

# Fear Itself - Genesis 32 1-23

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Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[ 0 : 00 ] All right, so my title today is Fear Itself. Boom, boom, boom. We're going to look a lot at fear today. It's a pretty cool section of scripture.

So where were we? If you remember two weeks ago, Jacob, we left him having just left Laban, and he's now on his way back to Bethel, the house of God, where he set up the pillar and anointed it. He's been 20 years with Laban, and we finally left Laban behind after we identified Laban, learned to live with Laban, left Laban, and then learned to love Laban. And Jacob now finds himself between Laban and Esau.

Just when you think you've left Laban behind, you got Esau ahead of you. And that's where we find him. And he's come down from Haran, if you remember, north of Israel, like a week's journey, and he's back down into the land of promise.

We're going to see, not today, Esau coming to meet Jacob. We'll get through half the chapter, a little more than half, about verse 32.

[ 1 : 05 ] But Jacob will send messengers to Esau. And when he does, Esau is going to then eventually come back. Well, where is Esau right now? Is he home with Dad, with Isaac? Esau is in the land of Edom.

And the land of Edom is down south of the Dead Sea. So Mount Seir, here's maybe a better view over here. This is zooming in beneath the Dead Sea.

And there we see this land of Edom. And this is where Esau is dwelling. So Esau is not in the land of promise anymore. He's left there.

And he's gone out to dwell south of Israel. And that's where Jacob will send messengers to. Jacob, if you remember, if you look on this map, he's up there by the river Javik. You see where Sukkoth is. And that's where he is right now. He's come that far. Laban tracks him to there.

[ 2 : 03 ] He has his Mizpah with Laban, where he says, Hey, Laban, God's calling me to go somewhere else and to do something else other than what you would like me to do.

And Laban says, Fine, I don't ever want to see you again. And then he goes back home. And so Jacob now finds himself here in the beginning of chapter 32. Our title is Fear Itself.

And if you want to look at an outline, it's very well alliterated. You want to do alliteration. P is the best letter to do it with, believe me. But verses 1 through 6 is peace and a presence.

Peace and presence. And you have Jacob between Laban and Esau. And God comes and meets with him. And there's this peace and this presence with God. 7 through 12 is panic and prayer.

Jacob hears Esau is going to come.

And he kind of just goes into this tailspin. But he also prays, which is new for Jacob. And then 13 through 20 is plans and presence with a T, not presence with a C. And this is where Jacob is kind of trying to be the old Jacob.

[ 3 : 02 ] He's trying to make plans, do a deal, and work this thing out for himself. And then you have 21 through 23 people and places. This is just kind of the preamble before Esau shows up.

And as we're going to see in the next week, before Jacob meets with this man he's going to wrestle with all night, it's just him and his family. They're just kind of a mess. It's just a bunch of people and places.

So, let's get into the text. Verse 1. And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

And when Jacob saw them, he said, this is God's host. They called the name of that place Manaheim, or literally two camps. Remember last time in Genesis 28 that Jacob had a visitation from angels.

He was on his way from the land of promise, from Hebron, and he was heading to Haran, heading up to visit Uncle Laban. And in chapter 28, verse 12, and he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up

on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

[ 4 : 09 ] And Jacob called that place what? The house of God. He said, I was asleep in God's living room, and I didn't even know it. So, he calls it the house of God. Well, this place in chapter 32 here, he calls it Manaheim.

He says, this is God's host. The host of the angels were here. I didn't even know it. I set up camp in the middle of God's camp. Two camps. Psalm 34, verse 7 says, the angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear him and delivers them.

Jacob is in a good spot right now. He has responded to God's word and God's voice. God said, go back, Jacob. Go back to Bethel. And he has. He's just left Laban, who has tried to pull one over on him, and God has protected him.

Laban behind and Esau in front. And in the middle of that, God shows up and pretty much says to Jacob, hey, I'm with you. You've just left Laban. Esau's ahead of you, and I'm with you.

God knows how best to prepare his people for what's coming next. Makes me think in 1 Kings chapter 19, maybe a little small. If you remember, Elijah had just had that great victory on Mount Carmel, and he had put to death the prophets of Baal.

[ 5 : 18 ] And then Jezebel sends him a letter and says, you're going to be dead tomorrow. And he kind of just goes into a tailspin and runs in fear. He's running to the Mount of God. He's running back to Sinai.

And it says, In 1 Kings chapter 19, starting in verse 5. Verse 5.

And so here's Jacob, as God is meeting him, essentially saying, Jacob, you can't do this on your own.

You couldn't handle Laban on your own. You're not going to handle Esau on your own, but I'm with you. Laban, if you remember, Jacob is our man of the covenant. Laban was our man of the world. So Jacob now has learned from Laban how not to be a Laban.

