

(Genesis) Genesis 35-37:11

by Joe Focht

Joe Focht's sermon emphasizes Jacob's return to Bethel as a metaphor for returning to God and the importance of complete obedience in our spiritual journey.

Duration: 57:55

Scripture: Genesis 28:20-22, Psalm 23:1, Proverbs 3:5-6, Acts 2:17, Romans 13:14, Colossians 3:1-2, Hebrews 6:19

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Spiritual Consequences"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Jacob and how he experienced a lack of full obedience to God. The preacher emphasizes that partial obedience is not true obedience and compares it to a half-truth, which is essentially a lie. The sermon also highlights how sometimes Christians find themselves in places they shouldn't be, whether spiritually, emotionally, or sexually, and God allows things to fall apart as a consequence. The preacher uses the example of Jacob's daughter being raped and his sons engaging in a bloodbath in a town as a result of Jacob's disobedience. The sermon concludes with a story about a boy named Teddy Stallard who was disinterested in school but was encouraged and transformed by a teacher's simple act of kindness. The preacher encourages Christians to have their hearts lifted above the world and to set their affections on things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

Transcript

Now we are in chapter 35. We are at the end of a long journey. Jacob is returning to Bethel and he hasn't been there for 30 years as he had deceived his father and received the blessing from Isaac and then fled from Esau, his brother, under Rebekah's instruction and go on to Padinarum and then there all those years, 20 years, he had returned and come back to the land, wrestled with God, you know the story, and then had gone to Sukkoth and was there, it seems about eight years or so, and then came to Shechem.

However, those years fell out. He's about ten years back in the area but hasn't come back to Bethel and that is the place that God called him to. He's kind of come halfway.

He's come to Shechem and he's built an altar there. This is what God said. God called him back to Bethel.

He called him back to where he first appeared to him. God identified himself in Padinarum as the God of Bethel. And Jacob had kind of shown a half-hearted obedience, you know, partial submission as it were and that's like a half-truth.

A half-truth is a regular old lie and partial obedience is not obedience. Not if Jesus is to be the Lord of our lives. And again, you know Christians like that.

So do I. They happen just to be somewhere they shouldn't be. They happen to be in a place they should not be. And then sometimes pandemonium breaks place.

They are either spiritually or emotionally or sexually or one way or another in a place they just should not be in. And God begins to allow things to fall apart. And sure enough for Jacob, his daughter is raped there in Shechem and Simeon and Levi end up in a bloodbath in the town.

And now finally Jacob is coming back to his senses. He is desperate. He feels at this point in time those in the land of Canaan will pursue him and kill him.

And all of this has brought back to his mind when he had fled from Esau and he remembered in his fear that God had met him there at Bethel. And when God had met him there he had put his heart to rest. And how often it seems that you and I get in a situation where we are being called back to our first love.

And here the Bible says to us, he who has ears let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. God saying I have someone against you. That you've left your first love.

Remember the first works and from whence thou art fallen. Repent. And Jacob now is at that place.

He's coming back to Bethel. And you know it's because God is faithful. God will not allow us if we take a detour or we go AWOL for a while and then we're coming back to the Lord.

He will never let us settle for something less than we've already had. He's calling Jacob back to Bethel. That is the highest experience that Jacob has had so far in his relationship with the Lord.

It's the most wonderful experience. It's a place of dream and a place of reality. A place where God had revealed himself to Jacob and pronounced the blessing that he had made to Abraham upon him.

And God is not content to let Jacob settle for some other thing. Though Jacob probably would. No.

God now is drawing him back to the highest place that he's known. That he might take him on from there. And he's bringing him back to Bethel.

And that is where we pick up the story. And it says here, 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.

Now there's an interesting thing in the grammar here. It tells us first that God spoke to Jacob. So he's initiating.

The Lord is initiating. But then as we read the verse, it seems to be interpreted to us as a thought that Jacob's having. Arise, go up to Bethel and build an altar there to the God who appeared to you at the first.

And we almost get Jacob's thought. You know, it's God that's prompting his heart. And it's God that's drawing him.

But it appears then that Jacob has this thought. Let's go back to Bethel and build there an altar to the God who appeared to me when I was fleeing from Esau. The God who covered me and cared for me when I

was fleeing from my life in the past.

The same God. So God initiating Jacob now having in his heart to come back to Bethel. And Jacob said unto his household, do all that were with him.

Put away the strange gods that are among you. Be clean and change your garments 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.

Jacob remembering and was with me in the way which I went. So good advice. I think sometimes when we find ourselves in a situation where we feel and I say we feel because we base so much of our faith on feelings.

Faith is not a feeling. But sometimes we feel far away from the Lord. We feel that we're in a dry place.

