



8/9 September 2018  
Vol. 40, No. 35



# The Stairway to Heaven: God Meets Jacob at Bethel

Today's Message (8/9 September 2018) /  
*Genesis 28:10-22*

THE ASSURANCE  
OF GOD'S  
PRESENCE  
SHOULD BRING  
ABOUT IN  
EVERY BELIEVER  
THE SAME  
RESPONSE OF  
WORSHIP AND  
CONFIDENCE IT  
PROMPTED IN  
JACOB.

Personal crisis is often the occasion for deep spiritual experience. So it was for Jacob, running scared for his life to a foreign country. All his life he had lived on the borrowed faith of his father and grandfather. He was raised in their faith, even knew their faith, but never had a personal experience with the God of that faith. To Jacob, it was all second-hand reality. The amazing point is that God now speaks to Jacob at the moment of his desperation.

Guilty about his past, fearful of the future, and uncertain in the present, Jacob will learn the lesson that there is no place we can go where God is not already there:

## 1. GOD **PURSUES** THE FUGITIVE, JACOB (vv. 10-12)

- This place, Luz (later renamed Bethel by Jacob), was where Abraham made one of his first sacrifices to God. At first, Bethel became an important center for worship. Sadly, Bethel would eventually become a place notorious for idolatrous sacrifice (*1 Kings 13:32, Hosea 10:15, Amos 4:4*).
- This is the first of at least seven recorded revelations from God to Jacob (*Genesis 31:3,11-13; 32:1-2; 32:24-30; 35:1, 9-13; 46:1-4*). The angels on the stairway were an indication of God's care. They appeared again to protect Jacob when he was about to face Esau (*Genesis 32:1-2*). Unlike many, Jacob was privileged to see his guardian angels (*Matthew 18:10, 26:53*).
- This sacred stairway comes to mind again in John 1:51 where Jesus says to Nathanael, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." By virtue of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, Christ is the mediator between God and man (*1 Timothy 2:5*). He himself is God's greatest blessing and promise.

## 2. GOD **PROVIDES** A FUTURE FOR JACOB (vv. 13-15)

- This was the first time God spoke directly to Jacob, the third generation of the Abrahamic covenant.

### Sunday English Services

(8:00 & 10:30 a.m., 5:30 p.m.)

Prelude

Call to Worship

Worship through Praise

Anthem (*Morning services*)

Worship through Fellowship

Baptism (*10:30 a.m.*)

Worship through Giving

Testimony (*Morning services*)

Scripture Reading

Appreciation of Grandparents

Pastoral Prayer

Worship in the Word

Pastor Larry Pabiona

Benediction



# The Stairway to Heaven: God Meets Jacob at Bethel

Today's Message (8/9 September 2018) /  
*Genesis 28:10-22*

This was Jacob's first personal encounter with God. He knew about his parents' faith and religious experiences, but for the first time he has come face to face with God, and he is overwhelmed.

- The point of the dream is that God was present with Jacob wherever he went. This was symbolized by the "stairway," explained in words by God (*vv. 13-15*), and recognized in faith by Jacob (*vv. 20-22*). God's promise to Jacob (*v. 15*) summarizes one of the great themes of Genesis—God's faithfulness to His people despite their unfaithfulness.
- Jacob was the first in Bible history to hear the assurance "I am with you," a promise later repeated to many of the nation's leaders. As God promised Israel that He would be with them wherever they go, so Jesus promises the church that He will be with them wherever they go. The New Testament supports this bridge to Christ with Jesus' promise to his church: "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (*Matthew 28:20*).

### 3. JACOB **PLEDGES** FAITH IN GOD (*vv. 16-22*)

- Jacob's vow can be translated as beginning with "since" rather than "if." So this was probably not as crass a bargain as it appears. Jacob was apparently a believer in God already, but his commitment to God at this time appears to have been somewhat conditional.
- Making a vow to God should not be standard Christian practice. Our example should be the three Hebrews who believed God was able to deliver them from a mad tyrant (*Daniel 3*), Job, who resolved to trust even if it killed him (*Job 13:15*), and Paul, who turned to prayer in the face of trial (*2 Corinthians 1:8-11*).
- Jacob's promise to return to the LORD a tenth of what the LORD provides shows the beginning of his maturation from a "grabber" to a giver. In the New Covenant, the Bible levels up worship through giving to the highest standard: God's people first give themselves to the Lord (*Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8:5*). Then, trusting God, they give sacrificially.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

The assurance of God's presence should bring about in every believer the same response of worship and confidence it prompted in Jacob. This is grace from the beginning: God visits His people and promises protection and provision that they might be a blessing to others. We in turn are to respond in faith—worshiping Him, offering to Him, and making "memorials" for future worshipers.

