

# The Faithfulness and Longsuffering of Jacob's God

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Let us now read from the Old Testament from the book of Genesis, chapter 35. The book of Genesis, chapter 35.
- And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there, make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.
- Then Jacob said unto his household and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments.
- And let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.
- And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears. And Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.
- [ 1 : 12 ] And they journeyed. And the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.
- So Jacob came to Lads, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar and called the place El Bethel, because there God appeared unto him when he fled from the face of his brother.
- But Deborah, Rebecca's nurse, died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak, and the name of it was called Alon-Bakuth.
- And God appeared unto Jacob again when he came out of Paddanerim and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob.
- Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name. And he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty.
- [ 2 : 23 ] Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins.
- And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.
- And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone. He poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.
- And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him Bethel. And they journeyed from Bethel, and there was but a little way to come to Ephraim.
- And Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not, thou shalt have this son also.
- [ 3 : 32 ] And it came to pass as her soul was in departing, for she died, that she called his name Benoni, but his father called him Benjamin.
- And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephraim, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave.

That is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day. And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the Tower of Eder.

It came to pass when Israel dwelt in that land, that Rehuban went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine, and Israel herded. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve, the sons of Leah, Rehuban, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Sebulun, sons of Rachel, Joseph, and Benjamin, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, Dan, and Naphtali, and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, Gad, and Asher.

These are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Paddanir. And Jacob came unto Isaac, his father, unto Mamre, and to the city of Arba, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

[ 5 : 02 ] And the days of Isaac were a hundred and four score years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days.

and his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him. Amen, and may God bless to us that reading from his truth.

Let us further sing to his praise from Psalm 84, and at verse 8. Psalm 84, and at verse 8.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear, O Jacob's God give ear, see God our shield, look on the face of thine anointed dear, for in thy courts one day excels a thousand, rather in my God's house will I keep a door, and dwell in tents of sin.

For God the Lord's a sun and shield, he'll grace and glory give, will withhold no good from them, that uprightly do live.

[ 6 : 18 ] O thou that art the Lord of hosts, that man is truly blessed, who by assured confidence on thee alone doth rest.

Let us sing these verses. Psalm 84, Psalm 84, verse 8. Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear. Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear, O Jacob's God give ear, take God our shield, upon the face of thine anointed dear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, and shines to give air, O Jacob's God give ear, O Arbeits, memampf I ammunition to turn, In them to hear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear,

O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, O Jacob's God give ear, The Lord shall stand as shield, in peace and glory give.

And will with hope, O good, from men, the cup I give to you.

O land of God, there are no hosts that man is truly blessed.

[ 8 : 19 ] If I have shielded confidence on me, I'll hold the thrust.

Let us now turn to the passage that we read, the book of Genesis, chapter 35. And we may read again at verse 1 of the chapter.

And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there. And make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee, when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there. And there is much that is fascinating in the life of this man, Jacob, the twister.

But what I believe is absolutely riveting, is God's remarkable, gracious dealings with the twister Jacob.

[ 9 : 43 ] Jacob's name is an indication of his character and personality.

A deceiver. A man who even tricked his own blind, vulnerable father to obtain what God had already promised was to be his.

And you will remember that his mother was also complicit in this act of deception.

Neither he nor his mother Rebecca learned at that stage that it is God who writes history and not man.

But it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

[ 10 : 48 ] It's worth remembering that. Many are the plans in the mind of a man. But it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand. In other words, irrespective of the plans that we make, they will come to nothing if they are not in accord with the purpose of a sovereign God.

And so Jacob was compelled to flee the family home because his twin brother, Esau, swore revenge.

In their mother Rebecca's view, it was only to be for a short period until Esau would cool down and get over this act of deception.

But you know, Rebecca never saw Jacob again in this life. Now just think of that. Actions have consequences.

Actions have consequences.

[ 12 : 18 ] When Isaac died, his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him. And that in itself is striking because you remember, these brothers were formerly estranged, but they are united in carrying out their last duty for their late father.

So you will remember that when Jacob left home, he was a figure of hate, under a cloud, a man with a dishonorable reputation, an untrustworthy deceiver.

And yet, this twister experienced a marvelous encounter with a merciful and gracious God.

And that's why I say that it is the dealings of God with this man that are absolutely riveting. And as a direct consequence of this encounter, Jacob made a vow.

