

Repentance and Brokenness

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[0 : 0 0] God said to Jacob, arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there.! Make an altar there to God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.

So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments.

Then let us arise and go up to Bethel. So that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.

So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods that they had and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

[1 : 0 4] And Jacob came to Luz, that is Bethel, which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. And there he built an altar and called the place El Bethel, because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother.

And Deborah, Rebecca's nurse, died. And she was buried under an oak below Bethel.

So he called its name Alan Bacuth. God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan Aram and blessed him.

And God said to him, Your name is Jacob. No longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.

So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply.

[2 : 1 0] A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.

Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone.

He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel. Then they sojourned from Bethel.

When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor. And she had hard labor. And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife came to her.

Do not fear. Do not fear. For you have another son. And as her soul was departing, for she was dying, she called his name Ben-Onai.

[3 : 2 2] But his father called him Benjamin. So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath. That is Bethlehem.

And Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. It is the pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there to this day. Israel sojourned on and pitched his tent beyond the Tower of Eden.

While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it.

Now the sons of Jacob were 12. The sons of Leah, Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

The sons of Rachel, Joseph, and Benjamin. The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant, Dan, and Aftalai. The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant, Gad, and Asher.

[4 : 25] These were the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan Aram. And Jacob came to his father, Isaac, at Mamre, or Kiriath Arbor, that is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned.

Now the days of Isaac were 180 years, and Isaac breathed his last. And he died, and was gathered to his people, old and full of days.

And his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him. Thank you very much, Faye.

Well, last Sunday, we covered the dark and depressing chapter in Genesis 34. It began with the rape of Dinah, and it ended with an argument between Jacob and his two sons, Levi and Simeon.

Jacob accused them of making him stink to the people of the land because of their merciless murder of all the men of Shechem.

[5 : 53] And they accused Jacob of being passive and indifferent about the rape of their sister Dinah.

And they said to him, you were willing for our daughter to be treated as, our sister to be treated as a prostitute. And although it's not mentioned in this passage, we can be sure that there was the vision, the family of Jacob.

It wasn't just between Jacob and Simeon and Levi, but no doubt, the other members of the family had their views about what had happened.

No doubt, Leah supported her sons, Simeon and Levi. It's also likely that Reuben and his other brothers did not support the murder or the rampage of murder that Simeon and Levi engaged in.

They didn't join them, but they did join in the plundering of the goods and the animals and the women and the children of Shechem. And what about Dinah?

[7 : 05] They brought Dinah back home. And I wonder how she thought about her father, Jacob. After all, Leah was, Dinah was the daughter of Leah, whom Jacob did not love.

And I wonder what she thought about her brother, Reuben, who was the eldest. And he showed less concern than his younger brothers, Simeon and Levi.

I think this was, to put it lightly, a messy family.

Jacob and his two wives and his two concubines and his four sets of children were very complex and divided family.

How does a family recover from such darkness? How does a family move on from this particular point?

[8 : 08] What does Jacob do? What conversations could he possibly try to have with this family that is as divided as it really is?

Indeed, how does any family that's divided with strife and sin and fallenness, how does it move on?

How does it get out of a rut like this? The passage we've come to this morning in Genesis 35 I think gives us some insight into how Jacob and his family moved on and indeed how we can move on when we find ourselves in such a condition.

And so for our remaining time this morning I want us to consider that but first let's take a moment and let's ask for the Lord's help. Father, we bow our hearts this morning and we acknowledge that we need you.

Lord, as Jacob and his family were broken people, Lord, we are broken people and we need your help, Lord.

[9 : 35] Lord, you have brought us all to this place this morning in your providence and we ask that you would speak to all of us through the preaching of your word.

Lord, you know where we are, you know what we need to hear. Cause us to hear it. Cause us to respond to it. Lord, I pray this morning that all that is said and done will be for your honor, the glory of your name and the building up of this local church.

We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. As I consider this passage, as I prepared this sermon, two words came to me to describe it and to summarize it.

Two particular words. And they're words that communicate much more than the word, than each word itself. They're words that we're familiar with.