We feel that we're far from him. And we ask how do I get back? How do I get back? It's almost as though, you know, God has moved from Philmont Avenue down to Bybury Road and we've lost track of him. And how do I find him again? And it really again is not a geographical problem at all.

It isn't that really that's put a distance between Jacob and God. The reason that he has not come back to Bethel is the same reason that he feels a distance from God. It's because in his heart he had put other things above the Word of God in his life.

And that's idolatry. And not only that, no doubt Rachel who stole the gods from Laban has been that kind of an influence on the family because it says, put away the strange gods, plural, from among you, plural. And it's going to tell us they took their gods.

So idolatry has crept into Jacob's family, though he had built an altar there in Shechem. His own sons and daughters and possibly still Rachel involved with idolatry. And God now challenging him.

The way back is threefold. First, and it is for us too, by the way, if you feel at a distance. First of all, get rid of all the strange gods.

Be clean and change your garments. And the same thing can happen to us. Many of the marriages that come in and are struggling that we counsel, really the baseline of the problem is idolatry.

It's because the husband is saying, well I'm not going to act like a Christian man unless this woman that God gave me and can take if he wants to, straightens up and submits to me the way, you know, the church has submitted to. You know, and the problem is he's responding on the horizontal instead of the vertical. He's not saying, Lord, how do I love this unlovable woman? Lord, how do I be an encouragement? Lord, how do I stop being the Holy Spirit and be who you want me to be? He's responding this way instead of responding this way.

And then it becomes idolatry. It becomes a false altar, a false idol. I'm not going to act like a Christian man unless circumstances, that's the idol, work out the way I want them to.

Instead of acting the way that Jesus wants us to act regardless of the circumstances around us in our life. And the same thing goes on the part of the wife. Or the same thing goes on the part of a single person.

You know, they've been in love with someone. They've been dating something. And all of a sudden they find out that person is dating somebody else.

And that's it. They're ready to get a hammer and sneak up behind them and let them have it on the Maxwell silver hammer. Bang, bang, you know, on the back of the head.

And that's it, Lord. You know, I'm back like a Christian long and all. And I've stayed pure.

And I did this. Now they ran off with this floozy. And I've had it.

You know, if I catch them in a dark alley, their name is mud. And besides that, Lord, don't talk to me till this is all straightened out. If you really love me, you told me you told me this was going to be the one you Indian giver.

You know, I think we we hear God saying things sometimes that we want to hear him say. Or it can be a job or it can be some other thing. It becomes so important in our life that when that particular circumstance doesn't work out this way, we find ourselves acting in a way that is contrary to Scripture.

Now, of course, we don't worship little statues anymore. We don't we don't have the gods of Molech and Baal and those kind of things. But certainly our society is an idolatrous society.

We don't worship Molech. They sacrifice their children in the fire. But again, we sacrifice thirty four million babies in the last 20 years to abortion, to to lust many of them.

And we don't worship Baal, the god of fire and lightning and water. But we watch the Discovery Channel and a lot of people in our country are tree huggers and they worship the creation more than the creator. Like it says in Romans chapter one.

How many of us worship Mammon? Not any of these the little idol little statue. But if we want to come back to the Lord, put away the strange gods. What has been the thing that has kept you from open fellowship with him or has taken you into rebellion or made you go AWOL or made you be somewhere where you shouldn't be.

Get rid of that. When he says, I am the Lord thy God, I will have no other gods before me. It doesn't mean I want to be number one God.

If you have number two, God, number three, God, number four, God, that's up to you. But I want any other gods before me in line. That's not what it says.

He says, I will have no other gods. The Hebrew phrase before me means in my presence there will be no other gods before me as well as in all the place that I can see in my presence and within my vision, I will have no other gods before me. So put away the strange gods.

Be clean. And the Bible says that you are clean through the word that I have spoken to you. Remember, wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed unto thy word.

Oh, Lord. Come back to God's word and change your garments. You know, remember that Jesus Christ has paid the price.

He's given us righteousness. He has. We are clothed with Christ.

And the Bible says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, that there is a righteousness that is imputed to us, that we are clothed with, you know, and all of that had to do with our first love. I mean, when we first got saved,

it was the simple thing that blew our mind, that we were forgiven. We're tired of carrying our burden of sin.

We're tired of what we ever we had in the world. That was our God. And then Christ saved us, and it was a wonder to get rid of that weight.

And it seems somehow as Christians, as the years go on, we kind of pick up little weights and put them back on our back again. And then sometimes we're saying, Lord, how do I get back? Well, this is not a franchise here. We don't want to patent this and write a book and send it out.

But I think there's some good, simple advice here. Get rid of your strange gods. Be clean.

Change your garments. And Jacob says, let's go up to Bethel. Verse four says, they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods, which were in their hand, and all their earrings.