The vow was, You might say, well, he wasn't looking for much, was he?

[ 13 : 59 ] He was looking for provision and clothing and preservation. Much happened in the life of Jacob after that meeting with God.

He met as much in his uncle Laban, so that the deceiver became deceived with regard to marriage.

He reaped as he had sown. Rather than have Rachel, whom he loved, he was given Leah as a wife. And another lesson was taught to Jacob with regard to the rights of the firstborn.

It's kind of ironic, given the way that he treated Esau. In other words, he suffered for his duplicity.

And you can't help but wonder whether this duplicity was something that was in the genes. His mother, his mother's brother Laban, and Jacob himself.

[ 15 : 19 ] He served his uncle Laban for 20 years. And he became prosperous in his own right.

And during that period, his uncle Laban also prospered. But Jacob's prosperity eclipsed Laban's. And so Jacob began to be viewed by Laban's sons with envy.

You see how twisted human nature can be. The moment Jacob became a rich man in his own right, his cousins became very jealous of his prosperity.

Two times he was urged by God on the need to return to the land of his birth. The first message was, Return to the land of your fathers and your kindred.

I will be with you. The second message was even more personal and pointed, for it reminds him of his past and his vow. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me.

[ 16 : 31 ] Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred. And as we know, that created further problems for this man, to whom deception appeared to be second nature.

He tries to slip away from her undetected, along with his family and his accumulated herds.

We don't know, but it's possible that he feared the loss of all his accumulated wealth if he made his intention known.

And then you probably remember his cunning plan for meeting with his brother Esau. He split up his flocks.

And before that meeting takes place, there is his encounter with God at Bethel, where he's given the new name of Israel. And you remember it is God who initiated the encounter, not Jacob.

[ 17 : 43 ] And I think it's worth reflecting on that, because when you read that encounter at Bethel, you will remember that it is written down that a man wrestled with him.

A man wrestled with him. Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him. Now, perhaps you're under the impression that it was Jacob who initiated the encounter.

It wasn't. It was God. And it's worth remembering that, because it is God invariably who initiates the wrestling match.

Why does he do it? Because he is bending your will to his. Bending your will to his. Your will doesn't naturally incline to the will of God.

God wrestles with you in order that you may, your will may come into line with the will of God.

[ 19 : 05 ] And so, you remember that Jacob was given something to remember this wrestling match. A reminder that stayed with him for the rest of his days, because the Lord left his mark on him.

And so, a measure of reconciliation was effected between Jacob and Esau. And yet, there is still more evidence of the twister and the curse of action he pursues.

And I think it is worth noticing that when they meet, neither brother makes reference to what had been the cause of the breakdown of family bonds in the past.

And by that I mean, they didn't take the moment when they met to air grievances, or to declare who said what, or rake over the events of the past.

Who behaved properly and who didn't. It's as if they had come to the place where Jacob is no longer trying to exalt himself, but leaving it to God.

[ 20 : 24 ] And Esau, for his part, had learned to be content with what he had. I have enough, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself. And that ought to be an example where there have been strained relations in the past, and where a rift has been deep, whether it's in a family or out with a family.

The God who is at work in your heart can also work in the heart of another. And our duty is to see that our own hearts are right before God.

And the upshot of all this was that Jacob returned to the promised land. But instead of returning to Bethel as he had been instructed by God, and as he had vowed to God, he settled at Shechem.

He purchased a piece of land. And so the impression is created that this man is displaying more of the old Adam than he was of the new nature.

And you may say, but minister, what about the fact that he built an altar there? And he did. He erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.

[ 21 : 45 ] God, the mighty one of Israel. Yes, he set up an altar. But it seems to me that there is a lack of full-time, unreserved commitment to the Lord on the part of Jacob at that stage.

There is, if I can put it this way, the formality of worship, but not the heart commitment to the Lord. And it seems to me as if he is trying to be both Jacob and Israel at one and the same time.

And that's an impossibility. That's an impossibility. And that brings me to our text. That's the background to our text.

So three thoughts from our text. First of all, the reminder from God. Secondly, renewed consecration on the part of Jacob.

And thirdly, recurring trial. A reminder from God. Then God said to Jacob, arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there.

[ 22 : 51 ] And make an altar there to God. And as I said at the outset, what comes across very strongly in this reminder is how marvelously gracious and long-suffering God is.

