

Title: The Pillars of Jacob

Text: Genesis 31:43-55

Genesis, chapter 31, please. Genesis chapter 31 beginning with Vs 43... This morning we are going to look at some PILLARS THAT CAME INTO THE LIFE OF Jacob. And these pillars represent experiences that happen to us, as Christians. Now, "PILLARS" are like memorial stones. They commemorate an event. They were used as signs of things that happened in people's lives. For example..if we were to travel in the Holy Land, we would see in many fields little piles of stones about two or three feet high. And these piles of stones I am told, represent ancient land marks. And they divided property lines. Ancient pillars. And this is what we are talking about in the times of Jacob. Pillars that mark out an event that indicated an important decision ~~in a person's life.~~ in a person's life.

Gen. chapter 31, verse 43....(READ Vs 43-55; 35:1-20)

PRAYER

Now, there are a number of pillars in the life of Jacob that I would like you to notice. And I am suggesting that all of these pillars represent an experience in our lives. And I trust you will see that before we are through these memorial stones, these monuments that marked out an event in the life of Jacob represent events in our lives.

For example, the first "Pillar" was the vision Jacob had of a ladder going to heaven. We looked at this "pillar" a couple of weeks ago, if you will remember. And the angels were descending and ascending on that ladder. We called this vision the ladder of Salvation. For here we learned about the meaning of salvation. *And the fact that* ~~For Jesus~~ is the LADDER, according to ~~Jesus~~ <sup>In N.T.</sup>. And salvation is through Jesus Christ. He is the way to heaven. And no person comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ/

So, this first pillar in Jacob's life represented Salvation. Salvation is the first step in living the christian life.

But, as most of you know, the christian's life is not always lived on the Mountain top. We still have struggles and problems and difficulties to overcome. *→ Ex: Hume Lake*

(2) \* And Jacob experienced the same thing. After haveing this great vision of salvation, we come to Gen. chapter 31 and the second Pillar. And I want to call this the PILLAR OF STRUGGLE.

Jacob experienced ~~great victory~~ <sup>salvation</sup> in his life, but then he finds himself in a period of stuggle. And doesn't that happen in our lives. We have that mountain top experience with God. And we are on cloud 10...just having a great time....and bang..we are confronted with the reality of living.

So, let's look at this PILLAR OF STRUGGLE that came into the life of Jacob. And then lets apply the lessons learned to our lives. And the stuggles we have

(A.) <sup>and</sup> I would like you to notice in the first place, the circumstances behind this problem of struggle.

Accordingg to the Bible, Jacob went to Laban to get a wife. Now, he had a worthy motivation. He went there to get a wife. And he saw this woman, Rachel, which means "gorgeious". And he fell in love with her.

And so he came to Laben and said, "Laben! I would like to marry your daughter, Rachel."

And so Laben turn to him and says, "Fine! But there is a little catch to it all. I would like you to work 7 years for me. And then I will give her to you."

And right at that point you know that Jacob was mad....You know that don't you? Do you know why Jacob was so upset at Laben? Because Laben was just like Jacob. <sup>Two of a kind</sup> ~~Same kind of person.~~ Always trying to get what didn't belong to Him. Jacob ~~stole~~ <sup>stole</sup> Issau's birth right. He was ~~that~~ way in his life. And so when he ran into Laben, he ran into someone just like himself. And Laben was going to get all he could get out of Jacob's life before he would permit this marriage. And so he made him work 7 years for Rachel.

Do you know what happened? He got married. But when he woke up in the morrowing he found out that he had married the wrong girl. He had married Leah, Laben's older daughter. The word "~~l~~eah" means "sore eyes."

Now, how would you like to be in love with a 'gorgeious' woman and wake up in the morrowing with "SORE EYES?"....HUN....

That is exactly what happened. Now, I don't know how she looked, But, I believe in the story there is a contrast being implied in the Hebrew words. This woman is "sore eyes" and the other one is "beautiful."

Now, some people say, "What is the matter ~~it~~ with Jacob? Can't he see? Didn't he know that the woman he married was Leah and not Rachel?"

Well, you have to know something about the oriental custom. You see, the night they were married, the woman draped herself and completely covered her face. And during the marriage night the man was not to look upon her face until the morrowing.

