



Glory in thy perfect love. Finish and thy new creation.

You thus want us, let us be. Let us see thy great salvation.

[11:38] Perfect, glory restored in thee. Change from glory into glory.

Till in heaven we take our place. Till we cast our crowns before thee.

Lost in water, love and face. If you could turn please now in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 28.

Amen. Amen. Genesis chapter 28.

And we'll read from verse 1. We'll read the whole of the chapter. Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him.

[12:56] You must not take a wife from the Canaanite woman. Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethuel. Your mother's father. And take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban.

Your mother's brother. God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful. And multiply you that you may become a company of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you.

And to your offspring with you. That you may take possession of the land of your sojourners. That God gave to Abraham. Thus Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel, the Aramean.

The brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob. And sent him away to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there.

And that as he blessed him, he directed him. You must not take a wife from the Canaanite woman. And that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother. And God to Paddan Aram. So when Esau saw that the Canaanite woman did not please Isaac, his father.

[13:59] Esau went to Ishmael. And took as his wife. Esau went to Ishmael. And took as his wife. Besides the wives he had. Mahalath.

The daughter of Ishmael. Abraham's son. The sister of Nebaioth. Jacob left Beersheba. And went towards Haram. And he came to a certain place.

And stayed there that night. Because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place. He put it under his head. And lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed.

And behold there was a ladder set up on the earth. And the top of it reached to heaven. And behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold the Lord stood above it.

And said I am the Lord. The God of Abraham your father. And the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie. I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth.

[14:56] 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. 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. Then Jacob awoke from his sleep.

And said surely the Lord is in this place. And I did not know it. And he was afraid. And said how awesome is this place. There is none other. This is none other than the house of God.

And this is the gate of heaven. So early in the morning Jacob took the stone. That he had put under his head. And set it up for a pillar. And poured oil on the top of it.

He called the name of that place Bethel. But the name of the city was Luz. At the first. Then Jacob made a vow. Saying if God will be with me. And will keep me in this way that I go.

[15:55] And will give me bread to eat. And clothing to wear. So that I come again to my father's house in peace. Then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone. Which I have set up for a pillar.

Shall be God's house. And of all that you give me. I will give a full tenth to you. Amen.

And may God bless that day of his word to us. We're going to sing again to God's praise. We'll sing this time from Psalm 67. Psalm 67.

And the first version of the psalm. We'll sing the whole of this short psalm. Lord bless and pity us. Shine on us with thy face. That the earth thy way. And nations all may know thy saving grace.

We'll sing the whole of this psalm. We'll stand to sing to God's praise. Lord bless and pity us.

[16:58] Shine on us with thy face. Let the earth thy way.

And nations all may know thy saving grace.

Let people praise thee, Lord. Let people praise thee, Lord.

O let the nations be glad. In songs and voices raise.

Thou just thee, people praise thee, Lord. Let them praise thee, Lord.



to be coming back together again Genesis 28 picking up where we left off two weeks ago we see that the brothers Jacob and Esau are nowhere near reconciliation they're nowhere near coming back together so the first point for this evening that takes us from verse 1 down to verse 9 is brothers at war to be taking notes so you're wanting a structure for your thoughts the first thing we see here is brothers at war and we see that

Jacob is sent off to Laban verse 1 then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him you must not take a wife from the Canaanite woman arise go to Pad and Aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother God almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you that you may become a company of peoples may he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you so that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham thus Isaac sent Jacob away and he went to Pad and Aram to Laban the son of Bethuel the Aramean the brother of Rebekah Jacob's and Esau's mother and we'll pause there for a minute the chapter begins here with a conversation that we're allowed to hear between

[ 26 : 30 ] Isaac the father and Jacob the son and Jacob is sending Isaac a fair distance away to Paddan Aram and we might ask the question why and Isaac gives the answer in this conversation the reason that he's sending Jacob away is to get a good wife but that wasn't the real reason the real reason that Jacob was being sent away was because Esau his brother wanted to kill him so once more the line that we see running through this family is a line of the truth not being up front and center Jacob was not so much being sent away to get a wife although that was part of it Jacob that the critical point he was being sent away at his mother's request for his own safety because brothers were at war and