The first word is backsliding. While it seems like the problem that Jacob and his family were facing was that they were divided over what happened in the aftermath of the rape of Dinah, that was not the real problem they were facing.

[11 : 02] The first problem that Jacob and his family were facing was the consequences of temporary backsliding. Jacob had drifted from God and so did his family but they've not abandoned God altogether.

They had drifted from God and that's what backsliding is. Backsliding is not a breaking of a relationship but backsliding is bringing distance in a relationship with God.

And Jacob and his family had temporarily drifted from God. They turned away from God. Jacob had spent far too long living in Shechem and in Sukkoth and commingling with the people of the land and he was very comfortable living there.

Back in Genesis 28 we may recall that Jacob was fleeing from his brother Esau threatened to kill him and God appeared to him at that place where he found himself.

The place Luz. And God made a covenant with him. The same covenant that he made with Abraham and that he had made with Isaac. It was a covenant that promised land.

[12 : 24] It was a covenant that promised a great multitude of offspring and a lot of blessings to go with it. And Jacob renamed the place Bethel and there he made a vow to God.

His vow to God was if you would be with me and protect me wherever I go, if you would give me food to eat and clothes to wear and you would bring me back to this place, bring me back to my father's house, if you do that, you will be my God and at this place, this place will be the house of God where I will come and I will worship.

But this was a vow that Jacob had not kept. This was a vow that Jacob had come back to the land of Canaan and up to this point, he had not kept his vow to God.

And you know what? God did much more than that. God didn't just protect Jacob and give him food to eat and clothes to wear. God blessed him abundantly.

God blessed him with flocks and herds and goods. He had servants. He had donkeys. He had camels. And God blessed him with a big family.

[13 : 51] And having returned to the land of Canaan, Jacob was making no haste to go to Bethel to fulfill the vow that he made to the Lord.

He was living away from God, away from Bethel in Sukkoth and in Shechem. And he lived there for many years. Remember, Dinah would only have been about five years old when Jacob left from his uncle Laban in Paddan around.

And she was a much older woman when she was raped. And that kind of, it doesn't tell us the specific time, but it tells us that he was living a long time in Sukkoth and Shechem.

Those are the two places that we have noted where he lived he lived. And you know, Bethel was only a mere 20 miles away, we're told. Geographically, Bethel was 20 miles away from Shechem, so not a long distance.

And Jacob was comfortable being close to where he said he would go and close to doing what he said he would do, but he hadn't done it. We can call what Jacob was doing halfway obedience.

[15 : 04] something that we oftentimes find ourselves doing, where we don't obey the Lord in doing all that he calls us to do, but we obey him partially. And I think you've heard it said that partial obedience is disobedience.

And so Jacob is comfortable now. He's no longer running from his brother Esau.

He is no longer terrified about coming back and facing Esau. He's living in easy land. He is comfortable in Canaan.

And brothers and sisters, this was the root problem for Jacob and for his family. When you look at what happened in Genesis 34, the rape of Dinah and the response to it, God is not mentioned once.

Jacob doesn't pray to God about what he should do. His sons do not pray to God about what they should do. It's an indication of how they had drifted far from the Lord.

[16 : 18] In the face of this unimaginable crisis that we find in Genesis 34, no praying goes on, no calling on God goes on. It's a picture of where they were spiritually.

They were in a state of backsliding. And so what we see is that Genesis 35 opens up with a gracious God coming to Jacob in that difficult situation that he had put himself and his family in.

And a gracious God calls to him and calls him to repentance, calls him to turn away from his backsliding. God to God.

It was a call for Jacob to return from spiritual drifting and delayed obedience and to fulfill the vow that he had made to God.

This was the solution to the difficult situation that Jacob and his family were in. No family meeting, no amount of talking, nothing that they could have done within themselves was going to get them out of that dark place that they were in.

[17 : 31] They needed to hear from a gracious God who came to Jacob and spoke to him. Look at what God said to Jacob again in verse 1 of 35. God said to Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there, make an altar there to God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.

Jacob understood what this call meant. Jacob understood that this was not just something God was calling him to do. God was not just calling Jacob to repent and to move away from his backsliding.