The idea is they're amulets. God is not opposed to earrings, which were in their ears. And Jacob hid them or buried them under the oak, which is by Shechem.

And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them. They did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. Now, how remarkable.

You know, here's Jacob, the very thing he's terrified of. The Canaanites are going to pursue him. But as soon as he gets rid of the strange god, as soon as he brings his life back in line with God, God puts his terror on his enemies, and no one pursues after them.

You know, the Bible tells us that when a man's ways please the Lord, he can make even his enemies to be at peace with him. The Bible says that. And so many times we get in a situation where we've got to face the boss on Monday.

I've got to face my wife. I've got to face my husband. I've got to face my aunt or my grandmother, you know.

And we find that if we just get on our knees first and say, oh Lord, please, just calm this person down. I can already hear the speech I'm going to get. I know what they're going to say, Lord.

Just give me favor, Lord. And how many times we find it rolls out in such a smooth way. Because when our ways please him, how he's able to do that.

And how he's able to keep the enemy away from us. And again, so many Christians act like, you know, the devil is some kind of boogeyman. You know, he's getting me.

I decide to serve Christ. And now things are so hard. Now he's jumping on me.

Now he's doing this. Now he's got my wife. He's got my kids.

Now look, there is warfare. And the Bible is clear about it. There's much to say about it in the scripture.

And there are forces of darkness. But all of that is under the government of God. We are blood bought, sealed with the spirit.

The evil one comes. He touches us not. We are sons and daughters of the most high God, the maker of heaven and earth, the almighty.

And let's not give the enemy more press than he deserves. Is he involved in our lives? Yes. Not him personally, but one of his minions.

When I'm having a difficult time in my life or I'm again, I'm on the way to Children's Hospital with one of my kids. I'm sure that the devil doesn't say, oh, you know, the coaches are having a really hard time. You know, let's just kind of leave off of them till they get over this.

No, I enjoy a fair fight. And they've been having a hard time lately. You know, the enemy doesn't do that.

He keeps it on when things are tough. But for me to understand what percentage of any situation is warfare is ridiculous. I don't know.

The important thing I do know is who my Lord and Savior is, who my shepherd is, who my king is. It doesn't matter anymore who my enemy is. Matters who my king is and who my Lord is.

And he will only allow that which I'm able to bear to come. And that to perfect us, to mature us, Jacob now sees the hand of God, the very thing he was afraid of. The enemies are now pushed aside and Jacob is moving through the midst and the fear of God is upon them.

And Jacob came to Luz. Interesting, that was the original name of this area, Bethel. Luz means departure.

And that's where he had journeyed from. Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan. That is Bethel.

He and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar and called the place El Bethel because there God appeared unto him when he fled from the face of his brother. Now, there's an interesting thing that's taking place here.

Jacob is not just returning to Bethel, which is the house of God. Jacob now returns, builds an altar and calls it El Bethel or the God of the house of God. He isn't just returning to a sacred place or a sacred monument.

And how many people on Sunday come to the house of God? They don't come to the God of the house of God. They come to the house of God. They come there because it feels good.

Or they come there to get a blessing. Or maybe they go to a dead church because it's a routine. And my grandmother did it, my mother did it, and I'm going to do it.

You know, they go to the house of God for years. I went to the house of God. I didn't go to the God of the house of God, but I went to the house of God.

And Jacob now has realized something. Not just coming to Bethel, but to El Bethel, to the God of the house of God. It's the same thing with reading the Scripture.

It isn't just the Word of God, it's the God of the Word also. We come to the Word of God so that we might walk with the God of the Word. In my own life, sometimes I get so involved with the work of God, I lose track of the God of the work.

And there's a point here. Jacob's heart now is being warmed and renewed and strengthened in a way that he hadn't realized. He's learned an incredible lesson now.

It's been a thirty year trial. Those are two phrases I do not like to put together. Thirty years and trial.

Jacob now is realizing something. Building an altar to the God of Bethel. Now, it inserts this interesting note.

We can speculate why. It just says, Deborah, Rebekah's nurse. Now, Rebekah died while Jacob was in Padinarum.

He would never see her again. And he was, remember, his mother's son. Evidently, when Jacob left for Padinarum, Rebekah sent her nurse that Laban had given to her.

Back in chapter 24, I believe it says that Laban gave to her maids and a nurse. Now, it's telling us she must be ancient by now. This woman, Deborah, who had been Rebekah's nurse, no doubt had gone with Jacob when he went to Padinarum.

Rebekah giving her to him to help care for him. Or somehow she's hooked up with him. I don't know.

It's a mystery to me. All of a sudden, this note is inserted that Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died. Why? How? It's really interesting.

I don't know. She was buried beneath Bethel, under an oak. And the name of it was called Alan-Bakuth, that is, the Oak of Weeping.

