

# No Longer Jacob

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. I would ask you, if you will, to open your Bibles to the book of Genesis chapter 35. We pick up with Genesis this morning.

We pick up with this story about Jacob and his family. So we'll read 35, we'll read down through verse 8 in chapter 36.

So, if you're able, I would ask in honor of the Word of God, if you would stand as we read together, as I read, and you'll join me in reading silently.

Is that fair? If we all try to read at the same time, that might be tough. All right, so verse 1, chapter 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. 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.

[ 1 : 10 ] 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 to 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. 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, Rebekah's nurse, died. And she was buried under an oak below Bethel. So he called its name Elan Bakuth.

[ 2 : 15 ] God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Padan 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. 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 journeyed from Bethel when they were still some distance from Ephra.

[ 3 : 19 ] Rachel went into labor and she had hard labor. And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, do not fear for you have another son.

And as her soul was departing for she was dying, she called his name Ben-oni, 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 journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

While Israel lived in the 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 Naphtali. The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant, Gad, and Asher.

[ 4 : 27 ] These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan-Aram. And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, in Kiriath-Arba, that's 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. These are the generations of Esau, that is, Edom. Esau took his wives from the Canaanites. Ada, the daughter of Elan, the Hittite.

Olahabah, the daughter of Anna, the daughter of Zebion, the Hivite. And Basmath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nabiath.

And Adar bore him Esau, Eliphaz. Basmath bore Raul, and Olahabama bore Jash, Jalem, and Korah.

[ 5 : 32 ] These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, all his beasts, all his property that he acquired in the land of Canaan.

He went into a land away from his brother Jacob, for their possessions were too great for them to dwell together. The land of their sojournings could not support them because of their livestock. So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. Esau is Edom. Let's pray. Father, would you cause your word to come alive in our hearts this morning?

God, would you show us the truths that you mean for us to see in this story of Jacob and his family and Esau? God, we ask you to bless this morning in Christ's name.

Amen. Y'all can have a seat. Y'all did notice I spared you all the difficulty of reading the rest of those names. So on your bulletin, you'll see chapters 35 and 36.

[ 6 : 37 ] I will speak towards that, but I think I would have jumbled them up pretty badly. Y'all remember chapter 34? We just read 35 and part of 36.

Do you remember 34 two weeks ago? Let me ask this question. How did Jacob get there? How did he get to the place in 34 where all of that mess took place in their family, where his daughter was taken, sexually abused, humiliated, and the people that did it seemed to have no remorse at all? And he said, don't make a big deal about it. I'm afraid if you make a big deal about it, we'll be stench in the nostrils of the people of the land, and we'll be in trouble.

They will destroy us and our family. It's as if he didn't want to come to the honor of his daughter. And then in 34, we saw that never once was a name God mentioned.

This place, Shechem. And so we go from 34 and we step into 35, and we see God says this.

[ 8 : 00 ] God says to Jacob, arise. Go to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau. How gracious is God?

Do we remember some of the things that Esau has experienced? If we look back on the truths in the book of Genesis about Esau, what do we see? We see that...

Jacob, sorry, did I say Esau? Jacob. In the life of Jacob, what do we see? We see a man that has a sin problem, don't we? Do you all remember how he tricked his brother to get the birthright?

Do you remember how he planned with his mother to deceive his father? You remember how... Do you remember how... He boldly lied to his father over and over.

Are you really Esau? Yes. Yes, I'm really Esau. Come here. Let me touch your arm. He had put goat's hair on his arm. He shows poor, if any, leadership to his family.

[ 9 : 16 ] Let me ask this question. How is it that this man Jacob, who experienced the presence of God at Bethel...

You remember when he was leaving, after all this went down with his family, he's really running from Esau because Esau was planning to kill him. And his mom was able to work out a story with his dad and said, you need to send him back to get a wife in our homeland, not here among the Canaanite people.

