

Climbing Jacob's Ladder - Genesis 28:1-22

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 February 2024

Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[0 : 00] All right, open your Bibles to Genesis 28. We're going to do the whole chapter today, Lord willing. I was reading this scripture, let's see if I can find it, this morning in Jeremiah.

Yeah, there we go. Jeremiah 17. It's right in that area where the scripture we all know, where he says, in verse 9, So I was reading through the section in Jeremiah in that area, but he gets down to verse 15, and he says, Jeremiah is saying, And essentially they're saying to Jeremiah, the people who don't agree with him, and with his teaching, they're like, okay, come on, prophesy something to us.

Give us a word right now, right now. And he said, In other words, he's like, I'm not looking forward to going about and telling woeful news.

It's not like I want to preach doom and gloom. And I kind of feel like that a little bit going through this section with Isaac, the Isaac family. It's just like week after week, it's like, Lord, this is some rough stuff.

These people are going through. Their home is kind of very dysfunctional, like we looked at last week. But, you know, like Jeremiah, we don't turn away from that. That's why we teach verse by verse and line by line, because we're going to hit stuff.

[1 : 40] We're going to cover it. What's in front of us is what we cover. I know if I was just choosing my topics, I wouldn't have thought, you know what? This church is only this big. It's a church plant. It's growing. Let's teach on problems within families and moms and dads and what they should be doing.

You know, I don't think I'd be teaching that. But anyway, so my title today is Climbing Jacob's Ladder. And today we're going to be climbing Jacob's Ladder with him here in Genesis 28.

So if you remember, in the end of Genesis 27, he has been told by his mother that, hey, your brother Esau wants to kill you because of what you've done to him. But it was whose idea?

It was his mom's idea. And then she's kind of throwing him under the bus here. Jacob is about 72 years old at this point. We think of him more as a young man, but he's not.

He's in his 70s. And we're going to be with Jacob's family now until the end of Genesis, all the way through the rest of this book, 20-some chapters. We're with Jacob's family now.

[2 : 45] But anyway, so she goes to Isaac and says, hey, Isaac, these wives of Esau are driving me crazy. If Jacob marries women of the land, I'm going to go out of my mind.

So she says, send him to Haran, where Laban is, where Isaac got his wife, where Rebecca's from. It's where Abraham sent his servant. So she says, send Jacob there.

And that's where we pick up here in chapter 28. I almost titled it Climbing the Ladder of Success, but Climbing Jacob's Ladder is even better. So this kind of outline kind of reflects a little more of the ladder of success.

But verses 1 through 5 is a rich blessing. It's where Isaac blesses Jacob. This time, Isaac is blessing Jacob, not Jacob dressed like Esau. Verses 6 through 9 is the other side of the coin.

It's the same coin, but you've got two different sides. You've got the Jacob side, and then his twin, the Esau side. That's Esau's response to all of what's going on here. And then 10 through 15 is the Ladder of Success, the true ladder of success.

[3 : 46] We'll see that when we get to it. And then verses 16 through 22, beginning the climb, beginning the climb on that first rung. What we're going to do as we go through this, as I put things on the screen, you know, there'll be kind of bullet points like I like to do at different times.

And there's a bunch of them in here. And it was kind of like, as I was looking at them, I'm like, oh, Lord, this is so cool. It's like climbing a ladder. So we're going to look at each one, and each one will be a different rung. And there's nine of them in total.

So if you grabbed one of the sheets, the bulletins, it'll be on there if you want to follow along and fill it in. But Isaiah 46, 10 and 11, the Lord says, That doesn't describe what's been happening in Abraham's life, Isaac's life, and now as we get into Jacob's life, that the Lord will do what he's purposed to do.

For us, it's do we want to be part of what he's doing? Do we want to be part of his purposes and plans? Because he's going to do them anyway. Do I want to be part of that or just on the sidelines watching that happen?

So verse 1 of chapter 28, And Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him and said also unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

[5 : 13] And so now Isaac calls Jacob to him. He's not calling Esau. He's calling Jacob to him. And it's interesting, all that Jacob's done to Isaac, he's lied to him, he's pretended to be Esau, he's dressed in gross goat skins, you know, all of that, Isaac doesn't mention any of it.

Now this is such a picture because what is Isaac? Isaac is the son of promise. He's the typology, in a sense, of Christ. He goes to the altar. Abraham, the father, takes him to the altar. They put him on the altar and sacrifice him.

And the Lord provides himself a substitute. And in that capacity now, Isaac is the son of promise is going to pass on this blessing of Abraham to Jacob. But right here, he doesn't bring up anything Jacob did.

