

## RESPONDING TO MERCY

Genesis 28:10-22

Genesis 28:21 “. . . Then the Lord will be my God. . .”

Purpose: To respond to God’s promised involvement in our lives.

Proposition: God initiates a relationship characterized by promise and blessing.

Introduction:

1. Jacob walked alone – a necessary survival tactic given his dysfunctional family.
    - a. His aging father, Isaac, did not recognize the damaging effect of favoritism toward Esau.
    - b. Esau, bitter and angry, possessed a materialistic value system.
    - c. Somewhere in the mix is a troubled mother who is aware of God’s will for her family, but complicates the divine plan with cunning deception.
  2. Jacob’s loneliness resulted, in part, to his own deceptive behavior.
    - a. He lied to his dad.
    - b. He stole his brother’s inheritance.
    - c. He runs away from the consequences.
  3. To sooth the ache of being alone, he goes looking for a wife.
    - a. An acceptable excuse for reaping his brother’s wrath.
    - b. A wonderful way to perpetuate dysfunctionality to the next generation.
  4. God steps into this desperate loneliness.
- I. God encounters Jacob.
- A. God identifies Himself (13).
    1. Can you imagine a dream with Jack in the Beanstalk likeness?
    2. The need for clarification would be apparent.  
#I read a prayer out of the Moravian Devotional Book showing our confusion:  
Creator Dad,  
Great good and monstrous evil seems intertwined all around us. Give us wisdom to discern your truth and your direction, for when we clearly see the truth we find the courage to act on it.  
Amen
    3. God declare the dream to be more than indigestion.
    4. He has granted this slumber phenomenon.
    5. We need God to tell us when He is near.
  - B. God identifies Himself as the God of Abraham and Isaac. (13)  
#Video clip on Identity Theft Commercials.
    1. Jacob’s dad’s and grandfather’s God spoke to him.
    2. The family religion served an important role.
    3. God identified Himself as one who is in the family.
    4. God was new to Jacob, but not a stranger to his ancestors.
  - C. God renews His promise to Abraham with his grandson, Jacob (13).
    1. The promise of land and a nation were closer to reality.
      - a. God’s mission and message did not change.
      - b. Jacob, rather than his brother, would be the one God would continue His plan.
    2. God promises abundant descendants (14).
      - a. The promise to Abraham was pictured in the number of stars of the sky and the sand of the

seashore.

- b. The promise to Jacob utilized the picture of dust and the everlasting dimensions of the compass.
3. God predicts Jacob's descendants will bless the earth (14).
  - a. The Jewish people have sustained a presence throughout the centuries and millennia.
  - b. The Lord Jesus provided salvation for all.
4. God assures His constant presence (15).
  - a. This encounter with God would not be a one occasion event.
  - b. God informs Jacob of His continued companionship.
5. God promises His on-going work until completion (15).
  - a. God perseveres.
  - b. God sees through to the end.

## II. Jacob awakens . . .

- A. To acknowledge God was there (16).
  1. Days pass without a conscious awareness of God's nearness.
  2. We cherish the moments when His Spirit touches our spirits.
  3. Living our lives in the knowledge and awareness of God's presence brings righteous acts and fulfillment.
- B. To become afraid and to admire (17).
  1. God is holy.
    - a. Our encounter with His purity leaves us trembling.
    - b. Our sin makes us fearful.
    - c. Jacob's unholy ways scared him when holiness came near.
  2. God's greatness leaves us in awe.
- C. To build a monument (18)
  1. The honor impulse directs us to erect buildings in

honor of God.

2. The deep significance of God meeting with us causes us to want to retain and capture the moment.  
#Peter suggested three tabernacles when Jesus met Elijah and Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- D. To rename the place (19).
  1. This expresses the desire to capture the occasion.
  2. Luz possessed no meaning to Jacob.
  3. Bethel meant house of God, for God lived here.
- E. To make a vow (20-21).
  1. We want to respond to God.
  2. Consecrating ourselves and our resources to God is the right response.
- F. To give a tithe (22).
  1. An offering represents us and our livelihood.
  2. Our financial gifts honor God.
    - a. They honor Him as we give.
    - b. The gifts give Him a double honor when we minister to others through that gift.

## Conclusion:

1. God comes to us in our loneliness and even our sin.
2. He provides us with a promise for the future.
3. Mark this moment: God is here to provide hope and help.