

Friday, February 16, 2018

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.

February 12 - 17, 2018

Saturday, February 17, 2018

Aware

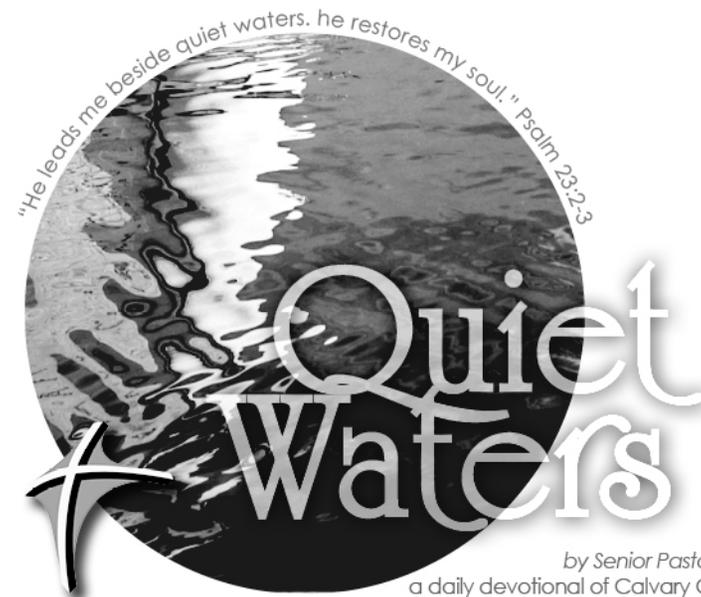
Genesis 27-28

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 "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.



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

Monday, February 12, 2018

Interceded

Genesis 17-18

The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said, "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"
Genesis 18:22

I have tried repeatedly to imagine this scene. The LORD (a pre-incarnate visit from Jesus) is engaged with Abraham in a special way. Abraham has just finished serving the LORD—literally! He has served Him a meal and has had a time of sweet fellowship with Him and now, they enter into a face-to-face conversation. It is a discussion that allows Abraham to know God even more. Abraham is talking to God in the interest of others. This is intercessory prayer. It is mediating for others. It is an example for me. Abraham could have been ambivalent toward a city that had become defiled beyond hope. He could have stood in judgment and told God that it was about time the city was destroyed; but instead, he interceded. He was not asking God to change His mind; rather, he was asking God to act according to His changeless nature. God assured him that He was. I want to be an intercessor. I long to pray for those who seem most lost—even those with whom I may be at odds. As I understand that God must judge the wicked, I need to plead for them. I also need to pray for the righteous. I long to be in intimate conversation with my LORD, asking Him to have my heart align with His.

Lord, help me become an intercessor. Help me search Your heart and have my heart align fully with Yours. Please help me plead for others as I learn to see each person as You do—one of Your special creations. Amen.

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Merciful

Genesis 19-20

When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them.
Genesis 19:16

The account of Lot and his family causes me to consider the mercy of God. Here is a man who apparently had become so settled in a city of wickedness that it had distorted his response to God's love. It had also impacted his family in a very negative way. So much so that it caused his wife to look back and die and his daughters to be moved to improper relations with him. What was it about Lot that caused God to act in mercy? I think we find the answer in Genesis 19:29. God remembered Abraham. Abraham had interceded for Lot and God responded to Abraham's prayers. He brought Lot out of the catastrophe, even though, apparently, Lot was unaware. I am moved to consider the people I know who are standing in opposition to God—people who claim the name of Jesus and yet are making choices contrary to His will. They stand in pride, which places them in opposition to God. How do I pray for them? I need to pray that God will show them His mercy, drawing them to repentance. And then, I need to keep myself pure in this generation. I must see if, in any way, I would need God to drag me away from the world.

Dear LORD, please help me see the danger of living in a world that is moving rapidly away from You. Keep me holy. Help me see Your will and follow it! Thank You for the times You dragged me away from those things in my life that were opposed to You. Amen.

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Covenant

Genesis 21-22

Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." and the two of them went on together.
Genesis 22:8.

God will provide. Many times, as I read this account, I place myself into the story and try to imagine how Isaac, or Abraham, or even Sarah must have felt. But what about God. YAHWEH-JIREH: The LORD will provide. In this account, God is quite certainly making it clear that He will provide the sacrifice for Abraham that would look forward to Christ. Of course, as I look back on this account and the account of the cross, I see that I can say with Abraham to my son, "God himself will provide the lamb for the offering, my son." While in this case it was a ram, eventually it would be the Lamb of God, none other than the only beloved Son of God. While a substitute was provided for Abraham, there was not a substitute for our Father in Heaven. Only the sacrifice of His own Son could pay the penalty my sin earned. While Abraham and Isaac were relieved, the Father knew what the future would hold for Him and His Son. And so, I thank God that He is Yahweh-Jireh and that He has provided the sacrifice of His Son to pay the penalty for my sin.

Dear God, thank You for providing the sacrifice for my sin. I do not deserve, nor have I earned this in any way, and yet, You provide. You demonstrate Your love through Your provision. Thank You. Let me never take it for granted and please, make me bold to proclaim that Your provision is available for all who believe! Amen.

Thursday, February 15, 2018

Bowed

Genesis 23-24

"... and I bowed down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son."
Genesis 24:48

What an incredible recounting of the miraculous working of the LORD. All through the Bible, it is unmistakable that God is working His plan for His purpose. This servant is shown the mighty power of God. I wonder what he thought as he traveled. Abraham had been very clear in his instructions. Was the servant fearful of coming back without a wife? He had great riches with him. Was he concerned about getting it there? All the while he traveled, was he praying? Then he arrives and God is so gracious to answer the prayer even before it was finished. I don't want to miss the fact that the prayer was offered in and came from the servant's heart (24:45). God is ready to answer my prayers—even before I finish them. Am I careful to bow down and worship Him when He shows His miraculous hand?

Dear Lord, help me learn from the response of the servant. Help my heart to be a heart of prayer. Help me not try to solve my own problems and find my own solutions, but rather, to pray to You and wait for You to show Your mighty hand. Then, Lord, call me to bow down and worship You and praise Your name. Amen.