And I was like, oh, Jacob. He called Jacob and blessed him. If it was me, it would be worded. And he called Jacob and scolded him and reprimanded him and then blessed him and charged him and said. But we see here that Isaac, the son of promise, never mentions Jacob's sin.

He only speaks blessing, calling, and purpose. That's the same with Jesus, our son of promise, right? We come to him like, Lord, my sin, my... And he's like, oh, I have a blessing for you.

[6 : 23] I have a calling for you. I have a promise for you. But what about my sin? I have a blessing for you. I have a promise. It's ridiculous. It's not fair. It's not. That's what grace is.

We see that with Isaac here as he calls Jacob in. And he blesses him. And this is our first rung. What are the three things we see here about God's blessing? The blessing that Isaac, the son of promise, is passing on to Jacob is the same way God passes blessing on to us.

He does what? Those three things. He calls him. He blesses. And he charges. That's what God does. He calls us. He calls us to himself. Will we answer? If so, he says, come, come.

I have a blessing for you. I have a blessing for you. But the blessing isn't just for you to remain in that blessing. It's to take the blessing and then have a purpose. But he gives us a charge. He gives us something that we can do to be part of that blessing.

And then we see the same thing with Isaac doing this with Jacob. And I think Jacob has waited his whole life to hear his father say this. His whole life he's waited to hear his father say, Jacob, I have a blessing for you.

[7 : 29] Because all we've ever seen is Isaac loves Esau. Isaac loves Esau because of his venison. Isaac loves Esau because of his personality? No. Because of his venison. But Isaac loves Esau.

And even this whole section where Jacob's in there with his father, he can't even tell for sure if it's Jacob. It sounds like Jacob's voice. But I don't spend that much time with Jacob. I'm not quite sure. You know?

And so here now, Jacob, at 70-some years old, is receiving the blessing from his father. These words of purpose, of calling, and of blessing that I think he's waited for his whole life.

If you're 70-some years old, I don't know how many of you are, and you're still waiting for your father's blessing, know that you have it. You have your heavenly father's blessing. You have his calling, and you have his purpose if you're in Christ.

You may not have grown up with a father who, you may look at someone else's father and think, well, look how they were just like with them and taught them the word, taught them to use a knife, and taught them to fish, and taught them, that wasn't my dad.

[8 : 31] You know? Well, that's okay, because you have a heavenly father that will speak that to you. And so here we have Jacob finally hearing this.

Proverbs 18, I'm sorry, Proverbs 1, 8-9 says, My son, hear the instructions of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother, for they shall be an ornament of grace unto your head and chains about your neck.

And so here's Jacob at 70-some years old hearing the instruction of his father. Verse 2, Isaac says to him, Arise and go to Paddan Aram.

Go back to Haran, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take you a wife from the fence of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. Go back to the old country.

Go back to your mother's home where she grew up. Paddan Aram, Haran, means the field. If you remember Bethuel, Rebecca's father, Rebecca who means a noose or a snare, her father's name, Bethuel, means man of God.

[9 : 30] He's saying, go back there. Go back there. If you remember in Genesis 24, Abraham realized it was time to get a wife for his son, for Isaac. And he says to the unnamed servant that he calls him and says, Hey, I want you to go.

I'm not going to go. I want you to go. I want you to go to Haran and get a wife for my son. And he says, well, what if he doesn't come? I mean, what if she doesn't come back? Can I take Isaac to Haran? He said, no, you will not take him back to that land.

He will not leave this land of promise. And so what you see here, Isaac gets this right where he's like, you need to go back there and to get a wife. Unfortunately, he's sending Jacob out of the land of promise and into the field.

Paddan Aram means the field. And so here's Jacob leaving, leaving. If you remember where he would dwell, he would dwell at the well of the oath. Beersheba. He's leaving the place of the well of the oath to go into the field to get his bride.

But at the same time, you can see a picture there of Christ as well. He left his father's home. He left the place of full satisfaction in heaven. And he came into the field to get his bride.

[10 : 36] And God Almighty blessed you, verse 3. And so now Isaac is speaking forth this blessing. He says, God Almighty blessed you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be a multitude of people.

Remember what in Genesis 27, that blessing that Isaac had for Esau? What's the difference here, this blessing with Jacob? What do you see there in verse 3?

And God Almighty blessed you. Remember in Genesis 27, verse 4, Isaac says, And my soul may bless you. But here you have Isaac recognizing that he is passing on something to Jacob that's not of himself.

And God Almighty blessed you. That word God Almighty, this is only the second time it's ever been used. The first time is in Genesis 17, 1. And when Abraham was 90 years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God.

