

Life Group Notes

Sunday 23 February 2020

Speaker: David Mosimabale

Series: Jacob's Story

Title: Back to Bethel

Passage: Genesis 35: 1-15

Read Genesis 35: 1-15

In v1 God gives him a command/instruction, "Get ready and move..." God is a God of movement and this is a call to all of us: "Get ready and move." Jacob is to return to Bethel and to settle there. Bethel is the place of encounter. We settle at Bethel by building an altar. An altar is a place of sacrifice, of laying things down, of worship.

Jacob's Response (vv2-8)

(a) He told everyone in his household. Make yourself accountable!

(b) He got rid of all his idols. The key word here is "all." All your idols. An idol is anything that becomes more important than Jesus – even good things.

(c) They purified themselves. Eph 5:26 speaks of "washing through the Word." Being occupied with the Bible keeps you clean.

(d) Put on clean clothes. Remember your new identity in Jesus Christ – he has given us new clothes to wear (Col 3:12-17).

(e) He built an altar.

God's Response (vv9-13)

(a) God appeared and blessed him. We have spoken a lot about "blessing" in the Jacob story. If you draw near to God, he will draw near to you.

(b) God changed his name. God often gives new names before we are ready for them/ before we deserve them. He calls us to walk into our new name by faith.

(c) God reminded him of his promises to Abraham. Lifted his eyes again to the Big Story of which he is a part.

Jacob's Final Response (vv14-15):

Jacob built a pillar to signify that God had spoken to him. What will be your response today?

Questions

1. When was your most memorable Bethel moment (moment of encounter with God)? Share with the group.
2. What would it mean for you to go "back to Bethel"? What steps could you take to return to the place of encounter?
3. An altar is a place of sacrifice. What do you need to lay down on the altar this week?
4. New name/ new clothes. What is the new identity that you have in Christ? How is this different from your old nature? How can you "put these on" (Colossians 3: 12-17)?
5. How do we see this grace of God in this part of Jacob's story?