Despite previous messages in the past to return to his native land, the Lord's message is more pointed now. This man had made a vow.

If God will be with me, I will, and will keep me in this way that I go. In effect, Jacob was saying, what would he not give to God? Should God honor his promise?

So why this powerful reminder? Did God honor his sight? Do you remember what it was? I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, your father and the God of Isaac, the land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your offspring.

Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south. And in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

[ 23 : 59 ] Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go. We'll bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

And you ask yourself, did God honor his commitment? Did Jacob enjoy divine favor and protection? And the answer to these questions is yes.

And then you turn the spotlight on Jacob. Did he honor his vow? And the answer is a resounding no. He settled in Shechem.

And the previous chapter, chapter 34, tells us of the problems and the heartache that were created for this man Jacob regarding his daughter and the behavior of his sons.

But even that didn't cause him to move despite his own fears of retribution. He needed this reminder from God, arise, go up to Bethel.

[ 25 : 03 ] What a gracious, merciful God is the God of Jacob. This man's life reveals to us what sin has done to human nature.

And how God in his infinite grace is able to alter sinful human nature. And that should be a source of encouragement to every one of us this evening.

Despite his experience of God in the past, there was negligence on the part of Jacob. And we are apt to forget our vows when God has fulfilled his sight.

Resolutions made in time of trouble are soon forgotten when our troubles pass. Is that not true? We pray and think about God more than when things are well with us.

Religion, in many people's assessment, is just for the stormy weather only.

[ 26 : 26 ] And I wonder, is that true of anyone here this evening? Did you make promises away back in the past?

On occasions of great trial. In times of illness perhaps. Or some other difficulties. How often that is sadly true.

And once the illness or the trial or the difficulties have passed. God is forgotten. And you know, we are often more resolved to make sacrifices in the beginning of our Christian path than afterwards.

Many a brilliant morning is followed by a cloudy day. Youth is often full of enthusiasm.

Which an after day forgets. But whatever it was. Whatever it was that caused you to make a resolution and it had passed.

[ 27 : 39 ] Did you settle down just like Jacob in Shechem. And merely pay lip service to God. No zeal.

No passion. Just a formal service and lukewarmness to God. Can we find reasons for this kind of negligence?

Perhaps Jacob felt a gradual fading away of impressions of need. The constant strife of former years in Chiron had passed.

No longer the same fear of Esau. Life was good. He was comfortably settled at Shechem. He was wealthy in his own right. He himself stayed so he went out with nothing.

And returns with much. For with only my staff I crossed this Jordan. And now I have become two camps. The commercial attractions of Shechem were dazzling.

[ 28 : 48 ] The man of God. Oh how deceitful. The material accumulations in life can be. So that we lose sight of the great benefactor.

As we are wrapped around by our material possessions. The comforts of life tend to make us spiritually sleepy.

But you see God did not give up his work. In the life of this man of tricks. He is shaping and bending him to his own will. Sometimes this can happen in the twinkling of an eye.

The thief on the cross is an example who came to faith. At other times it can take the whole of your life. To give the whole of your life to God.

It can take the whole of your life. To give the whole of your life to God. There is so much to be removed. So much to be ironed out.

[ 30 : 02 ] As he shapes you in his grace. God frequently uses the waters of tribulation. To flow over lives. To bring us to an unreserved commitment to God.

So the reminder comes to travel to the place where God has promised to bless. The only place where we can really be saved. Is where there is commitment to the Lord.

Without reservation. A reminder from God. Go up to Bethel. And then secondly renewed consecration.

The reminder obviously came with unction and power. It snapped Jacob out of his spiritual lethargy.

He became alive to his needs and to his dangers. I suppose you could say of Jacob. What was true of the psalmist on one occasion.

[ 31 : 04 ] When he said he made haste and did not delay. And that seems true here too. Of course. The cynic in me might say that.

There were new pressures. Arising out of his son's behavior. At the end of the previous chapter. It is clear that their behavior. Made him worried.

About their continuing as a family. In that area. So you might say that. God's reminder was a timely intervention. And certainly enforcing the point.

At any rate. He is provoked to action. And Jacob does two things. That are both vital. He first of all asserts his position.

As head of the family. And that in itself is almost something new. And in asserting his position.

[ 32 : 05 ] He gives the instruction. To get rid of all idols. Remember what he says. Put away the strange gods that are among you. Now there is no suggestion.