Walk before me and be thou perfect. That word God Almighty, you might know it as El Shaddai, the Almighty One. And this is only the second time that we find this in Scripture. Anywhere throughout Scripture where it is God Almighty, where you see that word Almighty, I'm sorry, it's referring to God.

[11 : 45] God Almighty, like some 30 or 40 times in the Old Testament. But here now Jacob, I'm sorry, Isaac, I'm going to mix them up like crazy. Isaac is using this term and he says, God Almighty, the El Shaddai, the Almighty One, who brings about His own word and His own promise and His own purposes, He bless you.

Verse 4, And give thee the blessing of Abraham to thee and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave to Abraham.

So Isaac is now giving freely what Jacob was unable to gain by effort. Jacob has spent, you know, years of his life. He tried to get the birthright from Esau, thinking maybe that will do it.

And then he goes and tries to steal his blessing. And now what has he been after this whole time? He knows, God, I know you've called me. I know I'm supposed to inherit the promise, the blessing of Abraham.

And yet for 70 some years, he's attempted to do this on his own. But now Isaac gives freely. The son of promise gives freely to Jacob what he could never gain by effort.

[12 : 55] We cannot take by effort what can only be given by grace. Grace is a free gift. You cannot take it by effort. We've gone over this a bunch of times, so we don't need to again. But you can't take something that's already been given to you, right?

You can't earn something that's being given. Because then it's no longer a gift if you want to earn it. And God's covenant and blessing, it's bigger than Isaac. Isaac tried to kind of shoehorn his plan into God's blessing and promise.

He wanted Esau. But God's blessing and covenant, it's bigger than Isaac. And it's never open to personal interpretation or gratification. God's covenant with us, God's promise to us, God's word, it's never open to personal interpretation or gratification.

It was not for Isaac to choose the inheritor of Abraham's blessing when God had already made his choice known, didn't he? In Romans 9, 10-11, verses 13-14, and verse 16, we'll look at those.

But it's this section in Romans 9, where Paul says, he's speaking of this idea that God makes a choice. And it's God's choice, right? We want to make choices for God.

[14 : 09] We want to make a choice, and we want God to make that his choice. That's what we want. God, I don't want to tell you what to do. I don't want to make the choice for you. But if you would just choose what I choose, we're all good.

But in Romans, Paul says, And not only this, but when Rebekah had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calls.

As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. This is the Lord speaking. Paul says, what shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Right away you think, well, that's not fair.

In any system of religion or theology that makes God more unreasonable than man, you can throw it out. Okay? God is not going to be more unreasonable than man.

But he says, is God unrighteous? God forbid. So then it is not of him which wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy. Not of him that wills. Sorry.

[15 : 15] That's all I could think of. Not of will. Sorry, will. Paul continues to, he explains, I think this, expounds on this idea, because you can look at this and go, so God just picked and said, I'm going to pick Jacob.

I'm going to hate Esau. And that's that. And that's it. Romans 8.28. We all know Romans 8.28. It's on our fridge. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose.

Wonderful. I like that. Well, then Paul goes on to explain what that means. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

So God predestined Esau to hell and Jacob to heaven. Well, okay. Let's keep reading. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called.

And whom he called, them he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified. So if you back up on the train, what's the first word in the train? Whom he did, verse 29, foreknow.

[16 : 20] Foreknow. So whom God did foreknow, he did predestinate. There's many things. We don't know the future, right? But there's many things we plan for because we kind of expect ahead of time things to happen, right?

You don't know for sure what you're going to do this evening, but you have plans of what you expect to do, right? That's about as far ahead into foreknowledge as we can get. And we plan accordingly, right?

We're going to go home and have dinner. We will plan accordingly and shape our lives accordingly. What we won't do is just go down to Carowinds and woo-hoo, whoop it up, and then, like, drive randomly around and come home and expect dinner to be this.

What's going on? Leave this. Not here. Well, God can foreknow and actually know what's going to happen, right? He can look ahead. If he knew, like, if I knew that, you know, Kitty's just learning to drive, if she got her license and I knew, you know what?

The fourth day of her driving, she's going to approach an intersection and there's going to be an accident. And she's going to rear-end someone. If I knew that, that it was going to happen because of a choice she made to try and get through that yellow light, I could plan ahead for that, right?

[17 : 29] I could, and same with God. God foreknows. He knows what we're going to choose. Before we were born, we were knit together in our mother's womb. God knew us. He knew the hairs of our head. He knew the days of our lives.

And he knew what we would choose. He knew who we would be. He looked down through history and he can look at me and say, I know that there will be this goofy kid born in 1981 who's going to end up loving Jesus, right?

