A Fear to Conquer Your Fears August 2, 2020

*Genesis 32:1-21 Series: How Jacob Became Israel*

Intro: The many faces of fear in our lives.

What do you do when you’re so afraid that you’re willing to sacrifice what God has promised you?

1. Jacob was paralyzed by the fear of Esau.

v. 6 *We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him.*

v. 7 *Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.*

1. Jacob was willing to give up half of everything he had.

v. 5 *I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants. I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.*

v. 8 *If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape.*

vv. 20-21 *For he thought, “I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterward I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me.”**So the present passed on ahead of him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp.*

1. Jacob was willing to give up the blessing that he had fought for.

vv. 4, 18, 20 *your servant Jacob*

vv. 4, 18 *my lord Esau*

* How might Jacob have responded differently if he feared the Lord more than his brother?
* Have you ever been so paralyzed by fear of someone else that you are willing to give up what God has blessed you with?

1. Quiet your fears by claiming God’s promises.
2. Jacob remembered God’s promise to bless him.

v. 9 *And Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,’*

Genesis 31:3 *… the LORD said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you.”*

1. Jacob remembered God’s promise of protection.

v. 12 you said, *‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea*

Genesis 28:14 *Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

* When have you clung to a particular promise of God?
* What are some other means of assurance we’re tempted to look to instead of the promises of God?
* Why is it important to not just know God’s promises but to claim them?

1. Conquer your fears by remembering God’s faithfulness.
2. Jacob had to finally recognize his unworthiness.

v. 10a *I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown*

1. Jacob remembered how God had provided and blessed him.

v. 10b *for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.*

Genesis 28:15 *Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.*

* What do we see from Jacob in this prayer that we had never truly seen before in his life?
* How does our perspective change when we remember God’s faithfulness to us in the past?

1. Overcome your fears by seeking God’s help.
2. Jacob is asking for God’s deliverance

v.11a *Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau*

1. Jacob is admitting his own fears.

v. 11b *for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children*

1. We must place our fear in God alone, rather than people, to be able to lay hold of the promises He has for us.

Psalm 111:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!*

Luke 1:50 *And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.*

Romans 8:15 *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”*

*2* Timothy *1:7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

* Do you struggle more with admitting your own fears, or asking for God’s deliverance? Why do we avoid doing these things?
* How does focusing on fearing God change our other fears?
* What promise do you have to claim by placing your fear in God?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Genesis 32:22-32.

Notes