

Jacob - Arise, Let Us Go to Bethel

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God's will and seeking His glory, as exemplified by Jacob's journey from a fugitive to a man of faith and brokenness.

Scripture: Genesis 32:24-35, Philippians 3:8, Hebrews 11:29, Revelation 2:4

Topics: "Divine Grace", "Repentance Restoration"

Description

Paris Reidhead preaches on the story of Jacob's journey to Bethel, emphasizing the importance of returning to God's presence and experiencing His grace and transformation. Jacob's initial encounter with God at Bethel led to a revelation of Divine Grace, but he strayed to Haran and Succoth, facing consequences of disobedience. Through wrestling with God at Jabbok, Jacob was broken and renamed Israel, signifying a transformed life. Reidhead urges the congregation to repent, return to Bethel, and surrender all idols, seeking God's forgiveness and restoration.

Transcript

Jacob - Arise, Let us go to Bethel By Paris Reidhead* Will you turn, please, to Genesis, Chapter 35. The message that is in the bulletin, New York Missions and You, will remain for another day. This morning I have a deep burden on my heart to share with you the testimony of His Word under the title, Arise, Let us go to Bethel. I shall begin with the 1st verse of the 35th Chapter: And 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. 2Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods which that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: 3And 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, and was with me in the way which I went. 4And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Schechem. 5And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

May God make this Word living to us, real to us. In Revelation 2:4-5, we have the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, that correspond almost completely to the text, Arise, go up to Bethel. Our Lord, speaking through John the revelator, declared, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;" Arise, go up to Bethel. Bethel was named by Jacob, as you read in the 28th Chapter; formerly it had been called Luz.

A little village about 12 miles north of Jerusalem, on the way to Shechem. It was here that God revealed Himself to Jacob as the God of grace. It has been written that each of the patriarchs presents some great truth concerning the believer's life in Christ. Abraham testifies to us of Divine Sovereignty in relation to the Christian. Isaac testifies to us of Divine Sonship. And Jacob reveals to us Divine Grace. Jacob's first visit to Bethel was as a fugitive from justice. He had deceived and defrauded his brother Esau.

Remembering that God had promised that Jacob was to receive the birthright, his mother had connived with him in such a manner as to take this out of the Lord's hands. He didn't trust the Lord to bring it to pass. He managed it himself by covering his arm with the skin, and feigning the voice of Esau. And, fearing for his life, and fleeing from Esau's wrath, he left Beersheba and went on his way toward Haran. The night overtook him on a plain, an arid, rocky plain, filled with cactus, and with everything that would be unpleasant.

He lay upon the bare ground in the dust. The stones were his pillow, and the darkness was his only covering. What a picture this is of the sinner. What a picture this is of you and me, as we were fleeing from justice, and fleeing from God's wrath and night overtook us, and we found ourselves in the dust on our faces. I believe this is the only place that God can ever reveal His grace. The reason there are not more people being saved today is that God finds it so difficult to get us to the place where Jacob was, down in the dust, on their face, covered with darkness, asleep.

When this can transpire, when the instruments of His love become effective in the heart of the sinner, then we have here the fact that God loves to help the helpless. When we are without merit, when we are without strength, when we have nothing to present to Him, and we know it, we are candidates for grace. Grace can only be shown to an undeserving sinner. And thus Jacob was in that state. And we find that that night as he was there filled with fear, filled with all the imaginations of justice and wrath from his brother upon him, fleeing for his life, overtaken in this miserable place, God gave him the land.

How God loves to do that, to find those that have nothing, to find those that have nothing but their filth, their uncleanness, their sin, utterly helpless and hopeless, possessing nothing, and yet to give them everything--there is one qualification: He who would receive of God's grace must first be in the dust, broken and on his face. And so it was that when God could get Jacob and you to that place He could give a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was this that came to this awaken sinner, this fugitive.

Now I know that the dream that God gave to Jacob was a revelation of Christ, because God says so. If you would like to turn to John 1: 51, you will have the identification of this picture that was given to this dream that was given to Jacob as being Christ. Now if it were not for this verse, I might be challenged and there would be those who would say, "Jacob's ladder refers to something else than the Lord Jesus." But, because of this verse, I can affirm conclusively that Jacob saw Christ. "And he saith

unto him, Verily, Verily I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see Heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the One who spanned the infinite distance between earth and heaven. There was no one else that could make a way over the great, open, yawning mouth of hell, and God's wrath and judgment and justice but the Son of God. Our Lord Jesus Himself became the Way. He is the ladder. "The angels were ascending and descending upon the Son of God."