And I can plan around his life to shape his life and to work with him without ever violating my free will and my choice. And God can plan accordingly.

So whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate. You know, the reformers at the time where the Catholic religion, right, was shaping the known world.

And it was expected that religion would determine life and government. What's funny is we don't realize that like Luther and Zwingli and Calvin, they all believe the same thing. The idea of multi-denominations and multi-churches, they would never have accepted that.

[18 : 28] It wasn't that the church shouldn't rule the world. It was which church gets to rule the world. And so the reformers taught the finality of God's word in all things relating to faith and practice through two principles that we hold to as well.

Sola Scriptura. The Bible alone must be our sole source for faith and practice. The Bible alone. Have you come to me with any other source and say, well, yeah, but this guy says, and it puts this slant.

Look, I'm going to tell you this. Any system that says you have to have the system to interpret the Bible, get rid of it. Get rid of it. You don't. You can be alone on a desert island with the Holy Spirit in your Bible and God will teach you everything you need to know for life and godliness.

Yes, he puts us in a body. Yes, he gives us people who can help us, disciple us, and teach us and grow. But if you need an outside source to put a lens on the Bible and interpretation, then it's not sola scriptura.

And then the second one, scripture interprets scripture. Because God's word does not contradict itself, we must use the clearer passages of scripture to interpret those that are less. In other words, I have to take the Bible and recognize God isn't going to contradict himself.

[19 : 35] When it says I'm kept by the power of God, that there is laid up for me an inheritance in heaven that's undefiled, uncorruptible, reserved for me, that fades not away. Okay, then I accept the fact that God keeps me and I'm not going to fall away because he's going to keep me.

Now, there are passages in the Bible that sound like, I might lose my salvation. There's this one verse in Hebrews 6. And then what about in John 15? It talks about the branches being cut off.

Does that mean I've lost my salvation? Well, I have to balance that with the rest of scripture. And just because that's a harder passage to interpret, I then accept that, wait, God's word won't contradict itself.

So if I'm not kept by the power of God, then God's word has contradicted itself. So as we look at that, I bring that up just because, you know, in Romans, God specifically speaks about Esau and Jacob.

It says, Esau, Jacob that I love, Esau have I hated. And it just seems like arbitrarily, but no, God can look down through the ages and see, Esau, you are a fornicator, one who loves the things of this world.

[20 : 35] And you love the flesh and you live for self-gratification. I cannot use you. I cannot. Could Esau have repented? Yes, the man could have repented. But he repented not with tears of true repentance, but tears of sorrow over the fact that he didn't get his way.

We do not depend on the beliefs of systems of man, but rather upon the words of scripture. If you can build your theology off scripture, let's talk. If you're building your theology off of man, I'm not interested.

Again, what is the chaff to the wheat? You know, when we have the wheat, why would you go with the chaff? John 6, 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, says Jesus, that everyone which sees the son and believes on him may have everlasting life.

And I will raise him up at the last day. Everyone who sees Jesus for what he is and believe can have everlasting life. God does not withhold that from anyone. Verse 5.

And Isaac sent away Jacob and he went to Paddan Aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob and Esau's mother. This is the first time Jacob and Esau are put together in a sentence.

[21 : 44] They're two names coupled like this. We've talked about Jacob. We've talked about Esau. But we never see together Jacob and Esau. This is Jacob and Esau's mother. And you see that Jacob is first and priority.

When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to take him a wife from thence. And then as he blessed him, he gave him a charge saying, Thess will not take a wife for the daughters of Canaan.

And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and was gone to Paddan Aram. And Esau, seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father, Then went Esau unto Ishmael and took unto him wives.

And we'll look at their names in a minute. So here you have the other side of that coin. You know, Esau, God bless him. Well, God could have blessed him if he would have had a heart to receive it.

Esau saw when Esau looked and saw. The flesh thinks that by mimicking the actions of the spirit, they can obtain the same blessings. You know what? Isaac did something. I mean, Jacob did something really holy.

[22 : 45] Hey, I'll try and mimic the same thing. And maybe I'll have the same result in my life. But there's nothing there. There's nothing real there. The flesh never sees beneath the surface.

Esau looked and says he saw. He saw what he was doing. Ephesians 1.18 tells us that the eyes of our understanding, having been enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

In other words, there's something more to be seen than just the flesh, than just what's on the surface. And Jacob, it says, obeyed in verse 7, his father and mother. He was gone to Paddan Aram.

But Esau, seeing the daughters of Canaan, please not Isaac, his father. I think that what that indicates is when he married those two women of the Hittites, he knew he shouldn't because he's recognizing Jacob obeyed.

