

Father's Day 2022

Title: Lasting Legacy

Text: Genesis 35-49

When a hobo told Andy he should just let Opie "decide for himself" how he wanted to live... Andy had these words of wisdom.

"No, I'm afraid it don't work that way. You can't let a young'n decide for himself. He'll grab at the first flashy thing with shiny ribbons on it. Then, when he finds out there's a hook in it, it's too late. Wrong ideas come packaged with so much glitter that it's hard to convince 'em that other things might be better in the long run. All a parent can do is say, 'wait' and 'trust me' and try to keep temptation away."

Somehow... we have lost this basic truth. Too many people are more worried about being their child's friend, than in being a parent.

Joshua 24:15

"As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Malachi 4:6

"He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers."

2800 years ago there was a man named Jacob who was a man with two natures.

We have spent many weeks on the life of Jacob and I will end the tale of Jacob with this message on Father's Day

- He was a man that appeared at times to be at war with himself.
- But he is also a man with whom other men can identify.

On this Father's Day, we will look at the checkered life of Jacob.

- **We will confront his deficiencies and consider his depths.**

The Bible clearly tells of his shortcomings but also of the victories he enjoyed.

WHAT JACOB DID WRONG

He was a lying, stealing son

- Lied about his identity, assuming Esau's identity to steal the blessing
- Used his father's God as a useful ploy in his lie.
 - "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the Lord your God granted me success."

He was a Bad brother.

He lived a life of deception.

1. He was a schemer and a trickster and was selfish from the day of his birth.

- Jacob was born the second son of Isaac and Rebekah.
- He had a twin brother named Esau.

2. The name "Jacob" literally means "he that grasps the heel."

- When used figuratively the name means "deceiver."
- As the boys grew, Jacob lived up to his name.

a. **He refused to give his starving brother food until he got something in return (25:29-33).**

b. He then tricked his old blind father (27:6-29) into giving him Esau's birthright, the right of the oldest son to become leader of the family when the father became too old.

c. As a result, Jacob had to run for his life and spent the next 20 years in hiding with his uncle. Uncle Laban turned the tables on Jacob and tricked him into marrying the unwanted sister of his fiancé.

He was a poor husband

1. He married Leah first because of Laban's deception and then married Rachel.

- In a day when plural marriages were common, Jacob had equal responsibility to both women.

- But he neglected Leah. He perhaps thought he had good reasons.
- See if these reasons sound familiar:

She was not the woman he thought he married.

- He thought he was marrying her sister.
- He was startled after their wedding night to look at her face and see that she was not who he thought she was (29:25).
- A contemporary Jacob would have said, "Wow, have you changed!"

ILLUS: How many husbands neglect their wives today because they say she is not the girl he married?

- She either changed in her appearance or in her personality.
- Maybe her health changed for the worse.
- They feel they have been cheated and are justified in whatever actions they take.
- If he wants to divorce her or stay married and neglect her, he has a right because he has been short-changed in marriage.

ILLUS: I have heard of husbands who leave their wives when the wife's health has changed. Rather than care for their wife, they leave in selfishness and move to another life.

- So much for the vows he swore to her before me the day I married them. They meant nothing to him. His actions proved that.

Yet, I also know others couples when a spouse was disabled or became very sick they stuck by their husband or wife in spite of the great hardship it was on them.

- Their love and devotion was clearly seen in the sacrifices they made.
- The greatest task we have on earth is to serve others and that service begins at home with our wives and families.

Jacob thought his right to happiness was greater than his commitment to marriage.

- He didn't divorce Leah, but he treated her as though she was not his wife.

ILLUS: As a pastor, I have numbers of times sat with couples who are contemplating getting a divorce. Some of the time they tell of adultery or money problems.

- But in the vast majority of cases, the couples on the verge of a divorce who are seeking my counsel tell me, "We are just not happy."
- They speak of happiness as if it is an inalienable right. It is not!

- Where in the Bible does it say, "You will marry and live happily ever after and never have any problems?"
 - The Bible never promises that all marriages will be filled with happiness and be problem free.
 - It does say, however, that a man and a woman will become one.
 - That oneness gives us new resources with which to face the difficulties of life.