And he separated himself. He separated himself out from the world. This is a good thing to pursue the will of God. And in verse 3, Jacob sends messengers before him to Esau, his brother, under the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

[ 6 : 45 ] And we just looked at that on our map there. There's, if you look, there's the mountain range on the east there, the mountain range of Seir, then the valley of Edom. And so Jacob is sending a message all the way from Jabbok, way down beneath the Dead Sea.

I mean, you're looking at, I don't know what the turnaround would be, a week, week and a half before they got down there and came back. And so back in our text, in verse 4, Before we go any further, look at how his message to Esau is phrased.

He says, He's coming in humility. He's sending this message in humility because he's learned how not to be a Laban. He's not saying, Esau, remember, I have the birthright.

I have the blessing and I'm coming home. So get out of my way. And God has protected me from Laban. You get out of my way. One of the best teachers of humility is to witness the consequences of pride.

And Jacob has just spent 20 years witnessing the consequences of a man of pride. And he's learned, I don't want to be that way. I don't want to be like this guy. And so he comes and he approaches Esau with humility.

[ 8 : 05 ] And in verse 5, this is the message that continues on. He says, And tell Esau, I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and men's servants and women's servants. And I have sent to my Lord, Esau, that I may find grace in your sight.

Grace does not press its claim based upon its own merit. But it relies on the favor of another, doesn't it? We are saved by grace through faith. That not of ourselves is the gift of God.

We don't press our claim based upon merit. We don't say, God, by my merit, by my effort, Jacob didn't come and say, Esau, remember I've got the birthright. Remember I've got. But grace relies on the favor of another.

And so Jacob coming in grace is relying on Esau's favor, just as we come to the Lord and rely upon his favor, not on our merit. But Jacob wants Esau to know that he did not need anything from Esau. He's not boasting. He's not like, dude, I got flocks and men's servants and maid servants and cars and houses. He's not boasting. He's letting Esau know, I don't need anything. I'm not coming to take anything.

[ 9 : 09 ] I'm not coming to be your Lord. I'm coming in humility. He wanted Esau to know that the only thing he desired from him was his acceptance. He said, let me find favor with you.

Would you accept me? I don't need anything from you. Jacob is in a good spot right now. This is probably the best spot we've seen him in a while. And Isaiah 26, verse 3 says, Jacob right now, I mean, you would say he's chill.

He's like, ah, it's good. I mean, I got two wives and two concubines and all these children that are just making all this noise, but I'm good. I'm at peace. Laban's behind me. Esau's ahead of me. But God is with me. And then verse 6. And the messengers returned to Jacob. Like we said, how long was this? A week, week and a half. Jacob's just sitting there by the river Jabbok, thinking, I am done with Laban.

Waking up every day, going, I'm done with Laban. God, you delivered me from Laban. This is amazing. And the messengers came and said, we came to your brother Esau. And also, he's coming to meet you.

[ 10 : 19 ] Oh, well, that's a little odd. Okay. Esau's coming to see me. I mean, I didn't need to do that. Oh, and 400 men also with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.

And he divided the people that were with him, the flocks and herds and the camels, into two bands. There are three words there to describe Jacob's fear, to let us know Jacob is terrified.

Hey, we saw your brother. You had to go. Well, he's going to come and meet you. Okay, that's cool. You know, maybe he wants to see me. And he's bringing 400 men. Okay, he wants to kill me.

The word there where it says Jacob was greatly afraid, greatly means exceedingly. Afraid means to tremble. And distress means straightened. So, in other words, Jacob was trembling exceedingly, and he had nowhere to turn.

He was stuck. He was straightened. He's like, I have nowhere to turn. And he is flipping out. Fear is irrational. Fear is always irrational. We're going to look at fear quite a bit. And it will do irrational things in an attempt to alleviate what is causing the fear.

[ 11 : 24 ] So, Jacob, irrationally here, is like, well, okay, I'm going to divide my people into two. And if Esau come, in verse 8, to the one company and kill it, well, then the other, which is left, is going to escape.

Really? You think the other, it's made up of little kids and women. You think they're going to escape those 400 men? They're going to chew up the one, but then they're not going to catch the other? Jacob, this is irrational.

Jacob, what happened to that will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind has stayed on thee because he trusts in thee? What happened to my Lord Esau? If I may find grace in your sight. Fear takes into its own hands what faith leaves in God's hands.

So here, Jacob is taking into his own hands what, by faith, he should have left in God's hands.

Jacob is looking at this situation before him with his natural sight. The host of the Lord was still with him, and so was the Lord of hosts, wasn't he?

But in his natural view of things, he couldn't process this. Proverbs 3, verse 25 says, Be not afraid of sudden fear. Why not?

[ 12 : 31 ] Does fear ever come slowly? You know, it's like, how are you doing today? Well, you know, I think I'm going to be afraid later. I just kind of feel it coming on slowly, you know, like a headache comes on slow. But yeah, I think if you call me tonight, I'm probably going to be afraid.