"He is the way, the truth and the Life," and in this form Jacob had a revelation of Christ. (John 14:6) And I see also that Jacob's reaction was one of faith. For if you would turn to Genesis the 28th Chapter, the 17th

verse, you will discover how he responded, "Jacob awakened out of his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not.' And he was afraid." There is that wholesome work of fear without which no man shall come to see the Lord. For the first operation of the Holy Ghost is as the Spirit of bondage again to fear; for having seen the Lord and beheld Him, he was afraid, and rightfully so.

He cried, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen. 28:17) He recognized that only God could meet the need of his heart, and that God had vouchsafed to him a revelation of himself. So he worshipped God. He rose up early in the morning, and took the stone upon which he had laid his head, and poured oil upon the top of it as an act of worship. But in addition to this, he vowed a vow. For you will find that he said, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on so that I can come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God." (Gen. 28:20,21) And this corresponds with what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 10:9, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

And he confessed with his mouth that the Lord - to be God, Jesus, this One whom he say, Jehovah, would now become his God. And the evidence of faith being exercised here is seen in the change of name. Luz means departure, or separation. And what would be more appropriate for Jacob to spend the night in the place named, Departure, named separation, for certainly he was separated from his family because of his crime, and he was separated from God. But the place of separation became the place of reconciliation because God was there, and it was changed from Luz, separation, to Bethel, the House of God.

And where God may have found you, fleeing sinner, as you in revolt against Him were pursuing your own way, and there He revealed Himself to cause you to fear and revealed His Son to cause you to be saved, and turned your heart to Him that you worshipped Him, and received Him as Lord and as God, He changed the place of separation, Luz, into the place of fellowship, the House of God. And this is where he ought to have stayed. He should never have left this place. God had revealed Himself, and God was enough.

But like you, the day after you came to know the Lord Jesus, perhaps your heart was filled with fear of the pursuit of someone, and consequently you will understand how upon awakening in the morning as act of worship he forgot that this One who revealed Himself to him was sufficient to protect him, and to provide his birthright. And so we find even after this revelation he continues to flee in rebellion. You follow him as he arrived at Padanaram. And there he had this meeting with Rachel, far more than coincidence.

It was a meeting that undoubtedly God had arranged. He fell in love with Rachel, and sought her, and gave himself for service to Laban in order that he might somehow purchase and procure this woman to be his wife. You recall that God allowed this one, still a fugitive from the place of blessing, though he had trusted in Christ, you discover that he learned some lessons. For chickens do come home to roost and this one whose name was Jacob, deceiver, was twice deceived by Laban in regard to his wages.

In Hebrews Chapter 2, verse 2 we have it: "Every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward." And so those 20 years that he spent in Padanaram were instrumental in bringing Jacob face to face with some of the Providential judgment of God. But there had to be a time when he returned. He was unsatisfied. O yes, he had his wives and his children. He had his great herds and flocks. He had wealth beyond that which Isaac could have given him had he stayed to claim the birthright.

And now he must go back, because back there he had a taste of God. Back there something happened to him. And now he's been estranged and lonely, and there is nothing to satisfy, and even though back there is Esau, Jacob has to go, because sometime in the past he drank of a cup of revelation of God, and now he knows that the insatiable desire of his heart cannot be satisfied with wives and children, with flocks and herds. He must have God. And though Laban entreats him. And whenever anyone will arise and go back to his father's house, there will be Labans to

persuade him to stay. For they profit from the believer's shame. And consequently, Laban pled with him to stay, saying, I have been blessed because of you. But Jacob had to return. You recall that even here he was unwilling to trust the God of his father, and so he waited until Laban was three days away with his herd, and then quietly he slipped away, taking his family and his herds with him. And then on the way he knew he must meet Esau. What preparation he engaged in, how careful he was.

You recall how he said, You take these gifts, lavish gifts that he would present to his brother. For he feared for his life. The servants went over the brook and on their way until they saw Esau coming with four hundred men, and the word had gotten out in the area that Esau with his men was out. And so the servants came back. Jacob's heart was filled with fear, for he was running though no man pursued him. His conscience was filled with guilt. Yet not a moment's rest or peace.

