

"The Walk of Faith"

Part 15

11:1-40

**Introduction:** Tonight in our study of Hebrews we have the blessed privilege again of looking at the life of another of the Patriarchs. Tonight our focus is going to be on the life of Jacob. Let me give you some of the background on Jacob's life and then we will get to our verse.

Jacob was the twin brother of Esau.

**Genesis 25:24-27**

<sup>24</sup> *And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.*

<sup>25</sup> *And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.*

<sup>26</sup> *And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.*

<sup>27</sup> *And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.*

These verses give to us some background about Jacob. When he was born he had a grip on the heel of his brother Esau. His name "Jacob" means "to supplant" and the definition of "supplant" is *a dispossessing or usurping of another's place, possessions, or privileges.*

The easiest way to define a person who supplants another would be "a person who trips others up in order to gain an advantage". When Jacob was born he had a grip on his heel which was a picture of the way he would live much of his life and that would be "tripping others to gain an advantage". In Genesis 25 we see that he was a plain man who dwelled in tents. He was the opposite of his brother for his brother Esau was a "macho" man. He was a mighty hunter who loved to spend time in the outdoors. If he were around today he would drive a 4x4 truck with a lift kit that required a ladder to get in the cab. He would be a hard worker who would spend his money and his free time on that which pertained to hunting. Jacob however was a momma's boy who enjoyed staying at the tent and cooking.

It was not long before Jacob lived up to his name because he talked his brother into trading his birthright for a bowl of pottage and then later in life when his father Isaac was old he joined up with his mother Rebekah and they deceived Isaac into giving him the blessing.

The Bible tells us that whatsoever a man sows that he will also reap.

**Galatians 6:7**

*<sup>7</sup> Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Jacob fled from his brother Esau and he went to live with his uncle Laban. It was there that Jacob met his match. Jacob fell in love with Laban's daughter Rachel. Laban made Jacob a deal and promised that if he worked for him for 7 years he could have his daughter for his wife. Jacob agreed and when the 7 years were up he was given the daughter of Laban but it was not Rachel but it was Leah. The "supplanter" had been supplanted. He was then made to work another 7 years to get Rachel the woman he loved.

These were some of the low points in Jacob's life and there were also high points. Jacob was a believer and he had a desire for the spiritual over the temporal. One of the high points in Jacob's life was his faith which he exercised right before he died. This is what we are going to look at tonight.

I. **The Examples of Faith**

**Part 12**

A. **The Faith of Jacob**

**Notice Hebrews 11:21**

What a wonderful verse this is concerning Jacob. We find him at the end of his life exercising faith and worshipping God. I could not find the author of the words below but they are certainly worth reading.

*What a way to end one's life! Worshipping. The perfect preparation for entrance into the presence of the only One Worthy of worship! Jacob's example of how to die well sets the bar high but imminently attainable by faith. Faith in the Father's promise of a forever future is the only way to truly handle the prospect of death. The patriarchs trusted in God's promised resurrection, and thus were enabled to face death with a calm serenity. How else could you describe Jacob's worshipping God while resting on his staff? Mark it down that the mark of genuine believer is their approach to death with a peace that passes all human (natural) understanding because it comes from a Supernatural Source, God Himself! Death to a believer like Jacob is exchanging a prison for a palace and a putting off of our worthless rages for His righteous robes.*

We are not going to spend time on Jacob's death tonight but his death will play a part in our study, we are going to look at his faith and Jacob's blessing of the 2 sons of Joseph. For this we need to go back to Genesis 48.

**Notice Genesis 47:29-31**

Here we see that Jacob is at the end of his life. He has Joseph to his side and he requests that Joseph make him a promise. We can connect this with what the writer of Hebrews recorded.

**Hebrews 11:21**

*<sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

The writer of Hebrews tells us he worshipped leaning upon his staff and in Genesis we are told he bowed himself on the bed's head. Both are true. As he bowed upon the bed he leaned upon his staff. Someone may ask, "What is the significance of this?" The answer is very clear. He had such a deep reverence for God at the end of his life that he would not lie flat on his back and worship in a careless way. It may have taken all the strength he had but he forced himself to bow upon his bed as he worshipped God at the end of his life.

