

Genesis, pt2: A Generation Passes. The Mission Advances.

Genesis 35-36

MPS God guards His salvation by calling people to Himself in worship, obedience and mission.

OBJ Every person can know that true purpose in life is only found in Jesus Christ by **three participations**.

READ Genesis 35:1-15

God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."² So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments."³ Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone."⁴ So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.⁶ And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him,⁷ and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother.⁸ And Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel. So he called its name Allon-bacuth.

God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him.¹⁰ And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So he called his name Israel.¹¹ And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body."¹² The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you."¹³ Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him.¹⁴ And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it.¹⁵ So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.

God tells Jacob to go to Bethel and dwell there, and to make an altar to worship Him there. He directs Jacob to recount who appeared to him and what happened to him there. Jacob directs his family to prepare to go on to Bethel by putting away all foreign gods and purifying themselves. Jacob leads his family to follow the Lord as he is reminded of the Lord's faithfulness to him. The family gave all their foreign gods to Jacob, who buried them there under a tree.

As they journeyed a "terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them". Before God delivered the Israelites by parting the Red Sea to pass through on dry ground, he held back the surrounding cities who might harm Jacob's family so they could pass through safely. When Jacob reached Bethel, he erected an altar and worshiped the Lord.

As Jacob worships, God appears, blesses him, changes his name to Israel, repeats His command to be fruitful and multiply, and renews His covenant with him by His promise. Jacob set up a pillar of stone, made an offering to the Lord, and named the place Bethel, which means house of God, because God appeared to him there.

The remainder of Genesis 35 provides record of Jacob's family and as it has been, it is still not all clean and pretty. There is great sadness, as Rachel dies in childbirth with Benjamin, continuing sin, as Reuben lays with Bilhah, and sorrow, as Isaac dies and is buried by Jacob and Esau. But in the midst of this record we see the next generation through which God will carry forth His covenant.

Genesis 36 records Esau's family, how the Edomites developed and set up their habitation all around the Israelites. God's faithfulness is recorded even here, though not of the blessed son, as His promise to make Ishmael into a nation is fulfilled.

TRANS And at the end of Genesis 36 we conclude the second part of our Genesis study.

God guards His salvation by calling people to Himself in worship, obedience and mission.



Genesis, Part Two, chapters 12-36, began with God's call to Abraham to leave all and follow Him. We walked with Abraham as he followed and failed, but through it all God remained faithful. From Abraham came a miraculous fulfillment of God's promise in the birth of Isaac. To Isaac and his wife Rebekah were born Jacob and Esau. As with his fathers, we also saw Jacob's numerous failures and God's abundant faithfulness. Jacob is renamed Israel, and by his twelve sons as tribe heads will become the nation of Israel. The final portion of our Genesis study will follow one of the youngest of Jacob's sons, Joseph. [Through every generation one constant has remained, God's faithfulness to guard His covenant as He leads His people.](#)

TRANS I want us to take one final walk with Jacob this morning, the most important walk one could ever take.

In this Part Two of Genesis, we've considered "the question of purpose". We are all familiar with purpose because every person longs for it, and endless sources promise it in this world. [Many like to talk about how to "find purpose", but only in looking to God can a person truly come to know genuine purpose in life as God created for them.](#) The question of purpose addresses the deep, soul longing of every person by addressing "who I am and why I am here". How many times did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob long to know these things, often choosing their own plan or way. How often we do the same. But God was faithful to call them back to Himself and lead them; and He is faithful to us too. Purpose is not some bit of knowledge that one gains and possesses the rest of life. Purpose fills our life as we walk in obedience to the Lord's commands to serve Him. When you lose that sense of purpose, that sense of divine blessing and leading on your life, you should not go searching to find it. Rather, return to the Lord who gives it and seek His face to lead you in it. [Established in our identity, the question of purpose leads us to listen and follow the Lord to bring our life into the full meaning and direction found only in Him.](#)

TRANS That's what I want us to do this morning. As we walk with Jacob one last time, we best summarize what we learn from his life about living in the purpose as God intended for us by returning to Him. [God is calling each one of us to return to Him today for revival and renewal of our hearts and lives.](#)

OBJ [True Purpose is only found in Jesus. God calls us to Himself to bestow purpose on our life by three participations.](#)

1. [God calls us to Himself to come and worship.](#)

*"Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you..."*¹

Renewal begins by Jacob hearing the Lord's call to him and remembering God's faithfulness to he and his family.

God was calling Jacob to renewal of his whole life, because by stopping short of obeying God his family had become comfortable living outside God's will and filled their life with many false idols. [Jacob recognizes God's command as more than only a relocation, but a revival to renew he and his whole family.](#)

Renewal could only begin by repentance, to stop going his own way and begin to follow the Lord. This renewal would not come without a price. The foreign gods were not simply trinkets without value. Many were made of fine and precious metals of great value. Obeying God would require faith in sacrifice. Leaving this place meant leaving all that had become familiar, comfortable, and even prosperous for them. [Putting away the false gods and leaving were not inconsequential decisions, but a demonstration of sacrificial faith because though it came at a high price, it culminated in a far greater blessing.](#)

ILLUS In 2005, after Tom Brady won his third NFL Super Bowl, Steve Kroft interviewed him.¹ Kroft asked Brady, "Which of the rings do you like the best? Which is your favorite?", to which Brady replied, "I've always said the next one." In that same interview Tom Brady said, "Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me?" Some say I've reached my goal, my dream. Me, I think, 'God, there's got to be more than this. This can't be all it's cracked

¹ Steve Kroft Interview clip with Tom Brady. https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=-TA4_fVkv3c Last accessed February 11, 2021.



up to be. I've done it. I'm 27. What else is there for me?" After seven super bowl championships, Tom Brady is the GOAT but still longs for a Savior.

