

Genesis 35

Recovering from a stale relationship with God

Where are we going?

- Obedience, through Faith, is the secret ingredient to overcoming a stale relationship with God.
- Removing idols means putting God in his proper place
- God's faithfulness and promises are true and are not dependent on our level of faith or our commitments. They are simple.
- God prepares us for the next stages

Defining a Stale Relationship

- God is seen as an after-thought
- A spiritual mask covers your shame
- You become indifferent to righteousness
- You feel the freedom to live life your way
- You start to feel like He wouldn't take you back after all this time
 - Luke 11:15-32



The call to obedience

- Verse 1: God calls Jacob back to where their relationship (& faith) began, Bethel, and asks him to setup an alter there
- Verse 2: Jacob immediately obeys and prepares to meet God by asking his community to purify themselves from their idols. This infers they had idols and that Jacob was ok with it...

Idols in our lives

- Job
- Money/Security
- Family
- Fear
- Control
- Religiosity
- Social Status/Moral Achievements
- Contentment/Entertainment

Idols in our lives

- Acts 17:16-34
- Tim Keller says that an idol is:
 - Anything in your life, that is so central to your life, that you can't have a meaningful life if you lose it
 - When you say to yourself, "If I have that, then my life would have meaning, and if I would lose that, I don't know how I would live"
- Paul's Response: Verse 30



The Promises of God

- Genesis 28
 - I am the lord of Abraham and Isaac
 - I will give you land and descendants
 - There will be lots of descendants
 - All people on Earth will be blessed through you
 - I will not abandon you
- Genesis 35
 - I am the lord
 - Be fruitful and multiply
 - I will give you many descendants
 - I will give you the land
 - Kings will come from you*

God's promises to Sean

- Psalm 106/107
- 2 Peter 1:12-15
 - A reminder of good things

The Mexican Fisherman



The next stages

- Deborah Dies (The Oak of Weeping)
- Rachel Dies (Genesis 48:7)
- Reuben sleeps with Bilhah (Genesis 49:4)
- Isaac Dies

Sean's next stages

- Fall Semester → maybe with a job?
- Fall Semester → with a kid!
- Job → more responsibility added?

God on trial in our trials

Does God “test” Jacob’s commitment to him? Or does God prepare Jacob for the hardships ahead? How do you view God’s character in trials?

Conclusion

- Obedience, through Faith, is the secret ingredient to overcoming a stale relationship with God.
- Removing idols means putting God in his proper place
- God's faithfulness and promises are true and are not dependent on our level of faith or our commitments. They are simple.
- God prepares us for the next stages

Discussion Questions

- Where is God asking you to take Faith in your life at the moment and what does obedience look like?
- What idols have replaced God in your life and how can you identify, repent from, remove, and then give God his proper place?
- What information and promises have God given you in the past that you need to go back to, rather than looking for the next great insight?
- Do you see God as preparing you for the next stage or as testing your commitment to him through trails?