

b. We, too, ought to get alone with God.

- 1) Only God, who knows and controls the future, can give us peace when we face the fearful unknown.
- 2) We must stop fretting and give our burdens to the Lord. (Philippians 4:6-7) "*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"
- 3) Like Jacob, we need to beg God for His blessing. However, we must remember that Jacob was crippled for the rest of his life as a reminder to him of that experience. God must change us from the inside out before He can bless us.

Broken surrender always precedes blessing. What is it in your life that you must let God break before He can bless you? It may be pride, an unsubmissive spirit, a sinful habit, selfishness or something else, but it must go. Do you want God's blessing enough to let Him have His way?

Conclusion: This evening, if you are facing the fearful known, you need to do as Jacob did. Realise God is watching over you. Humbly ask God for help. Prepare the best you can. Seek God's blessing.

It is not until God breaks us that he can greatly use us. Will you let Him have His way in your life?

Song: His Way with Thee - 367

Facing the Fearful Unknown

17 October 2021 PM – Genesis 32 – Gen2021 – Scott Childs

Introduction: Three years ago, none of us would have imagined that our world would be in the pandemic and chaos it is today. Neither do any of us know what the future holds. Lockdowns may interfere with our plans and dreams. Illness may threaten our wellbeing. Accidents may shatter our peace. Heartbreaks may lie ahead. These are just a few of the fearful events that may be before us. [How are we to face the fearful unknown?](#) Look with me at Genesis 32.

Transition: As we see how Jacob faced the fearful unknown, I find four calming things we must do when facing the fearful unknown.

When facing the fearful unknown, the first thing we must do is to ...

1. Realise God is Watching Over Us (v.1-8)

a. God's angels are right here with us.

- 1) Jacob met the angels of God.
- 2) Those angels had been there all the time, but he had not realised it. **Is that true for us today?** Let's see!

b. When we are doing God's will, we are not alone.

- 1) Elisha had a similar experience. (2 Kings 6:15-17) "*And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host [of Syrian soldiers] compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.*"
- 2) Jesus also said, (Matthew 18:10) "*Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.*" Awesome!
- 3) We do not talk much about God's angels, but they are our ministering spirits. We read in Hebrews 1:13-14, "*But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them*

who shall be heirs of salvation?" Only God knows how many times His angels have protected us from accidents, dangers, problems and mishaps. **Yes, angels are with us!**

- 4) Here is something to chew on. Just after meeting God's angels, Jacob send messengers to spy on Esau. The word "*angels*" and "*messengers*" is the same Hebrew word. He later sent servants (different word) to meet Esau. Were these messengers some of the angels? I will let you decide.

When facing the fearful unknown, the second thing we must do is to ...

2. Humbly Ask God for Help (v.9-12)

a. We must pour out our hearts to God. As we pray...

- 1) Recap God's directions (v.9).
- 2) Humbly thank God for his goodness (v.10).
- 3) Ask God for specific help (v.11).
- 4) Claim God's promises (v.12), (Ps 56:3; 55:22; Is 26:3).

b. God works through our prayers.

- 1) Jesus urged his followers to pray. (Luke 11:9-10) "*And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*"
- 2) We must ask according to God's will. (1 John 5:14-15) "*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*"
- 3) The bottom line is, to get God's help, we must pray. (James 4:2) "*Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*"

When facing the fearful unknown, the third thing we must do is to ...

3. Prepare the Best We Can (v.13-23)

a. Jacob sought to calm tensions (v.13-21)

- 1) He sent numerous gifts ahead of him to Esau.
- 2) His generous peace offering to Esau included:
 - a) Goats: 200 she goats, and 20 he goats
 - b) Sheep: 200 ewes, and 20 rams

- c) Camels: 30 mothers with their colts
- d) Cows: 40 females and 10 bulls
- e) Donkeys: 20 mothers and 10 babies

- 3) If our fears involve others whom we have mistreated, we must seek to calm the situation. Confessing our wrong and seeking forgiveness is God's solution. Jesus said, (Matthew 5:23-24) "*Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*"

- 4) Confession can do wonders for calming our hearts.

b. Jacob sought to protect his family (v.22-23)

- 1) He took his family across the Jabbok River for their protection.
- 2) Once we have asked God to protect us and fulfil his promises to us, He expects us to do our part. We must not hinder God's work.

When facing the fearful unknown, the fourth thing we must do is to ...

4. Seek God's Blessing (v.24-32)

a. Jacob was left alone (v.24)

- 1) There on the opposite side of the Jabbok River, Jacob sat alone in the moonlight. Perhaps he was praying about his fears of the unknown.
- 2) His solitude was broken by the appearance of a man who began to wrestle with him until daybreak. God has left many details of this story to our imaginations, but that night Jacob wrestled with a Theophany (i.e., God in human form).
 - a) It seems that Jacob knew he was wrestling with a divine being.
 - b) God put Jacob's hip out of joint (v.25).
 - c) Jacob refused to stop wrestling until he received a blessing from God (v.26).
 - d) That night, God renamed Jacob, Israel (v.28)
 - e) Jacob believed he had wrestled with God (v.30).