Yet he knew he must go on. And so after he tried scheming, and after he had tried planning, he tried everything else, there came a time when he had to pray. And so, as you find here in this 32 chapter, Jacob's prayer. You find the first recorded prayer in the Bible. No other prayer has been recorded in completeness. And you hear him cry, "O God of my father, Abraham, and God of my father, Isaac" (he is claiming covenant relationship). He is identifying himself with his father.

He is identifying himself with the covenant that God made with Abraham and with Isaac, and so it is, dear heart, when you would return to your father's house, you must remember the covenant, a covenant that God made with His Son, that God for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ could be merciful and gracious to repentant, broken hearts; and so he claimed a covenant relationship. Then he cast himself upon the sure Word of the Lord, the Lord which said unto me. The Lord which said unto me.

Ultimately, all faith has to rest on the Word of God. And so we find that Jacob has not only claimed covenant relationship with God, but he has put beneath his petition the sure, unchanging Word of God. He said, "The Lord which said unto me, Return unto the country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee." (Gen. 32:9) This is faith, when your heart leaps out over the abyss of the impossible, with nothing under you but the Word of God. Him that cometh to God must believe that God keeps His Word, and this we find Jacob doing.

Then we find that he fully acknowledges his own unworthiness, and his own sin. "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth that Thou hast shown unto Thy servant." (Gen. 32:10) Here is a man that is prepared in some measure at least to admit and acknowledge and confess his sin. "I am unworthy." But this prayer is not complete until you come to this last portion where Jacob begins to see that the only true and proper motive for answered prayer is the glory of God.

"Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he will come and smite me and the mother with the children, and Thou sayst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitudes." (Gen. 32:11,12) And thus Jacob saw that the reason for the answer of prayer in protecting him was not the children's sake, the

mother's sake, or his sake, but the glory of God who had promised. And therefore his prayer has now come to the place where he said, "Do this for Thine own praise and for Thine own glory."

And these ingredients must be in every prayer, if it is to be effectual. A prayer of repentance, a prayer of contrition, a prayer of return, covenant relationship, the sure Word of God, a confession and acknowledgement of guilt, and the only real reason for desire, expecting God to answer, is His glory. And thus we find him returning, as you must return, if since you came to first meet Him at your Bethel of forgiveness and pardon, you have gone astray into the world and into your own will and own way.

This is the way of return. This is the way of pardon. This is the way of forgiveness. Next we find Jacob at Peniel (in the 32 Chapter). Here in this, beginning with verse 24, "Jacob went over the brook Jabbok...and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. Jacob was left alone." My dear friend, we never truly see ourselves until we are alone with God. Oh, to what great lengths we will go to keep from this meeting with God, alone, when everyone has left us, just as he was left by his servants, by his family, by his wives, by his flocks, by his herds.

He had nothing now on which he could rest, because Esau was quite capable of destroying it all. And so Jacob is alone. And it is when we are alone in that moment of encounter, that moment of solemnity, when our spirits face God that we discover that it doesn't matter what we think about ourselves, and it doesn't matter what others think about us. The only question that has any significance in that moment is, What does God think of us? And until we get alone we are really not interested.

Most of our lives we spend in trying to cause ourselves to think well of ourselves in our own eyes, or in the eyes of others. But God in His great love for Jacob has crowded Jacob into a corner where he is alone with God. And I think the best thing that we could pray

is, O God, but me off from all support until I am alone with Thee, and see Thee and rightly see myself. And there it says, "A man wrestled with him." My dear, we frequently think that this is intercessory prayer, and Jacob is wrestling with the man. But this isn't what the text said. It didn't say Jacob wrestled with the man. It says, "The man wrestled with Jacob." This man was Jesus Christ; the very One he had seen in the vision of the ladder is now wrestling with him as the Angel of the Lord.

I believe this is Christ in theophany. It is as though God were so desperately concerned about Jacob. It is as though this were Jacob's very last chance. And God can never again get this man into a corner where he will see himself. Why his name is deceiver, supplanter, and he has just been rolling out from all the pressure that God would put on him. But finally God loves him so much that He says, I will wrestle with him. And oh, how God has had to do that with you and with me, how he has had to wrestle with us to bring us to the place where we are prepared to allow Him to do with us what He wants to do.