And so he goes and on the way... You remember that God met him on the way? And as he's laying down at this place, you remember the name of the place? This place that he called the house of God, Bethel, as he's fleeing from Edom and he lays his head on a rock and he dreams that night and what does he see?

The stairway to heaven. And he said, this is awesome. This is the doorway to heaven. How is it that a man who experienced that, not only that, but when he goes to the land of his mother's family to Laban, he sees God bless over and over again such that he becomes rich.

All the livestock and the animals that God put in his hands as he spent 21 years or 20 years serving Laban in that land. He sees the hand of God in his life.

[10:40] And yet here he is in this place, this place where it's worldly. This is Shechem. Again, verse 1, God said to Jacob, arise and go to Bethel.

What is he... When he says arise and go, we have to understand that that means arise and leave. Leave where you are and I want you to go to this place. What place, God?

This place where I met you. This place where you made vows. This place called Bethel. This place that you remember, right?

This place you experienced me. Let me ask this question. Why do you think that he didn't go to Bethel when he was called to go back to the land of his relatives?

Why didn't he go to Bethel? Why did he choose to go to Shechem? This place of worldliness. How is it that this guy whose name means trickster, a guy who's got a huge sin issue, a guy who's met God, how is it that he finds himself in this place of sin and idolatry and worldliness and fear?

[12:06] How is it? You know, I would pause for a second. Do you sometimes find yourself in a place just like that?

a place in Jacob's situation where their family, at least at that moment, was defined by worldliness and idolatry and sin and fear.

This was the chosen of God. We hear in the scriptures, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And yet he finds himself there.

Let me share this this morning. And how gracious is God that he would say to Jacob, the one who has found himself in this sinful place, he would say, Jacob, do you hear me?

Jacob, I want you to arise and I want you to go to Bethel. Here's the main point I believe in the passage this morning is this, is that God patiently and graciously refines his chosen people.

[13:11] God graciously and faithfully calls his chosen people to a life of faithfulness and worship.

So I see the refining this morning. If you like to take notes, there's three ways that I see here that God refines his people as we look at the text this morning. God graciously and faithfully refines his chosen people.

And we see it in the life of Jacob here as we look. Look with me in verse one again. He says to Jacob, Jacob, I want you to leave this place that's characterized by worldliness, that is Shechem. And I want you to go to this place that's characterized as my house, the place where I met you before and I will meet you again. And I want you to make an altar there to me.

Isn't it interesting that how he says this? Instead he said, I want you to make an altar to me. Look what he says. I want you to make an altar to the God who appeared to you. Do you remember him?

[14:19] Jacob, do you remember that event? Do you remember the God that appeared to you? Do you remember the powerful moment? Do you remember the blessing? Hey, do you remember what you promised? Do you remember that you anointed that pillar with a promise?

We can see it. Chapter 28, it says this. Behold, I am with you. This is when he is in Bethel the first time, when he's fleeing from Esau.

Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land for I will not leave you until I have done what I promised you. Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it.

How awesome is this place? There is none other. This is none other than the house of God. And then again, God graciously, in 31, chapter 31, Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, Jacob, and I said, here I am.

And he said, I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and you made a vow to me.

[15:43] Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred. Tell me why Jacob didn't go to Bethel. Tell me why Jacob ended up in Shechem.

It's as if in chapter 31, God is saying, I want you to rise and I want you to leave and I want you to go back to this land where your relatives are and I want you to go to Bethel, the place where I am, the place that you've called the house of God, the place that I met you and you powerfully made a vow to me.

And yet what does he do? He takes his family to Shechem. How gracious is God that God would allow all this stuff to go on in his life, all this disobedience.

We do see, right, that his family is full of idolatry. They've got idols. They've got earrings in their ear that in some way are part of worshiping another God.

Their family is a mess. And yet God says, Jacob, Jacob, I want you to go. You know, I see three aspects of this call.

[16:53] He speaks to us. God, point number one, God refines in this way, point number one. He speaks to us and calls us to faithfulness and worship. Have you heard it personally?