Jacob understood this was a call to him and his family. This was a call for him and his divided family to repent from their backsliding.

God was calling Jacob to do what he promised to do, but he was not doing. He was calling Jacob to let him, God, be his God.

Notice in verse 2, Jacob calls his entire household. He calls his entire household to repentance and to go up with him to Bethel.

[18 : 51] He tells them to do three specific things. First, he tells them, put away the foreign gods that are among you. this clearly means that Jacob was aware that his household had adopted and were worshipping foreign gods.

And sadly, up to this point, Jacob was tolerating it. And here again, we see Jacob's passivity. We see Jacob's lack of spiritual leadership in his home to knowingly allow open idol worship to take place in his household.

second, Jacob called his family to purify themselves, to cleanse themselves. And we can't be sure exactly what that looked like, what they were supposed to do, but we know what it meant and we know the implications of it.

He was calling them to cleanse themselves from the contamination of idol worship. He was calling them to renew a relationship with the true and the living God by purifying themselves.

from idolatry. And third, he called them to change their clothes. They were going up to Bethel to meet God. And that was an indication of their preparation.

[20 : 11] But they were not just going on some excursion, but no, they were going to meet the true and the living God. Jacob was calling his family and now leading his family away from backsliding and towards repentance.

Christians. They were going to accompany him to Bethel where he was going to build an altar and he was going to call on the God, the God who he said, who answers me, not who answered me, but who answers me in the day of my distress.

I mean, that's what God does. That's what a merciful God does, even for someone like Jacob, even for people like us, who are not faithful, people like us who are undeserving.

He is a God who answers us in the day of our distress when we call to him. I'm sure we've all had an experience, real or imagined, where we call someone and they don't answer.

And we might think that they don't answer because of something we did or something we didn't do. Not so with the Lord. He answers us in the day of our distress. And Jacob was going to build an altar to this God in the presence of his family.

[21 : 31] The God who answers him in the day of his distress and the God who was with him wherever he went. Now look at how Jacob's family responded in verse 4.

It says, so they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had and the rings that were in their heirs. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

Now, it's easy on the surface of this to wonder, did they give all the gods up? Did they give them all or did they hold some back? But under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Moses tells us they gave them all up.

Moses said they gave up all the foreign gods that they had, the rings in their ears, all of these objects and trinkets that they worshipped and they trusted in.

And you know what? Among these gods would have been the household gods that Rachel stole from her father Laban. And I wonder if it crossed Jacob's mind that Laban's gods that were stolen were among these gods, these idols that were given to him.

[22 : 55] We're not told, we don't know, but it's hard to think that didn't cross his mind. But Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

And he didn't just bury them. He took pain and great steps to ensure that he hid them, not just from his family, that they couldn't go back to them, but he seemed not to want anyone else to go and to be able to uncover them because they were not true, true gods that anyone should worship.

This is a passage passage. This section of this passage is something that we can quickly read over. We can just pass it without much thought because we don't worship idols like that.

We don't have little objects at home that we worship. We don't carry around little good luck charms that we have. love. But we shouldn't pass it over so quickly because when we consider the culture of Jacob versus our culture, the only difference is we don't have idols like that.

But brothers and sisters, idolatry is still real. Idolatry is still real because people don't always worship the true and the living God alone.

[24 : 31] Idols still abound. And very simply put, an idol is anything that we put our trust in other than God. That's an idol.

Anything that we put our trust in other than God. And that is what these things were that they had. These were like good luck charms. These were things that they put their hope and their trust in for all kinds of different reasons.

Idols. And so for us today, our options for idols are many and varied. There are all kinds of idols today that we put our trust in.

We put our trust in money. We put our trust in people. We put our trust in our jobs and our accomplishments and our possessions and the list goes on.

Brothers and sisters, they are idols all the same. They look different from what happened in Jacob's day, but they are idols all the same. Another definition of idol is anything or anyone that receives affections that truly belong to God.

[25 : 43] The affections of our hearts, they belong to God. And when we place them on anything else, anyone else, that's idolatry, brothers and sisters.

