

Finding God at Our Lowest Points

One of my favorite things about the people in the Bible is that they are fallible humans. I heard a teacher once say the people we read about in the Scriptures aren't there as much to be our examples as much as they are to be a mirror. So when we read about the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we should do so not just to read about their victories and failures, but also to insert ourselves and our lives and thoughts into the text. We do this in hope that we will not only experience similar victories but also learn from their mistakes so we might avoid similar pitfalls in our lives.

It is with this in mind that I read about Jacob's journey from the house of his father to the house of his uncle, Laban. Jacob has left Beersheva and is on his way to Haran when he stops for the night to rest. It is here that he dreams his famous dream about the staircase, or ladder, from heaven to earth with angels going up and down. As this dream continues, Jacob sees God standing on top of the stairs and hears Him say what we read in Genesis 28:13-15 (TLV):

"I am Adonai, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your seed. Your seed will be as the dust of the land, and you will burst forth to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed—and in your seed. Behold, I am with you, and I will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land, for I will not forsake you until I have done what I promised you."

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These words spoken by God to Jacob would have been amazingly powerful no matter where or when they were spoken. But when we take the time to consider the reality of the moment in Jacob's life when these words were spoken to him, we can better understand the next words he says. Hopefully, we can hold the mirror of the Scriptures up to our lives and allow God to speak these same words to us.

Think about it. Jacob has this dream at what is probably the lowest moment of his life spiritually, emotionally and relationally. Jacob is running from his brother, Esau, who wants to kill him because Jacob had deceived his father, Isaac, into giving him Esau's blessing. He has just left his mother, whom he dearly loves, knowing he may never see her again. He is also leaving the covenant land of promise and all of the physical riches and provisions that came with his birthright. He is now a homeless orphan, running for his life from the only home he had ever known to the very place God told his grandfather to leave. It would be hard to think of a lower moment for Jacob, and yet it is at that very moment that God appears and speaks into his life.

It is interesting that when God speaks to Jacob, He doesn't say: "Jacob, you are a thief and a robber, running away from those whom you deceived in order to stay alive." Jacob already knew who he was and what he had done. Instead, God reminds Jacob who He is and reiterates His promises. G-D then says something so very important that it shocks Jacob awake. God tells Jacob, "Behold, I am with you, and I will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land, for I will not forsake you until I have done what I promised you" (Gen . 28:15).

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The next words we read in Genesis 28 are as follows: "Jacob

woke up from his sleep and said, ‘Undoubtedly, Adonai is in this place—and I was unaware’ (v. 16).

When Jacob woke up, he had received new revelations about God. Jacob had known God as the God of Abraham and Isaac, the God who had given the land of Canaan to his grandfather. But Jacob wasn’t in Canaan anymore. He was a thief and a liar, running away in the wilderness, and yet God was still with him. Jacob seems to have believed that when he left behind his father’s house, he had also left behind his father’s God and all of the covenant promises made to Abraham and Isaac.

But at Jacob’s lowest point spiritually, emotionally and relationally, God made it clear that He was with him. This is still true today for you and me. Every one of God’s covenant promises are still ours, even at the lowest points in our lives. He is still with us. He will still watch over us wherever we go. He will still bring us back. He will not forsake us until He has done everything He has promised.

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