Have you heard the call of God in your life to walk faithfully and to live a life of worship? You know, there's a chance that many of us, if not all of us Christians, have found ourselves at times in our life in a place where we didn't hear God, we didn't sense God, we had sin that we'd allowed in our life, we were in somewhat of a wreck as far as our life.

Have you been there? Have you been to a place where you feel far away from God? How gracious is God to call us back?

You know, the phrase that I see over and over in scriptures, this phrase, return to me. He says it to his children, return to me. What is he saying when he says, return to me? Turn away and leave.

Turn your back on this worldly living, this sinful living, this reliance on self, this pursuit of your own selfish dreams.

[18:03] Turn your back on that and turn to me and come to me. His call for us as Christians is to live a faithful life of worship and that's what he's calling Jacob to.

He's saying to him, Jacob, return to me. Do you see him saying that? He doesn't use these words in the text, but isn't that exactly what he's saying? Arise, leave Shechem, come to Bethel.

What is Bethel? It's a place where I met with you. Return to me. Live for me. Establish an altar there. Make an altar.

What is he saying? What does that mean symbolically to make an altar? You know what an altar represents? It represents worship. You know what he's calling him to? He says, turn away from worldliness and turn to me and worship me.

Come to me. Walk in my ways. Worship me. And what does Jacob do? I want you to see three aspects of this call.

[19:04] Number one is, he has a decision to make, doesn't he? He has a decision to make. When God calls us to faithfulness, we have a decision to make. Have you been there?

Maybe some of us are there this morning. Maybe we're at a place where God has revealed sin in our life. Maybe God's revealed to us we're not in the middle of his will right now.

We've wandered off to this place that we've created on our own. We're chasing something that's not of God, that's all of us. And we find ourselves there right now. And I want you to hear the truth of this passage to you and me is that God is calling us to faithfulness and calling us to worship.

Is your life right now, is my life right now defined by faithfulness and worship? We have a decision to make. Are we going to turn away from sinful living and are we going to turn and face and walk to God and say, God, I desire to give my life away in service of your kingdom.

God, I desire to worship you not only with my mouth as I say, but with my heart. I desire to give my life away as a ransom for your kingdom, to give my life away in service to your kingdom so that you could use me for your glory.

[20:24] Are we there? What did Jacob do? How did he make this decision? What decision did he make? Here's what he did. Verse two, so Jacob said to his household and to all who were there with him, put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments.

What is he saying? All of this stuff, these idols, all anything that has anything to do with these other religions, now is the time, family, put it away.

I want you to get rid of every single ounce of it. Matter of fact, I want you to get rid of the clothing that's stained with the stuff. I want you to take your garments off and I want you to put fresh garments on as a way of saying, God, we're now heading to you to serve and honor you.

We don't want anything to do with this worldly lifestyle that we've been living. And what did they do? This might have been, at least in my estimation, one of the first times that Jacob actually stood up and started to lead his family.

He's been so passive and we saw that when we saw his character years ago as we've read through Genesis that he by nature is timid. He by nature wants to hang out in the tent.

[ 21 : 38 ] He is not a confrontational guy. He's a subtle, slippery guy who's willing to lie and trick, cheat, steal. But God's doing a work in his life.

Do you see it? Do you see him stand up and say, all right, enough's enough. This is it. I want you to give me every idol, every ring, anything that has anything to do with this worldly life and these other gods.

We're getting rid of him right now. What did the family do? Yes, sir. Yes, sir. And they brought him. And what did he do? He took every single one of them. He put it in a place of worldliness. He dug a hole and said, we're done.

I'm burying it. This is it. He puts it in the hole and they all together do what? They all head to Bethel. And what did they do when they get to Bethel? Keep reading with me.

He said to them, let us arise and let us go to Bethel so that I may make there an altar to God who answers me in the day of distress, who's been with me wherever I've gone. Boy, what a good memory.

