

It seems the emphasis is changing. A lack of worship and more concerned about taking care of the blessings that God had provided.

That brings us now to Jacob. What is Jacob known for? Jacob is not known for the altars he built but rather the well that he built.

John 4:5-12

⁵ Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour. ⁷ There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. ⁸ (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) ⁹ Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. ¹¹ The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? ¹² Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Jacob's early days was lied for himself. He was interested only in what benefited him.

He made his brother sell his birthright for a bowl of pottage.

He deceived his father in giving him the blessing that usually was given to the eldest.

He was interested in building a well to keep the things that he thought was important.

Jacob was a man who learned but was slow in doing so that what is most important is not what we accumulate, but rather our fellowship with God.

Notice:

1. JACOB'S DECEIT (GENESIS 27)

- A. He was deceptive about his person (vs. 19, 21-22)
- B. He was deceptive about his project (vs. 19)
- C. He was deceptive about his provisions (vs. 20)

2. JACOB'S DEPARTURE (GENESIS 27:41-46)

Genesis 27:41-46

⁴¹ And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. ⁴² And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, *purposing* to kill thee. ⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; ⁴⁴ And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; ⁴⁵ Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and

he forget *that* which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? ⁴⁶ And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these *which are* of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

A. His Directions (Gen 27:43-45; Gen 28:1-5)

Genesis 27:43-45

⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; ⁴⁴ And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; ⁴⁵ Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget *that* which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

Genesis 28:1-5

¹ And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. ² Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. ³ And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; ⁴ And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. ⁵ And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

B. His Dream (Gen 28:10-17)

Genesis 28:10-17

¹⁰ And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

¹¹ And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night,

because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put *them for* his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; ¹⁴ And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵ And, behold, I *am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of. ¹⁶ And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew *it* not. ¹⁷ And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful *is* this place! this *is* none other but the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven.

C. His Deal (Gen 28:20-22)

Genesis 28:20-22

²⁰ And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, ²¹ So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: ²² And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

3. JACOB'S DISCOVERY (GENESIS 32:24-32)

A. Jacob was alone (24a)

Genesis 32:24

²⁴ And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

Jacob was facing a serious time of testing. He had left his home behind and he was about to face a brother he had wronged many years earlier. At this juncture in his life, he needed to seek counsel from the Lord.

As he entered this time of prayer, Jacob found himself very much alone.

All he had was gone, family, servants, livestock, wealth, everything. Jacob was forced to face God all alone.

People fear this kind of loneliness! People structure their time to be as full as possible. The reason is when we are alone and unoccupied, then we have to come face to face with God.

People fear that kind of intimacy with the Lord! Yet, the very thing they fear is the very thing they need the most in their lives.

When we are busy, we can occupy the heart and the mind. When we are alone and still, it is easier for us to hear the Lord when He is speaking.

If we Christians are going to be strong in the Lord, then we must find time to be alone with God.

B. Jacob was alive (vs. 24b-25a)

Genesis 32:24-25

²⁴ And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. ²⁵ And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

As Jacob prayed that night, he was privileged to be in a place where the Lord decided to manifest Himself in a personal manner.

He allowed Jacob to fight to bring Jacob to the place where he was willing to see himself as he truly was.

At this point in time, Jacob represents the fleshy nature of man. He represents our old, sinful nature that is constantly fighting against the Lord. These natures that we are born with are stubborn, unyielding, fighting and self-sufficient. The old nature of man is everything the saint of God should not be.

The fact is, many of us are just like Jacob! We fight the Lord at every turn in our lives. God will tell us something is wrong and the old nature rebels against the Lord's truth. God will tell us something is right and our flesh will rise up in defiance.

C. Jacob was altered (Gen 32:25-32)

Genesis 32:25-32

²⁵ And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. ²⁷ And he said unto him, What *is* thy name? And he said, Jacob. ²⁸ And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. ²⁹ And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore *is* it *that* thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. ³⁰ And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. ³¹ And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. ³² Therefore the children of Israel eat not *of* the sinew which shrank, which *is* upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

This one night in the life of Jacob was the culmination of 20 years of patient activity by the Lord.