Whatever in the Bible. That Jacob himself bowed down. Before these foreign gods. But he knew of their existence. He tolerated idolatry.

Within the bosom of the family. And it was his beloved wife. Rachel who had stolen them. When they left here. When they were pursued by an angry father.

And they were laboring. And they were laboring. Bent on retrieving his gods. Rachel practiced deception. In order to hold on to them. She hid them in the camel saddlebags. And sat on them.

Does that not indicate to us. How difficult it is. We find. It to be.

[ 33 : 04 ] To part with our gods. And our idols. Whatever they might be. Or whatever form. They might take. She went. To inordinate lengths.

To conceal them. And to hang on to these idols. Even when the threat of death. Was very real. Anyone with whom you find.

Your God shall not live. That was a threat. And yet she was determined. To hang on to them. And that I believe.

Is a. Frequently. An accurate portrayal. Of the heart of man. There are gods. Or idols. In our lives. Which we are unwilling.

To part with. We keep them. As some kind of insurance policy. You know. How. How small children. When they're at play. Will hold tightly.

[ 34 : 04 ] To their favorite toys. You try and prize. Their favorite toy. Away from them. When they're at that age. And the little chubby fingers. Stubbornly refuse.

To let go. The toy. They just hang on to it. Well. That's just. How we are as adults. In our stubborn. Clinging to our gods. Or our idols.

And I want to ask. Is looking at the action of Rachel. Like looking. Into a mirror. Where you can see. Your own actions. Has been very similar.

Unwilling to let go. That which is a deterrent. To spiritual growth. In your life. They may appear small.

And insignificant. But whatever these idols. Or gods might be. We are to get rid of them. They can give no security. There is no security. In possessions or reputation.

[ 35 : 02 ] There needs to be. Renunciation. Of false gods. Are there some. That you need. To renounce. But you know.

A balance is required. To live joyfully. For God's glory. It wasn't just. Put away the strange gods. That are among you. But it was.

Be clean. Or purify yourselves. And change your garments. And that seems to me. To set before us. That God's transformation.

Of lives. Involves. Not just. A renunciation. Of false gods. Or idols. But also. A substitution. For them. Of fresh. Affections. Purify yourselves. And change. It's not just. Stop doing the wrong.

[ 35 : 59 ] The danger. In doing that. Is that you become. Like the Pharisees. The. The Christian life. Is not just. A matter. Of putting off. But it is also. A matter.

Of putting on. Do you remember. How the. Apostle Paul. Writes. In the New Testament. In the letter. To the Ephesians. To put off. Your old self. Which belongs. To your.

Former manner. Of life. And to. And is corrupt. Through deceitful. Desires. And be renewed. In the spirit. Of your minds. And to put on. The new self.

Created. After. The likeness. Of God. And true righteousness. And holiness. In other words. There is a putting off. And a putting on. The Christian.

Is to be. Transformed. Not just from old habits. And former practices. How difficult. It was for Jacob. And let's not forget. For ourselves too.

[ 36 : 55 ] To get away from old associations. But from our former nature. And life. To a new nature. And eternal life. There is renewal.

And repentance. And perhaps. One striking illustration. Of this. In the Bible. Is the greedy tax collector. Sacchias. And you remember.

His confession. Behold Lord. The half of my goods. I give to the poor. If I have defrauded anyone. Of anything. I restore it fourfold. And in that.

Quotation. That I gave from Ephesians. We see what God intends. For the new creation. Created after. The likeness. Of God. And true righteousness. And holiness.

In the original creation. Remember. What God said. Let us make man. In our image. After our likeness. And however. You understand.

[ 37 : 55 ] That statement. Here is defined. For us. What it means. To be in the image of God. True righteousness. And holiness. That's what we lost.

In the fall. But what Christ. Came to restore. Restore. What did he come to restore? The image of God. In man.

What could be more glorious? And I think I ought to say. In passing. This is not a garment. That we weave. By our own efforts.

But rather. What we receive. As the gift of God. Through faith in Christ. In being justified. We are forgiven. And clothed. In the righteousness. Of Christ.

As God's free gift. To those who believe. Oh treasure. That garment. If it is wrapped around you. This evening.

[ 38 : 50 ] It speaks much. Of divine. Eternal love. Remember how the psalmist. Expressed it. In Psalm 45. Behold the daughter. Of the king. All glorious.