[ 22 : 37 ] He must not have remembered it in Shechem, but boy, he remembers it now, right? God has graciously reminded him that I've been with you all along. Have you not seen it?

Christian, let me ask you, do you believe, do you recognize, do you understand that God will never leave you or forsake you if you're his? And even when we run headlong after sin, even when we turn our back on what God's calling us to do and we go a different direction, you know what God does?

He graciously and faithfully comes and draws us back to him. That's what he does for all his children. Now, we might be kicking and screaming and it might be very, very painful because we don't want to honor, we don't want to return for some reason, but he won't ever leave us or forsake us.

The graciousness of God is he's refining us. So you see the second aspect. Number one, he's this aspect of this call of God that says return to me is one, we've got to make a decision.

Secondly, we need to come clean. His family came clean and they buried all that stuff and then thirdly, do you see it? What do we have to do in addition?

[ 23 : 50 ] We have to turn to him with a life of worship. Is that what they did as a family? Yeah, so verse five, read with me.

And they journeyed, as they journeyed, picture this, they just left Shechem, right? You remember what they did in Shechem? You remember what the sons did?

They took a sword, right? Or several swords. They got, they caused them all to be circumcised and what did they do with the sword? They went and slaughtered them all. Do you think that all the people of the surrounding land are happy with them right now?

Do you think that they want to say, we need to, man, who knows where this dude's going next and his family, we need to take this dude down now. We need to go ahead and, and do you think he's afraid that'll happen?

Sure, if we look in 34, Zach was afraid of. And yet, here we, here we go. He finally turns and he heads the direction that God's called him to go and look what God's doing.

[ 24 : 46 ] God's protecting him along the way. You know, there's a principle in scripture that said that we're in God's hand and there's not a single power on earth that can take us out of his hand.

Do you think he's protecting us as his children? You better believe he is. And I see this protection in the life of Jacob and his family. As they turn and started going to the place where God has called them to go, there's a protection that God gives them.

As they journey, a terror of God fell on the cities that were around them and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. And as a result, Jacob came to Bethel and there he did what?

He built an altar. You know what that altar represents? I've said it before. It represents worship. So these three aspects of this call, we need to make a decision we need to come clean and we need to live our life in worship to God.

And that's what he did. I want you to see point number two. So the three ways that God refines, one is that he speaks to us and calls us to faithfulness and worship.

[ 26 : 00 ] Number two, he gives us a new name and blesses us. Number two, he gives us a new name and blesses us. Where do I see that? Verse nine. Look with me at verse nine.

It says this, 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. Why did God do this a second time?

Hadn't we already visited this once before? Hasn't God already met him and already said, you're no longer Jacob, your name's Israel? Why is he having to do it again?

Let me just say, he wasn't living like Israel, was he? He was living an awful lot like Jacob. It's as if God has to remind him, graciously remind him again. Jacob, do you remember?

Your name is Israel. You're not Jacob. You're not the cheater anymore. You're the one that wrestles with God and you desire a blessing. So he shares this with him again as a way to draw him to himself.

[ 27 : 04 ] Your name is Jacob. No longer shall you become, excuse me, your name is now Israel. 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. What do you hear here? As we read this, a nation shall come from you.

Verse 12, the land, I will give it to you. Does that ring in your ears if it was a promise that was promised to Abraham and then a promise that was promised to Isaac and now here it is, a promise that's also given to Jacob?

Do you see this truth that God always follows through on his promises always and God is promising him this covenant promise has been extended to Jacob that I'm going to bless you and I'm going to multiply your seed?

You're going to have so many kids that if you were to look up and try to count all the stars, you'll not be able to number them? The blessings of God are going to pour upon you in ways you can't imagine.

[ 28 : 16 ] There are kings in your loins. Your children will be, some of your children will be kings that will be on the throne. Who is he talking about ultimately?

Let's just take a step aside from the story for a second and let's just look at the truth that's being pointed to here. Do you see the truth? It's Jesus. Out of you is going to come a son who's going to be seated on the throne, the throne, that is the throne of God Almighty, the throne of heaven and it's through that son that the world is going to be blessed and through that son there's going to be so many children you can't even count.