No, fear comes suddenly. It's something that comes over us in an instant. It doesn't take a long time. Isaiah 41, 14. This is a fantastic verse, especially considering where we're at.

Isaiah prophesying to Israel says, Fear not, thou worm, Jacob. And you men of Israel, I will help you, says the Lord, and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

So, Jacob, God's got this. New Testament, parallel to that, in 2 Timothy 1, 7, Paul writes, For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, of a sound mind.

That sudden fear that comes on you is never the Lord. The Lord will never lead you. We are to fear the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. But that's not this fear that Jacob has.

That's not that we're supposed to be exceedingly terrified of the Lord.

[ 13 : 33 ] We're supposed to reverence the Lord. And so here now, Jacob finds himself afraid. Afraid. Oswald Chambers has this quote.

He writes, The remarkable thing about God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else.

Whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else. Jacob has, to this point, he's experienced

God's promise.

When God came to him before he went to Haran, when he met him the first time, when the angels ascending and descending, he said, Jacob, I'll be with you. He promised him that he would keep him and be with him. He experienced his presence.

They told him he was with him. He's experienced God's provision. Remember when he said to Laban, I don't have anything for my family. You've got everything. And over the next six years, God took from Laban and provided for Jacob.

But Jacob still needed to experience God's preservation. God, can you keep me? You see, for Jacob, Jacob had just come off an experience of God keeping him when he was in the right.

[14:36] Like, I know I'm right, God, and this man's trying to take advantage of me. And God kept him. In this instance, Jacob is in the wrong. And he knows it. Will God keep him? And God keep him.

God, I'm in sin. I'm in the wrong. Jacob has avoided dealing with this issue in his relationship with Esau for now 20 years, 20 plus years.

And he's afraid. He's afraid of coming face to face, not with Esau, but with himself. Because he's pushed this out of his life for so long. And one of the things, I was not planning on going this, diving into this next section we're going to.

It's one of those where I had all my notes set and I was ready. And the Lord was like, talk about this. I'm like, that's not going to fit. So that's why we didn't do this whole chapter. We never do a whole chapter. What am I kidding? But there's this question that this situation with Jacob and Esau brings up.

Jacob has been 20 years with this in his past, this unresolved situation where he's the one in the wrong. If I do not correct the errors in my past, will I be unable to be successful in my future relationship with God?

[15:42] Can I move forward with God knowing I have this issue in my past? Knowing that I've got an issue with sin back there. Something undealt with. Can I move forward in my relationship with God? That leads to the next question.

Is sin like math? Not math is sin. Sorry, guys. Math isn't sin. Math is wonderful. Doesn't everybody love math? No? Okay. Next to your Bible, math is the best.

Is math like sin? And what do I mean by that? Here's a math equation. You figure it out. You can tell me afterwards what you think it is. But so there's three parts to that, right? If I get that first part wrong, two plus two is four.

If I say two plus two is five, and then I get the rest of the equation right, is the equation right? No, it's wrong. No matter how long I go on from there, and no matter how advanced my math gets, and correct it is from going on from there, that first part is wrong.

It's wrong. So the end of the equation will never be right. No matter how long I spend being right after that error, it can never make up for the fact that I have an error in the beginning.

[16:50] And unless that error is corrected, what's going to happen? It's always going to be wrong. We all know what a compass is, right? And there's those little hash marks on it, the little degrees.

I mean, they're like that far apart, right? You set your course, and you follow that compass, you know, 35 degrees east or whatever. Well, if you're going somewhere, and you're off course by just one degree, after one foot, you'll miss your target by 0.2 inches.

Oh, so what? You're off by one degree, who cares? After 100 yards, you'll be off by 5 feet. After a mile, you'll be off by 92 feet. If you were trying to get from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., going across the country, you'd miss that by 42 miles, by starting off by one degree.

And if you're going to the moon, you'd miss the moon by 4,169 miles. If you started off so far, just far enough off that in one foot, you're not even, you know, a quarter of an inch off.

By the time you get to the moon, you've missed it. So if I do not correct the errors of my past, am I able to move on successfully with God? Can I continue to build on this relationship?

[18:00] And wait a minute, everything good was good from there. What about the past?

Thankfully, the Bible gives us an answer. Hebrews 8, verse 12. The Lord says, Did he say that?

No, I'll remember them no more. Those errors, I'll remember them no more. 2 Corinthians 5, 17.

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away.

Behold, all things are become new. The cross does not correct our mistakes. It sounds almost like heresy. Wait a minute. What do you mean Jesus doesn't correct our mistakes?

It doesn't. He erases them. Right? Guys, kids, it'd be like if you did math and you go to get it corrected. And instead of correcting it, they just erase the page. I said, you're good. It's all good. That's God's grace. Colossians 2, verses 13 and 14. And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

[ 19 : 07 ] Blotting out, literally erasing the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. The cross erases our mistakes.