Esau has been overheard in the last chapter saying I'm going to comfort myself from all that Jacob's done to me by taking his life so Jacob at his mother's request has been sent away one commentator says Rebecca didn't even give the real reason for Jacob's leaving to Isaac her husband this was a family in which the plain unvarnished truth was consistently in short supply we can track that all the way back to Abraham remember when he went to Egypt and he says to his wife Sarah you pretend to be my sister tell a lie it'll save my skin might put you at risk but it'll save my skin and we see deceit we see lies we see half truths all the way through the family from generation to generation it's probably something that we need to think about even as parents as parents what do our children see in us do they see in us particular sins that we keep hold of and seem to pass from generation to generation or do our children see in us yes real struggles but a willingness to tell the truth and to repent and to seek God's forgiveness and to seek other people's forgiveness when we need it so the story the chapter begins with a half truth being told both from Rebecca to Isaac and then from Isaac to Jacob and let's carry on now in verse 6 the scene changes to look now Esau and what Esau's going to do now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there and as he blessed him he directed him you must not take a wife from the Canaanite woman and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan Aram so when Esau saw that the Canaanite woman did not please Isaac's father Esau went to Ishmael and took as his wife besides the wives he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son the sister of Nebaioth so what's going on here as we look in here at Esau and what Esau's doing what Esau's heard of how Jacob has been sent away and how Jacob's been sent away with a blessing and he's in some measure trying to make wrongs right within the family remember Esau even if we just glance back to the previous verses of chapter 27 Esau previously had married two Hittites he'd taken two Hittite women as wives and we're told at the end of chapter 27 that they made the life of his parents misery we're told that in chapter 26 verses 34 and 35 as well so Esau he's brought these two women into the family there's been a huge clash his mother has been hugely upset by these women who are now in the family circle and Esau he's trying to make things right but he tries to make things right not by repenting not by acknowledging his wrong and saying sorry but he tries to make things right by having another marriage and marrying this time not a Hittite but an Ishmaelite because he thinks maybe maybe they'll prefer one of them and it's nonsensical it's clearly something which is unwise and unbiblical and yet if we apply this for a moment is it not true that sometimes we take Jacob's approach in life sometimes we take sorry Esau's approach in some areas of life sometimes we acknowledge that we've done a bad thing but rather than admit it confess it and turn from it we try to cancel out bad things by doing good things

so just to take a daft example you have a barney the night before with your wife or someone within the family there's a big fallout tempers are raised voices are raised and everybody goes to bed miserable what's the right thing to do the right thing to do is sit down sort it out and say sorry shouldn't have lost my temper shouldn't have spoken up shouldn't have said what I said please forgive me

[ 33 : 08 ] Lord and please forgive me those that I've spoken to that's the right thing to do but how often do we see in families everybody going to bed in a grump and the following morning everybody gets up and what are they like nobody says sorry nobody mentions anything but everybody is just extra nice to each other as we try to cancel out a bad thing with a good thing and when we take that approach we're following the track of Islam not Christianity the symbol of Islam remember is the scales Muslims believe that a set of scales will be used on the day of judgment balancing the good deeds and the bad deeds and their hope is that they've done enough good deeds in their lives to outweigh the bad deeds so at the end of the day

God will say you've passed the test you've made the wait you're through so the symbol of Islam is the scales trying to get more good than bad what is the symbol of Christianity not the scales the children would tell us it's the cross what happened on the cross well Jesus took our wrongs our bad from us and he gave his righteousness to us and so our salvation is not about what we do and trying to get more good than bad it's all about what Jesus has already done for us on our behalf Ephesians 2 verses 8 and 9 says for by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing it's the gift of

God not as a result of works so that no one may boast or 2 Corinthians 5 verses 20 and 21 we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God so it's through Christ it's by grace that we are reconciled to God and that we are reconciled with each other so first of all we see brothers at war we can learn lessons about grace and repentance as we think about that the second point as we continue through the verses is behold your

