Living Hope Ministries
Bible Study

Genesis 28

Despite knowing he has been deceived Isaac blesses Jacob. He urges Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. Esau hears of his father's wishes and decides in defiance to marry a Canaanite woman himself.

The rest of this chapter covers the story of Jacob's dream which proves to be a very powerful encounter with God.

Verses 1- 9

Marriage

Although in these days men had more than one wife, it was never sanctioned and approved by God.

We see in some relationships genuine love like Abraham and Sarah but there develops a culture of acquiring wives from different places where love and romance is not present.

Isaac is troubled about the thought of Jacob marrying a Canaanite woman.

The Canaanites worshipped multiple gods, engaging in practices that were considered immoral and offensive to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Isaac wanted to ensure that his lineage remained faithful to the one true God and did not want his family to absorb the pagan culture of the Canaanites. Marriage was seen as a sacred covenant, and marrying a Canaanite woman would be seen as marrying outside the covenant with God. He wanted to prevent Jacob from falling into idolatry and losing his faith in the God of Abraham.

The Canaanites practiced pagan worship, and Isaac feared that marrying a Canaanite woman would lead Jacob and his descendants away from the covenant relationship with God.

Scripture teaches a man should not be unequally yoked. The challenges of marrying an unbeliever often lead to compromise and even sin. The bond caused by marriage is much deeper than any other relationship and the act of intimacy creates a tie which is not easily broken.

Esau knows the concerns of his father and deliberately enters into a tie with Mahalath in an act of rebellion. He is not acknowledging how his sin was the major factor in losing his birth right not his father blessing Jacob by mistake.

The covenant of marriage is sacred to God and must never be treated lightly or carelessly.

Verses 10-22

Jacob's dream

A stone is used as a pillow (verse 11). Jacob is tired and falls asleep. A stone would not seem suitable to rest his head on, but it works for him and he falls asleep.

He has a vision of a stairway resting on the earth with its top reaching to heaven. Angels were ascending and descending. This is a reminder that we have angels on earth today just as we know they are in heaven.

Above all this stood the LORD

The ladder, the angels and a vision of the Lord himself bring Jacob to an encounter with God that will change his life for ever. God declares who he is. He is the God of His father and grandfather. He is the God of covenant and promise. The vision given to his predecessors is now passed to him. We need our own encounter with God so that we can enjoy the promises already enjoyed by those who have gone before us. The promise of God’s presence inspires us and gives us confidence that He will fulfil all that He has said.

Jacob's reaction

He is very aware that although God has used a dream to speak to Him it really has been almighty God. The experience provokes a fear of God and he knows he has met with the God of heaven and been in His house.
It is a massive moment in his life and using the stone that had been his pillow and oil he marks the spot that forever will be a testament of his experience. In our lives a wedding ceremony, our baptism or anniversaries remind us of the enormity of our meetings with God.

Jacob's vow.

"**If God provides and protects me on this journey then He will be my God and I will give a tenth**". Up to this point he had an awareness of God but now he knows for himself the living God.

Points to consider:

- How carefully do we choose a marriage partner? Why should we be cautious about marrying a non believer?
- God still speaks through dreams. How can we avoid missing something He is saying to us?
- Has God reminded you of His promises? Are there promises you are still waiting for their fulfilment?
- Can you list personal encounters you have had of God?
- What changes have you made as a result of encountering God?