He was a neglectful father

- He lavished his attention on some of them and neglected others.
 - He favored Joseph and Benjamin.
 - *Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. (Gen. 37:3)*
- As a result his mistakes were mirrored in the lives of his children.
- His sons were wild, unruly and unbelievably cruel.

His responsibility was to set the example for them and their families, but he failed miserably and that propagated his mistakes to his children and their families.

- Our sins are not isolated to us alone, but they affect all around us. Later generations suffer for the sins of their ancestors.
 - Sins to the third and fourth generation
- The unfaithfulness of a father will surely be reflected in his children.
- The problem is some fathers may be only marginally faithful to the Lord, and their children will not be faithful at all.
 - When church becomes optional to you, it becomes unnecessary to your children.
- The unfaithful father taught his children that serving and being faithful to the Lord is not important for them.

On the other hand, the opposite is true also and we ought to strive for these

- A faithful father sets an example that inspires his children to love the Lord as he does.
- They learn what a family should be from their parents and the example they see.
- What a blessing to see a family...a true family...a Christ-loving and honoring family.
- What a blessing to see their children love the Lord, too, and serve Him.
- A faithful father can do no greater thing on earth than to set a proper example before his children...and the example and blessing will extend into many future generations.

WHAT HE DID RIGHT

We wouldn't have an accurate picture of Jacob if we looked only at his mistakes.

He had a desire to serve the Lord

1. In the final analysis, we realize that God chose Jacob.

- He didn't seem like the ideal choice. He was full of faults.
- Yes, there was some good in him, but there was so much bad.
- Yet, God had great plans for him.

2. Having stolen his brother's blessing, Jacob ran for his life.

- He ran toward Haran. For the first time in his life he was alone and away from the shelter of his home.
- Lonely and dejected, Jacob stopped in Bethel.
- In the bleak, rocky countryside, he bedded down for the night and took a stone for a pillow.

3. During the night, he had a dream of a ladder that reached from the earth to the very gates of heaven.

- You see God is reaching out to the wayward to bring them into fellowship with Him.
- He sees in us what He can make us.

a. He saw angels going up and coming down the ladder. God spoke to him in his dream and assured Jacob that he was not alone.

Genesis 28:16

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not."

Genesis 28:20-21

"Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God."

b. Jacob had made a lot of mistakes but deep inside he knew who made him and he knew that he owed his life and his allegiance to the Lord.

How important it is for a man to realize that he is the special creation of Almighty God and that God has a purpose and plan for his life.

- A man who does not accept that he is responsible to God and that His loving Creator wants the very best for him...is a miserable man.
- He is lost from his purpose and can never be satisfied, nor experience true life and the peace and joy of living...until he submits in belief himself to His God and Creator.

4. Jacob faithfully worked for his Uncle Laban for 20 years even when Laban tried to trick him (31:38).

- But even in the years when God was increasing his herds and flocks, Jacob failed to see that God was the reason for his prosperity rather than his own cleverness.

Jacob is the example of a lot of men.

- They know what is right.
- They know of God, but they just will not submit themselves to Him.
- They let themselves be easily distracted.
- They are too busy with seeking pleasure, money, fun, and living in the world than to serve the Lord.
- They are many a terrible mistake....trading things that are worthless for the eternal blessings of God.

5. Jacob finally broke with Laban and traveled toward the south.

- Once again, God reached out to him.
- Angels met him there and told him that Esau was coming to meet him with an army of 400 men (32:6).
- That night, Jacob wrestled with an angel.
- He wanted God to touch his life and change him from the deceitful trickster he had always been to a man that God could use in a mighty way.

The angel asked him his name and he told him it was "Jacob." He was saying, "My name is 'cheat and deceiver.'"

- I am by nature a cheater, but I want to be different.'
- And the angel of the Lord said that from that day on, his name would be changed to **'Israel: a prince with God' (32:28).**

What a joy it is to get one's heart right with God.

What a blessing to see the reality of life itself and to accept the grace and mercy of a loving and caring Savior!!!

He recommitted himself to the Lord

- After seeing highs and lows in the lives of his children Jacob returned to the place he had encountered God and to the commitment he made there years earlier.
 - Going back to God was a time of renewal for Jacob.
- God demanded a high price for the sin in his life in terms of his own hardships and the problems he saw in children's lives.
 - With his recommitment to the Lord, the problems of his life did not disappear, but he finally became the father he should have been all along.