God and let's think now the camera changes it's been on Jacob as he's headed off and then it switched to Esau to see how Esau is reacting back in the family home and now the camera switches again back to Jacob and he's far from home he's en route to this place called Paran Aram he's probably homesick he's on his third night away from home and remember this is Jacob if it was Esau it would be different Esau was a man who was used to the wild outdoors he could make a fire he could camp he could survive Jacob was the boy in the kitchen with the apron on tasting the food he's not used to the rough and tumble of the outdoor life and so he's far away from home probably homesick third night away he's missing his mother probably not so much as father and we have no sense of

Jacob at this point seeking God but God is seeking him and God meets with him in this amazing dream but before we get to the dream let's just take a moment in that location to think about those who are perhaps far away from home and we come week by week as a congregation and we get the encouragement of being together with each other but there are people who we love people who are with us week by week and then they get to a certain age they need to go and study and they're far from home they graduate and they're out far from home some at sea some in foreign lands some in big cities and although we don't see them here week by week remember to pray for them think about these empty seats think about those whom we love who are far from us and far from home just now pray for them students those who are working pray for them because it's often when people are far from home it's often when people are feeling alone and they're feeling homesick that

[ 39 : 08 ] God meets with them so let's read the account of how God met with Jacob Jacob left Beersheba and went towards Haran and he came to a certain place and stayed there that night because the sun had set taking one of the stones of that place he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep and he dreamed and behold there was a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven and behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it and behold the Lord stood above it and said I am the Lord the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac so God appears to Jacob in a dream and it's interesting how God uses dreams in this family

Scott took us a little down the line when he was preaching here a week or two back he was taking us into Joseph's dreams and what we saw in Joseph's dreams was that God was in them God was

in these dreams and now God is meeting with Jacob in a dream I might ask the question just before we move on why does God not meet so much with us in dreams today it's true that sometimes God meets with people in dreams we can go to accounts of conversions in Iraq and Iran and parts of Russia and parts of China and you can hear amazing testimonies of how people have seen Jesus and heard the voice of Jesus in their dreams but most of us if we were to be asked to give our testimony it probably doesn't have much in the way of

God meeting with us personally in a dream mine doesn't certainly so why do we not have all these accounts of God meeting us in dreams well the reason is because we have Bibles Jacob didn't have a Bible but we have Bibles we have the word of God and God meets with us and he speaks to us clearly and reliably in the Bible so when you and I pick up the Bible when we come to church expect God to speak when we open our Bibles in the morning and in the evening it's not just a tick box exercise this is the living word of God expect him to speak ask him to open your ears soften your heart that you'll meet with

God if all this is is a routine we'll be falling asleep but if we have the expectation that God will meet with us in this book then the book is transformed and our hearts are touched what did Jacob see then in his dream well he saw a ladder sometimes it's called Jacob's ladder but we can notice here that it isn't actually Jacob's ladder it's God's ladder Jacob doesn't build this ladder Jacob doesn't put this ladder up it's not Jacob's ladder it's God's ladder it's a ladder to heaven but notice Jacob is not climbing up this ladder the angels of God the messengers!

of God those who are bringing the word of God they are they are they're coming down it and this is a preview of what was to come in Christ the God of heaven coming down to earth to seek and to save the lost this is a preview in this ladder of what God was going to do in Jesus he was going to come down to reach sinners like Jacob we sang in the the last hymn I think it was or the one before love divine all loves excelling joy of heaven to earth come down we sing the the carol at this time he came down to earth from heaven who was

[ 44 : 34 ] Lord and God of all and there's a movement there there's a lesson there that we're to take hold of there's lots of people who think that it's through church attendance it's through religious works that we can climb our way up to heaven lots of people open the Bible they see the commandments and they see the commandments like a ladder that we can climb up to get to God we cannot get up to God in our own strength we cannot climb up to heaven by works or by religion or by ritual or by anything and that's why the God of heaven came down to earth God John chapter 1 verse 14 says the word became flesh and dwelt among us and so we see in Genesis 28 that the God of heaven appeared to Jacob he met with Jacob and it was a it was a behold your God moment it was a it was a stop everything that you're doing moment as God revealed himself to