For you understand that Jacob was proud, and so are we. He had to yield to God before God could bless him. But Jacob stood his ground and defended himself, and sought to resist God in an effort to hinder God's effort to break him and to prepare him for blessing. But God loved him too much. God wanted to exalt him. God wanted to lift him to a royal life. God wanted to bless him with infinite blessing, beyond anything Laban could bestow. And Jacob was unwilling. And so God did the thing that He will have to do with all of us.

He touched Jacob where Jacob was the strongest. He put His finger on his thigh, and this man that had been capable of fighting his own way, deceiving his brother, and wrestling with Laban, now has had all

strength drained from him, and the cord of his strength is like the cord in the flame. It's gone. And there Jacob is. He is broken at last. But oh, see the wisdom of this man. When he was broken he was wise enough to cling. God touched him where his strength lay. God broke him where his strength was, but Jacob had the wisdom that comes from the desperate.

And he laid hold upon God, and he clung to God, realizing that "faithful are the wounds of a friend," and God never hurts us for the hurt's sake, but like a surgeon only to heal us. (Pro. 27:6) And God touched him, only that he could bring this man to the place where he could take blessing beyond anything that he could drive before him, anything that he could count or weigh. And so Jacob says, "I will not let thee go until Thou bless me." (Gen 32:26) And it is my conviction, dear heart, that many of you who have yearned for a life of victory, yearned for a life of the fullness of the Spirit, are still on the threshold of it, still on the other side of Jabbok brook, because you have not taken hold of Him and said, O God, I am willing for you to wound me where wounds must come, but I will not let Thee go until Thou dost bless me.

There is no easy way. The Cross always touches the dearest. He sent over his wives. He sent over his children. He sent over his herds. They can go easily, but now it is himself. Now it is his strength, and now the cross pierces. And Jacob wisely says, "I'll not let Thee go until Thou dost bless me." And then God said to him, "What is your name? What is your name?" That is all He asked. What is your name? Oh, I can see this man. He turns his head. He does not want to tell Him his name, because he knew the name.

He said, My name is Deceiver. My name is supplanter. My name is cheat. My name is mean. My name is crafty. "My name is Jacob." (Gen. 32:27) Oh, what a picture this is of the human heart, my heart, your heart. This is what God sees in us. This is that nature. This is what we are. This is why Paul said, "All that is in me I count but refuse. And I am in Christ." (Phil. 3:8) Because all you are and I am by nature is Jacob, and God can't bless Jacob. And so Jacob has to die, and God touches him that he might die.

And he says, My name is crafty, and cheat, and mean, and supplanter, and deceiver. "My name is Jacob." And so are we. And when we come to the place where we know our name, know what we are, and we are willing, broken before the Lord, then we discover with Jacob that brokenness before brought blessing. And Jehovah said to him, "You are going to have a new name now. You are going to have a new name. And your new name is going to be Israel, a prince with God." (Gen. 32:28) Oh, he had wanted to be a prince.

He had stolen the birthright. He had wanted to be a prince. He had acquired great wealth and influence. He wanted to be a prince. But he couldn't get it until God touched him and broke him, and then in the brokenness he clung to him and said, "I can't let Thee go until Thou dost bless me." And then God could touch him and say, "Your name is going to be Israel, a prince with God." What happened? As I meditated upon this yesterday, my heart broke. As you see here in these last verses.

In verse 30 and 31, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him." (Gen. 32:30,31) O my friend it's in the midnight of death when all is gone, but it is in the morning when the sun rises. What happens to us doesn't hurt us. It is what we do about it. And he wrestled and God touched him. And God touched the strong cord, and then

in the next morning, he says, "the sun rose upon him." Blessing, joy, and peace, and release from the tyranny of his own heart, and deliverance from the bondage to himself; and the sun rose upon him. O dear Christian heart, have you ever been willing to go down into death with Christ that you can come up in resurrection and have the sun rise upon you. The sun rose upon him. And he halted upon his thigh. And years later he makes his way down into Egypt. Here is Israel, a prince with God, halting upon his thigh, but

he is a prince with God, and God broke that he might give, and God stripped that He might cover.

