

Title: The Ladder of Salvation

Text: Genesis 28:10-22

Genesis chapter 28, please. Genesis chapter 28 beginning at Vs 10...
(Read Gen. 28:10-22)

Prayer

There are few passages in the O.T. which have equaled these verses in their influence upon christian thought. Jacob's vision of a ladder going to heaven and the angels ascending and decending have echoed in Christian prayers and Hymns throughout the ages.

A few moments ago we sang: "We are climbing Jacob's ladder."..And worshippers beyond counting, have sung, and will continue to sing the song that Jolyn Played as an offertory: "NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE." A song through which the wanderer, when the sun goes down and darkness covers him and he rest his head on a stone. And from that background comes the prayer:

Yet, in my dreams I'd be,
 Nearer, my God, to thee,
 Nearer to thee!

So, I want to look at this vision that Jacob had. This vision of a ladder going to heaven: The LADDER OF SALVATION.

(1) And the first thing that I would like you to notice about this vision is the significance of the place where Jacob came. According to Vs 19, the name of the place was LUZ. The word "Luz" means "Light".

And the point is that people must come to the light if they are going to expereince salvation in Jeus Christ.

Jesus said in John 8:12, "I am the light of the World."

He said in the Sermon on the Mount, "You are the light of the World.

And in John chapter 1, we learn that there is a light that has come to all men.

In Romans 1, we learn that the creation of the world, the things that are made, gives us light. Light from creation proves to us that there is a God. And as a result we are without excuss.

Now, it is true. Not all people respond to that light.

if you do respond

But, the Bible tells us that "the same God who shined the light out of darkness in creation will shine his light into your heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

You see, dear friends, there will be an additional light that will come into your life the moment you receive Jesus as Saviour. The moment you believe in Christ. At that moment the light will come on, as it were, in dissipating the darkness of your own sin and selfishness. And you will discover what it means to Know the Lord.

But, all people must come to the Light. And once they come they discover that it is BETHEL, the house of God. It is there where God dwells. Because you see, God was in the light. For God became man in Jesus Christ. And once you are there, you know that God is there. Jacob knew that God was there. As a matter of fact, Jacob was terrified.

The Bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. Now, a lot of us think of fear in terms of reverence and trust. And of course it means that. But, more than that in most of its usage in the Bible, it means terror. It means to be afraid.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. NOW WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

It means "an acknowledgement of God that He will bring the consequences of my actions. The Bible teaches that if a man continues to sin and he continues to reject the light that God has given to him in Christ, he is going to suffer PRESENT and eternal consequences.

Now, people often tell me that they do not like the message of Hell. That it is too severe. And I find over and over again that people are not ~~understanding~~ understanding the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. God has a hell. The Bible describes it. And all people who reject Christ are going to go there. That is what the Bible says. ~~But~~ ^{Who} whoever is not found written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire.

God doesn't want you to go there. But all people are going to go there who reject the light of Jesus Christ.

Jacob came to that place and he saw the light. And God appeared to him. ^{Jacob} And he said "I was afraid. I was felled with terror at the presence of God."

I also believe ^{that} the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge in the life of the believer. If you extend the grace of God to the point that you think that you can sin and get away with it, you are wrong. You are sadly mistaken. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. ^{It is time} God will not bring ^{us} you under eternal condemnation if ^{we} you are a believer. Because we are going to be in heaven. And there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. But, ^{we} you cannot sin, even as a believer and get away with it. God just does not engnore or over look ^{our} your sin. God will discipline ^{us} you and punish ^{us} you. He ^{our} knows your wandering away from him, and he give ^{us} you a long rope as it were. But God will judge ^{us} you and bring ^{us} you back to himself. ^{we} You cannot sin and get away with it. ^{and ignore his commandments}

Jacob came to the light and experienced the appearance of God. And he knew the terror of the Lord. He had a ^{healthy} fear of God in his heart. ^{Wise and Knowledge}

(2.) The second thing that I want you to ~~know~~ notice about this ^{ladder} ~~part~~ of salvation is the purpose of this ladder that appeared to Jacob.

Now, according to Genesis chapter 28, he received a vision of a ladder. That is in Vs 12. And the ladder was reaching up to heaven. And the Bible says that angels were decending and ascending on the ladder.

Now, a lot of people, and in fact some commentators, believe it or not, write that this means that there is a ladder to heaven of which there are steps. And by your good deeds you will slowly get there. And you know, this is human good through and through.

omit

In the tower of Babel they tried to build a tower to get to God. Just as surely as a ladder. And I ask you the question: ^{now} IS THAT WHAT THAT MEANS? IS IT A LADDER IN WHICH THERE ARE STEPS WHEREBY PEOPLE ARE PROGRESSING TOWARDS HEAVEN?

