

Friday, February 24, 2017

Deceitfully

Genesis 33-34

Because their sister Dinah had been defiled, Jacob's sons replied deceitfully as they spoke to Shechem and his father Hamor.

Genesis 34:13

This text reveals that the sons learned from the father. As Jacob had solved problems through deception, so will his sons. His sons carry it much further, moving into violent measures. The sin escalates in the new generation. They rationalize their behavior as righteous judgment against what has happened to their sister. Shechem has treated Dinah as a prostitute in her brothers' eyes, though Shechem said he loved her. They use circumcision as a tool for destruction. That which was intended to be a sacred sign was manipulated for deceitful purposes. When the destruction was complete, the women and children were brought into Jacob's camp. What do you think they would have thought of Jacob's God after this type of deceit? In what ways am I tempted to act deceitfully. Are there any ways that I manipulate the gifts of God for my own purpose and vindication? God used the actions of Simeon and Levi to keep Israel pure, but that does not justify the measures. I must be very careful not to manipulate the truth of God in a way that would keep people from finding God!

Dear God, please help me be very careful not to use You or the knowledge You have given me about You as a weapon. Help me turn to You in all situations and trust in You as You lead and guide me in how to be a witness even in very difficult situations. Amen.

Saturday, February 25, 2017

Prepare

Genesis 35-36

So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone."

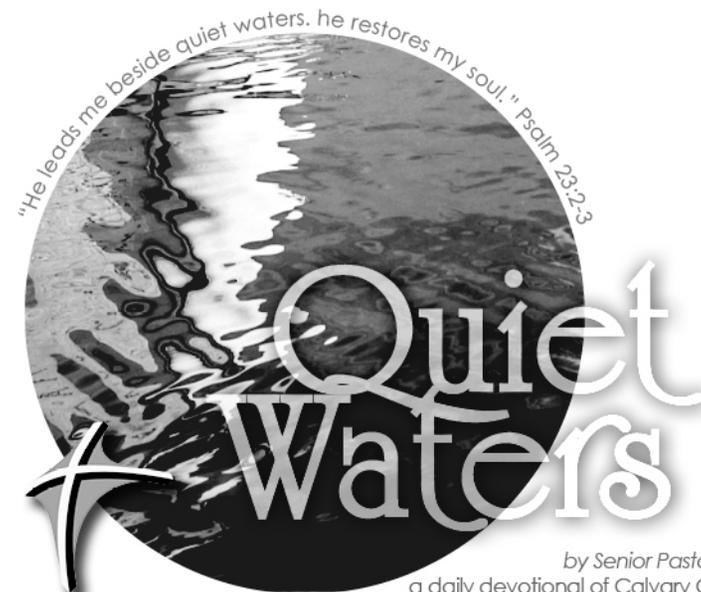
Genesis 35:2-3

This is how to prepare a heart to worship God. Jacob will name the place El Bethel, which means "God of the house of God." At first, he had seen the place as the house of God, now he sees and knows the God of the place. He is learning to worship differently and he is leading his family to worship differently. How will I prepare myself for worship this weekend? I will go to church—that which we designate as the house of the Lord—because of the times we have met Him there in mighty ways, but am I preparing myself to meet the God of the church? Am I going for what is in it for me or what I can bring to Him? I want to prepare myself inside and out to come and worship the Lord this weekend and every weekend.

Dear Lord, help me cleanse myself in preparation to come into Your house this weekend. Help me not take it lightly. Help me remember the times You have met me there and have changed my life. Stir in my heart great excitement to throw off everything that would hinder me from pure adoration of You with my brothers and sisters who are doing the same! Be magnified in me. Amen.

February 20 - 25, 2017

Note: During Pastor Chuck's sabbatical, we will revisit the Genesis and Exodus editions of Quiet Waters, resuming with Song of Songs upon his return.



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, February 20, 2017

Despised

Genesis 25-26

So Esau despised his birthright.