**Notice Genesis 48:1-4**

God had appeared to Jacob at Luz and he had made a promise to him that he would give the land of Canaan to him and to his seed after him. This was the same promise made to Abraham and to Isaac. Abraham's promise was given in Genesis 12.

**Genesis 12:5-7**

*<sup>5</sup> And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*

*<sup>6</sup> And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.*

*<sup>7</sup> And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.*

Isaac's promise was given in Genesis 26.

**Genesis 26:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> *And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:*

<sup>3</sup> *Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;*

<sup>4</sup> *And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;*

Jacob's promise came in Genesis 28. But the point we need to grasp is that Abraham, Isaac nor even Jacob saw the fulfillment but yet Jacob still believed God would be True to His Word. His faith in God's promises was so great that he would pass on the blessing to the sons of Joseph.

But this raises a question, "Why was the blessing given to Joseph when he was not the first born?" The first son born of Jacob was Reuben who was born to Leah. Why was the blessing not given to Reuben? Let me show you the reason.

#### **1 Chronicles 5:1-2**

*Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.*

<sup>2</sup> *For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's:)*

Because of Reuben's actions he was disqualified for the birthright. Therefore, the birthright was given to the firstborn of Rachel who was Joseph.

#### **Notice Genesis 48:5**

Ephraim and Manasseh would step into the positions which would have been given to Reuben and Simeon but the sins of these two resulted in their disqualifications.

#### **Notice Genesis 48:8-14**

Jacob could not see the boys nor did he know the sons of Jacob. When Joseph placed them before his father he placed Manasseh at the right hand of Jacob and Ephraim at Jacob's left hand. The right hand was the hand of blessing and Manasseh was the firstborn so Joseph set him up for the greater of the blessings. But Jacob crossed his hands and he placed his right hand on Ephraim and his left on Manasseh.

#### **Notice Genesis 48:15-22**

When I look at this blessing and I see the struggle between Jacob and Joseph I cannot help but wonder how Jacob knew to cross his hands because he could not see for his eyes were dim with age.

Jacob hands were guided by God. It was God who revealed to him that his right hand was to be placed upon Ephraim and his left on Manasseh. But here is the point which we need to understand: Jacob had come to fully trust God in his life.

**Notice Genesis 48:21**

This verse gives to us insight into the heart of Jacob. He told Joseph that God would be with him and would bring him into the land of promise. This verse helps us to see that Jacob has come a long way in his spiritual walk. When he joined up with his mother to deceive his father to get the blessing he was trusting in himself. When he returned from Laban's to meet his brother Esau he divided his family in a way to protect them and in so doing he was trusting in his own wisdom for survival. Along his life journey God patiently worked with Jacob. God allowed him to encounter some very difficult times but it was all for the spiritual growth of Jacob so that God would be glorified in the end.

Let me show you the patience of God with Jacob.

When he fled from his brother Esau on his way to Laban's house God spoke to him.

**Genesis 28:15**

<sup>15</sup> *And, behold, **I am with thee**, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

When he departed Laban's house and was returning back to his home land where he would again meet Esau God spoke to him again.

**Genesis 31:3-5**

<sup>3</sup> *And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and **I will be with thee**.*

<sup>4</sup> *And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,*

<sup>5</sup> *And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but **the God of my father hath been with me**.*

Now through all of this he has learned and so he says to his son Joseph, "***Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.***"

**Conclusion:**

When Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh and when he spoke to words of Genesis 48:21 to Joseph, let us remember that he was in Egypt and there was a famine in the land of Canaan. The point is that he could see no evidence of the fulfillment of God's promises. SO HIS FAITH BECAME THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.

**Hebrews 11:1**

***Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.***

Jacob is a powerful example of faith in God to the very end even when the conditions around us are not what we would desire to see. What an example Jacob was for the Hebrew believers who were in the midst of persecution. They could relate to Jacob for they could see no evidence of God's promises being fulfilled. But from Jacob they could learn that God was with them through every situation.

**Hebrews 13:5**

<sup>5</sup> *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

<sup>6</sup> *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*