

## **INTRODUCTION: GENESIS 28**

Psalm 145:4 (NKJV)

4 One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts.

- Often this verse is used in the context of the youth declaring the works and mighty acts of God to the older generation
- But in the Hebrew mind it's the older generations declaring God's works and acts to the younger generations
- It's people who have experienced the Presence of God sharing their experiences of God's power and mercy in their lives

## **Mary testifies of this in what is known as the Magnificat**

Luke 1:50–55 (NKJV)

50 And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him From generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones, And exalted *the* lowly. 53 He has filled *the* hungry with good things, And *the* rich He has sent away empty. 54 He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of *His* mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever.”

- Notice He spoke to Abraham, helped Israel, filled the hungry, sent the rich away empty, scattered the proud, put down the mighty, showed strength and mercy
- How were these passed down from generation to generation?
- The previous generations loved enough to share it
- That is the connection from one generation to the next... sharing your experience of walking with the LORD and all the mighty things God has done for you... it's invaluable
- In fact, it's needed

## **The wisest man who ever lived said this...**

Proverbs 4:10–12 (NKJV)

10 Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, And the years of your life will be many. 11 I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths. 12 When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, And when you run, you will not stumble.

- When we share our lives, our experiences in following Jesus it keeps future generations from stumbling, from being hindered in their walk
- That is one of the great values of studying God's Word
- We get to learn from some of the greatest examples of faith that have ever lived... people like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who walked with God
- They weren't perfect, but they didn't let their imperfections stop them from learning how to walk the walk of faith... that's a quality believer
- Someone who is determined to follow Jesus no matter what challenges face them... including personal challenges

***By the way, if you want to get connected to quality people at Calvary Chapel... get involved in serving***

- Those who serve in our ministry are some of the highest quality people I know... they love the Lord, they're faithful, they have great attitudes
- The selfish people don't show up to help, but the ones that show up and serve people that have nothing to offer them... that's love in action
- The servants in any church are the cream of the crop and serving is a great way for relationships to naturally form where you can be discipled and encouraged in your walk with the LORD
- I would especially challenge our young men and women to make an effort to get involved in our women's ministry, men's prayer, midweek study... there is buried treasure and it's your job to dig it out
- Not only will it benefit you... but it is a command from God

**Leviticus 19:32 (NKJV)**

**32 'You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I *am* the LORD.**

***Today I want to look at 3 old men... Abraham, Isaac and Jacob***

- 3 generations with 3 different relationships with God

***The First Generation – Abraham***

- I refer to Abraham's generation as the Friendship generation
- James 2:23 says Abraham was called the friend of God
- This generation of believers is all about the Presence of God

***First some history...***

- Abraham grew up the son of an idol maker which means he was an idolator until He had an encounter with God in Genesis 12

- In Genesis 12:1-3 The Lord (YHWH) speaks to Abram and tells him to get out of your country to a land I will show you
- By faith Abraham leaves his homeland in search of a city whose builder and maker is God
- Abraham has this intense relationship with the Covenant Making God and several times the LORD appears to Abraham, speaks to Abraham and Abraham speaks to the LORD (which is prayer)
- In Genesis 15:6 we read Abraham believed in the LORD and it was counted to him as righteousness
- Later in Genesis 17:5 because of Abraham's faith in the LORD God changes his name, gives him a new identity
- Thus Abraham represents salvation by grace through faith and the new identity that is ours in Christ Jesus

***As Abraham is declaring the mighty acts of God...***

- I wonder if he told the story of how God helped him defeat the 4 most powerful kings in the region while rescuing Lot from captivity
- I wonder if he told the story of how the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah
- I wonder if he told about the times he let fear cloud his judgment and how God delivered his family in spite of his mistakes
- Maybe he talked about how he negotiated with the LORD, trying to secure Lot's rescue
- How could Abraham not tell the story of how Isaac was born, how Isaac was the promised son

***Probably the hardest test of all...***

Hebrews 11:17-19 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said, "*In Isaac your seed shall be called,*" <sup>19</sup> concluding that God was able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

- Abraham trusted God so much... he believed God would raise his only son from the dead
- But the thing that stands out most about Abraham is what God said to Isaac about Abraham

Genesis 26:4–5 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; <sup>5</sup> **because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**”

- Someone who truly believes in the LORD, who completely trusts the LORD with their life will live a life of obedience
- Abraham obeyed God’s voice... He followed God’s instructions
- Abraham kept God’s charge... He willingly did what God required
- Abraham kept God’s commandments... He did what God told him to do
- Abraham kept God’s statutes... He followed God’s rules
- Abraham kept God’s laws... He obeyed the Torah, the written law
- Obedience is the proof of faith... a person who doesn’t believe or doesn’t trust God does not obey... people follow who they trust
- Abraham trusted the LORD and because He was God’s friend, God blessed Abraham abundantly

***The Second Generation – Isaac***

- I refer to Isaac’s generation as the Faithful generation
- Isaac was faithful with what was given to him

***First some history...***

- The first time Isaac is mentioned is Genesis 15:4 where the LORD tells Abraham his heir will come from his own body
- Isaac is the promised son and we know little about Isaac’s life except that Isaac obeyed the LORD... he never left the land God promised him
- He was the only Patriarch to have one wife and when Abraham died everything was given to Isaac
- The first time God appears to Isaac... God tells him to dwell in the land
- God promises to fulfill the promises he made to Abraham through Isaac
- In Genesis 26:12 we read that Isaac sowed in that land the LORD blessed him and he became very prosperous
- He learned the Philistines tried to take back the land given to Abraham and through his faithfulness he uncovers the wells Abraham dug and restores them... in other words he took possession of the land
- Thus it is through faithfulness that Isaac was blessed