And then we find that Jacob still has not had enough. Isn't it strange. He met God back there and he went into Haran, and he met God at Jabbok's brook, and what did he do. He told Esau the next day when he met him, Now Esau you go on over to Seir and I will come and join you there. And Esau went ahead and he turned and went up to Succoth, near Shechem. Isn't it strange. And you know when you have died, and you say, O death has wrought in me. And then you say, I'll never be tempted again.

You are going to be tempted the next day. And you will turn to Succoth, if you are like most of us. And he went up to Succoth, but oh the grief, oh the grief where he grieved God and deceived his brother, and so we find that when he went up and settled near Shechem, he had bought some land, began to mingle with the people, perhaps Mrs. Jacob said to him, Well you know it is nice, here our children can get an education, and they can keep up with the fashion and we are near all the things.

And they stayed there until the sons of Shechem came out and saw Dinah his daughter. And Jacob's only daughter was ruined. Her happiness was gone and broken. And then out of vengeance Jacob's sons became assassins and murderers because Jacob had disobeyed God and gone up to Succoth. And now how gracious is God. God ought to have let him go long before this. And God ought to have let you go long before this. And he ought to have let me go long before this. But you see in Jacob, God reveals His grace.

He did not let him go. But he had to reap what he had sown. There is Dinah ruined, there's his children, murderers and assassins. And finally God gets through to him again, and so we find there in the 35th (chapter of Genesis) that "God came and said unto to Jacob, Arise and go up to Bethel." "Arise go up to Bethel." That is where he should have stayed, never should have left. But he went back to Haran and served Laban, and he has gone to Succoth and served his family. And now God says, Arise, go back where you started, go back to Bethel.

Go back to Bethel. And God reminded him of his promise, the promise that Jacob had made to God that he had broken, for he said, I will serve you but he hadn't. And then God's Word reminded Jacob of God's promise to him which God had kept. I'll keep you. I will bless you. I will go before you. You brother won't hurt you. And then God's Word reprovved him, because he has allowed idols to come into his house, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life. Jacob knew they were there.

And even though he had made covenant that the Lord should be his God, he knew that his family had submitted to idolatry. But now something's happened. Everything had been broken. He is halting on his side. The cross' work. But it is not enough. And so he says to his family, Bring all your idols. I have had enough. This is going to be a home where Jehovah reigns. We are finished now. You bring them. And they brought their earrings, and they brought their idols. And he buried them.

There was not any way he could melt them down. There was not anything he could do with them. They had to get rid of them. The thing that grieved God. And, my friend, if we are going to go back to Bethel, we have got to deal with everything that grieves God. We've got to take it and bury it just as he did. And then he started out, and from the moment that he started out God's blessing was upon him, for we find that the people seeing Jacob go had terror fall upon their hearts.

This man that had fled in terror from his brother and from Laban, meeting God, found that the people fled in terror from him. Oh, what a revelation this brings to our hearts as we find that from the moment he

began to obey God, God began to bless. And so Jacob returned to Bethel, that miserable, arid, rocky place, but it was the place where in the dust and on the ground, God met him, And that is where He wants to bring us, back to Bethel. And Jehovah appeared unto Jacob again.

Oh, to think of it. Jehovah appeared. All this year he had the Word of Jehovah, but He had not appeared to him. He saw Him, the ladder. He met Him there by the Jabbok's brook, but now Jehovah appeared to him again. Think of it. All the years he spent at Haran were lost. For he had worked. He had worked hard. But he had not worked

for the right master. He had not worked in the right way. He had not worked for the right wages. And so almost twenty years over in Haran were lost, "wood, hay, stubble." (I Cor. 3:12) And then down at Succoth he had bought land, he had farmed, he had tilled, he had worked, but he had not worked under the right direction for the right reason. And it was just "wood, hay and stubble." If you read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the 29th verse, you discover that it said, And "by faith Israel crossed the Red Sea."

And the next thing it says, "And by faith they conquered Jericho." (Gen. 29:30) And forty years in the wilderness are written over as meaningless, because they were not in faith. And so all the years of Jacob's life was just "wood, hay and stubble." How much of your life is wood, hay, and stubble? Oh, you have worked. You have served. You have served the wrong master, the wrong direction, and the wrong wages. "Wood, hay, stubble." No result. Nothing to endure. But now he has come back.