I didn't. And so he's trying to make up for his failure by essentially adding to it. He's seeking to please men instead of God. He wants to please his father because for him, source of blessing is coming from dad.

[23 : 49] It's not coming from God Almighty. And so Esau goes to Ishmael and took unto him wives, which he had. He added Mahalalath, which means stringed instrument, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, and the sister of Nebojeth, which means heights, to be his wife.

And Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. And so Esau took unto the wives, which he had. He took Mahalalath. And she was the daughter of Ishmael and the sister of Nebojeth.

I don't know who Nebojeth was, but I guess worth noting that her sister. And Jacob leaves now. Jacob goes out from the well of the oath and into the field.

But Galatians 5.17 says that the flesh lusts against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh. We've looked at this a bunch through this section of scripture. They are contrary one to another, so that you cannot do the things you would.

Jacob and Esau can't cohabitate. They're not going to stay together. They cannot live together. But he sends out Jacob and he keeps Esau. Very sad to see for this family.

[24 : 55] Proverbs 14.6 says, A scorner seeks wisdom and finds it not. And that's Esau very much. There's also a proverb that says, Cast out the scorner and the strife pieces.

Instead, they're casting out Jacob. In verse 11, He lighted upon a certain place and tarried there all night because the sun was set. So he goes to Haran.

He travels as far as he can. It's dark. And he's like, okay, I didn't pack anything. And he took the stones of that place and put them for his pillows and lay down in that place to sleep.

Remember Genesis 27.28, the blessing that Isaac was giving to what he thought was Esau that Jacob stole. It says, Therefore, God give thee of the dew of heaven, but the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.

Not exactly what Jacob is experiencing, isn't it? He might experience the dew of heaven as he lays out overnight, but not exactly the blessing he was hoping to get through deception.

[25 : 54] But he's not alone. Luke 9.58 tells us that Jesus said, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, and the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. No place to find a home.

So here's Jacob. He's out there and he lays himself down or tries to find some place to sleep. And he's sleeping on stones, on a rock.

Now, in one sense, that's kind of picturesque. Yes, we stand on the rock. We sleep on the rock. Christ. Yeah, true. But I think for Jacob, this is just showing that despite all of his self-effort, look what it's got in him.

And so here's Jacob now with no place to lay his head. And yet he sleeps. And Proverbs 3.24 says, When you lay down, you shall not be afraid. Yea, thou shalt lie down, and I sleep shall be sweet.

Speaking of the righteous man. And so Jacob dreams in verse 12. He dreams this interesting dream. I'm not a big dreamer. I don't know really what it has to have dreams like with meaning like this.

[26 : 56] But Jacob has one. 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.

So there's this ladder reaching to heaven. The angels are going up and they're coming down. Going up and coming down. And what does it tell us there? That behold, the Lord stood above it.

The Lord's at the top of this ladder and Jacob is watching. Unbeknownst to Jacob, he was in constant contact with God's presence and care. The man fell asleep in God's living room and didn't even know it.

Angels. Hebrews 1, 13 to 14 says, But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstools?

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them, to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation? So here are these angels ascending and descending from Jacob to heaven.

[27 : 56] And scripture tells us they're ministering angels. They're there for a reason. Psalm 91, 11, For he shall give his angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways. Yes, God is using angels every day in our lives.

Are we ever to try and seek out angels? Call on our guardian angels? No. We call on the name of the Lord. But God will use them. And so you have the assurance that not only is God's presence with you, but he has all the hosts of heaven at his disposal for your help and your benefit.

And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac, the land wherein you lie. To you will I give it and to your seed. Here's rung number two.

God spoke to Jacob when Jacob was alone, when he was in a hard place, and when he was out of resources. God has come and spoken to Jacob. Isaac has spoken a blessing to Jacob.

Isaac has spoken God's blessing to Jacob. And now God himself is speaking to Jacob and saying, Jacob, I am. Remember how many times Isaac said, I, I, I, in chapter 27, in verse 37, when he spoke to Esau, he said, I have made him your Lord.

[29 : 10] I have given him. I've sustained him. I don't have another blessing. I, I, I, I. And here we see now the true I am. As the Lord says to Jacob, I am the Lord God, and I will give you.

And he speaks to him when he's a place where he's alone, in a hard place, and out of resources. And we find out what? God was showing Jacob that he was personal because he comes to speak to him specifically.

He says, Jacob, it's me. I didn't send my angel to speak to you. The angels are there ministering, but God spoke to Jacob specifically. Personally. And he's present. Jacob, I'm here.