So certainly there is a breaking with the past in the life of Jacob. We can at least see that. Things that have been part of his past now are falling away as he is rediscovering his God.

And it says, God appeared unto Jacob again when he came out of Padinarum and blessed him. Isn't this interesting? Jacob's been back in the area for ten years, in Sukkoth and in Shechem, and God has not considered him back from Padinarum until he comes to Bethel. Because God spoke to him over ten years before this when he was in Padinarum and said to Jacob, I'm the God of Bethel, you know, and called him to return to him.

And in all those years, Jacob had not returned to Bethel. Now finally he gets to Bethel and then it says, God appeared to him when he had returned then out of Padinarum. Interesting.

All those years. Ten years. Again, I'm reminded in the book of Hebrews chapter 11, as you're reading there the Hall of Faith and you read the life of Moses, it says, by faith they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land.

The next verse says, by faith the walls of Jericho fell down. And I think, what happened to the forty years between those verses? You know, by faith they passed through the Red Sea, by faith the walls of Jericho. Meantime, a whole generation passed away.

Meantime, they wandered in the wilderness. Meantime, forty years God doesn't bother to remember between the verses. And I think, you know, when we get to heaven and we get there for our rewards, what kind of gaps will there be? You know, Jophos, here's the day you got saved, here's the day you got here.

You know, what happened? Now, I'm sure the children of Israel, we're going to be glad that there are some gaps in our life. You know what I mean? I mean, when we read about Abraham, in Hebrews 11, God doesn't bother to tell us. Oh yeah, he went down to Egypt, told his wife, told my sister.

None of that's there. Those gaps are erased. I appreciate that greatly.

So I'd rather have big gaps than complete information when I show up in heaven. You know what I mean? I'm glad Jesus has taken all of that away. But it's interesting, God doesn't consider him back from Padnerim until he gets to Bethel.

Doesn't recognize those ten years. And God said unto him, you're still Jacob. Thy name shall not be called anymore Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name.

And God called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply.

A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee and kings shall come out of thee. There is no word of rebuke here. There is no Jacob, now you're going to have to take a second seat to some of the other saints we're going to write about in Scripture.

There is no Jacob, you're going to have to settle for second best. There's none of that even indicated here. Because God had made the covenant and God had called him and God had been faithful and God had really shepherded him.

At the end of Jacob's life, when we see him getting ready to prophesy over his sons in the end of the book of Genesis, Jacob will talk about the Lord that fed him. And the Hebrew is the Lord who shepherded me. And as he looks back over his life, he realizes in all his hard-headedness and all his wanderings in Padnerim and his fleeing from Esau and his mistakes at Sukkoth and Eshechem and finally coming up in all of those years, God had been faithful to him.

And the twelve tribes of Israel had been produced in his hard-headedness and in his rebellion. And God took advantage of the difficult years that he went through to work out his own plan for the nation of Israel, for the history of the world. God took advantage of the fact that he had worked seven years for Rachel and he woke up in the morning after his wedding night and Leah was laying next to him.

And she was the mother of Judah, the Messiah would come from. She was the mother of Levi, that the Levites and Aaron would come from. And all that seemed turmoil and all that seemed mistakes, there comes a point of hindsight in the life of Jacob where he looks back and he says, the Lord that shepherded me.

And I think David in his old age picks up on the same idea. The Lord is my shepherd. And I believe he wrote that in his old age.

I shall lack no good thing. And you know, the longer I go on with Christ again, the more I appreciate that. I read that psalm and it's probably my favorite psalm.

And you get excited about it, you know, and you teach it to the little kids in Sunday school. And you know, they don't have any idea what they're talking about. And it's wonderful to you because he has shepherded you and led you beside the still water.

And he's and he's been with you in the valley of deepest darkness, you know, and all of a sudden this is filled with wonder in hindsight. And we teach it to the little kids and they really know. It's like, again, it's like the wedding day when I have the bride and groom in front of me and they say richer and poorer in sickness and in health for better or for worse.

I'm glad we have it on video. Now we have proof that they said those things because as the years go by, those terms all of a sudden they define themselves. And they're saying that I say that richer and poorer, better and worse, you know, sickness and in health.

And all of a sudden those words begin to define themselves. And I think the shepherd psalm is like that. And I think for Jacob in his old age, as he looked back, he saw the wonder of the tapestry of God in his life and God's faithfulness and God's weaving and shepherding and God's care.

And at this point there is no rebuke from God. There is no calling Jacob a second-class citizen. I am the God almighty.

That's El Shaddai, the God that appeared to Abraham. He's bringing the fullness of the blessing like he said he would. Be fruitful and multiply a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee and king shall come out of thy loins and the land which I gave unto Abraham and to Isaac to thee I will give it to thy seed after thee will I give the land and God went up from him.

