

And that we would have a testimony to share. A living, active, developing testimony of how God meets with us. So four points, if we have the time.

The first point is relocation. And that takes us to verse 10. 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.

So as we pick up at verse 10, we can see here, or we can remember here from our past studies, that Jacob, he is moving home.

[36 : 08] He is being relocated. Now, the social commentators tell us that moving home is one of the most stressful things that you can do in your life. And most of us have moved home at some point and we know that it's a stressful thing to move home.

But Jacob's move was more stressful than most. When we move home, it's usually because of study or work or a relationship or something like that. But Jacob is moving because his family is falling apart.

And his brother wants to kill him. We can step back and see verse 41 of chapter 27 and we hear the words of Esau in that section.

Esau hated Jacob, his twin, because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him. And Esau said to himself, the days of mourning for my father are approaching, then I will kill my brother Jacob.

So that's Esau's plan. He intends to kill his brother and Jacob's mother, who doted on him, has overheard this.

[37 : 22] She's understood this. And so Jacob is being forced out of his home and he is having to relocate.

And for Jacob, as we just remember what kind of character he was, this would have been a really uncomfortable thing. Remember, Esau was the man's man. He was the hunter.

He was the shooter. He was the fisher. He was the guy who was comfortable in the wild outdoors.

Jacob was a home bird. So when Esau was out killing wild animals, Jacob was fine-tuning the recipes, the sauce, that the wild animals could be cooked in.

Jacob liked spending time with his mother, Rebecca, and she would spoil him. We can imagine Rebecca at the end of each night just going through to Jacob's room and fluffing up his pillows and making his cocoa and putting it at the side of the bed.

And so that was Jacob's experience, but his experience just now is far from that. Here he is, and he's far from home and he's sleeping under the stars and for a pillow, he doesn't have a nice feather pillow.

[38 : 44] He's got a stone under his head. So there's a 4th Street location. What can we learn from this picture?

Well, I think we could learn, first of all, that sin has consequences. Jacob was a schemer.

He was a deceiver. He sinned against God. It caused a whole lot of hassle between his father and himself and the father and the mother.

There was a whole lot of discomfort in the family home that had been caused by Jacob. And as a consequence, Jacob has found himself out here.

He's gone from the comfort and the security of the family home to the discomfort and the danger of being at this stage homeless. And he's sleeping rough.

[39 : 50] And we know that there's a wonderful story of grace in all of this. But at this point, we have an illustration of the fact that sin has consequences.

The other thing I wonder about in terms of application is I wonder if we can begin to see even here just a preview of Jesus.

There was an old elder in Torrid and he used to say to me on every page that you read and preach look for Jesus. And we know that God had promised that his blessing would come to and through this family line.

And if we trace this family line forward, we can go from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob, fast forward all the way and we'll do this at Christmas time.

We do it every year and we get to Jesus. This is the family line that leads to the one through whom we would be blessed, Jesus.

[41 : 08] And what did Jesus do? Well, he was not forced. but he, because of his great love for us, he left the comfort, the security, the glory of heaven to come to this world to deal with the sin of Jacob and all the Jacobs.

And one of the things that came to my mind in preparation that Jesus said is in Luke 9, 58 and Jesus says foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

Are we seeing Jesus here? Just a preview, a pointer forward. Relocation is the first point. We see Jacob and he's being relocated, he's in transit at this point.

The second thing we see here is revelation. Now it takes us into the dream in verse 12. And Jacob 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 there's revelation. revelation. But just note before we come to the revelation as we watch Jacob here far from home in a really uncomfortable precarious situation as he settles down to try to get some sleep on this cold night we don't have any record of Jacob reaching into his bag and checking to see what his spurred in morning and evening reading notes are.

[43 : 04] nothing of that we don't read about Jacob picking up an iPod and selecting a Christian podcast or looking for a CD of his favorite preacher so he can have a sermon in his ears as he drifts off to sleep.