Jacob I suppose the question we have to ask is are we beholding our God are we are we turning away from all that fills our minds and and invades our lives through our phone screens and beholding our God in some ways we could say connecting with the morning that this is a day that we have been gifted where we are to come apart from everything that invades our lives Monday through Saturday and we're to take time to behold our God the God who has revealed himself not so much in dreams to us but he's revealed himself to us in the word he's revealed himself to us in the word made flesh

Jesus so we are to especially on this day stop what we're doing and behold him brothers at war so it begins and then we see Jacob beholding his God our God God and the third thing that we see here is blessings from God you look at verse 13 down to verse 15 and behold the Lord stood above this ladder and said I am the Lord the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac the land on which you lie I will give to you and your offspring 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 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 put yourself in Jacob's shoes or put yourself in the shoes of somebody who's been looking in the life of Jacob who was Jacob we just have to glance back to the previous chapter to see that he was a rascal and he was a schemer and he was a deceiver and he had caused no end of trouble in the family and that's why he's in the middle of nowhere his brother wants to kill him his father struggles with him his mother has made a god of him and he's just always in the midst of deceit and trouble and now in the middle of nowhere on his own the god of heaven appears to him and meets with him what would you expect to happen next

this rogue this disreputable hard to love character what would we expect comes next well I think we would expect a blast of judgment Jacob's on his own now the god who sees his life and who sees his heart and who sees everything that he's done we would expect a blast of judgment or at least a strong dose of discipline of rebuke to be put down the throat of Jacob but what does the Lord bring what does the Lord promise to this rogue to this rascal blessing the same blessing that was promised to Abraham that passed down the line to Isaac is now coming to Jacob does he deserve it absolutely not but God still gives it and that was true in

[ 50 : 46 ] Genesis 28 and it's still true tonight which is good news for all us rogues we are no more deserving of blessing than Jacob was and yet God still gives it we see time and time again in God's word and in our lives the grace of God undeserving sinners as we are and yet the blessings of God are showered upon us and we should be continually thankful for that we sang about just a moment ago our God shall blessings send God shall us bless men shall them fear and to our utmost end that's our story blessings from

God and the final point is Bethel and I think we'll bank that for Wednesday evening let's pray heavenly father we thank you for your grace we thank you for your compassion we thank you for your patience we thank you for your goodness towards us and for your love we confess that as we look into the family of Esau and Jacob and Isaac and Rebecca we see so much of our own sin we see a reflection of our own hearts and our own lives we thank you that even though they were the way they were still you loved them and you were working in that family and we thank you that even though we are sinners whilst we were still sinners Christ died for us and this is the greatest story of the grace and the blessing of God showered upon us in Christ we thank you that although we could never climb up to heaven although we could never make ourselves acceptable to

God we thank you that you have come down to us and that we see the blessings and the grace of God coming down to us in Christ so help us we pray each one of us to receive that grace and to be thankful for your blessing and to respond in praise that we would behold our God and forgive us for how often we are distracted by every shiny thing in this world give to us a greater vision of who you are and a greater sense of reverence in your presence that we would know more of the wonder of your character and your works hear our prayers take away our sin we ask it in Jesus name amen we'll sing to conclude and we'll sing from mission praise 907 it's a paraphrase of Genesis chapter 28 the verses 20 to 22 God of Bethel by whose hand thy people still are fed who through this weary pilgrimage has all our fathers led our birds our prayers we now present before thy throne of grace

God all her fathers be the God of their succeeding grace through each!

[ 55 : 42 ] her path of life our wandering footsteps die give us his day our daily bread our brave and faith provide!

O spread thy covering! wings! around till all our!

! and our father our souls our souls are life and life in peace!

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more Amen