Scripture calls us to love the Lord with all of our heart, with our whole heart, with our whole being. And when we divide that love in any way and it is diverted to anyone or to anything, that thing, that person becomes an idol.

Love in God. There are some people who consciously make choices to love things and to love people above God.

And the reason they do that is because they know that they cannot love God and love those things or love God and love those people or love that person in the way that they do.

And they consciously choose to hold on to that thing, hold on to that person instead of holding on fully to the true and the living God. And they have just made that thing or that person an idol.

[27 : 02] And you know what, brothers and sisters, idols always come down. Idols always come down. What we see is that God's people, not just in this passage, but we see it throughout Israel's history, they had this capacity to hold on to the true and living God at the same time as they were holding on to idols.

Brothers and sisters, we're no different. Jacob's family, for all intents and purpose, outwardly, were worshipping the true and the living God, but they were holding on to these idols in a private and in a secret way.

And brothers and sisters, by the grace of God, let us guard our hearts so that we trust in God alone. Let us guard our hearts so that we love the Lord with our whole heart.

As we consider this passage this morning, I want to encourage us to let us reflect and let us consider how we may have drifted from the Lord, drifted personally, drifted in our families, and in God's call to Jacob to go up to Bethel and to build an altar to him.

Repent. I pray that we would hear God calling us to call our families in a very similar way to repent, to repent where we need to repent.

[28 : 41] And fathers and heads of households, it's our responsibility to lead the way. It's our responsibility to lead the way for our families.

families. And the place that we start is that we address things we are aware of, practices that we are aware of, that are taking place in our homes that are not pleasing to God.

And I don't plan to try to stand and list areas because I can't do that, but here's what I would do. I would suggest one big area and that's a big area of entertainment.

I remember when I was younger and the church I grew up in, they thought watching television was a sin.

And they thought all the programming and all that was on television was just unhelpful and unprofitable. And so I was preparing, I reflected on that and I said, wow. they were concerned back then.

[29 : 55] Brothers and sisters, are we concerned today? Are we concerned about what comes into our homes in the name of entertainment?

Whether it's a movie with a good storyline, or whether it's a game that maybe our children play, or some other form of entertainment entertainment that we have.

Brothers and sisters, these kinds of things, broadly speaking, because we know that they were not created for God's people. They didn't have God's people in mind when they created these things.

They had the world in mind. And you know what? The world doesn't owe us anything. Hollywood doesn't owe us anything. They don't owe us.

We don't have a right for them to produce things that are acceptable to us. Nor do we have a right to adapt it to us and overlook what we think is objectionable.

[31 : 00] Brothers and sisters, we must, by the grace of God, to the best of our knowledge, seek to rid our homes, rid our households of that which we know does not please the Lord.

And it doesn't matter that you may have overlooked it in the past. I imagine Jacob's family could have been saying to him, well, what's the problem? You saw these things before. Why now?

Brothers, it's never too late to do what is right. Let us, by the grace of God, do what is right. And this requires effort. when he told them that they were going to go up to Bethel, we're told that geographically Bethel was some 1,000 meters above where Shechem was.

That was going to take effort to go up there. This takes effort, but it's grace-motivated effort. God gives us the grace to do all that he calls us to do.

God answered us in our many distresses stresses and cared for us beyond our wildest dreams.

[32 : 36] He calls us to be faithful to him and to worship him alone. And so what we see is that this call that God gave to Jacob was foundational for them getting things right in their home.

They had to get right with God. This big family that Jacob had with all these problems that they faced, what they needed to do was they needed to all get right with God.

And as they got right with God, those things were going to be able to be put in their rightful place. That was the way they moved on. That's the way we will move on.

We need to repent where we need to repent. And repentance is about change. It's not just about words. It is about change. It's about doing what God calls us to do.

Notice in verse 5, we're told that Jacob and his household, as they journeyed from Shechem to Bethel, the terror of God fell on the cities around them and they didn't pursue Jacob's sons.

[33 : 54] This was Jacob's fear. Jacob said to his sons, oh, you've made me stink in the eyes of the people of the land and we're just a little group and they'll come and attack us.