There's no sense here that Jacob is seeking God. There's nothing that we see in his life so far that would suggest to us that he has any desire to seek God.

Of course he's not in the Bible because there is no Bible he's not reading Spurgeon because Spurgeon is not there. But there's nothing that would suggest to us that Jacob at this point even though it's so difficult he doesn't appear to be looking for God.

but the sovereign God is looking for Jacob and in Jacob's dream God reveals something of himself to Jacob.

We might ask at this point what was it about Jacob that caused God to choose to reveal himself to Jacob.

[44 : 29] Was there anything worthy about Jacob that we might have missed? Was there anything attractive in this man that caused God to say I want him?

Well we know from a survey of Jacob's life and character so far that it's quite the opposite. There's nothing attractive about this man Jacob. He's a sneaky snidey deceiving manipulative man. He's hard to like never mind love. He's very clearly a sinner and at this point in his experience he is very very lost.

But God drew near to him and God revealed himself to him and God loved him.

And here we have another picture of the gospel of how God works and how God is and his character and his nature and his dealings with us many Jacobs.

[45 : 50] And here we have another clearer preview of Jesus because the clearest revelation of God is seen in Jesus God the Son.

Colossians 1.15 says he Jesus is the image of the invisible God and Jesus came for sinners like Jacob like us.

The Son of Man Luke 19.10 came to seek and to save the lost like Jacob. Romans 5.8 says God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners like Jacob Christ died for us.

So God's revelation of himself to Jacob is seen in this dream. You could say it's a low definition. It's a kind of blurry hard to see revelation but God's revelation of himself to us today here is in high definition it's in clear focus because we are called to look to to fix our eyes upon Jesus.

So there's relocation there's revelation the third thing that we come to hear is the relationship that God is calling Jacob into.

[47 : 32] That takes us to verse 13 the second half of it and verse 14 we hear God speaking and he says to Jacob the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring your offspring will 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 then you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed!

again just take a moment to remember who Jacob was and some of the things that he had done we think about all the deceit and all the scheming and all the lying and all the cheating and all the disruption that he caused within his family we would expect that on the day that God meets with

Jacob on the day that God reveals himself to Jacob the word and the tone of this meeting would be a word of rebuke and chastisement that's what we would expect if we were predicting what comes next and we had been told God is about to meet with Jacob what do you think he's going to say we would expect this is going to be a hard word of trouble he's getting us he's getting us just desserts! But that's not what happened that's not what we read here God as he meets with Jacob he is gracious to him he does not treat Jacob the way that Jacob deserved to be treated instead he shows him the most tender kindness and love and grace it's amazing grace the promise the promise that was given to Jacob's grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac the promise of blessing the promise of land the promise of family and of protection these promises are given to Jacob this unworthy character everything that was promised to

Abraham and Isaac passes down the line to Jacob but even more is given to Jacob in terms of assurance promise invitation to be in relationship because the promise of God to Jacob is much more personal it's much more personal the way that God speaks to Jacob than he first spoke to Abraham look at verse 15 the Lord says to Jacob behold I am with you and I 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 and if we want to bring this promise all under one word it's the word relationship God promises Jacob the God of heaven and earth promises Jacob a relationship I am with you says the Lord think about Jacob what a comfort that must have been to hear these words as he sleeps rough under the stars the God who made the starry frame the God who set the stars in space says I am with you I will not leave you I will keep you wherever you go Jacob is far from home this whole place is so strange and alien to him he doesn't know at this point where he's going to end up he would have felt so vulnerable and so lost but the God of all the earth says to Jacob I will keep you doesn't matter where you go there's no place on planet earth that is strange to me and he says

[52 : 26] I will be with you and I will keep you wherever you go and you're going out and you're coming in the Lord promises to keep his soul Psalm 1 to 1 before we get to Psalm 1 to 1 I will bring you back to this land says the Lord I will not leave you until I have done everything I promised and we read these promises we look in on this relationship the Lord calls Jacob into and rightly as we think about who Jacob is and who God is we are amazed by the grace of God we say as we look in this how amazing for Jacob to have experienced this how privileged Jacob was to have received these amazing promises and all that is true but let's remember that these promises don't stop with