So, you can imagine the horrifying experience of Jacob as he wakes up in the morning and there is Mrs Sore eyes. Do you think he was mad? I will tell you he was mad....He was just as mad as you would have been.

He came to Laben and said, "Listen, I want Rachel!" "Fine".. "7 more years." ~~He~~ <sup>you</sup> Don't think that Jacob was a little upset?...Listen, those two men never got along. He worked 7 more years and he give him Rachel. Do you think he is through now?.....

NO!!! Here is what ~~he~~ <sup>Laben</sup> does now.."Now, Jacob, ~~you~~ have Leah and you have Rachel. Now, let's talk a little bit about this cattle problem. Do you know what Laben tried to do? He tried to do to Jacob exactly what Jacob tried to do to Laben? Jacob tried to take Laben. and Laben tried to take Jacob. And they had a struggle going on.

And so here is what happened. Laben said, "Listen, you take all these sick cows. And we will have a little breeding program going on here. And old Laben is smiling and thinks to himself: "Boy, oh Boy, Jacob is going to end up with all those sick cows." "And I am going to have the healthy ones."

Do you know what God did? He intervined. And out of those sick cows, he brought out ~~the~~ the best cows through breeding. ~~And~~ Laben was horrified. WHY! THAT BREAKS ALL THE LAWS OF BREEDING. HOW DID THAT HAPPENE??

Was Laben through at this point? No way...He comes with <sup>sweet words</sup> ~~grace~~ and pity pouring out of his mouth and he says, "Now, Jacob, you know that these are my children and these are my cattle. You know that don't you?"

And of course you know what Jacob is thinking. "THEY ARE MINE. I worked for them."

"Oh know. They were all mine, You know that!" Take about a struggle.. It represece to me much of the struggle that goes on in the believers life. Fighting the things that are happening in our life. Constant conflict.... constant struggle....AND THERE HAS TO COME A PLACE OF TOTAL COMMITMENT.

(2B) And that is the second thing that I want you to notice. The commitment that was made. And we read about that in Verses 45 to 48. Jacob took a stone and he set it up for a pillar. And they called it a "witness". They made this pillar. They made this commitment....

They made this pile of stones and said, "We will never cross over..We will never harm each other again. We are going to settle this once and for all

So, a commitment was made. Just like many times we make a commitment. We want to settle the struggle that is going on in our lives. We want to stop living like we are living.

(30) But, the third thing that I want you to notice is the carefulness that both of them had. Because ~~me~~ according to Vs 49, he calls it MIZ'PAH. Which means "watch." He said, "May the Lord watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other."

You know, they both knew each other well. And they knew one thing. "We had better turn this thing over to God." And God will watch between each of us. As to what we do or we don't do as to this commitment.

Now, some lovers have a tendency, you know, a young man loves this <sup>gal</sup> ~~girl~~ and he says to her and he writes, hoping to put a little <sup>spiritual</sup> ~~love~~ in a love note: He says, "The Lord watch between thee and me when we are absent one from another." Now, you had better think about that in light of the context of this passage before you do that.

They were in conflict. They didn't like one another...And he was ~~settling~~ settling this conflict that turning it over to the Lord. "The Lord watch between us when we are absent one from the other."

(3) Now, come to chapter 35. The third pillar that <sup>you</sup> ~~he~~ faced was amazing to me. Because this man, now total afraid of his brother Esau, running away from God as it were, and God comes to him and says: "Jacob, I want you to go back to Bethel."

"But I was at Bethel. I saw the ladder there. It was the gate of heaven. I was there at Bethel, the place of God." "WHY DO I HAVE TO GO BACK?"

Just like every one of us in our christian experience. We start running the show. We start doing what we think we ought to do. We are not trusting God. We are not surrendering to Him.

There will come a time when God will say, "Listen, I am running the show. I have a plan for <sup>your</sup> ~~your~~ life. You surrender totally to me. "

~~WHILE THE PRINCE~~

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE PROBLEM WAS? Let's look at it.

(1) First of all a command came from God. Chapter 35 verse 1, "Arise, go up to Bethel." Get on the stick, Jacob. I am in control, now. "And make an altar there to God."

Jacob I want to meet ~~with~~ with you. I have ~~got~~ something to talk to you about. God back to Bethel.