Imagine that. God's talking to him all of a sudden. God goes whoosh.

That's what it means. He ascends out of his sight. God went up from him in the place where he, God, talked with him.

What a wonder. Just imagine this. And this guy's been a swindler.

You know, we love Jacob because we think, boy, if God will talk to him, he'll talk to me too. If God will talk to David and he committed adultery and committed murder and God loved him, God can love me too. If God loves Peter who had foot and mouth disease his whole life, God can love me too.

Chop people's ears off. And, you know, you know, it's remarkable to see and think what he's saying here. God Almighty Yahweh God appears, appears to him and talks to him and has a conversation.

And when he's done, he goes up. He goes up. When he was done talking, Jacob set up a pillar in that place where he talked with him.

Even a pillar of stone. And he poured a drink offering thereon and he poured oil thereon. Now this is consecration.

Jacob is coming to the point where his life is becoming consecrated to the purposes of God. How wonderful God's faithfulness is. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him Bethel.

And they journeyed from Bethel. There was but a little way to come to Ephrath or Ephrathah which is Bethlehem. The house of bread.

And Rachel travailed and had hard labor. Now Jacob is a hundred and five years old at this point in time. Which means that Rachel got pregnant when he was a hundred and four.

She is in hard labor travailing. No OBGYN, no nurses on the side of the road. And it came to pass when she was in hard labor that the midwife said under her, fear not thou shalt have this son also.

No doubt she's hemorrhaging on the side of the road. She's bleeding and she's in hard labor. The nursemaid trying to encourage her.

No medical help. It came to pass as her soul was departing, Rachel's, for she died. That she called his name Ben-Onai.

The son of my sorrow. But his father Jacob called him Benjamin. The twelfth son now.

The twelfth tribe. Son of my right hand. And Rachel died and was buried in the way to Ephrathah which is Bethlehem.

And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave. That is the pillar of Rachel's grave and Moses says unto this day. Unto the day that he was writing.

And notice this now. Israel, no longer Jacob. Israel journeyed and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar which is the tower of the flock down below Bethlehem.

And it came to pass when Israel dwelled in the land that Reuben, his oldest son, went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine. And Israel, Jacob, Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.

Now Reuben forfeiting the birthright and the blessing going into his father's concubine. The sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, were Dan and Naphtali. And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, were Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob which were born to him in Paddan Aram.

That is except for Benjamin. They were born along the way. And Jacob came to Isaac, his father, unto Mamre, unto the city of Arba, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac journeyed.

And I imagine the first time that Jacob sees Isaac, Isaac doesn't see Jacob. He was blind thirty years before this. Jacob must be remembering the last time I saw dad was with goat hair on my neck and my hands.

There was a sourness between us even when he sent me away to Paddan Aram knowing that I had deceived him. And what a remarkable thing after thirty years now coming back and seeing Isaac again. Now Isaac will live on into the events in chapter 37 about twelve more years.

Jacob comes to him in Mamre into the city of Arba. Verse 28, And the days of Isaac were a hundred and eighty years. And Isaac gave up the ghost and died and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days, I'll say.

And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him. They're a hundred and twenty years old at this point. Twins.

Now, 36. Don't worry. I'm not going to read it all.

Chapter 36 traces for us the lineage of Esau and places it in there. Esau, in one sense, becomes a perennial enemy of Israel, Edom. We'll read part of it.

It says, These are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan. Ada, daughter of Elan, the Hittite.

Ahol Obama. What a name. You know, honey, I have this name book.

What do you think we should call her? You know, I was thinking, Ahol Obama. That's a funny thing. It's the same thing I was thinking.

What a cute name. Ahol Obama, the daughter of Anna, the daughter of Zibion, the Hittite. Bezimoth, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nabijoth.

Nada, baron to Esau, Iliphaz. And some wonder if it's the Iliphaz from Job. I don't think so.

My personal conviction is Job is written about a generation that lived much earlier. Bezimoth, Ber-Ruel. And Ahol Obama, Ber-Jayesh, and Je-Alem, and Korah.

These are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan. And Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters, and this is important information, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had gotten in the land of Canaan, and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob, because their riches were more than they might dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle. Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir.

Esau is Edom. It's telling us that Esau moved east of the Jordan River, down by the Dead Sea, that area where Petra is today, that that was the area that Esau moved to with his generations. And then it tells us, these are the generations of Esau, the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir.

Again, you can read through them on your own. Amalek is mentioned there in verse 12. Moses notes that because he struggles with Amalek there in Exodus 17, I believe.

Verse 14, these are the sons of Aholabamah. You read through those. Verse 15 starts to talk about the dukes of Hazard there.

