

Monday - Week Nine

Lesson twenty-four: Jacob in Egypt

Read: Genesis 45:16-50:26

Summary: God's chosen family took a monumental step by moving to Egypt. God had already planned on this trip - indeed, He would use it as a blessing.

Background and Comments

- Imagine Jacob's shock when he learned that Joseph was alive and in charge of all Egypt. Jacob had deceived people early in his life; in turn he had been deceived quite a few times by other people ... even by his own sons. God had saved a wonderful surprise for the end of his life!
- God had already told Abraham that his descendants would spend 400 years enslaved in a foreign country (Genesis 15:13-14) and that they would later return to the Promised Land. The scope of God's planning ability boggles out minds!
- Joseph was such a good businessman that Pharaoh ended up owning the country of Egypt as well as most of the citizens! It's no wonder that the Pharaoh was so willing to allow Joseph's family to inhabit the best part of Egypt - Joseph was the best thing that ever happened to the Pharaoh!

Lessons for Today

- Genesis 49 makes for interesting reading; God gave Jacob insight into the character traits of his sons that would influence all of their descendants. What character traits are you passing along to your family members and friends? This gives new motivation to setting a good example for others.
- Genesis 50 provides us with a real life example of forgiveness. Joseph hadn't forgiven his brothers simply to please his father (in that case he would have sought revenge after his father died); he forgave them because God wanted him to forgive them. He would not "play God" by seeking revenge. How do we "play God" every time we try to get revenge on someone?
- The beginning of Genesis 50:20 could be memorized by every Christian. How will you apply this passage in the future?

Read: Psalm 41; Romans 13.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, guide me to freely and completely forgive people when they sin against me. I ask this in the name of Jesus; Amen.

Tuesday - Week Nine

Lesson Twenty-five: The birth and training of Moses

Read: Exodus 1:1-2:22

Summary: We meet Moses - a certified hero in God's eyes (cf Hebrews 11). The way in which God trained Moses is fascinating.

Background and Comments

- Between the end of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus there is time gap of about 300 years. During this time God blessed the Israelites incredibly: their numbers increased rapidly.
- Even though Moses had everything as a young "Egyptian" he chose to be mistreated along with the people of God (Hebrews 11:24-25). Moses took it upon himself to become the Israelites' leader (as he demonstrated by killing the Egyptian and then trying to settle an argument). God would teach him humility through the next 40 year period of his life.
- Moses rescued the seven daughters of Jethro after he fled Egypt. This act of heroism became significant in Moses' life; one of these daughters became his wife! (What an interesting way to meet your spouse!)

Lessons for Today

- The book of Hebrews (11:23) tells us that it was *by faith* that Moses' mother and father hid him from Pharaoh's forces. Faith allows us to have confidence in even the most hopeless situations!
- Moses' education in Egypt was the best this world had to offer. Acts 7:22 tells us that Moses was educated in all the wisdom of Egypt and became powerful in speech and action. These leadership skills were put to the ultimate test years later when Moses led millions of Israelites out of Egypt through the desert. Can you think back to some lessons God taught you early in your life that He used later on?
- In the Old Testament the meanings of names were extremely important. How would you have liked to go through life named "Gershom" - a Hebrew word that means "alien there"?

Read: Psalm 42; Romans 14.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, please give me patience, Lord ... patience to wait for You to train me, patience for You to give me tasks in Your kingdom, and patience to listen to Your Word. In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

Wednesday - Week Nine

Catechism Review

Read Questions 34-40

1. Give a practical example of each:
 - A. Fearing God (to have God as the only One in Your heart - the One you obey)

 - B. Loving God (to hold God more dear to you than anyone/thing else)

 - C. Trusting God (to depend on Him more than anyone else)

2. Would you agree or disagree (and why): "If a person kept the first commandment then he or she would be keeping all the commandments".

3. What are some examples of secret idolatry that you struggle with?

4. When we sin how are we robbing God of His glory?

Read: Psalm 43; Romans 15.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, You mean everything to me. Fill my heart in rich measure so that I can fear, love and trust in You above all things. Let every aspect of my life bring glory to Your name. I ask this in the name of Jesus; Amen.

Thursday - Week Nine

Lesson Twenty-Six: Moses called to lead Israel

Read: Exodus 2:23-4:31

Summary: God's first step towards rescuing His people was to provide a leader for them. God called Moses in a most unusual way.

Background and Comments

- Exodus 2:23-25 set the stage for the entire rescue of the Israelites. God heard His people and remembered His promises; God was concerned about the Israelites. It's true that God had been concerned for the Israelites for the past hundreds of years while they were in Egypt even though it must not have seemed like it to the Israelites. God's ways and "schedules" are much different than ours.
- In Exodus 3:8 we read the phrase "flowing with milk and honey" for the first time to describe the land of Canaan.
- Moses asked God what he should tell the Israelites God's name was. Names described people. The Israelites would need to know what they could expect from God ... how God felt toward them.

Lessons for Today

- Moses had been so self-confident and aggressive before he fled from Egypt. Now, forty years later, we see a completely different Moses. He asked, "Who am I that I should bring out the Israelites?" God had done His work of bringing humility into Moses' life. How exactly had God accomplished this in Moses' life? (Be specific) How does He accomplish the same thing in Your life?
- Moses hadn't only gained humility he had lost some of his trust in God. Even though God told him that He would guide Moses every step of the way, Moses doubted. The line between Christian humility and a lack of trust needs to be sharply drawn. Christian humility remembers that without God we can't accomplish anything; yet Christian humility also knows that God is in our lives and that with His strength we can accomplish great, miraculous things. As strange as it seems, we can be humble and bold at the same time. How will this impact your life today?

Read: Psalm 44; Romans 16.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, give me humble boldness. In Jesus' name; Amen.

Friday - Week Nine

Life Questions

Topic/Question: What does the Bible say about living together before marriage?

Bible References and Considerations

- Before we begin we need to define the term “live together”. If that is taken to mean that a couple is having sex before they get married then the matter is quite clear. The sixth commandment clearly says, “Do not commit adultery”. Having sex before marriage is outside God’s plan for marriage and is a sin.
- Someone might say, “We live together but we don’t sleep together.” This is still dangerous (wrong) for two reasons:
 1. The Bible warns us about putting ourselves in temptation’s way. To think that two people who have strong feelings for each other will be able to control themselves when they spend the nights alone together does not display very much Christian wisdom.
 2. An even more important consideration is the Christian witness that we are setting. God wants us to reflect His glory to the world. We live in a world that has made sex a sport to be enjoyed by any two consenting people. God has said that sex is a blessing He has reserved for marriage. When a Christian person lives with someone before marriage they are not reflecting God’s glory because they are living like a married couple even though they aren’t married.

Practically Speaking

- How do we deal with Christians who are living together before marriage? We deal with them in the same way God wants us to deal with anyone who has fallen into a sin (cf. Matthew 18:15-17). We need to remember that our goal is to help them grow spiritually, not simply to stop them from living together before marriage.
- Some say, “We are going to get married (in a big worship service with a big reception, etc.) so what is the big deal?” We need to direct them to what has been said above in the “Bible references” section. Another part of our response could be: “Why not get married now? Get a marriage license, be married privately by a judge or pastor and then have the big service and reception later as planned.” This would be a God-pleasing solution. If someone rejects this we need to question if they understand what marriage, God’s law and living a God-pleasing life are all about.

Read: Psalm 45; Mark 1.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, give unmarried people in our congregation wisdom as they deal with the issue of living together before marriage. Amen.