What's so amazing about grace? It surprises us when we least expect it, but we **all** need it. It can come in a dream, by an angel's voice, through a verse of Scripture, or the encouraging words of a friend. But we can always trace it back to God. The glory of it all is that we don't have to be at Bethel. The God of Bethel is with us wherever we go ■

# The Shepherd's Voice

by Pastor Migis Orleans

---

A blessed Grandparents Day to all the *lolos* and *lolas* of our GCF community! When our little darling Dia was born, something was “activated” in me: the ability and capacity to love as a Tatay. So graciously given by God, I believe the same happened to my dad—but of course, as a Lolo.

The memory of telling my dad that he was going to be a grandparent is still very fresh to me, but it has been a blessing to simply add to those as Dia continues to grow. On her first year, I would often say, “*Kakaiba pala ang joy ng pagiging Tatay.*” My dad would probably have the same sentiment as Dia’s Lolo, but there is something uniquely meaningful about being “in between”: how Yang and I show our love for our daughter, and witnessing how Lolo Audie does so. More than the gifts, I am truly grateful for the time he spends with

Dia—just like Lolo Junie and Lola Maan (Yang’s parents).

I only have two years to look back to, and I am sure that the more seasoned parents and grandparents in our GCF family have a whole lot more. One memory we want to make today is the opportunity for our Senior Pastor to pray for you, and to appreciate you through a token available at the Ministry Information Booth. *Sana po ay magustuhan ninyo pareho :)*

To Daddy aka Lolo Audie, I love you! May each GC Fer today say this to their parents who are also grandparents. My prayer for us as a church is that we never tire in nourishing this special kind of love, and cherish more memories for our children with their *lolos* and *lolas*. A blessed Sunday GCF family! ■

# Ablaze Devotional

**The man talked about it so much and told so many people, that Jesus could no longer go openly into a town. He had to stay away from the towns, but people still came to him from everywhere.**

—Mark 1:45 (CEV)

After curing the leper, Jesus commanded the man to show himself to the priest. He was to follow the religious law, not to become clean (for he is already made and declared clean by Jesus), but in order to be seen clean. It is important to note that the concept of cleanness or uncleanness in the Jewish narrative is more than an issue of hygiene and health. Being clean is to be ritually appropriate for temple worship and communal life. With proper diagnosis from a priest, and officially praising God for the healing, the healed leper will be welcomed back both in the temple worship and the community.

The healed leper's assignment was to show this healing to the priests and the whole Palestinian community as a sign and witness, not with words, but with deeds. But the mission aborts, and he went to tell many people about what happened. With this, Jesus had to lie low, being wary of attracting a wrong kind of attention. As we observe in Jesus' ministry, His healing was seen either as freedom from oppression or defiance of the law, depending on where one's faith lie.

In our discipleship journey, it is not strange to talk about what Jesus has done in our lives. In fact, He commissioned us to be His witnesses. But as we continue in this journey, we learn that it is not just through words, but more so in humble obedience can we be faithful witnesses for Him. In our times of prayer, let us ask the Holy Spirit to guide and encourage us, as we witness to the good news and power of Jesus ■

## GCF PRAYER GATHERINGS AT THE CHAPEL:

**The GCF Hour of Prayer**  
Tuesdays, 6-7 a.m.

**Midweek Prayer Service**  
Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

## Ministry Opportunities + Other Announcements



### 2018 CHURCH LEADERS ELECTIONS

*Nomination Period:* September 3-28, 2018

*Election Days:* December 8 and 9, 2018

Nomination forms are available at the Ministry Information Booth. For more information, please refer to the flyer inserted in this bulletin.



### OIKOS TRAINING FOR ALL

*Learn to reach out to your own community*

September 16 (Sun), 12-2:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Those interested to participate may register at the Ministry Information Booth, or by texting Angel at 0932 371 3457.



### 3RS RETREAT FOR WOMEN

*Annual Retreat of GCF Women's Ministry*

September 21-23 (Fri-Sun) at MMRC, Batangas

Regular registration fee: PhP 3,500

For more info, please visit their booth at the lobby.



### MEN: OVERCOMING AND WINNING

*GCF Men's Ministry's Conference*

October 6-7 (Sat-Sun) at CCT Tagaytay

Open to men aged 21 and above. Fee: PhP 1,000

Please contact 0917 532 7740 for more details.

