

## Jacob's Model Prayer 06-26-16

Gen 32:1-12

*Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2 And when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" So he called the name of that place Ma-ha-naim. 3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, 4 instructing them, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now. 5 I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants. I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.'" 6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him." 7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps, 8 thinking, "If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape." 9 And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,' 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. 11 Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. 12 But you said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"*

Jacob's faith is maturing: 20 yrs. prior he ran from his problems, now he is addressing them head-on.

- They did not have to go thru Esau's land but choose to mend relationship as they obeyed the command to return home. Gen 32:1-5, Rom 12:18, Mt 5:23-25, , Ps 34:7
- The Angelic encounters experienced in leaving & entering the Promised Land reassured & reminded Jacob of God's presence & protection wherever he went.

If we remember God's promises, we usually realize that our fear is usually irrational, and can grip us if we allow it to. Gen 32:6-8, Prov. 18:19a

- 400 men vs. angel army, just delivered from Laban.

When fear grips us, our tendency is to rely on our plans.

- It is not wrong to pray & then plan. Be responsible when trusting God.
  - But it is wrong to plan without first seeking God & relying more on our plans than on the Lord.
- Jacob's plans were more tied to his fear than to his faith.
  - He divides his family (1 attacked, other might escape), prays, and give gifts of 550 animals.
    - The procession was meant to inform Esau of his approach & assure him of his kind intentions.... Showing he was rich so he was not coming to claim their father's wealth.

- Jacob hoped to have a cumulative effect of “humble’ groveling & gifts in order to appease Esau’s wrath & soften his anger.

Unbelievers often approach God like Jacob approached Esau.

- Knows God that He ought to rightfully condemn him so he fears God & does things he hopes will appease, propitiate, and gain favor with God.
- Christians are to approach God as Jacob did- in humble, God-centered prayer.

Acknowledge God for who He is PERSONALLY. Gen 32:9a, Mt 6:9a, Lk 22:20

- Jacob acknowledged God as *the* covenant keeping God of his fathers.
  - Christians approach God through NC established by JC.
- Our beautiful God is THE POWER behind our prayer

Base your prayers on God’s promises and His Word. Gen 32:9 & 12, Rom 4:20-21, Mt 6:10

- Jacob’s prayer rests on the foundation of God’s covenant & God’s promises.
- 2 wings of the Christian life are prayer & Word.
  - God speaks to me through the Scriptures; I speak to Him through prayer.
    - Our prayer should be full of scripture & Biblical promises.
  - God delights to have us claim the promises He has made to us.

Appeal to God on basis of grace, not merit. Gen 32:10, Mt 6:12, Jam 4:10

- Admit your unworthiness & God’s goodness, grace/mercy. Confess your sin.

Pray specifically & for God’s purposes. Gen 32:11, Mt 6:9b,11, 13, 33-34

- God tends to respond to specific prayer with specific answers.

Like Jacob, many times our prayer & faith is mixed with fear, unbelief & self-reliance as our old, fleshly nature & new, spiritual natures contend with each other.

- After exemplary prayer, Jacob reverts to cowardly & self-serving ways.
- As Lord was with Jacob, He is patiently, kindly, and lovingly is taking us on a faith journey from immaturity to maturity.
  - Practically: Is there someone you have offended & need to reconcile with?
  - Are there changes you need to make in prayer life so that they are more Christ-centered?
- Our hope/confidence is not in our inconsistent performance but in Christ’s perfect work for us.

We exist to bring glory to God in all things by making disciples through Christ-centered worship, Christ-centered community, Christ-centered service, and Christ-centered multiplication.