

Crossroads Community Church

Sunday March 22nd, 2015

Spring is here and we rejoice as the sun melts away the snow and the Son makes all things new. Pastor Don shared announcements and much needed prayer requests. He then prayed over us, ?Dear Father God, we pray for malleable hearts, the kind that seeks to please you and follows your guidance, help us trust your plans for our lives, help us not become impatient and take matters into our own hands which causes strife, in Jesus name, Amen.?

Today we continue to learn from the rollercoaster life of Jacob in Genesis. So far we have seen the deceiving spirit he had towards his brother and father, his spiritual condition was wicked without a relationship with God. Last week we left off in the plot of Jacob and his mother tricking Isaac to give him the firstborn blessing instead of Esau. The plan was set, Rebecca cooked a meal, disguised Jacob and he went to deliver the bowl of deception to Isaac. Jacob obtained what he wanted, he received the blessing but at what cost. (Genesis 27:27-29).

Jacob never saw his mother again, his mother had heard of Esau's plan to seek revenge so she quickly told him to flee to her brother's house, his Uncle Laban. Once in Laban's house the old adage of what goes around comes around fell to him as he was deceived by his Uncle. Meanwhile he was exiled from his family for over 2 decades, his brother formed an enemy nation; the Edomites. Things could have been less troublesome if he and his mother had waited for the Lord's timing concerning the birthright promise God had already made in Genesis 25:23; Although the promise was made it didn't mean he would enjoy the blessing immediately, it was essential for him to build a relationship with God for himself not rely on the relationship his father and grandfather had with the Lord. God is never caught by surprise when we hasten situations; he uses those circumstances to mold us into who we need to be to fit into His glorious plans.

While on his way to Uncle Laban, Jacob became tired and set up camp, but his sleep was disturbed. In a dream that night, God came to Jacob and established his covenant with him as he had with Abraham and Isaac. God was repurposing Jacob's journey, we read later that God changed Jacob's name to Israel. After Jacob's encounter with God, he placed his faith in Him; Jacob was now part of God's plan and made a vow to Him. You would think making this kind of vow was enough to ensure a trouble free life, but not quite, Jacob had many lessons to learn. Once in Haran in Laban' house, Jacob fell in love with his uncle's daughter Rachel. Since he did not have money, he agreed to work for 7 years in exchange for her hand in marriage, however Laban conveniently omitted the fact that the custom was to marry the first born daughter and so on the day he wed, he was tricked into marrying Leah, first lesson learned. Jacob still wanted Rachel, so Laban again tricked Jacob into another 7 years of labor to have her. He eventually needed to work another 6 years to obtain his own livestock. I wonder how much Jacob enjoyed that bowl of deception.

Jacob was disappointed but God used it as an opportunity to teach Jacob about submission. Jacob had initially failed to submit to God's timing concerning the promise and resorted to trickery, God needed to humble Jacob, God was forming his character. During all this time God still blessed Jacob and prospered him. Jacob became wealthy and earned Laban's trust and respect. Then only then was Jacob ready to go home, God prepared him for the right time and assured Jacob of His presence for the journey back.

Further ahead we see that Jacob is afraid, he feared Esau may retaliate so he sent messengers ahead with a humble and reverent message. He was given the feedback that Esau was coming with an army of 400! So what now? Jacob had no choice but call out to God. He acknowledged his unworthiness before God and he sent his family away safe fearing for them. Jacob again was alone, he struggled with God all night and begged for his blessing, he fought because he would not surrender all his will to God, so the Lord touched Jacob's hip and wrenched it out of place which left Jacob with a limp the rest of his life, perhaps as a reminder to not resist God but always submit.

Beloved, Jacob was heading the wrong way far from God and God met him and redirected his path. How many of us need that today? We can all agree that patience doesn't come easy surrendering is not natural even for us believers, we struggle with waiting on the Lord's timing and want to hold on to things that are harmful to our spiritual life. How many of us have been like Jacob and took matters in our own strength, devised a way to make something happen sooner rather than wait, how did that work out? What has God had to do to finally get our attention? We need to be a people of faith in God, trusting his timing and obeying his instructions for our lives. Friends it is not enough to hear stories of great people of faith we need to be part of the story. So if we feel we have strayed too far, we can always call out to the One who can redeem us and set us on the right path again, may our wills conform to His?.Asherey Shalom!