I've been here the whole time. I'm just giving you the ability to see this now. And he's patient. 72, 73-year-old man, right? Now he's going to live, you know, the age, he lives a lot longer.

So it's, he's probably like more like 40s or 50s in today's, relative to today's age. But still, he's a grown man. He's lived his whole life. He's waited for Jacob to be at a point where he can speak to him.

[30 : 14] Jacob was receiving a promise and a blessing, wasn't he? And that blessing that God was giving him for our fourth throne, it was unearned. Nothing Jacob could do could earn it.

It was unmerited. He didn't give anything in exchange for it. And it was unchangeable that God was giving to him. Verse 14 says, And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth.

It means they won't ever wash. They'll be filthy children. No. And you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and the south. And in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

So Jacob's seed, rung number five, they'd be what? The dust of the earth. It's innumerable. Go ahead and try and count dust. You can't count dust. It's irrepressible.

Every single person in this world has experienced dust. That's inescapable. You can't get away from it. No matter where you live. When you've been born, you have experienced the dust of this earth. And the seed of Jacob, when you think of that seed, ultimately would be fulfilled in Christ.

[31 : 16] Right? But there's nowhere you can go where you're apart from Christ. There is enough of him for every person that will ever be born. It's not like we're going to get to the end of the age where there'll be that one kid born, Jesus will be like, Oh my word, I used everything up.

I got nothing for you. I'm sorry. It's innumerable. It's irrepressible. The gates of hell will not stand against the church. Nothing will stand against Jesus. And it's inescapable that Jesus, that seed, has permeated all of humanity if only they would turn to him.

And then for right now, our last rung, rung number six. God's covenant makes us what we could never make ourselves. Jacob couldn't do this on his own. He tried hard to, but he couldn't. Matthew 5, 14, you are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hid. You can't do that for yourself. You can't make yourself into the light of the world. Ephesians 2, 10, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

There are good works that God has set up for you ahead of time, made you his workmanship, that he's preparing you for specifically for a good work that he specifically made for you. But he'll never force you into it.

[32 : 23] And then 2 Corinthians 5, 21, For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Could never do that for ourselves. And behold, I am with you, and I will keep you in all places where you go, and will bring you again into this land, and I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken unto you of.

He which began a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. The I am is able to fulfill all of the promises he puts his name to. God's promises, or God promises his presence, his protection, and his persistence to Jacob.

He says, Jacob, I'll be with you. I will be with you always. And I'll keep you. I'll bring you back to this land. And I will not leave you until this is done. I will be persistent in this.

God's ability to work all things together for our good does not alleviate us of responsibility for consequences, though. And Jacob's going to experience a lot of consequences in his life as he goes down to Haran.

[33 : 28] And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place. And I didn't even know it. I was too busy with my rock pillow. I didn't know God was here.

Just because Jacob wasn't aware of God's presence, it did not mean that God was not present. I think of when Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection. They're all terrified in the upper room. They're locked in there.

It says, Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, shut and locked, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst and said unto them, Peace, guys.

Peace be unto you. Whoa! Jesus just showed up. No, Jesus was here the whole time. It's just, you got to see him right now. And when Jesus left, he was still there.

They just weren't experiencing his presence. Why did he do that? Because they needed to get to a point, he was training them, like, guys, I'm with you always, like I said. But you're not going to experience my presence as you did when I lived on this earth.

[34 : 30] I'm going to send the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit. It's going to be a new way of experiencing the presence of God, not by a physical, bodily interaction. Verse 17, And Jacob was afraid and said, How dreadful is this place!

This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. The word afraid and dreadful are the same words. This just means fearful or trembling. This scared him. This is a little sad.

You know, we looked last week at just the situation of the family. Isaac, the job he'd done, or lack of a good job of teaching his kids at the Lord. And I don't just mean like, Sons, here's what the Abrahamic covenant is.

Boom, boom, boom, boom. Memorize your scripture. I don't mean exemplifying it and living it in such a way where Jacob is 70-some years old, and his response is, This is scary.

Oh my word, I'm so scared right now because I've been in God's presence. He doesn't really have much of a relationship with the Lord. In verse 18, And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he put for his pillow, and he set it up for a pillar.

[35 : 35] So if you thought, Did he really sleep on a stone? Yeah, he really slept on a stone. But he sets this thing up for a pillar. And he poured oil upon the top of it.

And he called the name of that place Bethel. But the name of the city was called Luz at the first. Luz means omen tree. Bethel means house of God. Jacob's lack of understanding and resources did not prevent him from worshiping God with all that he had.