He is back, back to Bethel. And he takes the stones, and he builds the altar, and he bows before Jehovah, and he pours the oil out, and he has forgiveness, and he has pardon, for he has come back to the House of God. God hath revealed Himself. God has revealed Himself to him, and so he finds a new name, the name is El Shaddai, the God who is Enough. He was enough. He never need left Bethel. For God was enough to protect him from Esau. But he fled. He had to take matters in his own hand.

He had to secure his own way. He had to pursue his own good. He had to be Jacob. But now he is Israel, and as Israel he finds that at Bethel God is El Shaddai. The rest wasn't necessary. All waste, all useless, futile. And so he discovers here in this 16th verse, "And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath:..." (Gen. 35:16) Bethel means the House of God, and Ephrath means the House of Bread. It is just a little way from the place of reconciliation.

It is just a little way from the place of forgiveness. It is just a little way from the place of restored fellowship. It is just a little way from the place of pardon to the house of nourishment, to the house of satisfaction, to the house of strength. And he found that it was just a little way from Bethel to Ephrath. And he had been out there trying so hard to satisfy himself, and he couldn't. O dear heart, today let us arise and go back to Bethel. There is nothing at Haran.

There is nothing in Succoth. There is nothing but death at Jabbok Brook. Let us not stay there. Let us go back to Bethel. Back to the house of God, back to full fellowship with God, back to the joy you once knew, back to feed upon the bread of Ephrath. Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Shall we pray. Father, we are here before Thee, a company of eternity bound men and women. Jacobs all, not a one of us that can point a finger and say, He is Jacob. Jacobs all. We know our hearts.

When we say with Paul, "In me and my flesh there dwelleth no good thing." (Rom. 7:18) O God, how laboriously we have sought prosperity and peace and princship in Haran, pleasure in Succoth, all to no avail. God of Grace, Thou art wrestling with this people, wrestling with us, that Thou canst touch us and

wound us, and break us, and bring us to the place of death, change our names as Thou hast changed hearts. We ask Thee, Lord, that everyone that has ever come to Bethel and known forgiveness and seen Jesus Christ as the ladder to Heaven, and has vowed to serve Him as Lord, and has changed the place from Luz to Bethel, from separation to the House of God, but have gone out to Haran, to Succoth.

O God, stir our hearts, the desert, the distress, the heartache, the grief, the pain to us and Thee is too costly. Put into our hearts today a heavenly, holy longing to go back to Bethel, the place of forgiveness, pardon, cleansing, back to the place of bread, of Ephrath. Meet us, Lord, we wait before Thee. Here we are, Lord, beginning the 81st year of history of this church. We cannot serve Thee at Haran. It has got to be at Bethel. And Thou art El Shaddai. But Thou wilt only reveal Thyself as El Shaddai at Bethel and so we pray, dear God of Grace, that Thou wilt bring us back every one to Bethel.

We hear Thee as Thou art calling to us, as Thou didst to him, Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Go up to the place of brokenness, go up to the place of confession, go back to the place of beginning. Do your first works. And find that I have never changed. I have such rich blessing for you. Speak, heavenly Father. There is so much Thou dost want to do. Such blessings Thou dost want to give. O El Shaddai, El Shaddai, the God who is enough, come upon us and bring us back to Bethel.

With our heads bowed and our eyes closed...What are you going to do? Are you going to go back to Bethel? Have you found yourself out here somewhere? You know what I want you to do today, if you find God speaking to your heart get up where you are and go into Wilson Chapel and kneel and pray and God will meet you. Will you do it right now? Do it today, don't wait, go back to Bethel. Let's stand in silent prayer.

Our Father, we thank and praise Thee that Thou art the God of all Grace and Thy Grace is sufficient. Thy strength is made perfect in weakness, grace to pardon, grace to forgive, grace to cleanse, grace to restore. Lord, Thou knowest each heart, the ones to whom Thou has been speaking, the ones that have heard Thee say, Go back to Bethel, the ones who will go home and say, Oh, why didn't I mind God, why didn't I go, why didn't I deal with it. Lord God of Grace, Thou knowest us and we are asking Thee to reveal Thyself as El Shaddai to us as a people. Come Thou upon us. Come Thou upon us. Continue with us.

Now may the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the Blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be the glory now and forever. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Morning, January 21, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor. ©PRBTMI 1962

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