He led his family to the Lord.

He gave the order that all of the idols of the past be buried.

- You see, Jacob knew that was what he would have to do if he submitted himself to the Lord.
- For all those years, he could not give up the idols that pleased him.
- They were too dear to him, but now he saw the truth and he wanted God's blessing on himself and his family.
- He made the decision that he and his family would serve the Lord God.

ILLUS: Michael Josephson runs the Josephson Institute for the Advancement of Ethics. He has conducted exhaustive studies of people 18-30 years old. He has compiled the results of numerous surveys and reports to get a broad view of the morality of the so-called "younger generation." His conclusion: "An unprecedented proportion of today's youth lack commitment to core moral values like honesty, personal responsibility, respect for others and civic duty." (Assoc. Press, 10-11-90.)

- But if that is true, and our children are morally weak, where do we lay the blame?
- We may try to lay it at the feet of educators, or blame it on television, or on the entertainment industry.
- But we know that we who are parents must shoulder much of the responsibility.

He prepared his children for his death

1. With a Blessing
 - In Gen. 49, He gave them his blessing and talked to them about the future.
 2. With a last Desire
 - It was a future without him.
 - But with all of his mistakes in life, he succeeded in raising sons that became the foundation of the nation of Israel.
- He knew that he was dying and he took his last words to give guidance and direction to his children.

Fathers, we are not as invincible as we like for people to think.

- Our children will someday face life without us.
 - How will they live then?
- Where will they turn when they make decisions?
- If death takes us out of the picture before our children are off on their own, will we have given them the raw materials from which they can continue to build their lives?

One of our duties as parents is to work ourselves out of a job.

- We look forward with mixed emotions to the day when they are mature and off on their own. We have the responsibility to:
 - (1) Teach them to live independent, Christ-honoring lives.
 - (2) Lead them to faith in Christ.
 - (3) Continue to love and encourage them throughout their lives.
- In the 20th century we still can't get away from the directives God's Word gives for parents.

Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

- Bring them up...
- ...in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We may be more like Jacob than we want to admit.

- May we fathers privately admit today our failures a husband and a father.

The responsibility goes on also to the grandparents.

- We can have a great influence on our grandchildren and help our sons and daughters raise them.

Mistakes and damage

You may look at the mistakes of the past and conclude that you have done such damage to the important relationships in your life that there is nothing you can do to rectify your mistakes.

But for every Jacob listening to me...

- Remember that God is forgiving and seeks to be your strength and Guide.
- Remember that God has given you your family and if you will look to Him.
- He will give you wisdom to be the husband and father you need to be.

In the New Testament we read the post script of Jacob's life.

Hebrews 11:2

"By faith Jacob, when he was a dying... worshipped the Lord."

- **If you are breathing you can make a change**
- **Worship the Lord**

CHALLENGE

Though you may have started poorly, come back now

Bring a lasting legacy of godly blessings to your family

- For every person listening, both male and female, young and old, married and unmarried, **we can all make the trip back** to Bethel that Jacob made.
 - We can go back and repair the relationship with God that may have long been neglected.
- **If you are not a Christian, and have not in belief accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior...why not?**
 - Why would you not want God on your side?

- Why would you not want the blessing and guidance of the Lord in your life and family?
- Often like Jacob we hold on to our sins and let them rob us of the joy of having a true family relationship with our wife and children.
- We rob ourselves and we rob them too.
- My friend if you are not saved...why not ,like Jacob,turn to the Lord, repenting of your past sins and having the Lord wash you white as snow, forgiving you sins and giving you eternal life. An also giving you a God honoring and blessed home.
- **Maybe there is a wayward Christian husband here.**
 - Would you journey back in your heart to that place where you first met the Lord?
 - Will you go back right now to that time when you were much closer to the Lord than you are now?
 - Would you now let the Lord be the true Savior of your live and of your family?
- **If you are a Christian and you have wandered away from the Lord, will you come back to Him in rededication right now?**
 - If you have never placed your faith in Him, will you repent of your sins and accept Him as your Savior?
 - As we sing, we are waiting for you to come...