It does. It wipes them out before God. We don't have to go back and correct them. I don't have to figure out where in my past that math equation was off. What does it do? It erases it and says, hey, start from here.

Start new from right here. We confess our sins. He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If I get off course by 4,000 whatever miles and I realize it, I'm like, man, where did I go wrong?

How am I going to get back there? It's going to take so long. It doesn't work that way. The Lord says, let's just start from right here. Set a new course from right here. Follow me from right here. So with Jacob, he's grown in the Lord. He's grown a lot, hasn't he? But not all relationships can move forward at the same pace. Laban. For Laban, his was not a relationship with Jacob that could move forward.

[ 20 : 11 ] It had an end point. It had an expiration date. And yet, not all relationships are ready to move forward, are they? Esau, 10 years prior, may not have been ready for Jacob to move forward.

What Jacob doesn't know is Esau is going to come to Jacob and be thrilled to see him. Jacob thinks he's coming to kill him. But there is a point, and only God knows when that is, when it's time to move forward in that.

So what is our part? How do I process this? Well, if we're in a situation with a Laban who's wronged us, Matthew 6, verse 12 says, when Jesus is explaining to the disciples how to pray, in verse 12, he says, and forgive us our debts.

We're to pray that as we forgive our debtors. And then, down in verse 14, Jesus says, for if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Well, we know that can't be talking about salvation. For we are saved by grace, through faith, not of works. So that is clearly a work. That is, if I forgive and do this correctly, God forgives me.

[ 21 : 19 ] So it's not talking about salvation, is it? It's talking about relationship. But if we're not willing to release people and forgive them, and we're not willing to extend that to them, then we're not in a place to experience that from God.

Because our own nature, our fallen nature, will project onto God the same thing that we're dealing with other people in the same way. If I have an unforgiving heart, I'm going to expect God to deal the same way with me.

And I will not be able to receive his forgiveness. How can I receive God's forgiveness and be unwilling to extend it? That was Jacob's situation with Laban.

What about with Esau? With Esau, Jacob did the dirty. Well, in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus says in verse 23, He says, If you bring your gift to the altar, and you remember that your brother has ought against you, leave there your gift before the altar and go your way.

First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. If you come to church on Sunday and raise your hands to praise the Lord, and as you're like, God, you're so good. Your mercy is so good. Thank you for your forgiveness, for blotting out my sins.

[ 22 : 24 ] Then you remember that your brother has ought against you. That is a legitimate cause that you have done him wrong that you're remembering. It's not him coming to you and saying, I'm annoyed with you. I don't like you.

I've got something against you. People are going to be in your lives like that forever. But this is talking about if you remember, your brother has a legitimate reason to hold something against you, because you've been wrong.

You have done him wrong, and God's bringing that to your remembrance. He's saying, Leave your gift there. You can't praise God and thank Him for His grace and mercy in sin, knowing that He's bringing that to your remembrance.

He's saying, Hey, remember when you treated that guy that way? Now, in both of these situations, you're not responsible for the other person's part. I'm not responsible. If, in the first situation, I forgive that person, that person may not want to be reconciled.

I can forgive and release that person, and they may have no interest whatsoever in continuing on a relationship. In the second instance, I can go to that brother and say, Man, I'm sorry. Remember that time I told you that, you know, I'd help you find your wallet, because you lost it at church?

[ 23 : 30 ] I stole it. You know, I'm sorry. You know, He may not be like, Oh, it's okay, brother. Let's be friends. That relationship may go nowhere. But you have a part before God that you can do.

For Jacob, I don't believe he's dealt with this situation with Esau. But God hasn't held that against him. He remembers our frame that we are but dust. Right? He knows us.

He knows Jacob. And He has brought him along. We look at our shortcomings. God doesn't. God looks at our victories. Because, remember, our shortcomings, the cross is covered. He's just looking at how He can continue to lead us on into victory.

Let's get another victory. Another one. I'm looking at the 45 failures. He's looking at the three victories. He's like, We can probably add a fourth. I'm like, Oh, what about those? Right? But that's not grace.

We think of it like, Man, I got to go back and fix. And the Lord's like, No, I fixed it. Move forward. I've got this. Jacob now, having escaped Laban, is all too quickly realizing that he's not yet dealt with the Laban in here.

[ 24 : 35 ] Right? That's the issue. And God had used Laban to prepare Jacob for Esau. Jacob doesn't know this. But God has used it. Psalm 37.5 says, Commit your way unto the Lord.

Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. The literal translation of that, which I love. It's one of my favorite scriptures. Psalm 37.5, literally translated as, Roll on Jehovah your way.

Roll it off onto the Lord. And trust upon Him. And He works. So you take the situation, God, I don't know what to do with this. I can't handle it. You roll it off onto the Lord. You trust upon Him, and He works it out.