Read through there. The duke of this, the duke of Korah, the duke of this, the duke of that. Verse 17, these are the sons of Reuel.

Verse 18, these are the sons of Aholabamah, Esau's wife, and more dukes there. Verse 20, these are the sons of Seir, the Horite, who inhabited the land of Lotham, and Shobel, and Zibion, and Anna. And we're taking his lineage and we're taking note, there is no mention of the Lord through this lineage.

There is no mention of, so the Lord led, so the Lord blessed, so the Lord opened the womb. No mention of it as we go through. Verse 31, notice now, these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom.

Now he's talking about the kings that came forth from Esau. And then as we get back down to Exodus 17, back down to verse 40, starts to speak about the dukes again. And finally, in verse 43, it says there, these be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations, in the land of their possession.

He is Esau, the father of the Edomites, and Jacob, in contrast, dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. So it takes us through this remarkable lineage of Esau, making the point that his lineage became dukes, and chiefs of tribes, and kings. They made their home in this world.

They settled in. They built their kingdom in this world. They built their life in this world.

And they are a type of the flesh, as Esau was. And we come back to Jacob again, and it says, Jacob dwelt in the land where his father Abraham was a stranger, dwelling in the land of promise as a stranger

because they looked for a city whose builder and maker was God. They looked for a place that kept them from settling.

And again, remember Abraham with the tent and the altar. The tent defining his relationship to this world and the altar defining his relationship to the next world. And remarkably, now it comes to Jacob and it says these are the generations of Jacob when Joseph was 17 years old.

Then it gives us 13 chapters on one person. You know, here we are looking at the Dukes of Hazzard, you know, here in the chapter before all the earthly kings and chiefs and Dukes and all their names. When we get to Jacob, these are the generations of Jacob.

Joseph being about 17 years old says, and then 13 chapters on Joseph. One guy. Because this is the transition and the remarkable work of God and one of the most wondrous stories in all the scripture where God will move this young man down into Egypt through horrendous circumstances to preserve his lineage and to form a nation in Egypt of millions.

And no doubt as they're there to teach them agriculture and writing and science and geometry and to bring them out with great riches and to lead them through the wilderness and to make of them a nation. This is the transition. This young 17-year-old man.

We begin the record of his life. Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger in the land of Canaan. These are the generation of Jacob.

Joseph being 17 years old was feeding the flock with his brethren. And the way it's written here that he was feeding the flock, it seems to indicate that he was kind of the the preeminent one there. He was shepherding the flock or in charge of the flock with his brethren.

And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought unto his father their evil report or he brings back to Jacob report about his other sons that they are involved in some kind of mischief. Now the interesting thing is this as we go through, you're going to find Joseph never has an appearance of God.

The appearing of God seems to cease with Jacob and then take place at the burning bush again with Moses. And we study the life of this remarkable remarkable man Joseph over 25% of the book of Genesis about his life. More than Abraham, more than Isaac, more than Jacob.

He gets more print than anywhere else than anybody else in Genesis and in some ways we have more detail and fact about his life than anybody else in the Old Testament. So we're introduced to this young man. Very important for us to see that because he's one of the most sterling characters in the Bible, maybe even more so than Daniel in the Old Testament.

We really find no particular flaw. Now some people immediately say, well there was pride there. He should not have shared his dream with his brethren.

Because they didn't appreciate it. Well it wasn't really for them to appreciate it. It was for him to appreciate it.

It would keep him for years. But sharing it with his brethren became his ticket to Egypt. So in one way or another God was involved in that.

Here is this young man and notice it says now Israel verse 3 loved Joseph more than all his children because he was the son of his old age and he made him a coat of many colors. Now he gives him a preeminent place. Simeon and Levi have committed murder.

Reuben has gone in unto Jacob's concubine. It seems that that Jacob now decides to give the preeminent place to this young man Joseph and he loves him and he's the son of his old age. Now take note of this as we look at it.

If you're an astute Bible student it's interesting to take note as you study through scripture when the Bible says Jacob and when the Bible says Israel. And often when it's talking about disobedience or a problem he's referred to as Jacob again. When it refers to his godly side we hear the name Israel used.

Or when God is pleased with the nation Israel. And here we find Joseph growing up under Israel. Not under Jacob.

The older sons grew up under Jacob. They had witnessed much of their father's swindling and much of his struggling with God. And now truly Joseph is being raised under Israel, governor of God.

The man who is governor of God. And he sits with this old man. Again I remember my own grandfather living in the house with us.

He died on Thanksgiving when I was eight years old. But I remember sitting in the house with him and asking him all kinds of questions. I mean they're memories that I'll never forget.

He sat there white hair, white mustache. Came across the ocean in a 28 foot sailboat from Europe to Ellis Island. Crossed the Atlantic in a 28 foot sailboat.