(2) The second thing that I notice is that <sup>Jacob</sup> he needs cleansing. His whole family. Vs 2. "Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments;"

And all the gods of worldly, material possessions that come into our lives, the compromise, be clean. { Oh, how we have need of cleansing. God said that if we would confess our sins he is faithful and just and for forgive our sins and cleans us from all unrighteousness. *Someone comes to us with advice - it is strong. It is for our good - We say we receive the advice. But do we - when we permit a barrier to find*

Put away the gods. <sup>out</sup> Seek you first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added upto you.

~~But~~ The main point of this is fantastic for the believer if you would only get ~~an~~ whole of this. J

(3) In the third place, Jacob was missing communion with God. And he didn't even know it. He wasn't depending upon the Lord. And according to the Bible, in Vs 7, when he built an altar, he named this place again. (Read vs 7)

Now, the first time he called it Bethel. Which means "House of God." It was there that he meet God. It was there that he found the gate to heaven. But now he calls it EL'BETHEL. Which means "GOD! OF THE HOUSE OF GOD."

You see, a lot of times, folks, we receive salvation from Christ, but we miss Christ. We miss God. The first time he saw the <sup>fallen and he</sup> place. ~~What happened to him there.~~ *experiences - the presence of God* → himself

The second time, God showed him. "Listen, Jacob, you had better learn that you must depend upon me. You cannot run your own life. This isn't your show. This is my plan. And you have missed me, Jacob. You must come back to Bethel and realize total dependence upon me. I am the God of the House where God blessed you."

That is why God created us, you know! To have fellowship with him. Have you missed God. Have you been going your own way and forgetting God?

(4) And then notice, in the fourth place, the change that came over Jacob.

Vs 10 says "And God said to him, Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name."

Israel means "Prince of God." God's prince. He trusted God. And now he is God's representative. He got a whole of God and it became a tremendous blessing in his life.

I wish our story ended here, but it doesn't.

*But please see the  
Victory in  
sorrow*

( ) There is a pillar of sorrow that will come into your life, believer.

Are you ready for it? According to the Bible in Vs 19 "Rachel died". And Jacob set up a pillar on her grave and it is a pillar unto this day. And this is on the road to Bethlehem. And I am told that if you travel that road today you can see the pillar of stones that represent Rachel's grave.

And I got thinking about all of this. And I believe God showed me something here. You know, when Jesus was born into the world, the Bible says that Herod decided to kill all the babies <sup>Boys</sup> two years old and under in Bethleher. And those soldiers came into that town and ripped it apart and kill ever baby <sup>boy</sup> under two years of age. ~~Every baby boy.~~

And the Bible says all the mourning and lomenting and the weeping of the families was like the crying <sup>Jacob</sup> over Rachel.

When Rachel died it was a woman that he had worked 14 years for. He loved that woman. And shortly after he had surrendered his life to the Lord, God took away the woman that he loved with all his heart.

Listen, Christian, are you ready for sorrow? God is going to take away things out of your life. But, he is going to fill them with more power than you can dream possible. Because from this point on Jacob becomes a mighty servant of God. A mighty servant of God. The father of the 12 tribes of Israel. With unuasally insight and blessing them and showing them how God's plan was going to unfold for all of history. Jacob becomes a man of God.

Listen, sometimes God must bring sorrow and suffering to your life. And he will build you and mature you. But recognize it...

Recognize that God wants to know whether he is first or not.

2 Cor 1:3

LET US CLOSE IN A WORD OF PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your Word. We thank you for all these circumstances in Jacob's life which causes us to see and understand our own christian experience. Father, we know that there are some here today who need to come to the place of the light, to Bethel, the house of God, see to see that ladder which is Jesus. That Jesus is the only way. That no one can be saved who doesn't come through Jesus Christ.

And God we pray for believers. Oh, how we ~~did need~~ need to surrender to you. Like Jacob we have had an experience in the past, we have know the Lord as Saviour, but how ~~we~~ often have we wandered away from you, going our own way and experiencing the ~~same~~ struggles of all the years. And you call us back to Bethel. You ~~call~~ <sup>call</sup> us back to that place where you gave us salvation. Oh, how we need to learn to depend upon you. For you are the ~~vine~~ <sup>vine</sup> and we are the branches. And without you we can do nothing. Help us Lord to know that. And we ask this in Jesus name and for His sake.

Amen....