Was Jesus married? You know Jesus didn't marry? How is it then that Jesus can have sons? How is it that Jesus can have offspring? He has offspring because it's talking about the spiritual children that would be born because of their faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

You know that is me and for all of us who are in the kingdom or Christians in this room, it's you, that we're spiritual descendants of Jesus. Apart from Jesus, we're not sons of God.

That's what he was ultimately talking about, this blessing that he says, I'm going to give you a new name. You're going to be different. Let me ask this question. Is that true for you?

[ 29 : 39 ] Have you been given a new name? Do you act different? You know all of us as Christians have been given a new name, haven't we?

It's a defining name and it has a life-offering change that takes place in our life. What is a new name? Christian. And you'll know they're Christians by their love, by their love.

You'll know they're Christians by their love. You know what God does? He takes the heart of stone, this heart that's focused on self, that wants to satisfy self, and you know what he does?

He takes it, in a sense, he takes it out and he puts in a new heart. And you know what that new heart is? That new heart is a heart of love. It's a heart of flesh as we see it in the Old Testament. He changes our heart.

He creates in us a new heart. And that new heart desires what? The honor of God. The new heart desires to worship God and serve God. That's the effect of what God does in the lives of his chosen people.

[ 30 : 49 ] He did this to Jacob. Isn't it amazing how long it takes for this thing to seat itself in his heart? Do you see that Jacob keeps returning to this sinful life?

It's like, Jacob, come on, man. Look what you've seen. Look at the blessings you've been given. How is it you still live in this way, man? Why don't you live for God and serve him? But you know, the question's true for you and me too.

Are we Christian at a place where we genuinely have given our life over to God for his kingdom and his glory? You know, that's what the word of God calls us to, right?

Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness is the call to every Christian. Live for God. Give your life away as a sacrifice.

You know, this is not new to scripture. It's not like this is the only place. Listen at what Moses said to the people before he departed as they are, in the book of Deuteronomy says this.

[ 31 : 56 ] He's speaking to the Israelites, the nation. And he says this to the nation before he departs from them, before he dies. And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God being careful to do all his commandments I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you if you obey the voice of the Lord your God. You know, when we decide to turn away from worldliness and we decide to live a life of worship, you know what comes with that?

It's this incredible blessing. You know, and that's not the only place. Deuteronomy 30, he says it again. Listen to this. The Lord will again take delight in prospering you as he took delight in your fathers when, I emphasize the word when, when you obey the voice of the Lord your God to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in the book of the law.

When you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You know what the result of a worship-filled life is? It's abundant blessing.

It's joy that you can't imagine. It's peace that passes all understanding. It's the rest that your soul desires.

[ 33 : 20 ] It's intimate communion and fellowship with God himself. There's a beautiful verse. I don't have time to share the context, but I want you to hear this powerful truth out of 2 Chronicles.

It says this in terms of those who are walking toward the place that God has called them to go. God says this, for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.

Boy, don't I want the Lord to strongly support me as I seek after him. It doesn't mean our life doesn't have difficulty. Again, three ways that God refines.

Number one, he speaks to us and calls us to faithfulness and worship. Number two, he gives us a new name and he blesses us. And number three, God uses the broken world, this broken world as a means of training his people.

God uses this broken world as a means of training his people. Do you notice here in 35 that there's some difficulty?

[ 34 : 44 ] So we see in 16 and following, we see Rachel's death. She dies in childbirth. As she is giving birth to Benjamin, a son, that labors very hard and she doesn't make it.

she dies and the great sadness that certainly envelops Jacob is real. He sets up a memorial for her. He puts stones over her grave so that no one will forget this is the woman that he deeply loved and the wound is deep.

So there's still loss for the Christian that goes a direction that God calls him to go. Jacob turned, he put away the idols, he turned and he went toward God and he established an altar and he began to worship and the statement was, God, no longer do we want to live that way.