Please The Lord

~~promise~~

Well, we are not left to our own interpretation here. Would you turn to John chapter 1, please. John chapter 1

Now, Jacob said, when he had this vision, that this was the gate of heaven. Listen, ^{Dear Friends} ~~people~~, there is nothing more important than knowing that you are going to heaven. Nothing more important. All the promises of the here and now are worthless in comparison to the knowledge of life after death. And that you are going to be in heaven. Do you know that you are going to be in heaven? Jacob said in his vision, "This is the gate to heaven."

John chapter 1 verse 51, Jesus in calling disciples to himself, is talking to Nathanael. And Jesus said to him in Vs 51, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon what?.....THE SON OF MAN."

you Jesus is the ladder!!!! Jesus said, quoting that O.T. passage, you are going to see angels descending and ascending not upon ^a ~~the~~ ladder, but upon the Son of Man.

You see, Jesus is the ladder. He is the bridge. He ~~is~~ the gate to heaven. Jesus said, "I AM THE WAY. AND NO MAN ^{comes} ~~GOES~~ TO THE FATHER BUT BY ME." Literally, it is "through me".

You cannot get to heaven except through Jesus Christ and him alone. It is not Jesus and going to church. It is not Jesus and your good works. It is Jesus alone. There is no other way.

omit

Jesus said, "I am the door of the sheepfold." You cannot get into the fold unless you go through the door. He is the ladder leading to heaven.

what I hope you will learn

So, Jacob, learned a tremendous truth. He saw heaven ^{open} ~~open~~. And he said "This is the gate of heaven. This is the door into heaven." And Jesus said, that ladder is myself. Jesus is that ^{gate} ~~ladder~~.

(3) Now, the third thing, coming back ^{please} to Genesis chapter 28, is the promise of God that came to Jacob at this time. *The Promise of God*

You know, I doubt seriously, that if there is a new ^{believer} ~~convert~~ here this morning that you will not respond to this passage. ^{defect} I think that every believer ought to respond. But, you know, one of the greatest needs in the life of a new ^{believer especially} ~~convert~~, one who has just come to know Christ as Saviour, is to have assurance...to really know the promises of God the moment you are saved, to understand what is going to happen in your life. And there is a little four-fold plan that God gave to Jacob indicating His promise to him.

Chapter 28 and notice Vs 15....God said to Jacob, "And 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."

Four things that represent God's promise ^{to you this morning}
(1) Number one, his wonderful presence. He said, "I am with you and will keep you.".....There are times that come into your life and you wonder if God is there. Where is God? Oh, dear friends, God is there. He hasn't left. Maybe we have left.

The presence of God. There is nothing in the way of assurance that we need more than to know that God is with you. The presence of God. Jesus said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

Have you ever thought of the circumstances of that ^{news?} Those disciples standing on that Mount of ascension, on Mt. Olive. And Jesus is going to leave them. And yet he says, "I will never leave you." "I will be with you always even unto the end of the age."

And you know, Jesus taught them what that meant. He said, "~~You know,~~ I am not going to leave you like orphans. But, I am going to give to you another comforter who is the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit will give you assurance of my presence. And he will be with you...and in you, forever."

Hay! That is a wonderful promise. You will know the presence of God as the Holy Spirit bears witness with your spirit (says Romans 8). And because of that you will know that you are a child of God.

Oh, my friends, let me tell you. It is wonderful to know that God will never leave you, nor forsake you.

(2.) The second thing that comes by the way of a promise is the promise of God's protection. He says in Vs 15, "I will keep you wherever you go."

The word "keep" means "to put a guard around...to watch...to put a fortress around your life Jacob."

Do you know, my christian friend, that you have nothing to fear. Nothing can happen to your life that isn't a part of God's plan? Did you know that? Listen, God is in control. And he has promised to protect you. He promised to put a guard and a fortress around you.

The Bible teaches that under neath are the everlasting arms of God. A beautiful expression.

The Bible tells us, also, that God put an angelic host, a host of angels, around those who are trusting the Lord. How many angels is that? I don't know. But I do know that as I talk to you there is a whole host of angels that *are* encamped around us.

A *minister* in my church back in California got a new car. And he wanted to *take* his Pastor out and show him how fast his *new* car would go. So, I went with him and we went for a drive out on the freeway. And we are moving right along and he was just having a good time talking about the things of the Lord. And ~~and~~ I am watching that old speedometer. And it is *slowly* getting higher and higher. And we are moving right along. And the speedometer is climbing to 60 and 70. And he is just talking about the things of the Lord. And I am starting to sweat a little bit.