Jacob had nothing. Like, I got a rock for a pillow. He stands that up. It's kind of like an altar. He's got some oil, and he dumps it on it to worship the Lord. Jacob's worship was a priority, genuine, and anointed.

This is the first thing he did when he got up. And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone and set it up. I said, I'm going to worship the Lord. It was genuine. It was real.

It wasn't something that was like, well, this is the pattern I was taught, and I need a specific altar. This was like, all I have, God, and I'm bringing it to you. And it was anointed. It dumps the oil on it.

[36 : 43] You see, worship is always in response to God's word. That's what Jacob's worshiping. He's responding to God's word. When we worship, we only worship God in response to his word. It's because of what his word said about sin, and about me, and my condition, and about Jesus, and about the cross and salvation, that I believe that, and then I worship him in response to his word.

And Jacob vows a vow, saying, if God will be with me, if God will be with you, Jacob, I mean, there's a ladder, a dream, and everything. God stood on top of it.

Well, if God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to eat, and to put on, if God will be with me. Jacob sought to convince God to do for him, but God had already promised he would do.

Like, now, Lord, I know you promised this, but let's make a deal that if you do this, I'll do this. Jacob, it's going to be a long time for him to learn who his God is.

So that I come again to my father's house in peace. Then shall the Lord be my God. God, if you do this, then you'll be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house.

[37 : 56] And of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee. Ooh, what a deal. Now, Lord, I know you've given me everything, and I know everything is yours. Hey, if you do what you said you'd already do, and actually fulfill a promise you told me you would, I'll give you a tenth.

You know? That's pretty good, Lord. A tenth. Hebrews 6.1 says, Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from the dead work, from dead works, I'm sorry, and of faith toward God.

Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. That doesn't mean we leave doctrine. It just means you need to grow. You need to get past this beginning foundational part of your relationship with the Lord.

You need to recognize what God has done for you, and stop trying to convince Him to do what He's promised. Stop asking Him to save you when He has. Right? Thank Him for that fact, and believe it.

Self-effort, and I'll put the quote up there, self-effort calls God's faithfulness into question. Because self-effort, self-effort always comes up short. I assume that since I came up short in my part, that God will also do so on His.

[39 : 15] You see, when I try, through my own effort, to bring about something that God has promised He will do, I can't do it, and I fall short. I then assume that since I fell short, and that was my part in this relationship, well then maybe, maybe God won't do what He said He would do either.

Because I didn't do what I said I would do. Where when we receive by grace, we come expecting right from the beginning, I have nothing to offer. And I can't keep this, and I won't keep this. And so God, I just receive from You.

And Jacob then says, we just read it, verse 21 and 22, he says, so that if I come again to my Father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone, which I've set up for a pillar, shall be God's house.

God, you can live in my pillow. Where's your God live? He lives in my pillow. Oh, okay. And of all that He shall give me, I will surely give a tent. We saw this the other night in Acts 17 on Wednesday night, well, a few weeks ago, when Paul is in Athens.

He says, God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands. Neither is worship with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He gives life to all and breath and all things.

[40 : 29] Jacob, God doesn't need anything you give Him. God receives what we give Him, not because He has a need for it, because we have a need to give it to Him. And we know who the temple of the Holy Spirit is now, who God's temple is in this church age.

1 Corinthians 6, 19, Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not of your own? Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. God is in you. In Christ, He comes to dwell in you.

You are not your own. You've been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. They belong to God. Instead of trying to convince God to give you what He's already promised, why don't we work on giving God what belongs to Him?

Our capacity to give to God indicates our capacity to receive from God. Now, that doesn't mean, well, I gave God \$100, so He's going to love me more. That's not what it means.

But our capacity to give indicates what we've already received. Luke 14, 33, Jesus says, Whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has cannot be mine but disciple.

[41 : 37] Forget 10%. Jesus says, it's everything or it's nothing. But we don't give to try and receive God's favor. In Luke, again, in chapter 7, Jesus is in the home of one of the Pharisees and this woman comes in and anoints His feet.

And the Pharisee's like, ugh, do you know who she is? She's a sinner and you're letting her touch you. And Jesus turned to the woman and said unto Simon, so He's looking at the woman but He's talking to the Pharisee, I entered into your house and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

You gave me no kiss, a kiss of welcome. But this woman, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil you did not anoint, but this woman has anointed my feet with ointment.

Simon, you should have done up here as a bare minimum. She's gone even lower and done the very lowest thing. And you couldn't even do the thing that wasn't so hard. My head with oil you did not anoint, but she's anointed my feet with ointment.

Wherefore I say unto you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven. For she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.