God called Jacob to come and worship Him, not in ritual, but in deep, heart-wrenching, soul-wringing surrender. And this is what worship is; we bring our whole life and lay it at His feet to confess that He is worthy. [Worship is key; purpose cannot be found in stuff, accolades or accomplishments, but in laying all of these down in worship before the only One who is worthy.](#)

[Are you listening to the Lord, or are you still occupied looking in other places? Will you lay it all down to worship Him today?](#)

2. [God makes us who we are in Jesus Christ to walk by faith in obedience.](#)

And God said to him, "no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." .10

When Jacob arrived, God appeared to him and renamed him Israel. God renamed Jacob to remind him of the new creation he was remaking in him. And from His work in Jacob would come His work through Jacob, a nation. IF Jacob had stayed away, he would have never known God's transformative work in his life. But the Lord is faithful to His covenant. Obedience by faith to the Lord's command brought Jacob back to the place where God's work was first in his life. Jesus teaches, "*But seek first the kingdom of God & his righteousness,*"^{Matt6:33} [God was Jacob's purpose for life, but Jacob did not know it until He trusted to obey. Until you seek Jesus first in life, NOT as one of but as first in all, purpose will always be fleeting.](#)

In salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, everyone gets a new name by which they are known to God; Beloved, child of God, co-heir with Christ! In salvation God calls you to trust Him to live for the glory of Jesus' name, in whom your life is now hidden with Him. Of all the other things we hear in the world and remember of ourselves, none compares to this reminder we have of our true identity in Jesus Christ. The Lord remakes and renews us as we honor Him in worship with our whole life; "*in Christ, he is a new creation*"^{.2Cor5:17} This remaking of being and identity is God's work, and He continually draws us back to Himself to remind and renew us. [The most real and true reality about you is NOT what you see or remember yourself as, but what God has made you in Jesus Christ. THIS reality of your new identity is what God commands you to walk in!](#)

Our purpose is grounded in identity because every time you try to find yourself in anything else, you lose yourself by forsaking the One who is your life! Jesus teaches this in Luke 9:23-25;

*And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? **Luke 9:23-25***

[Are you listening to God's Word, that remakes and renews within, to obey His command by Holy Spirit and walk in obedience to Him? Is there any disobedience that you know you are living in?](#)

3. [God commands us so we can serve His mission and make His Name known on earth.](#)

¹¹ *And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply.*

¹²*The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you." .11-12* God chose a man through whom He would found a nation of people, and through this nation He would bring His Messiah. God tells Jacob, "*I am God. I will do my work. You trust and do my command; be fruitful and multiply.*" [God makes clear that He is the One doing the work by calling His people to trust and obey to serve His mission.](#)

God's past faithfulness is always an anchor for future faith as He leads you forth to serve Him. Life with God will not be without struggle, without pain and heartache, without death, loss or grief. It will not be absent of trauma, of broken relationships or suffering. [Have you even considered that 2020 may not be the worst year of your life?](#) BUT You will never know a year or season so 'bad' or 'broken' that Gd cannot and will not bring good! [Nothing will ever prove "more than" God's sufficiency in Jesus! We must look to Him, trust to obey, and serve His mission through it all.](#)

[We must pay closer attention to what we have heard from God in Jesus Christ, so we do not neglect our great salvation.](#)



*Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ²For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. **Hebrews 2:1-4***

We must return to the only One, Jesus Christ, who IS and brings good to us, so we do not forget His great promise.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

What you have come to know of God from his past faithfulness to you is never only about that moment for you. God draws you to Himself in Jesus Christ remake and renew you, so you will trust and obey to serve Him! There is so much about the last year that I do not understand. But in the midst of it all there is one thing that I do know: God is good, and He will bring good to me through it all. *Life only loses purpose when we cease looking to Jesus and live to serve self.*

God guards His salvation by calling people to Himself in worship, obedience and mission.

Genesis parts One and Two reveal life for all in this way. God is our Origin, the Creator and designer of your life. God is our purpose, the only One in whom you can know purpose and meaning. Where you meet God and what He reveals to you always begin with salvation, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. If you have never repented of your in and put your faith in Jesus Christ, today God is calling you to believe and be saved.

- Sunday, February 28, we will host Baptism Sunday. Make your faith in Jesus public and join us.

Christian, God is calling to you too! He may be calling you from the fringe of His will, where you've made your life comfortable, convenient and manageable. Today God is telling you to cast of what has kept you at a distance, and move to the "center" where He wants renew you in the heart of His call for your life. *Will you throw off those false idols and hopes, and return to Him in complete surrender of worship today?*

LifePoint, God is calling to us! God is working in powerful ways in our church.

- Nine people are ready to be baptized on Sunday, February 28. I am confident more will make their faith in Jesus public.
- We've already dedicated 8 children in this new year, and more are coming.
- We are commissioning to send two families into the international mission field this year.
- He is leading us into our biggest church planting partnership ever.
- We have four young men discerning a call to ministry and preparing to serve vocationally.
- Following our Jan 17 Orphan Care Sunday, four more families obeyed the Lord to pursue adoption or foster care.