We want to live for you from now on and what happens? Death and sadness and difficulty and tragedy.

Do you know that Christians are not delivered from that stuff? Do you know it's still real for all of us even if we're following God, even if we're faithfully worshiping with all of our heart and all of our life, you know what happens?

[ 36 : 00 ] Death, tragedy, and difficulty, and circumstances, and pain. We're not delivered from that. It is interesting how God chooses in his providence to use these things to change us, to refine us, to make us into the image of Christ.

Do you know even Christ wasn't delivered from that? Do you know that Christ suffered much even though he never even sinned? Even though he was doing exactly what God called him to do?

He suffered much, was crucified on a cross. The word of God says as he was young, he learned obedience through the things that he suffered.

You know what the book of James says? I bet many of you can quote it. It's just a powerful, difficult passage for us to step into, but here's what it says in James.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet various kinds of trials. If you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness, let me stop.

[ 37 : 15 ] The testing of your faith. Christian, you know that faith that is not tested is not faith? It's just a concept. And God chooses to use the circumstances of life to test that faith and to refine that

faith and to help us to see our own sin and to turn away from sin and to help us see our own idolatry and to take the idols and bury them in the ground and say, no more, I'm going this way.

It's these difficulties in life, these trials that God uses to refine us into the image of Jesus, into the character of Jesus. It goes on to say, and let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

There's a maturity that has taken place through the difficulties of this life and God's doing it. And He's doing it for our sake that we might enjoy Him.

You know how we enjoy God? It's when we begin to feast on Him, when we begin to be absorbed and totally focused on Him, when we surrender our whole life and yield ourselves to God.

You know what the result is? It's joy that you can't contain. And don't take my word for it. We can turn to John 15.

[ 38 : 45 ] You remember what John 15 is about? It's about the vine and the branches. He said, here's what I want you to do. I want you to abide in me. Matter of fact, I command it. Abide in me. He says, apart from me, you can do nothing, meaning that there's no spiritual benefit of any at all unless you abide in me.

Because it's not what you do for me, it's what I do in and through you. And when I do these things in and through you, when you abide in me, you know what the result is? Verse 11 is the result. John 15, 11, you know what it says?

These things I've told you. Why? So that you might have joy and have it to the full. Overflowing joy. You know where it comes from? Abiding. You know where it comes from?

Worship. This life of worship is where it comes from. God chooses by His own providence to use this broken world as a means to refine His people.

Do you see how gracious God is to love us enough to put us through trials and circumstances so that we would be changed into the image of Christ and we would be able to enjoy Him.

[ 40 : 00 ] And He would do this work in our character to refine us so that we look a lot like Jesus. We'll never look exactly like Jesus. We've had sin in our life but you know what He's doing? He's causing the Holy Spirit within us to shine forth in such a way when people see us it's like something's different about that guy.

What in the world is so different? They can't get over the fact there's something uniquely different about this guy. I see a guy who doesn't slap me when I slap him.

I see a guy who doesn't retaliate. I see a guy who loves even when he's hurt. Wait a minute. People don't do that. You know what's true for you and me too?

In and of our own self we would never love in such a way but when the Holy Spirit is free to live His life through us you know what it looks like? It looks like love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness. It looks like the fruit of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit is free to bless people through our lives when we will quit chasing our own idolatrous sinful things and begin to say God I'm yours to do with whatever you want for the sake of your kingdom.

And that's what's going on here. God is refining him. But let me make this distinction. So I haven't talked about Esau at all but you see as we step into chapter 36 we see at the end of 35 and then 36 it talks about the blessings to Esau.

[ 41 : 22 ] But let me just say this. God's special grace and covenant promises are not given to all people. Let me say it again. God's special grace and covenant promises are not given to all people.

Do you notice that God's work of grace is uniquely different towards Jacob compared to Esau? Have y'all seen that as y'all have read? God's work of grace is uniquely different in the life of Jacob than it is in Esau.