We want instant everything today. Instant coffee, instant tea, instant grits, instant gratification, instant everything! Yet there is one thing for sure: Instant holiness is not available to anyone! It is always the result of prayer, sacrifice and self-denial. It seems that God always takes His time in bringing us to spiritual maturity. He gently and patiently leads us along and brings us to the place where we can be filled and used for His glory.

1. He was a broken man (vs. 25-27)

Genesis 32:25-27

²⁵ And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. ²⁷ And he said unto him, What *is* thy name? And he said, Jacob.

- He was clinging

Jacob is no longer fighting, he is merely holding on. If we insist on fighting the Lord and His attempts at growing us, He will eventually bring us to the place where all the fight is gone.

- He was confessing

The angels demands to know Jacob's name. He's forced to admit just who he is.

A trickster, a supplanter, a cheat, a deceiver or one who takes you by the heel.

Jacob had to come to the place of seeing himself as he really was before the Lord could use him.

2. He was a blessed man (vs. 28-30)

Genesis 32:28-30

²⁸ And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. ²⁹ And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore *is* it *that* thou dost

ask after my name? And he blessed him there. ³⁰ And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

The Jacob who left Canaan was capable of deceiving his brother, lying to his blind father, of cheating a crooked uncle. But, the man who returns is a man with a new nature. No more Jacob the "Trickster", but Israel a "Prince with God."

God's purpose in breaking us is always the same. He does it so that He can make us again.

Jeremiah 18:4

⁴ And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*.

3. He was a branded man (vs. 31-32)

Genesis 32:31-32

³¹ And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. ³² Therefore the children of Israel eat not *of* the sinew which shrank, which *is* upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

The limp! Everywhere Jacob went after that day, he carried the mark of God upon his body.

Every step he took reminded him and everyone around him that he was the Lord's and the Lord had touched him in a very personal manner.

The believer is no different.

Matthew 5:16

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The walk of the believer ought to be different.

When a man is walking with the Lord, he will always be out of step with the world.

4. JACOB'S DECLARATION (GENESIS 48)

A. He reflected on the past

He remembered three high places that stood out on the landscape of his past.

1. He remembered a spot (vs. 3-4)

Genesis 48:3-4

³ And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, ⁴ And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee *for* an everlasting possession.

Jacob remembered a night when he met God, He remembered and encounter at a place called Bethel (Gen 28).

Jacob remembered what happened that night. He remembered the covenant the Lord made with him. He remembered the promises God gave to him. Even as he was dying, Jacob remembered the place and the time when he met God.

2. He remembered a spouse

Jacob remembered the greatest love and the greatest heartbreak of his life. He thought of his beloved wife Rachel. He remembered how he felt when he saw her. He remembered their love. He remembered how he had to work fourteen years just to have her as his wife. He remembered all the happy years they shared together. He also remembered how she died. He remembered the love and he remembered the loss. Jacob saw his Rachel as the highpoint of his earthly existence. She has been dead for two decades, but Jacob has never forgotten her! As he looked at Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim standing before him, he was reminded of his Rachel and of her legacy.

It's good for us to take a moment to think of all the important people God placed in your life. Think of how they shaped you into the person you are today. Remember them and take a moment to thank God for your heritage and for the people He so graciously placed in your life.

3. He remembers a Spirit (vs. 16)

Genesis 48:16

¹⁶The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

As Jacob blesses Joseph's sons, he remembers an Angel. He remembers a divine encounter with God that forever changed his life (Gen 32).

Jacob wrestled with the Lord one night and when the sun rose on the new day, he walked different for the rest of his life.

He remembers the day that Jacob became Israel.

Jacob remembers the amazing, life-changing work of God His life.

B. He reflected on providence

1. He remembered God's providence (vs. 3, 11, 21)

Genesis 48:3

³And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,

Genesis 48:11

¹¹And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

Genesis 48:21

²¹ And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

2. He remembered God's provisions (vs. 15)

Genesis 48:15

¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

C. He reflected on the present

D. He reflected on the promises

1. Their helper (vs. 21) – God will be with you

Genesis 48:21

²¹ And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

2. Their hope (vs. 21) – God will bring you again unto the land of your fathers

Close:

Jacob was slow in learning, but did learn, and is recorded in Hebrews 11:21 as a man who by faith blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped.

Hebrews 11:21

²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.