Jacob to Israel â?? A Life Transformed â?? 13

Description

Genesis 35

After all the problems of the previous chapter God is still in control and Jacob is still listening and following Almighty God. How is it that God is so patient with us? What is it that caused Jacob to hold fast to his â??God Encounterâ?? and not give up? The answer is because God had not given up on him.

We find Jacob, in Genesis 35, having to move on because of the disastrous actions of his sons. But he is not alone, the chapter starts â??Then God saidâ?•, â??Arise, go up to Bethelâ?•. God is at work in all our situations and here He is bringing Jacob back to the place where he started his changed life, the place of the â??God Encounterâ??. God wants to remind Jacob that he has not forgotten him and that He is still interested in his life, and surprisingly, that of his family. It is comforting to know that God does not give up on us even when we fail Him.

Jacob has really learnt what it is to follow Almighty God. He instructs all his household to â??*Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garmentsâ?•. Genesis 35:2*

Colossians 3:8-11 tells us something about â??putting offâ?• and â??putting onâ?•.

Jacob is calling his household to repentance.

Genesis 35:2

- Put away â?? in other words identify what it is that is getting in the way of God working in our lives.
- purify yourselves â?? which is to take action and call on God to free us.
- change your clothes â?? take off the old, that is the thing or things that are condemned, those things which are the cause or causes of the problem and put on new fresh clothes, clothes supplied by Godâ??s amazing work of salvation.

True repentance will cost us and requires our action. We have to be willing to acknowledge that there are things in our lives which constitute idols, things that get in the way of us following God. We then have to confess and â??get rightâ?•, bringing ourselves back into line with God. We call this being justified, we do this in conjunction with God Himself. Jesus died to bring an end to Sin and in one selfless act justified us, or made it possible for us to be right with God. That act alone is useless if we as individuals do not allow ourselves to be justified.

Hebrews 12:1-3 talks about laying aside the things that hinder us from having a relationship with God. It calls us to look to Jesus the author and finisher of FAITH and then to consider HIM.

Jacob has called his household to repentance in Genesis 35:2-3 he intercedes for them and leads the way back to Bethel, â??The House of Godâ?•, and the place where Jacob had his first encounter with

God Almighty. By his actions Jacob assures his household that he will stand in the gap, that he will take the initiative and call on God Almighty, God who had heard his cry and had remained faithful to the promise that He would be with him.

We then find Jacobâ??s decisive action and leadership is the very thing that causes his household to heed the command,â?•*Put away the strange gods among you*â??, as in Genesis 35:4 they bring all their strange gods and their earrings in their ears and Jacob buries them underneath a great oak tree. When Jesus calls us to repent, the cost is great but necessary if we are to see the hand of Almighty God at work in our lives and situations. The call of repentance will always call us back to the original place where we first encountered God. We know that this ground is secure and on this ground God can reiterate His original calling to us He can also refresh us and equip us for the future as this ground is sacred and hallowed, it is the ground of our â??God Encounterâ??. Jesus takes all our â??strange godsâ?•, those things that hinder us from getting to know Him and buries them at the foot of the cross, out of sight and gone forever.

Jacob has called his family to repentance, he has dealt with â??the foreign godsâ?? by burying them under the great oak tree and is now set to move on. The cross is not the end of our life, it is just the beginning, we cannot always live in the shadow of the cross, yes we may need to return to it throughout our lives but only to remind ourselves of the wonderful work of Salvation in order to refresh ourselves and to equip ourselves for our continued journey.

Jacob had proved his faith, the Faith that had been entrusted to him at his â??God Encounterâ??. As Paul the apostle puts it â??Christ in you the hope of gloryâ?•.

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Author
cowmansteve