You don't have to. It's like a tangled mess. And you keep trying to untangle it, and it just gets tighter and tighter, and more knots and more knots. Eventually the Lord's like, and He's just waiting, and finally put it in His hand, and He can untangle the whole mess.

Remember we said it last week, that God works all things together for His glory and our good. So, the question that we first asked there, if I do not correct the errors in my past, will I be unable to be successful in my future relationship with God?

[ 25 : 43 ] Yes, because you are never asked to correct errors in your past. That's God's job. It's the cross. He does that. We're asked to move forward with Him. Moving forward with God may mean He takes care of things from our past, but it's not our responsibility to try and correct what only God can correct.

And that is a wonderful promise of grace. Moving on in verse 9. Jacob now does something remarkable for him. Jacob has nowhere to turn.

Remember, he's straightened. He can't turn to the left or right. He's like, ah! Laban behind. I can't go backwards and Esau's coming to get me. So, he prays. Jacob turns to prayer. This is remarkable for him.

And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, return unto your country, into your kindred, and I will deal with you. And I will deal well with you. He's reminding God of this. Prayer is the remedy for fear. Prayer takes from fear's hands.

Remember, fear takes from God's hands what faith leaves there, right?

[ 26 : 47 ] Well, prayer takes from the hands of fear and returns the situation back to God when we pray. Philippians 4, verse 6, be careful or anxious, literally, for nothing.

But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Don't be anxious.

Instead, pray. Return it to the Lord's hands. Verse 10, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which you have showed unto your servant.

For with my staff, I passed over this Jordan and now I am become two bands. He's saying, God, I am not worthy. I had nothing and now I'm coming back blessed beyond measure. He recognizes it's nothing he has done.

Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother. From the hand of Esau. And you know what? God heard that prayer and answered that prayer. Jacob just isn't going to believe it.

[ 27 : 48 ] For I fear him, lest he will come and smite me and the mother with the children. And you said, God, you said this, I will surely do you good and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Lord, if he kills me and the kids, how's this going to happen? We have an example here of prayer by looking at Jacob's prayer and how we step through it. Starting in verse 9 through verse 12, I think there's some things we can pull out here that can be extremely instructive to us.

Jacob's prayer. What does he do first? In verse 9 there, he acknowledges God. He acknowledges who he is. Oh God, of my father Abraham and of my father Isaac and the Lord which spoke to me. He acknowledges who God is. He surrendered to who God is, where he says, the Lord who said unto me. He recognizes he's his Lord, his master. It's based upon what God said, not what Jacob needs or desires or wants.

He bases his prayer first and founds it upon God's word. And he fully understands his position before God, where he says, I'm not worthy. I am not worthy to receive your mercies.

[ 28 : 56 ] He's not demanding of God. He presents his petition before God, only after all of that. Then does he present before God this petition. And he expects an answer based upon who God is, not because of the, you know, power of his prayer or who he is, but fully upon who God is.

This is great. Jacob has turned to prayer. But in the middle of that, in verse 11, he says, deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau. And then he gives us a kind of a, a little key there to where his heart's at.

He says, for I fear him, lest he will come and kill us. Jacob's prayer was genuine. It was true. I think it was more motivated by fear than faith at this point. I don't think he's praying out of faith.

He's praying out of desperation and fear. Still a good thing to do. Better that than not praying. You see, God had answered, God had heard and answered Jacob's prayer already.

Unfortunately for Jacob, he was too consumed by fear and self-preservation to leave this outcome to God. Rule upon Dehover your way. Trust also in him and he works. But Jacob is so consumed by his fear, he did pray.

[ 30 : 05 ] But he's not able to leave this in God's hands. Jacob was going to help God answer this prayer to make sure everything turned out okay. In verse 13, And he lodged there that same night and took of that which came to his hand a present for his brother Esau.

So now he's going to give Esau a present. He's going to help God answer this prayer. And I did have this verse in here. I quoted it earlier. Psalm 103, verse 13. Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him.

For he knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. It's like your kids, your little kids. They're going to make mistakes, but they're kids. That's what they do. So, the Lord knows.

He looks at Jacob and he's not like, Jacob, you should be trusting me. No, he's going to use this. Jacob was viewing God right now as someone to help Jacob accomplish Jacob's plans.

God helped me accomplish my own ends. Instead of as the one who accomplished all things for him. Instead of looking at God as the one who could accomplish everything, he was looking at God as the one who would help him accomplish God's will.

[ 31 : 12 ] God helped me accomplish your will instead of God accomplish your will. And if you choose to use me, great. Verse 14. And he sends then 200 she goats and 20 he goats, 200 hews and 20 rams, 30 milk camels with their colts, 40 kind, that means cattle, cows, 10 bulls, 20 she donkeys and 10 foals.