And when we hit 90 miles per hour he says to me. "Pastor, I really enjoyed that message last Sunday." "OH!!"...."Yes, he said. You know, it gives me a thrill, right now, to know that. Isn't it exciting going 90 on ~~the~~ freeway that you have all these angels protecting you?"

"Ha...I turned to him and said, "I think ~~they~~ all jumped off 20 miles back.".....

Ah, but it is wonderful to know the protection of God. *[*You know, I find people who are living in fear. The Bible says that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind."*]*

It is because you are putting "self" first. Put God first.

If you are living in fear, you have no need to fear. God says "I will keep you wherever you go." ~~Don't fear.~~ God has promised his wonderful protection to you.

(3) The third thing that came to Jacob by way of ^{God's} his promise was his plan. Jacob I have a plan for your life. Vs 15 says "and I will bring you back to this land." A wonderful promise.

Listen, God has a plan for everyone of our lives. And oh, how we need to accept this. Some of the things that happen to you, and you say, "Is that a part of God's plan. All these problems and testings?" Yes, it is all a part of his plan. "I will bring you into the land, Jacob." You will not bring yourself. I will do it. It is all part of my plan. God has a wonderful plan for your life. And it is all based upon what He will do.

(4) Fourth, please notice the power of God which is based upon His word.

The last phrase of Vs 15 says, "I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

God's actions are based upon God's word. He has power to do what He says. His word is power.

Let me explain this by making a statement which I trust will really challenge your thinking.

That is witness for Christ

You know, a lot of times when we are witnessing, we have the idea that somehow we, through are wonderful salesmanship and techniques, are winning people to Christ. That is not true. People are won to Christ by the power of the Word of God.

And let me add another thought which is often misunderstood. It is not related to whether or not you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Did you know that? A lot of people say, "Well, I am going to wait until I am filled with the Holy Spirit. And then I will share the word of God.

Listen, my friend, the Word of God is not dependent upon us. It is powerful within itself. God said that I will accomplish that for which I have sent it.

Now, I think you will enjoy it more if you are filled with the Holy Spirit But, that has nothing to do with the power of the inherent Word

And people have a had time understanding this. Listen, if you wait until you feel like you want to witness, you will probabale never witness. In fact, that is why some of you never witness.

The world is going to ~~hell~~^{hell}. And God says you are my plan, you are a christian, therefore, witness. Don't worry ~~me~~ about what to say, or not say, or whether you are filled with the Spirit or not. Listen, you leave that up to God. God says that as you renew your mind in the Word of God, the Spirit of God will transform you into the image of Christ.

There is only one thing that will stop the flow of God's spirit in you: Only one thing. And that is sin. You confess ^{Self-Intend} ~~your~~^{that} sin and God will do his work. God will control you by his spirit. That isn't something special for a certain class of christian. That is the normal christiann life.

Christian's, if you life is normal, then you are controlled by the Spirit of God.

Are you sensitive to your sin? And do you confess it? That is the Spirit of God working in you and controllling your life.

Many times we are waiting to share the gospel, we are waiting until we feel a certain way. As if our own life, Spiritual, depends on ~~us~~ us. It doesn't. The Word of God can accomplish just what God intends.

I have found in my own life in witness that when I don't want to share Christ, God brings someone into my path and just dropps him there. And he starts bugging ~~me~~ me about the Gospel. And I sit there and I am thinking.. "Hay, I don't want to talk with you." "I want to be my myself." And God continues to lay that burden there. { And all of a sudden I notice that the spirit of God is working in that person. [And I have seen ~~4~~ people come to Christ. Do you think that I walk away and conclude that that is my power? I walk away with a tear in my eye, knowing the grace of God. That God with his powerful Word, when ever it is shared, brings a soul to know Christ as Saviour. So, many christians are waiting around doing nothing because they are not trusting in God. They are trusting in themselves.

Listen carefully, Christian...one of the greatest truths you can learn as a believer is the power of God's Word. God spoke and it was so...

(SOFTLY)

Oh, friends, trust it in your own life. Realize that that Word, which is the seed that causes the new brith in you, can continue to grow and bear fruit in your own life. THE WORD...

A lot of people read the Bible, but they are not trusting the Bible. They go out and try to be like Christ, when they are not trusting the Bible. They try to do what they believe Christ wants them to do, but how can they wher they are not trusting the Word? It is the Word of God which is all the power we need. Praise God for it. And it will transform you and change you into the image of Christ. You will start to think what God wants you to think. You will begin to do what Christ wants you to do. And to be what God wants you to be. The power of the Word.

Let's close in Prayer

I will not leave you, until I have done what I have ~~promised~~ promised you -