

Sermon Study Guide



#4: Loneliness & Companionship

HOME: Finding Redemption in the Messiness of Life

February 16, 2020 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

In this series we look at the life of Jacob to help us identify the sin issues that causes messiness in life and dysfunction in the family, and how we can find redemption in these messes.

Reflect

Loneliness is one of the worst feelings in the world, and we would go to extreme measures to look for a companion. The feeling of loneliness is a deep heart issue often brought about by feelings of abandonment. This is why you can feel alone even in a crowded room. You feel it even when you are surrounded by family or friends who may have misunderstood, hurt, or betrayed you. When do you feel the loneliest? How important is having a companion to you?

Read and Discuss

Scripture

Genesis 28:10-22

Discussion Questions

How you deal with loneliness can bring you to trouble if you don't deal with it correctly. On the other hand, if you deal with it correctly then it will give you great joy and hope. Read Genesis 28:10-22. Jacob was on the run because his brother wanted to kill him (v.10-11). Discuss why Jacob could be so lonely and scared in his situation.

From Jacob's life experience, we draw out three things to remember, one truth, and three responses in times of loneliness:

1. Three things to remember:
 - a. **Remember the realities of the spiritual realm (v. 12).** The spiritual realm is where God is very much actively at work. Throughout the Bible, when God allows someone to see into the spiritual realm, it is always to encourage them. What special

thing did Jacob experience in his sleep? What did he recognize through his experience? Angels in the spiritual realm are commanded by God to assist and protect His children in the physical realm. In what ways may you experience God's protection through His angels? Although God can do it, why doesn't he speak to His people through dreams nowadays?

- b. **Remember the promise keeper and His promises (v. 13).** In this passage is the first time it was recorded that God talked to Jacob. Although Jacob knew God as Yahweh, he did not have a personal relationship with Him until now. What did God tell Jacob that must have encouraged him? To whom did God make the same promise before Jacob? Share a promise in the Bible that you claim because of who God is as a promise Keeper. How does this promise help you in your Christian walk?
 - c. **Remember God's assurance of companionship (v. 15).** "I am with you!" This is a promise of God to His people throughout the Bible. How does God's assurance of companionship make a difference in your life? What is one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit that gives you the assurance that you will never be alone? Share how you have claimed this promise even when everything didn't seem to be all right in your life?
2. A truth that transforms: **God has been present all along (v. 16-17).** Jacob woke up from his sleep realizing the truth that transformed his life. Everything was the same in his situation, except that He realized that God was present all along. Loneliness often leads people to a life of bitterness. Discuss how the fact that God is present in your life even when you are going through something dark can keep you from being bitter and live with joy and hope.

3. Three responses to this truth (v. 18-22):
- a. **A response of a memorial/remembrance (v. 18-19).** What did Jacob do the next morning to remember his experience with God? Discuss why it is important to remember your encounters with God. Share how you keep a record of your experiences to help you remember that God would never leave you and that He has always been there for you.
 - b. **A response of inner conviction (v. 20-21).** This was Jacob's first experience with God and he wanted to see that God is indeed faithful. How does your belief in God help you to grow in your journey with Him instead of starting all over again when problems come?
 - c. **A response in tangible action (v. 22).** Jacob promised that he would give back to God a tenth of whatever God would give him. Why is a tangible action important as you respond to God's goodness in your life? What really matters when you give back to God?

Respond

In Walk: We don't walk in our faith journey alone. When everyone has abandoned you, there is a Friend closer than a brother who is there with you. Jesus is always by your side. Do you recognize His presence in your life? If not, what do you think you should do?

In Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You that in my life's journey, You are with me through the Holy Spirit. Help me please to always remember that You are the Promise-Keeper who is with me daily as my faithful Companion, no matter what situation I find myself in. Thank You for the reminder that Your presence has always been there all along even in my worst experiences. Thank you that You will not let go of me. May I respond by remembering your goodness and presence with inner conviction of trust in my walk with You. Help me also to respond to your faithfulness and goodness in tangible ways that will bring honor and praise to Your name. In Jesus' name. Amen.