And he delivered them into the hand of his servants and every drove by themselves. He separated them all out so that Esau is going to just be overwhelmed by this wave one after another of all these gifts.

and said unto his servants, pass over before me and put a space between the drove and drove. What happened to the grace, Jacob? Esau, if I find grace in your sight, forget that, we're going straight on self-effort here.

So, what do we see fear does? It costs unnecessary resources or costs resources unnecessarily. Jacob didn't need to do this. God answered his prayer. Esau was coming in peace.

But Jacob, through his own effort and through fear, he costs resources unnecessarily. And he commanded the foremost in verse 17, saying, when Esau, my brother, meets you, this is what

you're going to say, and asks you, saying, whose art thou?

[ 32 : 31 ] And whither goest thou? And whose are these before you? Then thou shalt say, oh, they be thy servant Jacob's. It's a present sent unto my lord Esau. And behold, also he is behind us.

And so commanded he the second, the third, and all that followed the drove, saying, on this manner you shall speak unto Esau when you find him. It reminds me of the prodigal son, how he's rehearsing to himself.

I'm going to say to my father this, and he's going to say this back to me. Well, son, why did you do this? And then I'm going to say, father, because of this. And he has this whole thing planned, and he gets there and he says, father, and he's just engulfed with a hug.

And so Jacob has this plan. But we see fear projects itself onto others, doesn't it? He's afraid, so he thinks, well, Esau's going to say this, and then you're going to have to respond this way, because Esau, this is his reason for what he's coming for.

And so fear is projecting itself onto others, and fear is also involving others unnecessarily. He's got all of these men now because of doing all of this effort because of his fear.

[ 33 : 29 ] And verse 20, And say you, moreover, behold, your servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him. And that word appease literally means to cover over.

I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face. For adventure, he will accept me. Well, earlier, in verse 5, he said, go and tell my Lord that I may find grace in his sight.

By grace, he will accept me. Well, now he says, well, maybe he'll see all of this and he'll accept me. Jacob is attempting to cover over a past wrong through what is essentially bribery in the relationship.

Instead of giving love to Esau, that's our part in a relationship. Instead of freely giving love to Esau, Jacob is attempting to buy love from Esau, right?

In a relationship, my part is to owe no man nothing but to love one another. But, if I don't want to go to the trouble of the relationship, but I still want the benefit from it, well, I can try and buy your love to fulfill my need for this relationship instead of in sacrificial love giving.

[ 34 : 40 ] Because that doesn't always receive reciprocation, does it? I can love freely, I may not receive that back. So, instead of loving Esau, Jacob is attempting to buy love from Esau.

Proverbs 28, 13 says, he that covers his sins shall not prosper. It doesn't mean covered in the blood, it means trying to hide them. But whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy. Jacob is gone from trusting in grace to placing all of his hopes in his best efforts. Verse 21, So went the present over before him and he himself lodged that night in the company.

And this was people and places in our outline here. And he rose up that night and took his two wives and his two women servants and his eleven sons and his one daughter, Dinah, and passed over the ford, Jabbok.

Jabbok means emptying. And God is in the process of emptying Jacob of himself. And he took them and sent them over the brook and sent over all that he had.

[ 35 : 45 ] So understand what's happening here. He sends all this out and then that night they go to bed. Jacob can't sleep. Fear robs him of his sleep. He can't sleep.

His mind is going. He's trying to figure this out. Instead of rolling this on Jehovah, instead of giving it to the Lord and being like, Lord, this is, you're right. Man, that's a messed up past that I have and I can't fix it.

I give it to you, Lord. And I'm about to face the situation I created and I can't face it alone but you've already told me you're with me because of the two hosts. So I'm going to leave this in your hands. Instead, he's trying to figure all this out.

And fear affects those we love, doesn't it? He gets his whole family up. Come on. What are we going to do? We're going to take a swim. In the middle of the night, yeah, we're going to cross the river. Let's go. They're on the north side of the river where they're more protected from Esau.

He takes them all over to the south side of the Jabbok because the Jabbok runs east and west into the Jordan which goes north and south. And he took them over and set them over the brook and sent over all that he had.

[ 36 : 45 ] So he sends them all over. They go on over to the other side. And Jacob goes back over to the other side. He sends his family over to the side Esau's coming to and he goes back to the other side.

I don't know. I was trying to figure out is this an act of faith or fear? Is this cowardice or is he caring for his family? Is he trying to think, well, this is this, okay, somehow this is going to be good for them.

I don't know. But either way, at the brook of Jabbok, at the brook emptying, God has now removed Jacob's family. He's removed those closest to him. He's bringing him even more isolated where he can be alone.

The faith and serenity that Jacob possessed at the beginning of the chapter has quickly dissolved in the face of the stark reality of Jacob's fear and panic. He had such peace.

And then all of a sudden, this thing from his past takes it in a moment. Jacob has found himself completely undone over his fear of Esau. And that was exactly what needed to happen.