And God showed himself faithful to Jacob again that his fear was unfounded. And Jacob's family knew that what happened to them, this terror that fell on the cities that nobody troubled them, they knew it wasn't their idle gods that did it.

They'd gotten rid of their idle gods, those idle gods had been buried, this was the act of the true and the living God who took care of them over this very dangerous journey to leave that place where they had created such animosity towards themselves.

God kept his word and God protected Jacob and his family. Look again at what it says in verse 6 about what happened when Jacob arrived at Bethel, starting in verse 6.

It says, And Jacob came to lose, that is, Bethel, which is the land of Canaan, and he and all the people who were with him. And there he built an altar and called the place El Bethel because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brothers.

[35 : 28] The picture here is that Jacob did this in the presence of his household. The picture here is that Jacob's household watched him as he built this altar to God.

who revealed himself to him at this place when he was fleeing from his brother. He called it El Bethel. And so when you think about all that has happened here, Jacob had to tell them the story.

Because remember, when Jacob was fleeing, it was only Jacob and God. If Jacob did not share what happened, we would not have this account.

But Jacob shared with his family, told his family how he was in distress. He was running from his brother and God met him and God spoke to him and revealed himself to him.

We have this history because Jacob told this history. Brothers and sisters, we need to tell our history to our children. Our children need to see our relationship with God openly and lived out.

[36 : 40] Some of you have heard me share it again and again. some of the greatest pictures I have seen of the relationship that my parents had with the Lord have been around my parents' bed as we prayed in family devotions and hearing their prayers and watching God answer those prayers.

Praying for needs. And God answering those needs. And they could have just closed the door and they could have just prayed by themselves and kept all those things to themselves but no, they opened it to us and built my faith.

Jacob did this for his family. family. He was vulnerable to his family to share with them the distress he was in and how God met him and God revealed himself to him at a time of crisis.

It's a wonderful way for households to come to know and trust in our God. They saw Jacob build this altar. They knew the reason the altar was built and this continued in the history of Israel.

In verses 9 to 16 we're told that God appeared to Jacob again and renamed him again and confirmed the covenant blessings of Abraham upon him again.

[38 : 22] Look at what it says starting in verse 9. God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan Aram and blessed him. So this is the flip side of what happened when he was leaving Paddan Aram.

He was leaving. God met him. God blessed him. He is now returned and God meets him again and God blesses him again. And God says to him, your name is Jacob.

Jacob. Now you'd remember that a few chapters earlier when he was coming back at Jabbok, when he was crossing over and God met him and encountered him and wrestled with him, God changed his name.

And so this is now some years later that God says to him, your name is Jacob. No longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.

So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, I am God almighty, be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you and kings shall come from your own body.

[39 : 31] The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you and I will give the land to your offspring after you. Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken to him.

This will be the last time that God speaks to Jacob. in this open way. Why do you think that God came to Jacob a second time and confirmed his name change and also confirmed the Abrahamic covenant with him once again?

Why did God do that? God did it as an expression of his gracious care for Jacob.

Jacob had failed his family miserably. he lingered in Shechem he delayed to fulfill his vow to go to Bethel and to worship the Lord.

He failed to lead his family in the aftermath of Dinah's rape. He knowingly permitted his family to worship idols. And he only went to Bethel because God commanded him to go there.

[40 : 56] He was comfortable in Canaan. Going to Bethel and building an altar was not really an expression of his natural commitment to God.

God said arise and go to Bethel and he went out of that command. I think a lot of times when we read scripture we sometimes forget that the people we're reading about they're just like us.

I want you to think for a moment how Jacob probably felt. This is a man God met him just recently changed his name gave him a new identity gave him a new walk now he finds himself in this place and the same enemy of our soul that we have wasn't letting up on Jacob be assured of that he was condemning him he was speaking words into his mind telling him look you're not you're not worthy you are a failure you're failing your family you're failing your God and no doubt Jacob like we sometimes do joined in and say yeah you're right Jacob was no doubt discouraged and very depressed and I think the last thing on Jacob's mind was that God would come to him because building an altar did not guarantee that