[42 : 48] But Jesus says, her sins are many. They are. But they're forgiven. They're forgiven. For she loved much. So if I love Jesus more, I get more sins forgiven?

No. The more we recognize how much we've been forgiven, the more we love Him. Right? We love Him because what? He first loved us.

Right? It's a response. It's a response. So if you find in your life where it's like, man, I'm like Jacob. I'm striving so hard with things that I read in God's Word that He's specifically telling me He's already done.

Maybe I need to try harder. No, you don't need to try harder. You need to receive more. You need to receive more grace. You need to receive more love. You need to receive more forgiveness. You need to accept the fact that you're not going to do it on your own.

You're still in your own self-effort. Rung number nine, the last one. True giving is a response of love. It's not something we have to do.

[43 : 44] It's also a proof of love. It's a proof that we love God. And again, I'm not talking about putting money in the offering. I'm talking about, like Jesus said, He who would not forsake all that He has cannot be my disciple.

We can't hold on to something else and hold on to Jesus. We'll be divided. And true giving starts with God's love. And we see a picture in there of God's love for us.

Now, He loved us. And because of His love for us, we can love Him. It's a response. It's also proof of love. Man, I have such proof of God's love. How? Because He gave His only begotten Son.

That whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Man, if God refused not to give His own Son, then how shall He not also give us all things by Him freely.

Greatest proof of His love. And it starts with God's love. That God's love in eternity past foreknew my fall, foreknew my sin, and decided, I'm going after that one.

[44 : 43] I'm going to rescue them. I'm going to show them my love. Psalm 116, verses 12 and 13. One of my favorite sections of scriptures. One of about 300.

I just love this. This is a mind-blowing scripture. David says, What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? What can I give back to God? Oh, I'll just receive.

The thing that we can do to most please God for all that He's given us is to receive more from Him. Wait a minute, that doesn't sound very fair or make sense. What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits for me?

I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Why? Because if I don't receive from the Lord, I have no capacity at all to give anything to the Lord. I have to first receive from Him.

And the more I receive from the Lord, man, the more I have to give. Right? Jesus says that out of you will flow forth rivers of living water continually gushing up unto eternal life.

[45 : 42] And so the more that I receive from the Lord, the more I have to give. The more I have to give. Jacob has spent so much time trying to take from the Lord and get from the Lord what he was freely giving to him. And now here he's freely received the blessing and covenant of Abraham and God has appeared to him.

We won't see Jacob pray to the Lord until, again, until later on when he's leaving Haran. And he will eventually come to know that the source of all of his life and desires and fulfillment is God Almighty.

But God is patient as we looked at those rungs we've been climbing that ladder. So the first step on the rung, what's the first step? And it's not your effort. You've got to receive. I have to receive.

I have to continue to receive my whole life. As I climb that ladder, it's not like the ladder of success. It's my effort. I'm going to get up there. Not at all. Not at all. You know why? Because the angels are going up and down too. I'm like, and the angels are like, it's okay.

And they lift you up to the next rung. Okay, gotcha. It's all right. Because the Lord's right there. Because you just rely on me. So it's just a neat chapter as we close this out. Jacob is heading off to Haran.

[46 : 46] And he's heading with unfortunately this idea that he's made a deal with God. Where instead God's made a promise to him. But even if you have made a deal with God or think you have, God's promises never fail and they never will.

His mercies are new every morning. I would say just sit before the Lord. Respond to him. Not with, Lord, what can I do for you? What can I, my life has been this. How do I make it better?

Lord, my relationship with my kids. Ooh, I'm more like an Isaac than I should be. God, my, Isaac and Rebecca, they're just not on the same page. My marriage, whatever. Receive, receive from God.

Receive his love. Receive his grace. Receive his forgiveness. Receive his promises. And God will work all those things through you for your good and his glory. But Lord, as we close now, we thank you, Lord, that we are saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.

Not of works, lest any man should boast. What do we have to boast in, Lord? For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Lord, you have created us to do good things.

[47 : 52] But Lord, you've not created us to try and be good and do good on our own, Lord. It is you who works in us, Lord, to will and to do of your good pleasure, Lord. So Lord, help us to go from here today to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

Not fear like Jacob, terror, because he doesn't understand his God. but Lord, in awe that you would love us so much that you would give your only son for us, Lord. That we could live in the fullness of the Spirit, supercharged spiritually as it were.

I don't have to rely on myself. In fact, we're told that our weaknesses display God's grace and power better than our strength. We want to come with our weaknesses.

We want to confess our weaknesses. I want to say, God, if you could take any of this and use it for your glory, do so, Lord. But Lord, let it be out of a response of love and not self-effort.

In Jesus' name, Amen.