Look at Esau. Did y'all read it while I was praying maybe? The rest of them? I don't know if y'all read it before we met today but if you start reading all this you know what you're going to see?

You're going to see name after name after name after name after name after name. It sounds like Esau has been incredibly blessed doesn't he? You know what? He has. Isn't this a promise to Abraham that your offspring are going to be blessed?

And so God's common grace has been abundantly poured upon Esau and what do you see? What does that common grace look like? Well, in this case for Esau he's so wealthy he's got so many herds that he can't even stay in the same land as Jacob.

[ 42 : 47 ] Both of them have been tremendously blessed with possessions. And now he migrates to Seir so God gives him a place to call home. You see children, you see property, you see

possessions but you know what you don't see in the life of Esau?

The call of God. Never do you see Esau receive this draw, this touch on his life and his heart. Never do you see in Esau this calling out of sin and remorse.

You don't even see he's interested in spiritual things. Have you noticed? He never was interested in spiritual things. He gave away his birthright which is a spiritual place that he found himself because he was first born.

He's never been interested. He's only wanted things. You know, when he didn't receive the blessing from his father, Isaac, what was his beef?

He said, no, don't you have something for me? I want all the goods. I mean, you've got so much, I want it all. You know what, did he get it? He ended up getting it, didn't he?

[ 43 : 53 ] Why? Because Jacob went to another land. He couldn't even keep it up. The grace of God is different in the life of Jacob.

What is it? Hey, Jacob, you're mine. Has God said that to you?

Let me just say that there might be some here that are not a Christian. And I get it. There's a time up until I was 22 I wasn't a Christian either. and I didn't even understand.

But my question to you if you're not a Christian, have you heard the call of God? Have you heard him say, I want you to come and follow me? You know, there's an invitation to anyone today who's not in the kingdom.

God would say to you, come, follow me. And you know what I'll do? If you'll follow me, I will change your heart. I will protect you I will give you a whole new life.

[ 44 : 59 ] I will do a work in your heart you can't even imagine. And you will be mine. And you will be with me one day where I am.

Now, how is that possible? You know how it's possible? We talked earlier about Jesus. You know, all of this, all of these promises, these covenant promises of God that he's given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

You know what they were all pointing to? Jesus. They were all pointing to a Messiah. They were all pointing to one who would live in our place and die in our place.

You know, because we can't do it without sin. Ask Jacob if he struggles with sin. And yet, God chose him. And God graciously worked on his life to try to change his heart, to change him.

And he promised him these incredible promises. You know, those promises are for you and I, for all of those who turn their lives over, who recognize their sin, who recognize their rebellion, who see that Jesus was the promised Messiah, who understand that Jesus died in our place.

[ 46 : 06 ] Christian, I hope you hear this call from this passage this morning. Will you please, please, please, I beg you, take the idols out of your life. What is it that you've allowed in your life that doesn't honor God?

What is it that you've allowed a place that reside with you and you carry it along and it doesn't honor God? He's calling to us to turn aside from all that stuff, to leave it, and to turn and symbolically, in a sense, to make an altar and say, as of this day, from now on, I choose to worship you.

You know what worship looks like? Abiding. That's what it looks like. Let's pray. Father, we are humbled that you would so graciously refine us.

God, you would so graciously show us our sin and by your power, you would put something within us that allows us to turn away from that sin.

God, you said you've given us everything we need for life and godliness in this world. everything we need in the person of the Holy Spirit that we now can choose to live for you and honor you and worship you fully.

[ 47 : 29 ] God, would you continue to do this work, this maturing work, this changing work that's taken us to this place that looks a whole lot like Jesus?

God, where we don't choose to let our selfish ways rule our lives, we choose to let you rule our lives. God, would you do that work and for those that don't know you as Lord and Savior, God, would you open their eyes to understand what it means to turn to you, what it means to give their life to you and I pray in your name, amen.

Amen.