Genesis 25:34b

There was a birthright and a blessing that went to the firstborn son. While every son could receive a blessing, only the firstborn received the birthright. This was a double share of the inheritance. The original audience would react to this statement with horror, because of the deep-seated value of a birthright. It is not just about the money. It is much more. This sentence reveals that Esau valued the birthright at less than a bowl of stew. It is possible that he really was that hungry, which would cause him to believe that if he was dead, it would do him no good. But the bottom line is that he despised it. The text leaves us to wonder whether he even looked back. I can jump to all sorts of conclusions here but, as I look, I see that Esau relinquished his birthright with disdain because he devalued it. I need to think here about how I view what has been given to me. Do I, in any way, disdain that which is of great intrinsic value? I have been redeemed. I have an eternal inheritance that can never spoil or fade. Is there any way that my actions show that I place a greater value on temporary things than I do on that great inheritance? Is there any way that I despise my salvation?

Dear Lord, even as I consider that question, I know there are ways that I do. Please forgive me for the times that I set temporary gratification above that which has been secured for me. Amen.

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Aware

Genesis 27-28

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place and I was not aware of it."

Genesis 28:16

Jacob comes to the place that he will name the Bethel, meaning "the house of God." Until God revealed Himself and His plan, Jacob was unaware that God was there. God is preserving His covenant to Abraham. Since Jacob received the blessing as well as the birthright, God is renewing the covenant with Jacob. It is the promise of the land and descendants. God promises that He will bring Jacob back to this land. It is the land of promise—the Promised Land that will be and is so important to the fulfillment of the promise of God for the nation of Israel. Jacob is moved and excited by this promise. It is Jacob's first theophany and it has an impact. I must remember that God is in me, in the Person of the Holy Spirit. God indwells me. He is in this place—me! Isaiah 57:15 tells me that God chooses to live not only in highest heaven, but also in the heart of a person who is broken before Him. Jacob is so excited when he becomes aware that God is in that place. How much more excited should I be to realize that God is in me? Is there any way in which I am unaware of the presence of God? How does it keep me from living out my life fully committed to Him?

Dear Lord, remind me often that because of Your salvation through Jesus Christ in my life, You are in me. Help me be constantly and fully aware of Your presence. Because of the power of Your presence, let me live in Your truth. Amen.

Wednesday, February 22, 2017

Jealous

Genesis 29-30

When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, "Give me children or I'll die!"

Genesis 30:1

This seems a bit dramatic. But then again, drama is what we see in these chapters of the Bible. It is the drama of a dysfunctional family. There is competition and jealousy and envy and negotiating and anger and positioning and bargaining. It is hard to find love and truth in the story. Rachel gets jealous and looks to Jacob to solve her problem. It would seem from the text that it was not for lack of trying that Rachel had not conceived. Jacob tells her that he is not the one who will open her womb—God is. It appears that Rachel went to every possible solution except God for what she wanted. And what she wanted became her idol. She had the love of Jacob—but that wasn't enough. She wanted sons. Even when she was given one, the name she gave him indicated that one would not be enough (30:24). She was jealous of Leah. Leah had what she longed for. Rachel had what Leah longed for—the love of Jacob. Both women were unhappy because they had not learned to be satisfied with what they had. Jealousy is ugly and makes me do ugly things. I must learn to be very content with what God has chosen to provide for me and celebrate with others for what He has chosen to provide for them.

Lord, help me be satisfied with Your provision. Please keep me from jealousy. Keep me from the mean spirit that jealousy raises up in me. Amen.

Thursday, February 23, 2017

Struggled

Genesis 31-32

Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."

Genesis 32:28

The test for today includes a great turning in Jacob's life and an establishment of the name of a nation. Jacob has struggled with God, not merely physically but spiritually as well. As we see in the account, all the angel needed to do was touch Jacob and he was instantly wounded. Jacob is alone and concerned about what waits for him when he returns home. He didn't leave on the best terms. This night would signify a change in the character of Jacob that would be pronounced through the changing of a name. He wants assurance that God is with him as he returns to see Esau. He perseveres in the struggle and relents to God's control. I can learn from this. I can see my self-sufficiency as a struggle against recognizing the sovereignty of God in my life. I wrestle with God, not wanting to have my will fully submitted to Him. I wrestle, but I wonder if my wrestling isn't more with my self. I long to put my self to death so that I may live for Christ (Galatians 2:20). When uncertain moments and temptations come my way, I would do well to remember that I overcome when I relent and allow God to be in control. It is there that I find peace and purpose—living out my life in the new name God has for me.

Dear LORD, please help me overcome through Your power and presence in my life. Help me stop struggling against Your sweet control of my life. Amen.