Graduated from university in Vienna. And I remember asking him questions. What's the biggest number in the world? What's God like? I mean the kind of questions that kids ask.

And he would sit there with me and talk to me. I remember slippers and I remember suspenders. And Joseph is the son of this man's old age.

Now there is in this for all of us, look, if you are in your golden years. I won't say older. You're in your golden years.

If you think you're out to pasture and God is done with you, I'd really like to reprove you this evening. Because you have no idea what your life may mean to a grandchild or to a niece or to a nephew or to some young child that God brings across your path that you don't even know that you may say a kind word to. The psalmist says this.

Oh God, thou hast taught me from my youth and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am gray headed and old, oh God, forsake me not until I have showed thy strength unto this generation and thy power to everyone that is to come. Thy righteousness also, oh God, is very high.

Again, the psalmist says this. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.

They shall be fat and flourishing. You don't have to take that literally. That means, you know, just healthy spiritually.

To show that the Lord is upright. So the very important role of bearing testimony to the next generation of God's faithfulness because you are the ones that, you know, when you can look back over 40 years or 50 years of walking with Christ and you can tell the next generation of His faithfulness and of His goodness, what a powerful testimony that is. And how little we know how we might change someone's life.

Here is this young man, Joseph, who is being raised under this old man, Jacob, whose name has been changed to Israel. And you know what he's telling him? I have no doubt in my mind. He tells him the stories of Padnerim.

Remind me, Dad. I was so little. What was that like? Remind me.

What was this like? And he must have said to Joseph, Joseph, you have no idea. The first time God appeared to me. What was it like, Dad? The young boy asking this old man.

I saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon a stairway to heaven. And the God of our father Abraham standing at the top of the steps saying, Jacob, the ground that thou liest on to thee will I give unto thy generation after thee. And I will bless thy seed and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you.

And I will keep you and I'll be with you in the way that you go. And I will bring you again to this land and I will not leave off till I've fulfilled all of the things that I have spoken to thee of. He must have said, Joseph, it was a dream, Joseph, that changed my life once and forever.

And Joseph, it was hard after that. Seven years I worked for Laban for Rachel and then was betrayed and worked seven more years then. But that dream, Joseph, stayed in my heart.

And it was twenty years, Joseph, before I was back in the land, back in the area. And then I still dilly-dallied around. Little did Jacob know, because he hadn't read this chapter, that it would also be a dream that would change Joseph's life.

And then Joseph, seven years of famine, seven years of goodness in Egypt, he would live out in pattern the lessons of his father. But he would live them out as they were described to him by someone who was governed by God. And as they were recounted to him, they were recounted to him as chapter eleven of Hebrews.

They were recounted to Joseph under Israel, under the man governed by God. They were recounted to him from the perspective of all the victories and the wonder and the faithfulness of God. And it formed this young man so that without a New Testament and without an Old Testament and without a personal appearance of God living the way that many of us live, and we have greater advantage than he did, he becomes one of the most remarkable personalities in the Old Testament, standing for righteousness and for God.

Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren. They hated him yet the more. He said unto them, Here I pray you this dream, which I have dreamed.

Now his older brothers hate his guts. Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and it stood up, and your sheaves stood round about, and they bowed down to my sheaf. Now this is a great thing to tell your ten older brothers who hate your guts.

Hey guys, I had this dream. You know, these sheaves in a field, and the sheaf that represented me stood up, and the sheaves that represented you guys, you all fell down and bowed down in front of me. And his brethren said unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us, or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words.

And he dreamed yet another dream, and he told that to his brethren. He said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more, and behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father and to his brethren.

And his father rebuked him, understanding evidently, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him, and that's why they hated him, but his father, like Mary, observed the saying, pondered these things in her heart. And you know, it's interesting, in the one dream, in the one dream it represents his earthly work, the sheaves of grain, and certainly he would preserve the known world, thousands, untold thousands by a dream, and interpreting a dream in Egypt. And the other dream of the moon and the stars, Revelation 12, interprets that for us, and it deals with God's divine sovereignty over this entire plan.

And there was a heavenly pressure that was put on his heart in regard to all these things. And he was seventeen years old, and he was a man of seventeen with a dream and with a vision. And again, you know, our world is very desensitized to that.

We, you know, want to get ahead and college and we want to do our best in our grades and we want to get into a mortgage and we want to get married and we have lots of things on the horizon that we want to do. We have lots of goals, but somehow we have lost the sense of vision. We have lost the sense of being lifted above this present world to see seventeen-year-olds and fifteen-year-olds and fourteen-year-olds with a vision from God in their heart that will make them stand above all that this world has to offer.