Jacob they're filtered down through the line through the ages to us we we sing so often in Psalm 46 the God of Jacob is our refuge and the God of Jacob he calls us he calls you he calls me into relationship with him maybe there's someone here tonight who's never entered into relationship with the God of Jacob tonight he calls you he calls you to come into relationship with him and maybe there's some of us here tonight and we're in relationship with this God but he seems so far away and tonight he calls us to come close to return to come back again the God of Jacob calls us into relationship and just as the

Lord came to Jacob he has come to us think on that not in a dream not even lowering down a ladder from heaven but he has come to us in Christ Christ came down from heaven as we see this ladder that is lowered down we are being given a picture of what God would do for us to make it possible for us to get to heaven Christ had to come down Warren Weerspey says the ladder symbolizes Jesus Christ Jacob is a perfect picture of the lost soul in the darkness fleeing for his life away from the father's house burdened with sin and ignorant of the fact that God is near him and wants to save him the ladder pictures

Christ as the only way from earth to heaven he opens heaven for us and brings heaven's blessings to our lives and he alone can take us to heaven so we see this relationship we'll finish with this we see this relationship that God is drawing Jacob into and we this evening are being called into this relationship with God we are that's what it means to be a Christian being a Christian is not having your name on a denominational list being a Christian is not being able to recite huge sections of the Bible or the confession these are helpful things perhaps being a

Christian is about being in relationship with the living God being a Christian is about knowing Jesus as our saviour and following him as our Lord the Lord who takes us from that place of being absolutely lost to being safe it's about being in relationship with the God who takes us from darkness into the light from death into life and ultimately from this sin sick world to the Father's house to our home at the end of the wilderness journey to our home in heaven let's pray our

heavenly

[58 : 26] Father we thank you for your word we thank you for this testimony that we read of in this chapter we thank you for the way Lord God that you met in power and in grace with Jacob and we look in in his life and we see so much of ourselves we see that we are sinful that we fall that we fail that we drift we we ourselves where Jacob was but we thank you that you're a God who seeks us you are the God who saves us you are the God who likes to bless us and we thank you father for sending your son Jesus into this world we thank you that as we see the ladder descending from heaven our minds go to Jesus he came down to earth from heaven love divine all loves excelling joy of heaven to earth come down we thank you for the gospel we thank you that you are the God who calls us to trust you we thank you that we are promised that when we believe in Jesus when we are able to say that the

Lord is my shepherd we have the promise that you are with us that you are with us through all of life you are with us as we travel even through death we thank you that when you are with us you are with us eternally and there is a place prepared for us in the Father's house a place that we can truly call home so help us we pray as we read on we see Jacob responding in faith flawed faith but faith and help us we pray as we hear the invitation of the gospel even in this chapter in Genesis to respond by asking the Lord Jesus to be our saviour to be our Lord to be our God to be our King and we ask all this in Jesus name Amen we sing to finish the words of Mission

Praise 482 nearer my God to thee nearer to thee nearer my God to thee nearer to thee in though it be a cross that raiseth me still still all my songs would be nearer my God to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee!

O like the wanderer the sun gone down darkness be over me my rest of stone!

! yes in my dreams I'd nearer my God to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee nearer let the way appear sent son to have all that thou sendest me in mercy give angels to beckon me nearer my God to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee then with my waking thoughts bright with thy grace out of my stony peace

[63 : 40] Bethel I raise so by my woes to nearer my God to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee nearer to thee or if on joyful wing leaving the leaving!

sun moon and stars for God upwards I fly upwards fly still all my song shall be nearer my God to thee me to me to nearer to me and may the Lord Jesus Christ the God the Father and the fellowship of Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore Amen