God was going to show up remember he built an altar back in Shechem when he first came he built an altar God didn't show up at that point there's no record of God showing up and so there was no expectation that Jacob could have relied on that God was going to show up but God showed up and God reaffirmed the name that he gave to Jacob he reminded him you still have a new name in spite of all that you have done in spite of all that has happened your name is Israel you have a new identity despite your failures despite your sin despite your passivity you have a new name your name is Israel that's your new identity brothers and sisters our sins don't define us as serious as they are and we need to repent of them and we need not play with them but our sins do not define us our identity in

Christ defines us and God gave Jacob a new identity and yet he found himself not living up to that and God came to him in this weak and dejected and discouraged moment and God says to him your name is Jacob is is Israel no longer will you be called Jacob that is your name God is reminding him that you're not perfect but you are different you are changed you have a new identity in me that's who you are despite all that has happened that is the grace of God brothers and sisters it's the mercy of God that came to Jacob that day in the very difficult place that he must have been in and God affirmed to him your name is still Israel and God affirmed the promises to him

[44 : 51] God didn't say hey I'm going to find someone else to fulfill these promises too because you're too checkered your life is too you're just not up to scratch with your character you're too passive you don't lead your family well no God didn't say that to him God reaffirmed those promises to him the promise of Abraham he affirmed it to him and he said to him in essence he was saying to him despite your many failures I haven't changed my mind despite your many failures you're still going to be a great nation and a nation and nations will come from you and I will give this land to you and to your offspring brothers and sisters what a joy it is to know that this is the God we serve a God who is gracious and merciful to the undeserving he doesn't dump us when we fail instead he reassures us that we are still his own and this gracious loving kindness of God leads us to repentance the Bible says the Bible says it is the kindness of the

Lord that leads us to repentance! perhaps you're here this morning or you're listening online you have trusted in Jesus as your Savior and that's not in doubt but you're also aware of your many failings you're aware of the many ways that you have fallen short I pray that you likewise will hear God's gracious voice to you as he spoke to Jacob reminding you that you're still his own reminding you that your sins don't define you your relationship in Christ the identity that new identity that he has given to you doesn't change hasn't changed and he hasn't left you and his promises haven't changed and by the grace of God

I pray that that would lead us to repentance because that is the kindness of the Lord brothers and sisters when we repent from backsliding it gives us a fresh start and it offers much hope for the future but you know as wonderful as repentance is repentance has its limitations even after our most glorious repentance even after our most glorious encounters with the Lord we face an ongoing and unchanging reality that reminds us that we need more than repentance this ongoing and unchanging reality is the reality of brokenness on every level every single thing in this world everything without exception is broken broken by sin to one degree or another and that is our lot in this life and so if we put our hope in anything in this world it is a hope that will soon be dashed it is a hope that will soon not be fully realized because this world is filled with brokenness and everything that we hope in at some point is going to give way that is our lot and this remains our lot even after we repent this remains our lot even after we've had glorious encounters with God we will have this ongoing experience with brokenness and this is what we see in this chapter as well we see evidence of this brokenness first in verse 8 right at the time of repentance and revival

Deborah obviously a beloved nurse of Rebecca died she was so loved that they wept for her she's buried under a tree which means the oak of weeping and so here they are repenting and here they are turning back to God but in the midst of that comes this reminder of sin and brokenness and they are burying someone whom they love we also see a reminder of brokenness in the reference to Rebecca that this the Deborah was Rebecca's nurse and the reason I say that is because Moses is silent about the death of Rebecca he doesn't mention it he mentions the death of her nurse but doesn't mention her her own death and this is a signal of discipline this is a signal of rebuke to Rebecca that she is not given the honor of being mentioned and her death being recorded because Rebecca you remember deceived her husband

Rebecca was the one who set Jacob up to do what Jacob did and Rebecca was the one who brought division in her family and strife in her family and really in many ways even the strife that trickled down to Jacob and his family Rebecca was the one who had handed it and it seems that Moses by not mentioning her death is not speaking highly of her this is evidence of a rebuke of her life and it's also evidence of brokenness we're also reminded of brokenness in verses 16 to 21 where we have recorded the death of Rachel and the birth of Benjamin how do you deal with that how do you deal with the joy of a son being born but a wife also dying it's a reminder that even in this world the most joyous moments are overshadowed by some of the saddest moments in verse 22 we're reminded of human brokenness in