***As Isaac is declaring the mighty acts of God...***

- I'm sure he talked about the time when his dad took him to the mountain to offer him as a burnt offering and as his dad was about to take his life the Lord intervened and provided Himself a sacrifice
- This event becomes a type of God the Father offering His only Son whom He loved to be a sacrificial offering for the sins of the world
- I wonder if he would talk about the times God spoke to Him and the promise God made to make him into a great nation
- I wonder if he would talk about the time God healed Rebekah of barrenness after he cried out to the Lord
- Maybe he told of how God instructed him to not leave the promised land in a time of famine and how he was blessed when everyone else wasn't
- Or perhaps he simply spoke of God's faithfulness and how God simply blessed his crops, led him to dig up the wells that were covered up and reclaimed the land
- I'm sure he would have recounted how blessed he was to have twin sons who would both become nations as it says in Hebrews 11:20... by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come
- No doubt he would have mentioned how God was faithful to fulfill his promise to Isaac through Jacob who gives birth to 12 sons who become the nation of Israel
- If there was a motto for Isaac's life it would simply be to remain faithful to the promise of God's Word

**Proverbs 28:20 (NKJV)**

**20 A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.**

- Eugene Petersen defines faithfulness as long obedience in the same direction
- 1 Samuel 2:35 the Lord says I will raise up a faithful priest who will do according to what is in my heart and mind
- Galatians 5:22-23 tells us faithfulness is the fruit of the Spirit's work in our lives
- And thus faithfulness is proof of faith... if you say you believe, then you will be faithful to serve the Lord, to worship the Lord, to pray, to read His Word, to be involved in your home church, attending Bible Study and worship services
- Unfaithfulness is really a sign of selfishness...

- I'm going to do what I want to do because it's not about serving others... it's about what serves me
- But when I believe in the LORD, I don't have a need to go beyond what God has given me... I'm faithful with what I have

### ***The Third Generation – Jacob***

- I refer to the Jacob generation as the Fatherless generation
- We read in Genesis 25:28 Isaac loved Esau but Rebekah loved Jacob
- We see in Jacob the signs of a young man who spends his whole life competing for his father's love and in the absence of his father shows

### ***First some history...***

- In Genesis 25:23 the Lord tells Rebekah 2 nations are in your womb
- One will be stronger and the older will serve the younger
- Esau was the older and Jacob was the younger and in the end becomes the stronger
- In Genesis 25:29-34 Esau sells his birthright to Jacob
- In Genesis 27 Jacob, under his mom's direction, steals Esau's blessing... the blessing of the firstborn son which brings Esau to the point of hopelessness and despair
- Esau's hopelessness and despair turns to rage and he promises to kill Jacob... so Jacob flees from Esau under the guise of finding a wife
- Genesis 28 the LORD meets with Jacob in a dream that's commonly referred to as Jacob's Ladder
- The Lord reveals Himself as the I AM, as YHWH the Covenant Making God and Elohim, the Creator God of Power and the LORD promises to not leave Jacob until He has fulfilled His promises to Jacob
- Genesis 28:16 gives us a glimpse of Jacob's spiritual life... he says surely the Lord is in the place and I didn't know it... he was not conscious of God
- Isaac, the absent father, didn't pass on his spiritual legacy to Jacob
- Jacob lives 20 years with his unbelieving relatives and he becomes very prosperous through God's blessing on his hard work
- But his success is called into question because of his reputation and he is accused of stealing the inheritance of Laban's sons just like he did his own brother and he flees for his life
- Now Jacob is living in fear of Laban and in fear of Esau but this changes in Genesis 32 when Jacob wrestles with the LORD and God changes his name... gives him a new identity... Israel

- No longer will you struggle with God and man... from now on you will be governed by God... in other words... I will be your Father

***As Jacob is declaring the mighty acts of God...***

- I wonder what Jacob would say?
- Would he talk about how he took Esau's birthright and blessing?
- Would he talk about how God blessed him even when Laban was trying to rip him off?
- Would he talk about the time God met him in a dream or how the angels met him when he returned to Canaan?
- I think he would talk about the day God changed his name
- How he lived his life without any knowledge of God and how he spent a lifetime trying to earn his father's love but when he met the LORD he found the love of a lifetime

***We read this summary about Jacob's life***

Hebrews 11:21 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning on the top of his staff.*

- He worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff
- Jacob found in his heavenly father what he didn't get from his earthly father... He found God's love and grace and God made a worshipper out of Jacob
- Worship is a proof of faith... because in order to worship God I must first believe that He is real, that He is, He exists
- And when I believe, worship becomes so natural, so easy... it's my first response when God does something... oh praise the Lord

***Q: What generation are you?***

- I think all of us fit in one of these generations... Many of us identify with the fatherless generation... we're making a way for ourselves because if we don't do it no one will... like Jacob we forget God is our Father
- Many identify with the faithful generation... they're being responsible, doing the right things... but they lack the intimacy Abraham had with God
- I believe God wants us all to be in the friendship generation because Jesus said... I no longer call you servants but friends
- For the fatherless generation it means fully surrendering to the Lord and for the faithful generation it means learning to sit at His feet