
GENESIS 46:1-5

{1}And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. {2} And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

KEY OBSERVATION:

It is interesting to notice that in our passage this morning we see two names for the same person.

We remember from our studies in Genesis that the name Jacob meant HEEL CATCHER or SUPPLANTER.

It was a name that referred to his NATURAL strength but it also spoke of his SPIRITUAL weakness. But we saw in Chapter 32 that after God had crippled Jacob that God changed the name of Jacob to Israel, which means GOVERNED BY GOD.

That name spoke of SPIRITUAL strength despite NATURAL weakness

NOTE WELL:

The ONLY time you are strong is when you are RULED BY GOD.

BECAUSE it is ONLY the man or woman ruled by God that can say no to sin - no to the pressures imposed by the world around him.

KEY OBSERVATION:

When this man started on his journey to Egypt he went in great faith and strength.

That is why we are told that ISRAEL took his journey.

It was indeed the plan of God for this man to go down to Egypt with his family -

He moved in obedience and faith - even in his old age.

KEY OBSERVATION:

We are told that on the first day he reached the well of BEER-SHEBA.

It was the BORDER town.

When he passed that place he would be leaving the promised land of Canaan and on his way to Egypt.



KEY OBSERVATION:

WHEN he was about to take that step of LEAVING Canaan he suddenly begins to realize the implications of such a move and finds himself becoming more like Jacob than Israel.

That is why we are told that God DID NOT address him as Israel.

Instead God called to him and said, JACOB, JACOB.

CRUCIAL:

God KNEW the weakness of His servant at that very moment. So He would NOT address him as ISRAEL, but rather addressed him in the midst of this trial according to his condition.

KEY APPLICATION:

Jacob's obedience and faith are mingled with fear and unbelief.

The same can be true in our lives!! *Lord I believe, but help my unbelief.*

Many of our lives alternate between ISRAEL and JACOB.

Sometimes we are strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

But other times we find that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

The Lord had CHOSEN Jacob, the heel-catcher, and SAVED Jacob the supplanter and PRESERVED him.

But His great desire was to make the Israel in him the DOMINANT character.

He wants Jacob to be far more RULED BY GOD than a SUPPLANTER among men.

There is another observation to make

Jacob is at a TURNING POINT in his life

He is about to break new ground and go somewhere that he had never gone before.

As he stands on the threshold of CHANGE he does something very WISE.

He comes before the Lord with sacrifice

This is a VALUABLE example to us for those TURNING POINTS in our own lives.

When you set out to establish a new household...When you start a new job/business - Come before the Lord.

ACTUALLY, every new day is a venture into the unknown.

NOTE:

Taking time to come before the Lord did NOT hinder Jacob's journey.

In the OT it was common for men to bring their sacrifices before the Lord and to then SEEK the Lord for UNDER-STANDING and DIRECTION.

Ps. 73:16-17 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

CURRENT APPLICATION:

We so often don't take the time to come before the Lord for His guidance at crucial turns in our lives.

EXAMPLE:

Getting lost while driving

I would only be taking a small fraction of my time wasted driving around lost trying to find my way back to the main road I wouldn't get lost.

Then you get careless trying to make up for the lost time.

KEY INSIGHT:

The Lord LOVES to see His children CONCERNED with being RIGHT.

He LOVES to see us be so CAREFUL that we would take time to come before Him.

He LOVES to see us make our decisions based upon His counsel and direction.

There are THREE important points to OBSERVE and to LEARN from (OBSERATION/APPLICATION)

1. Jacob had a fear that was very natural
2. God didn't want Jacob to be afraid
3. God's cure for Jacob's fear

1.) Jacob's fear was natural...it was the fear of change

For Jacob to have such a fear at this moment is very understandable. Jacob is a very old man leaving the land he was born in.

Old men DO NOT like changes

NOTE:

The older we get the less tolerant we are of change.

When you're young you have very few deep attachments to things in your life.

IN FACT - you almost NEED or DEMAND change

EXAMPLE:

Children don't want to do anything for very long.

EXAMPLE:

There are tons of people in their late teens early twenties that run all over the world with little concern for where they're headed next...They just can't wait to move on to the next place or next job.

But as you get older you get SETTLED in to locations and vocations.

It's been said that it's the older trees that strike their roots deep.

