

An Open Door

Genesis 28:10-15

As I get ready to share God's word with you this morning, I give praise to God for these wonderful children. Let's put our hands together in praise to God for the children of our church. The psalmist said it beautifully, "[God has] *built a stronghold by the songs of [children]. Strength rises up with the ... singing [of] children*" (Psalm 8:2). Have you been edified, strengthened by the singing of our children this morning? Give God glory if you have...

My sermon this morning has been inspired in the message that our children have shared with us through music: *Jesus rescues, the Lord never lets go of us*. This message is also presented to us in the passage we read a few moments ago. It is my prayer that the proclamation of God's word will inspire and equip you today and always.

We just heard part of the story of Jacob. The son of Isaac was fleeing from his brother; he was afraid and running for his life. We know from this specific passage that a new chapter in the life of Jacob was about to begin. His past was hunting him, the future was unknown. Jacob's reality was chaotic externally and internally. But in the midst of such confusion, the Lord appeared to Jacob with a vision.

I love the vision God presented before Jacob because it reminds us of a wonderful truth that we need to treasure in our hearts and minds. In the midst of his difficulties, God showed Jacob "*a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it*" (**Genesis 28:12**).

I love this vision because it reminds me that in the midst of our broken existence the heavens are always open. I love this vision because in it I see the message that the presence of God flows freely in our lives

regardless of our experiences. No matter what we do, what we are going through, there is always an open door in heaven. Isn't that great news?

I see this truth illustrated throughout the Biblical account.

You may remember Moses and the Hebrew people. The Israelites had left Egypt and were on their way to the Promised Land when all of a sudden, they saw Pharaoh and his army following close behind. The Hebrews were in an impasse; mountains on both sides, the Red Sea in front of them. No way to escape. Yet, there was still a door open. Heaven was attentive to the cry of the Israelites.

There is another story you may remember well. The story of Elisha and his servant. You may remember that these two found themselves in a similar situation. Elisha and his servant were surrounded by the army of the king of Aram (2 Kings 6:8-23). Horses and chariots encircled the city of *Dothan*. There was no way out. Like Moses and the ancient Israelites, Elisha, his servant, and the people of *Dothan* were doomed. Destruction was imminent.

Sometimes, we find ourselves in similar situations. We feel like there is no way out of difficult circumstances. But, when you feel surrounded by mountains of problems, armies of difficulties, a sea of tribulations, **remember this: the enemy may surround you, but it will never drown you.**

The enemy will never be able to drown you because for that to happen, the enemy will have to put an impenetrable barrier between you and heaven and there is nothing that can stand between you and God. There is nothing in this world powerful enough to block heaven for us. Nothing can prevent God from opening the floodgates of heaven and pouring out abundant blessings on us.

Paul said it like this, “...*If God is for us, who can be against us? ... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or*

persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 8:31-39

Moses and the Hebrew people were surrounded, but their access to God was not obstructed; neither was God’s access to them. As the people cry out to God, the Lord send a mighty wind and the waters of the Red Sea were parted. There is an open door in heaven; and because there is an open door in heaven God makes a way where it seems to be no way.

Elisha was surrounded by the king of Aram and his army, but heaven was wide open for him and his fearful servant. And from heaven, God filled the hills around *Dothan* with horses and chariots of fire. Because there is an open door in heaven, the prophet was free to exclaim, “*Those who are with us are more than those who are with them*” (2 Kings 6:16).

The Psalmist said it well, “*I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth*” (**Psalm 121:1-2**). Heaven, God’s throne, is always accessible for those who want to take refuge in God. Heaven is always open for those who are afraid and feel uncertain. Even when we are surrounded, there is always an open door in heaven giving us admission to the throne of God.

Friends, we know life is not easy. It is paved with both smooth and rough roads. There are detours that take us places we may not want to be, circumstances that we would love to avoid, but as life happens we need to remember that there is an open door in heaven.

Ten years ago, my wife, my mother-in-law, and I escaped from Cuba. By the way, in case you have not noticed, I am not from here. I know it's really hard to tell, isn't it?

Anyhow, over ten years ago God gave us the opportunity to escape from Cuba. Like Moses and the Hebrew people, we were on our way to a fruitful land. We were leaving Egypt behind for a much better place. I was super excited about the opportunity, but things did not work out as I was expecting. We were coming to America, but we ended up in Cancun, Mexico (and it was not for vacation).

In Mexico, my wife, my mother-in-law and I were taken hostage and were asked to pay a great amount of money for us to continue the journey. We found ourselves in a very difficult situation, but, as always, there was an open door in heaven. God, who is our ever-present help, opened the floodgates of heaven and provided enough money to pay for the ransom of my wife and my mother-in-law.

I had to stay in Mexico, but God never left me behind. The door to God was always open. As I approached God's throne, the Lord opened other doors for me.

One day I decided to escape from those who had taken me hostage. The day I escaped, I found a church and the pastor of that church offered me help during this critical time. The pastor opened the doors of his house to me (no doubts God opens doors, doesn't he?). The pastor brought me to his house and I stayed with him and his family for over 20 days until he drove me from Cancun, Mexico all the way to the U.S. border. It was then when I reached my intended destination.

During my life, and especially during my journey to America, I have learned that there is an open door in heaven for all who want to come before God's throne of Grace.

Church, we, like Jacob, are entering into a new chapter. As we begin this journey together, I want to appeal to you; and my request is this: **know that as we go from here God will always have an open door in heaven for us.** We need to access the throne of God through prayer, worship, service... we need to enter God's gates with thanksgiving and openness and God will pour out blessings in the form of growth, provision, new opportunities, and strength for the journey.

*I am here, filled with hope, to know you,
to share with you,
to find our way together on the journey.*

Let us be encouraged... The Lord is with us... there is nothing to fear... In times of need, we will be provided for... In times of trouble, we will be rescued... In times of confusion, we will be guided... At all times, God will have the gates of heaven open... for us to “*approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace...*” (Hebrews 4:16). If you believe so, please say AMEN...

Prayer...

Father, we trust in your faithful company... As we move into the future, help us to remember that you have the gates of heaven open for us, ready to rescue us and bless us at all times. We give you thanks for your goodness and loving kindness. Amen.