Joseph would go to Egypt and what God had sown in his heart at this point in time would keep him for years. And are we willing to say to the Lord, you may be a fifty-year-old seventeen-year-old. You know what I mean? I mean, I'm forty-six and I'm fourteen.

You know what I mean? You know, you may be an older person realizing I need a fresh vision. I need a fresh dream. God, I need you to sow something supernatural in my heart that will keep me.

I need you to make your word alive to me. I need to come back to my first love. I need, Lord, a vibrancy in my relationship with you.

Not just religion, but relationship, Lord. And I think how desperately we need that. Again, as I look at this, I think those of you that are older, you have no idea of the impact that you can have on one life by a kind word, by something you might do.

Those of you that are just taking hold of what your faith means, just growing, thinking, Lord, I need nothing phony, not just another Bible study, not just going to church again. Lord, I need from you, as your word says, in the last days your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions.

Your old men will dream dreams. I'm not sure whether I'm supposed to see visions or dream dreams. I'm somewhere in the middle.

I'll take what I can get. But how we need to be Christians with our hearts lifted above this world, as Paul says to us in Colossians, with our affections set on things above, not on things of the earth, but where Christ sits at the right hand of God, an anchor to our soul, the hope, the blessed hope that we have. I'm going to read an excerpt to you.

I heard it years ago from Charles Swindoll. We'll end with this. Mike McIntosh included in his little book, *The Tender Touch of God*.

I was reminded of it. It's a great illustration of how you may encourage someone, how simply it might be done. Teddy Stollard was disinterested in school.

His clothes were wrinkled. His hair was always messed up. Teddy always wore a deadpan expression, a glassy eyed countenance, an unfocused stare.

He was unattractive, unmotivated and uncommunicative. And when his teacher, Miss Thompson, spoke to him, Teddy always answered in monosyllables. He was just plain hard to like, even though his teacher said she loved everyone in her class equally.

Deep down inside, she knew she wasn't being completely truthful. And whenever she marked Teddy's papers, she got a certain perverse pleasure out of putting X's next to the wrong answers. And when she put the F's at the top of his paper, she always did it with a flair.

And she should have known better. She had Teddy's records. She knew more about him than she wanted to admit.

And his records read like this. First grade. Teddy shows promise with his work and his attitude, but has a poor home situation.

Second grade. Teddy could do better. His mother is seriously ill.

He receives little help at home. Third grade. Teddy is a good boy, but too serious.

He is a slow learner. His mother died this year. Fourth grade.

Teddy is very slow, but well behaved. His father shows no interest in him at all. Christmas came.

The boys and girls in Miss Thompson's class brought her Christmas presents. They piled the presents on her desk and they crowded around to watch her open them. Among the presents was a gift from Teddy Stollard.

Miss Thompson was surprised that he had brought her a gift, but he had. And Teddy's gift was wrapped in brown paper, was held together with scotch tape, and on the paper were written the simple words for Miss Thompson from Teddy. When she opened Teddy's present, out fell a gaudy rhinestone bracelet with half the stones missing and a bottle of cheap perfume.

The other boys and girls began to giggle and to smirk over Teddy's gifts, but Miss Thompson at least had enough sense to silence them by immediately putting on the bracelet and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist, holding her wrist up for the other children to smell. She said, doesn't it smell lovely? And the children, taking their cue from their teacher, readily agreed with oohs and ahhs. At the end of the day, when school was over and the other children had left, Teddy lingered behind.

He slowly came over to his teacher's desk and said softly, Miss Thompson, Miss Thompson, you smell just like my mother and her bracelet looks pretty on you too. I'm glad you like my presents. When Teddy left, Miss Thompson got down on her knees and asked God to forgive her.

The next day, when the children came to school, they were welcomed by a new teacher. Miss Thompson had become a different person. She was no longer just a teacher.

She had become an agent of God. She was now a person committed to loving her children and doing the things for them that would live on after her. She helped all the children, but especially Teddy Stollard.

By the end of the school year, Teddy showed dramatic improvement. He had caught up with most of the students and was even ahead of some. She didn't hear from Teddy for a long time.

Then one day she received a note that read, Dear Miss Thompson, I wanted you to be the first to know I will be graduating second in my class. Love, Teddy Stollard. Four years later, another note comes.

Dear Miss Thompson, they just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be the first to know the university has not been easy, but I liked it. Love, Teddy Stollard.

Four years later, another note comes. Dear Miss Thompson, as of today, I am Theodore Stollard, M.D. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know I am getting married next month, the 27th to be exact. I want you to come and sit where my mother would have sat if she was alive.

You are the only family I have now. Dad died last year. Love, Teddy Stollard.

Miss Thompson went to the wedding and she sat where Teddy's mother would have sat. Without friends, the Teddy Stollards of this world get left behind. Amen.

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