Such trees are NOT easy to transplant

So it is NATURAL for the man Jacob to be afraid at such a MAJOR DISTURBANCE to his settled life and at THE PROSPECT of traveling to an unknown place to live.

Jacob is about 130 years old.

His heart would be CLINGING to his homeland.

He loved the oaks of Mamre. The plains of Esdrelon and the hills of Carmel were dear to him.

EGYPT ITSELF also would hold in it an element of fear.

Egypt was an ugly name to him. It was with great difficulty that he sent his sons there buy grain. It was a place of bad times for his ancestors.

Abraham was met with trouble there.

Isaac had thought of going down there, but the Lord told him: *DO NOT GO DOWN TO EGYPT*

It was a place to be avoided rather than sought out.

Though there was the promise of seeing his long lost son Joseph, the trip bore with it great risk and difficulty.

Change such as this would naturally produce fear because of the possibility of NEW BURDENS and TEMPTATIONS that would meet him there.

As we get settled in to our lives and occupations we get used to the day in day out difficulties of that setting.

We become accustomed to the those burdens temptations unique to our lives...

Like a burden that conforms to our back after a while

They aren't as heavy as they seemed originally (Marriage / kids - you get used to the weight of wife first / kids first)

The wounds that they originally caused have long healed.

But what about some NEW burden?

- It might try my faith in new areas.
- It might cause some fresh wounds.

NOTE:

That is why many women refuse to deal with husbands that are drunks or unfaithful because of the potential change that might follow.

NOTE WELL:

Even God-directed change carries with it such possibilities.

It is SO important that we not find ourselves outside of the will of God

So we MUST note-

Jacob's fear that was born out of impending change - was NATURAL

2.) God did NOT want His servant to be the slave of fear.

How do we know this to be true?

That FACT that God desired to REMOVE Jacob's fears is clearly seen in the fact that He appeared to Jacob and said:

Gen. 46:3 fear not

NOTE:

As we study THROUGH the Bible we begin to see those things that the Holy Spirit desires to EMPHASIZE to the heart of the believing man and woman concerning the heart of God.

One of the MOST emphasized truths of the Book of Genesis is that God is deeply concerned that His children NOT be afraid.

YOUR peace and security is of great importance to the Lord.

The peace and security of this one aged man is of great importance to the Lord.

Regardless of the SOURCE of their fears, He goes out of His way to DRIVE AWAY their anxieties and CURE their fears.

There are several KEY REASONS why the Lord would want to provide A CURE FOR JACOB'S FEAR OF CHANGE

1. Fear makes you unhappy.

As a father, it is very unsettling to see my kids afraid. There is NO joy or laughter in them when they are afraid. Our heavenly Father wants us to be REJOICING in Him. It is SAD when fear, especially the fear of change, robs us of the happiness that belongs to us in God.

Listen to the words of the Psalmist

Ps. 9:2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee

Ps. 31:7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy:

Ps. 32:11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

2. Fear has a WEAKENING effect upon God's children.

The CHANGES that awaited Jacob - the realities that awaited him in that strange and idolatrous place would require GREATER STRENGTH in Jacob than what was required in the comfort zone of Canaan.

Fear spells defeat for the believer because it so saps our energies.

- ANXIOUS thoughts drain us.
- ANXIOUS thoughts can paralyze us.
We can only think about "WHAT IF?"
- ANXIOUS thoughts distract us and rob time that could be given to strengthening our faith and undertaking the new work ahead of us.

3. Fear and faith are incompatible!

We just can't please God when we are in unbelief.

When God judged it right for him to go, Jacob MUST rest assured that God is right.

4. To turn back in fear is MORE than DANGEROUS, it is TREACHEROUS!!!

You have NO armor for your back

QUOTE:

Mel Gibson - When you see a 9ft. Philistine in front of you with a huge spear and sword, and you have a sling and a stone RUN RIGHT AT HIM - NOT AWAY FROM HIM.

3.) God had a CURE for Jacob's fear of change.

First - The Lord cured his fear by showing that he knew him by name.

Gen. 46:2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob.

You might say: "If the Lord were to speak to ME by MY name, then I wouldn't be afraid?"

But do you think that God DOESN'T know your name?

He knows EVERYTHING about you.

He knows the path you HAVE BEEN upon.