[ 37 : 47 ] God has him right where he wants him. Jacob needed to be unmade before he could be remade. And that will be next week. Fear takes into its own hands what faith leaves in God's hands.

And this is another direction I wasn't going to go, but perhaps you've seen that. And if you've seen that coming tomorrow, perhaps you've seen something like that and heard a lot of that.

I don't know what's going on in this world. You know, the spirit of Antichrist has gone to the world and many Antichrists are in the world. There is a spirit of deception. Why people are so worried about an eclipse, I'll never figure out.

You know there's an eclipse happening right now on the other side of the world? It's called night. The shadow of the earth blocks the light from the sun and we call it night. I mean, but speaking of fear and the fear that we see in our world today, there's a lot of people out there with a lot of fear right now.

In Matthew 6, Jesus says, starting verse 25, he says, therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body what you shall put on.

[ 39 : 09 ] Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? Therefore take no thought, no anxious thought, just like we looked at in Philippians, that we have to be anxious for nothing.

Therefore take no anxious thought, saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or wherewithal shall we be clothed.

For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. Your heavenly father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek first, remember how we put, prayer does what?

By seeking God, it's the remedy for fear. Prayer takes from the hands of fear, puts it back in God's hands. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5, he says, but of the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, switching from they to you, but you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

[ 40 : 16 ] You are all children of the light and the children of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness, for God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, wanted them to know what season they were in. He wanted them to know for certain. What about these signs? Do we look to these signs? Matthew chapter 12, verse 39, Jesus responding to the Pharisees who said, show us a sign.

He says, an evil and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Resurrection is the sign. As Jonah was, for all intents and purposes, dead, he had nothing to look forward to in front of him. As he laid in that fish for three days, there was no way out of there but death, right?

Just as Jesus on the cross and those two men next to him. When you're on a cross, the next thing is death, not deliverance. But what was the sign? As Jonah came out of the fish and for all intents and purposes resurrected, Jesus resurrected.

[ 41 : 22 ] That is the sign. The sign the world has today is the resurrection. And they've rejected that sign. And now an evil and adulterous generation goes about looking for other signs. Matthew 24, verse 35 says, heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Man, we have the sign right here. It's his word. We have all the signs we need. Heaven and earth, those signs, that's going to pass away. And I thought it was funny because man, if you know your Bible, you don't get caught up in that stuff.

Psalm 19, verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day unto day utter speech and night unto night shows knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

Every single day, the heavens are giving a sign. Every single day and every night, they are declaring God's glory. And they speak forth with perfect knowledge that God is real, if people would hear it.

So what do we do with this? This is not something I usually talk about, right? Not political. And world events, this world's not our home. But you know, as your pastor, I just feel like we don't want to be people living in fear.

[ 42 : 28 ] And we don't want all these things to rock us. Like with Jacob. How quickly he was moved to fear. And Jesus told us about all of this. And they asked him. So they come to Jesus, the disciples, after he said, no stone will be left one on another here of the temple.

They said, master, but when shall these things be? Two questions. And what shall there be? And what sign shall there be? When these things shall come to pass. And he said, so he's going to give them two parts to this answer.

First, then tell them of things to come in answering this. He said, take heed that you be not deceived. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and the time draws near.

Go ye not after them. Then said he unto them, nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in diverse places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs there shall be from heaven.

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my namesake, and they shall turn to you for a testimony.

[ 43 : 33 ] Yes, these things shall happen, but before that, church, you're going to have years where your life will be a testimony. And what are we here for? Are we here to make this world a better place? No, we're here for a testimony, and that testimony is going to come through suffering and rejection.

But these things will come. Verse 25, speaking then of his return, and there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's heart failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.

Men's hearts are failing them for fear. Why? The wording there, for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, literally means they are looking with expectation of what's coming on the earth.

They know what's coming, and with great expectancy, they're looking at it, and it's terrifying them. This is speaking of those in the tribulation. At that time, there'll be great signs in the heaven. There'll be great trouble in the earth, and men will look with expectancy on what's coming on the earth, and they will be terrified.

They will not, because of those signs at that time, turn to the Lord and go, well, Lord, you must be true. No, they will shake their fist at God, and they will reject him even more. What does it say we should do?

[ 44 : 52 ] For the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then in verse 27, and then shall you see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. The second coming of Christ, seven years after the rapture. And when these things begin to come to pass, man, we're seeing them begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads for redemption draws near.

We're to look up and not to look around. When you look up and then you lift up your head, you are completely vulnerable. You do not know what's going on around you. You don't have a clue.

You have put yourself in a 100% vulnerable position. And as we today are seeing these things begin to come to pass, this is speaking to those, there'll be a word to those in the tribulation.

