



Midweek Study Notes

23rd January 2022

Prepared by Matt

Ice Breaker

Jo and Hattie Bedford celebrated their 18th birthdays on Sunday. If you could travel back in time to give *your* 18-year-old self one piece of advice, what would you say?

Giants of Faith - Jacob

During the service we continued our look at the giants of faith listed in Hebrews chapter 11 by exploring the story of Jacob, whose life is detailed in Genesis chapters 25 to 50.



The account of Jacob is an inspiring picture of someone crooked being made straight. He was a deceptive, lying performer who went to great lengths to steal the birthright of his older brother Esau, but as **Psalm 103:10** reminds us, God *'does not treat us as our sins deserve'*. Despite his continued struggle against God's will for his life (**Genesis 32:22-32**), Jacob was given a vision as he slept in which God told him *"Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions—to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants."* (**Genesis 28:14**)

Read the full account of Jacob's dream at Bethel in **Genesis 28:10-22**.

God gave Jacob his own personal vision through a dream, Jacob gave each of his sons *their* own personal, individual blessing before *he* died, and God's heart is to do the same for each and every one of us. *God sees us all individually, wants to know us all individually, and blesses us all individually.*

We worship a God who loves us so much that He is willing to work in our lives to right what is wrong, bring healing to our deepest wounds, and restore us to the person He created us to be. As we were reminded through the lyrics of Handel's Messiah:

'Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight and the rough places plain.'

Discussion Suggestions

Mervyn wondered if we could relate to the account of Jacob deceiving his father Isaac in order to steal the birthright of his older brother Esau, asking *Are we people with a long term purpose, or are we looking for instant gratification?* You could apply this question to yourself, to our church, to Christians in general or to society as a whole.

Jacob was described as a 'performer,' which is perhaps something that we can all relate to. *Do you find yourself putting on a performance on Sunday mornings? Do you feel there is an expectation about how you should behave at church?*

Through the death of His son Jesus, God does not treat us as our sins deserve, but like Jacob, we *do* have to face up to the things that we need to change in our lives. *Are you wrestling with God about something that you need to change or come to terms with?*

Prayer Suggestions

Thank God that we never need to perform in order to be accepted by Him, but can enter His presence exactly as we are.

Give thanks to God for the way that He speaks to us all in a way that is personal and individual. If you have never had your own personal encounter with the living God, ask Him to speak to you now.