He knows the path you WILL BE on.

As you face the fear of change and the unknown, we are told that He CALLS US BY NAME.

We are told that all of our needs that we don't even know about in our new circumstances are known to Him.

[Matt. 6:32](#) (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

SECOND - The Lord dealt with Jacob's FEAR OF CHANGE by revealing Himself to Jacob as the UNCHANGING God

Gen. 46:3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father

KEY POINT:

What God has been to Abraham and Isaac He will be to Jacob.

KEY APPLICATION:

What God has been to all of His people throughout the history of man He will be to you.

The God of MOSES is YOUR God.

The God of Elijah is YOUR God.

The God of David is YOUR God.

The Jesus of the Gospels is YOUR Jesus.

You MUST ALWAYS keep this at the forefront of your mind and heart when the FEAR OF CHANGE begins to grip you.

EXAMPLE:

Early on in the ministry - A man whose wife has filed for divorce. After sharing with him the ability of God to change hearts he said: "*But she won't ...*"

I had to say to him - *SHE is NOT the issue*

WHAT she is capable of doing IS NOT his concern.

WHO God is - THAT is your basis of peace and security in such a frightening time as this.

KEY POINT:

IF God is YOUR God, THEN everything is secure.

As secure as it was for Moses before Pharaoh.

As secure as it was for Elijah before the prophets of Ba-al.

As secure as it was for young David before Goliath.

IF God is YOUR God, THEN the rest will be right.

IF God is YOUR God, THEN you have everything.

LASTLY - To deal with Jacob's FEAR OF CHANGE, God made some PRECIOUS promises to Jacob

In Gen. 46:3 God said to Jacob: *FEAR NOT TO GO DOWN INTO EGYPT; FOR*

Then God listed what He would do for Jacob

NOTE: Each of these promises are based upon what GOD would do for Jacob

Gen. 46:3 I WILL there make of thee a great nation:

Gen. 46:4 I WILL go down with thee into Egypt; and I WILL also surely bring thee up again

KEY INSIGHT:

IF God had made promises to Jacob **based upon what Jacob must do - THEN** there would still be reason to fear

BUT- Jacob is told what GOD WILL DO and **(THIS IS KEY)**

what God says He will do will ALWAYS be done

1.) Because He is of the power to do ANYTHING

Rom. 4:21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

2.) Because God ALWAYS keeps His Word

Isa. 48:3 I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.

CRUCIAL INSIGHT:

There are certain things that God wants US to do.

But I would encourage you to make it a habit to study the Bible to see what God HAS DONE for and WILL DO for you

EXAMPLE:

Before Paul ever tells the Ephesian Christians what they are to do for God he spends THREE CHAPTERS telling them what God has done for them

These promises are of great comfort in the face of change and the unknown

Gen. 46:3 I WILL there make thee a great nation:

You will see more of MY goodness than man's evil

You will not be exterminated there, you become a mighty people.

Gen. 46:4 I WILL also surely bring thee up again

Your descendants will return to the land of promise

But the most precious to me is I WILL GO DOWN WITH THE

No matter how dark the unknown appears to be, we are in the light if God is with us

His presence causes the night to be as the day

Like a child afraid of the dark, if mom or dad is with him it's as if every light in the house is turned on

PERSONAL:

Valerie and I would have NEVER made such a step in coming here unless we knew that the Lord was with us.

We left family, friends, and everything familiar.
We came to a place that was totally foreign to us.
We knew NOTHING of you.

We knew much of ourselves
Our own failures and fears

But the Lord was with us and that's all that mattered.

[Ps. 23:4](#) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for THOU ART WITH ME

I want us to close with TWO applications

1.) There is great comfort to the believer this evening who is dealing with CHANGE and all of the uncertainties that accompany it.

Be encouraged that such fear is NATURAL

Be encouraged in that God is very concerned that you NOT be afraid

God has a CURE for your fears

2.) For the person who has not accepted Jesus, you are left to your own devices to deal with fear

To be afraid is more than understandable for you

You DO NOT know what tomorrow holds for you.

You DO NOT have God with you because your sins have separated you from Him.

You are - as Paul wrote - WITHOUT GOD AND WITHOUT HOPE IN THIS WORLD.

Come to Jesus TODAY!

He will be your peace, your hope and your life in this world!

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