[52 : 54] Reuben's act of sexual immorality he sleeps with his father's concubine villa what made this even more troubling is this is Jacob's first son this is the one whom the family succession is resting upon this is the one made in Jacob's own image next in line for leadership but evidently he couldn't wait and one of the common practices in those days was when you either conquered someone or you rose up and just took over you took over the wives you see that's what Absalom did Reuben committed a gross act of sexual morality and reminds us of the depth of brokenness that they were continuing to experience what made this very sad because it was a public event this was something that was known in the family this was scandalous in the family we also see human brokenness in Jacob's response his response was silence he heard about it and did nothing consistent with his passivity no correction no reprimand just silence

Jacob would only speak of this immoral act later on his deathbed when he removed Reuben from being first in the family we also see human brokenness in Jacob's divided family in verses 22 B the last part of 22 to 25 we see the children of Jacob listed but they're not listed in birth order they're grouped to their mothers and it helps us to see the divisions between them they just couldn't be listed in one long line of succession in the order of birth but they were listed and grouped with their mothers and this is one of the reasons that Jacob's brothers sorry Joseph's brothers had no problem selling him into slavery no problem they hated him because he was the son of Jacob's beloved wife

Rachel and they had no regard for him and all of this is evidence of human brokenness brothers and sisters you know that we have fewer closer relationships than with our siblings and yet here we see that even that in this family was broken finally we see the evidence of human brokenness in the death of Isaac verses 28 to 29 Esau and Jacob come to bury him and even though they are together they are apart these are two brothers who are on two different tracks leading two different lives and we'll see that next week as we come to chapter 36 that is exclusively dedicated to Esau and his lineage his brothers are together but they are yet divided this chapter is filled with reminders of human brokenness even in the face of glorious repentance that takes place for

Jacob and his family and reminds us that no amount of repentance can change this ongoing reality of human brokenness sin broken relationships disappointment death they're all a part of our reality as we live life on this earth and our brokenness points to our need for the only one who can heal it and that only one is the Lord Jesus Christ and the brokenness that we encounter in Genesis 35 points to Christ and points to our need for him indeed that's all of scripture all of scripture points to Christ as Jesus rightly said to his disciples all these things are written about me and only through his coming and his living and his dying on the cross do we have any hope that human brokenness will ultimately one day be healed and that is the hope that we hold on to in the midst of experiencing human brokenness and one day that hope is going to become a reality one day

Christ is going to return to this world he is going to judge and punish the wicked with everlasting! damnation and he is going to reward the righteous he is going to reward his people and he is going to usher in a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells where there is no more death where there is no more sadness there is no more sickness there is no more tears and we will be with him forever never to be separated from him never to be separated from one another and so if you have trusted in Jesus Christ this morning this is your hope in the midst of all of the brokenness that we experience in this world you know sometimes we wish for long life and short life or long life is all in God's hands but the longer we live on this earth the more brokenness we will see the more brokenness we will experience the lonely end when the one who can heal our brokenness returns if you are here this morning and you have not yet trusted in Jesus as your savior and as your lord I pray that you will do it today the good news is that

[60 : 01] Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners he came into the world to save sinners like you and me and he says whoever comes to him he'll never turn them away never turn them away and so it doesn't matter who you are it doesn't matter what you have done God's grace and mercy awaits every sinner who turns to him and it's not meager grace it's amazing grace it is abundant grace it is a grace that is far beyond your greatest sin and that grace can be yours today and you just turn to him and trust in him and when you experience brokenness you can hold on to the hope that you have that one day it will all be done away with when our

Lord returns and so I encourage you today turn to Jesus trust in Jesus for the pardon of your sins let's pray oh father would you join out each one of us now speak to our hearts Lord you cause us to hope and the only one who can bring an end to the brokenness of the experience in this world to the brokenness in our own lives Lord I pray especially for those who don't know Christ would you convict their hearts open their eyes would you save them pray in Jesus name to