

“Do Right, and do it Right Now!”

Genesis 33:18-35:3

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INTRODUCTION

Jacob's life, like ours, has glorious successes and painful moral failures. Jacob has come so far and done things that we could only dream of doing! Jacob has worshiped at the Gate of Heaven, Jacob has received promises from the Lord God, and he has grappled with God in the form of a man. *But he is still very immature.* God has kept His promise to faithfully stand by Jacob, but God also allows Jacob to live the consequences of his failures so that we all can learn.

In this passage we see Jacob fail as a father and leader, and we see the painful consequences of not delaying. But we still see the faithfulness of God who eventually overcomes Jacob's failures.

Be proactive in doing right, take initiative, and don't delay! God is faithful, but sin destroys the lazy.

Gen 33:18-20 God Is Faithful, But Jacob Becomes Lazy.

Vs 18 God has safely delivered Jacob from the anger of Esau. We can be happy for Jacob, God helped Jacob move on and grew Jacob's faith. But Jacob starts making bad choices again...

Jacob settles within walking distance of a pagan town. But Beth-El, the House of God, is not far away. Jacob intends to stay because it is a rich area, but he knows how wicked his neighbors are! Remember Lot's decision to settle in Sodom in order to become rich (Gen 13:12-13).

Vs 20 To be fair, Jacob did worship God in this place. He build an altar called “the God of Israel is mighty”. Maybe Jacob thought he was doing the pagans good by living among them, maybe he thought he had a “testimony” with them. This would be foolish! We are called to be lights in the world, but we are also called to be separate from wickedness. (Jas 1:27)

Life changing sorrow and horrific evil will happen because Jacob led his family to live in a Godless city.

Take initiative in separating from sin unto God! Don't assume that all is well because you are physically blessed.

Gen 34:1-5 God Protects His People, But Jacob Fails to Protect His Daughter.

Vs 1 It's reasonable that Dinah would want to go out to meet people, she was probably between 12 and 16 years old. But it's very strange that she goes alone. Where was Dad in all of this?

We don't know if she went with her parent's permission or if she sneaked out. But whatever happened, Jacob moved the family into a dangerous area and failed to keep track of his kids.

Vs 2-5 And this was a dangerous area! The prince abducts and abuses Dinah, the language used does not leave any room for other interpretations, but note how no one apologizes and nobody, not even the king, seems to have a problem with what the prince did.

Take initiative in protecting the souls that God has put in your care!

Gen 34:6-29 God Keeps Covenant, But Jacob Fails to Guide his sons.

Vs 6-12 Jacob apparently has nothing to say about Hamor's plan.

Vs 13-29 Jacob apparently has nothing to say about his son's murderous and deceitful plan

Could Jacob not have come up with something? Did Israel (wrestles with God) not have an appeal to God or God's justice, did Jacob (trickster/supplanter) not have a strategy or idea?

See how the brothers profane the holy covenant sign? The sign of God's grace (circumcision) is used as a tool for murder!

The brother's sin here will come back to haunt them and their children. At the end of Jacob's life, he speaks a prophecy about these two brothers...

"...in their anger, they slew a man, and in their self-will, they dug down a wall. 7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Gen 49:6-7

Take initiative in preventing others from falling into sin!

Gen 34:30-35:1-2 God Never Gives Up On His People, And God's People Do Eventually Learn.

Vs 30-31 Jacob had nothing to say when his daughter put herself in danger, he had nothing to say when she was abducted and abused, he had nothing to say when his sons lied about their intentions and went about wiping out a small city, but now that he's in personal danger Jacob finally speaks.

Now at the end of this sad story, finally Jacob opens his mouth...and he only reacts to the danger that the family is now in. All this pain and loss could have been prevented at so many points if Jacob had just spoken up! *We must take initiative to deal with sin and do right as soon as we can, or it may spiral out of control.*

35:1 Yes, this has been a sad story, but thank God it does not end here! In the darkest moment, when all seems lost, a word from God comes reminding Jacob (and us!) that He is faithful...

And look at how Jacob responds!

And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone."

CONCLUSION

Let us learn Jacob's lesson early! Praise God that He does not give up on His people, and by His grace, God will finish the work he has started in us. But the sooner you learn to deal with sin and quickly obey, the better off you and your family will be. Do not become complacent! Do not just react! Be proactive. Go out of your way to keep watch of your soul and the souls of those around you. Delaying only brings pain, sin, and eventually, death.

Be proactive in doing right, take initiative, and don't delay! God is faithful, but sin destroys the lazy.