They pick up their Bibles and they will read that and then whatever part they are in those seven years, and they'll read that and they'll go, yes. So it's almost over. And Jesus says, lift up your heads. How much more should we be looking up?

I love prophecy. I love listening to people teach on prophecy. The spirit of prophecy is the spirit of Jesus that tells us in Revelation. So that's wonderful.

[ 45 : 58 ] But the point of prophecy is not to look around, it's to look up. In John chapter 14, I quote it all the time. Let not your heart be troubled.

Don't be afraid. You believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself and that where I am, you may be also. Fear takes into its own hands what faith leaves in God's hands. And as we seek God, as we look to God, as we look up, as we pray, it takes out of the hands of fear and puts everything back in God's hands.

In the middle of John 14 here, this section, in verse 2, is one of my favorite phrases that Jesus says. It's the way Jesus says profound truth that's like, yeah. He says, in my Father's house are many mansions.

He says, I'm going to go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you. And he says, and if it wasn't so, I would have told you. Kind of like, hey guys, I would let you know if something changed. If this isn't true, I would have told you something different.

[ 47 : 08 ] This is what's happening. This is the truth. There's going to be even more signs as we draw closer to the end. Signs in the heaven and signs in the earth. There's going to be more people coming and declaring on Christ's behalf, I am Christ.

This is what it is. This is the end. We're here to be a testimony. We're here to live for Jesus. Paul said, I do not want you to be ignorant of the times and seasons you are in. You should know them. But man, we're not looking for signs in heaven. We're looking for the sun from heaven, right? We're looking for Jesus to come and get us. So don't get so caught up in a world that's rejected the sign, that's rejected the resurrection, that they're desperately trying to find something.

And all this is doing is producing more fear. Don't get caught up in that. Yes, recognize these things. But like Jacob, who was at peace and was trusting in God's grace, man, he allowed these circumstances just to rock his world.

But we have an opportunity to return those things in our lives today. The thing in our past that still kind of hammers at us. You need to crack that. You need to fix that.

[ 48 : 19 ] You've never done anything about that. We can hand that back over to God. We can roll upon Jehovah our way and trust in him. The fear that maybe the things of this world are stirring up, right?

Maybe the, what's going to happen next? You know, it troubles me to hear the church today, well-meaning people in the church that believe in the truth of the gospel, which Jesus, the end of the gospel is Jesus died, was buried, rose again, and he's coming back for us.

They believe that, but then they preach this like pre-tribulation, pre-tribulation. They're like, we're not going to go into tribulation, but it's going to get really bad. The reason I read that scripture to you in Matthew, where he said, not to take any anxious thought over what you're aware.

Where he said, but seek you first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and all things, these things will be added unto you. It's because we're not, when we see these things happening, supposed to go, okay, well, I'm going to dig the moat and I'm going to put up the razor wire and I'm going to get my food and there's going to be a gun in every window and we're just going to wait out the pre-tribulation tribulation until Jesus comes and gets us.

I believe in the rapture, but I think it's going to get so bad, I got to do something about it. That's what Jacob did. He grabbed everything into his own hands instead of leaving it with God and we have the hope and the promise and the assurance that Jesus said, I'm going to come and get you.

[ 49 : 39 ] Look up and be about being a testimony. Roll upon Jehovah your way. Let the fear go. Give it back to the Lord because he's already got a solution for it.

Signs in the heaven and signs in the earth, but man, we have a sign that we can grab every day where the world's going, oh my word, are there signs in the heaven? We can turn to Psalm 19 and we can say, yes, there's signs in the heaven every day and every night there's a sign.

God says that he makes the rain fall and the just and the unjust. That's a sign of his grace. Nobody believes that. They think it's climate change. But we know the truth. So Father, we thank you for that.

Thank you that we know the truth. Thank you, Lord, for this section of scripture that reminds us, Lord, that you've not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of sound mind. And Lord, as this world waxes worse and worse and as you promised, you told the disciples 2,000 years ago that, hey guys, this is coming.

How much more should we expect it now? We should not be surprised. We should not be surprised when there's signs in the heavens and signs in the earth. We should not be surprised when there's great deception in the world. That shouldn't surprise us. What it should do is cause us to look up with greater expectancy.

[ 50 : 48 ] That our hearts would not fail us for fear because of looking at expectation of what's coming on the earth. It's true. This world is headed for a tribulation. With great expectation, we can look to that and say, that is coming.

But that's not our expectation and our hope. Our expectancy is that Jesus is coming for his bride. So Lord, whether you come for us in our lifetime, and I believe you will, or whether you come for us at our own individual rapture, Lord, as you take us, Lord, in a moment when our eyes close and they open in your presence, until then, Lord, let us be a testimony to you with eyes and faces looking up, Lord, not attempting to protect our own, protect ourselves and keep ourselves, but in complete vulnerability, leaving everything in your hands and trusting you. We love you, Jesus. It's your name we pray. Amen.