God’s Grace Calls for a Response September 6, 2020

*Genesis 35:1-15 Series: How Jacob Became Israel*

What God is using in my life to touch the lives of literally thousands of other people is the fact that I was a convict and went to prison. That was my great defeat, the only thing in my life I didn't succeed in. – Chuck Colson

Intro: Where the failures usually go.

1. God’s grace overcomes our past.
2. Where do you go after overseeing a genocide?

Genesis 34:30 *My numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed …*

Jacob is likely feeling inadequacy, guilt and fear.

1. Who would expect God to still come knocking?

v. 1 *God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there.”*

1. This wasn’t the first failure and it wouldn’t be the last.

v. 1 *Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.*

Genesis 28:20-22 *Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me … then the LORD shall be my God ...”*

* Why does spiritual failure often drive us away from God?
* Why does God tell Jacob to make an altar “to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau”? Why remember that about God?
* What helps you to return to God when you feel like you’ve failed spiritually?
1. God’s grace motivates our present.
2. God’s grace motivates us to bury our false loves.

v. 2 *Put away the foreign gods that are among you …*

v. 4 *So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears.*

v. 4 *Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.*

Ephesians 4:22 *put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires*

1. God’s grace motivates us to approach Him with the reverence He deserves.

v. 2 *purify yourselves*

v. 2 *change your garments*

1. God’s grace motivates us to give Him glory for all that He’s done.

v. 3 *I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.*

* Why do you think Jacob buried the gods when he could have sold them and made a bit of profit?
* What’s the difference between burying false loves and just trying to stop doing bad things?
* What does it mean to approach God with reverence today? What are some ways that we can purify ourselves and change our garments?
* How would an altar like this help Jacob in the future?
1. God’s grace inspires our future.
2. God’s protection gives us courage.

v. 5 *And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.*

1. God’s blessing gives us joy.

v. 9 *God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him.*

1. God’s purposes give us hope.

v. 10 *And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.”*

v. 10 *So he called his name Israel.*

1. God’s commission gives us meaning.

v. 11 *be fruitful and multiply*

v. 11 *A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body.*

v. 12 *The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.*

* God had already named Jacob “Israel”. What would it mean to Jacob to hear God reaffirm the name now?
* Jacob has 11 sons and at least 1 daughter at this point. Why would God tell him to be fruitful and multiply?
* How does God’s grace give you hope about your future?
* What helps you remember God’s grace when you’re tempted to just fixate on God’s rules and your performance?
* Where do you most need prayer in applying this message?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Genesis 9:18-27.

Notes