Is within. And with embroideries. Of gold. Her garments. Wrought. Have been. You can examine. That garment. It is. There are no flaws. There are no.

Dropped stitches there. By righteousness. I understand Paul. To mean. Our conduct. By holiness. Our spiritual attitude. Our love.

For the things of God. And our inward purity. To be like Christ. That's the goal. Now you can appreciate.

After more than 20 years. Or perhaps more. It's not easy to seek. To guide a family. In this way.

[ 39 : 46 ] Because. They seem to have enjoyed. Remarkable freedom. And so you find them. Arriving in better. And it's worth noting. Among other things. In verse 7.

What he called the place. He built there. An altar. And called the place. El Bethel. And in my view.

This verse. Tells us. Of the spiritual. Maturing. In the life of Jacob. You remember.

When Jacob was first there. And God appeared to him. He called the name of the place. Bethel. The house of God. He was impressed. By the place. Surely the Lord.

Is in this place. How awesome. Is this place. And so you find him saying. This place is none other. Than the house of God.



- [ 40 : 43 ] And this is. The gate of heaven. And if you are in Christ. Tonight. You've probably used. That phrase. Too at times. Of particular. Awareness. Of the.
- Of the presence. Of the Lord. The place. Meant much. To Jacob. And we too.
- Tend to be like that. With regard to places. Where we have received. The blessing of the Lord. Favored spots.
- In life. This building. For example. Itself. A favored spot. In the lives. Of many. Over the years.
- Ah. But you notice. What is true. Of Jacob. Now. It's not so much. The place. That is so precious. But the God.
- [ 41 : 38 ] Of the place. That's what's special to him. Not so much. The place. But the God. Of the place. Why do I say that? Because notice the name. He gives to the place. Where he built his latest altar.
- El Bethel. That literally means. God. Of the house of God. God. You see.
- It's not that. You do not care. About the places. Or the people. That you associate. With these places.
- Of blessing. You may even care more. For them. But relatively speaking. People and places. Become less important. In your life.
- Than God himself. Your mind. Is filled with him. Your thoughts. Are constantly. Going back to him. And you yourself. Rejoicing.
- [ 42 : 36 ] In his presence. That is what I believe. Happened here. There is renewed. Consecration. There is a reminder.
- From God. And finally. There is recurring trial. You know. One could be forgiven. For thinking. That surely. His path. Would now.
- Be trouble free. His life. Is re-consecrated. To God. His calling. Of Bethel. An indication.
- Of how the Lord. Constantly. Before him. He is even given. The covenantal promises. Made to his grandfather. Abraham. And we ought to notice.
- To. How God's. God's. Covenantal. Faithfulness. Seems. Is seen. In the. Protection. He receives. On the journey. Despite.
- [ 43 : 32 ] The ill will. They incurred. As a family. They journeyed. And the terror. Of God. Was upon. The cities.
- That were around them. And they did not. Pursue. After the sons. Of Jacob. You see. Wasn't.
- Any military power. Or prowess. That deterred. The citizens. Around. From pursuing. This family. It was the fact.
- That the terror. Of God. Was upon them. Do you remember. The promise.
- Of God. Behold. I am with you. Will keep you. Wheresoever you go. Will bring you back. To this land. I will not leave you. Until I have done. What I have promised you.
- [ 44 : 26 ] No. That promise. Doesn't mean. That there would be. No trials. For us. This family. Continued. To journey. Towards the family home.
- There is tragedy. The psalmist. Reminds us. Many are the afflictions. Of the righteous. Christ himself. Tells us. Disciples. In this world.
- You will have tribulation. And you see. Along with consecration. There requires. To be. Obedience. Where there is.
- Absolute. Submission. To the sovereign. Providence. Of God. Jacob. Had already. Experienced. The pain. Of parting. By death. From Deborah.

The beloved. Nurse. But now. There is. A much. Deeper pain. The pain. Of separation. By death. From the woman.

[ 45 : 21 ] That he loved. So dearly. Remember. What the Bible says. About his love. For Rachel. He served. Seven years. For Rachel. And they seem. To him.

But a few days. Because. Of the love. He had. For her. And now. The Bible. Records.

The final. Parting. In this life. She dies. In childbirth. She had. A difficult. Labor.

And survived. Long enough. To give birth. To a son. Whom she requested. With her dying breath. To be called. Benoni. The son of my grief. For the son of my sorrow.

As if to say. He is the fruit. Of my agony. And pain. And the loss. Of my life. And it's a very. Poignant picture. That is set. Before us.

[ 46 : 14 ] In the Bible. The father. Cradling. His newborn. Son. In his arms. Beside. The cold. Lifeless body. Of the woman.

He loved. So deeply. For so long. Thankfully. It's not. Such a common. Feature. Of life. In our island.

Today. As it was. In the past. What could be more sacred. Humanly speaking. Than the dying wish.

Of the person you love. As her soul was departing. She called his name. Benoni. Surely her wish.

Would be honored. God. But no. For we are told. His father called him. Benjamin. And you know.

[ 47 : 12 ] You're almost tempted. To ask. Is this the old Jacob. At work again. Well. I don't believe it is. Why do I say that?

Because you find. Recorded in the chapter. After he had attended. To the burial of Rachel. These words. And they are highly significant.

And most valuable. And Israel journeyed. Verse 21. And Israel journeyed. We've known.

That he was renamed Israel. But for the very first time. He is called by the new name. In this passage.

And I take that to mean. He is acting. In accord. With the new name. He really is Israel. And not. The twister Jacob.

[ 48 : 15 ] Why? Because. When in the overriding. Unfolding. Of divine. Sovereign providence. Unspeakable sorrow.

Has befallen him. In the loss of his wife. He has the strength. Of faith. To say. This sorrow. Will even turn out. For blessing.

And so he calls him. Benjamin. The son of my right hand. He is so convinced. That God keeps his promises. To bless.

And for those who know. The Joseph story. You will know how Benjamin. Fits into it. Even this. The greatest.

Of his sorrow. God. Will turn to blessing. What faith. Is displayed here. By the man. Who was formerly.

[ 49 : 10 ] The twister. Surely. Israel indeed. We may struggle. To believe. What Paul teaches. When our circumstances. Are difficult.

And extremely trying. Remember what he wrote. We know that for those. Who love God. All things work together. For good. For those who are the called. According to his purpose. Paul does not say.

That this is not painful. It doesn't cause hurt. But that God. Will show himself. Faithful. Because he has kept. The promise. Every promise.

He has made. And that is often. How God. Matures. His people. In spiritual life. You need to know.

That is the cure. When everything goes badly. And horribly wrong. How will you know? Because. The God.

[ 50 : 06 ] In whom you trust. Gave the son. Of his right hand. To become the son. Of sorrow. On the cross. In order. To serve.

Save those. Who trust in him. This is the guarantee. He who did not. Spare his own son. But gave him up. For us all.

How will he not. Also with him. Freely give us. All things. He gave everything. For those.

Who trust in him. The hymn writer. I believe. Puts his finger. On the purpose. Of trial. In the lives. Of believers. He is asking. The question.

In the hymn. Why are these trials there? This is what he wrote. Tis in this way. The Lord replied. I answer prayer. For grace.

[ 51 : 02 ] And faith. These inward trials. I employ. From self. And pride. To set thee free. And break. Thy schemes.

Of earthly joy. That thou mayest. Seek. Thy all. Thy all. In me. Let me ask this question.

As we conclude. Where is your role. To be found tonight? Is it to be found. In Jesus Christ.

Where is your role. To be found. Return to Bethel. For Jacob. Involved. A reminder. A reminder. From God. It involved.

Renewed consecration. It involved. Recurring trial. Returning to God. For us. Very often. Requires. A reminder.

[ 51 : 59 ] And renewed. Concentration. Consecration. And yes. It may very well. To involve. Recurring trial.

But trial. Is brought. Eventually. To an end. As the psalmist. Reminds us. Many are the afflictions. Of the righteous. But he doesn't leave it there.

But the Lord. Delivers them. Out of them all. The Lord. Delivers them. Out of them all. That's the promise of God.

And faithful. Is he who has promised. Let me ask again. Where. Is your role. To be found this evening.

Let us pray. Oh. Jacob's God. Help us. To come before thee.

[ 52 : 58 ] Humbly. Penitentially. Seek in your face. That we may know. That we too.

Belong to those. Who honor. Jacob's God. Who worship. Jacob's God. Who follow. Jacob's God. Who are not ashamed.

Of Jacob's God. But who trust. Implicitly. In him. And the glory. Shall be thine. In Jesus name. We ask it. Amen.