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT

September 2018

	September Budget	Received, Sept. 1-5
General	7,901,145	8,344,743
Missions	927,000	71,575

  

	Jan. to Sept. Budget	Received, Jan.-Sept.
General	78,316,916	64,911,704
Missions	8,343,000	7,224,651

### Flower Ministry

*The flowers this week are given with praise and thanksgiving to our God for His mercy and grace by the Basilad family, the Valera family, the Messiah College and an anonymous donor.*

Please call 632 1354 to 56 for inquiries on how to participate in this ministry.

I have had a very sad experience in my married life. I went through so many hardships and pains that I thought were just too much to bear or endure. Neglect, abandonment, infidelity—I experienced all these. Many of these miseries occurred when I was not yet a believer. Some went on even when I was already a Christian. By the time my husband was at his deathbed, he had already abandoned us for years.

When I became a Christian in 1984 through a missionary friend, I began learning many things. One of them was forgiveness. When my husband was dying in 1996, it was very painful. We cried mostly because of the pain, but my children and I declared forgiveness to him.

I thought I had really forgiven him. But recently, I got a rebuke in one of our Inductive Bible Study sessions under Precept Ministries. We were watching its founder, Kay Arthur, discuss about forgiveness and letting go, and then suddenly it dawned on me that I had not really forgiven my husband. God used His word through Kay Arthur that I have to forgive one hundred percent. After sincerely forgiving my husband after 23 years, and surrendering what I felt to the Lord, I felt a tremendous peace. I was free.

It's easy to say we forgive someone, but it really takes some sincerity and God's grace to do so. I'm thankful to God for delivering me from not extending real forgiveness.

We need to be in church, attend services, and join a Growth Group. But more than fellowships, we need adequate feeding. It's only when we get adequate feeding through a careful and consistent study of God's Word that we are truly blessed and transformed. And that is what happened to me ■

## Join a DISCIPLE-MAKING GROUP

### New Growth Group (Mixed Group)

Leader: Pastor Emer Manaloto

Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Rm. B124 (Growth Group Center)

### Overcomers Support Group

for any kind of addiction

Starting this September

Thursdays, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

**8 a.m.:** Ages 1-3, B415; Ages 4-5, B410; Age 6, B414; Age 7, B403; Age 8, B413, Ages 9-10, B411; Ages 11-12, B409; Transition Age 13, B406

**10:30 a.m.:** Ages 1-2, B412; Age 3, B415; Age 4, B408; Age 5, B410; Age 6A, B402; Age 6B, B403; Age 7, B401; Age 8, B413; Age 9, B411; Age 10, B414; Age 11, B409; Age 12, B405; Transition Age 13, B406

**3 p.m.:** Ages 1-5, B415; Ages 6-9, B402; Ages 10-12, B403

**5:30 p.m.:** Ages 1-5, B415; Age 6, B402; Ages 7-9, B401; Ages 10-12, B403; Transition Age 13, B404

**Nursery:** 2<sup>nd</sup> flr. for nursing moms and babies aged one week to 11 months old

**Yayas:** 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., B404

### Sunday School Parents' Class:

9:30 a.m., B406

*If you are interested in joining any of the small groups above, fill out the tear-off form inside this bulletin, drop it in the offering bag or submit it to the Growth Group booth at the lobby. For more information, you can text or call us at 0917 532 7740.*

### Q3 DMG LEADERS' ASSEMBLY

Crash-Course on "How to Lead 40-Minute Bible Studies" with Ave and Dith Gaspar

September 29 (Sat), 3-5 p.m., Fellowship Hall



## Greenhills Christian Fellowship

Know Christ and Make Him Known

Ruby cor. Garnet Roads, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1605

Tel. Nos. 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80, 635 0082 to 83 | Fax No. 632 1357

Mobile No. 0920 961 2964, Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

E-mail: email@gcf.org.ph • Website: www.gcf.org.ph



# How may we SERVE YOU BETTER?

Fill-out this tear off form and drop it in an offering bag/box or at the Ministry Information Booth. Please check all that is applicable:

- I am a first-time guest.
- I prayed to receive Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord today.
- I would like to know how to become a Christian.
- I am interested in becoming a member of this church.
- I want to join a Growth Group.**  
(Specify age group: \_\_\_\_\_)  
(Specify group composition: \_\_\_\_\_)
- I want to start a Growth Group.
- I want to host a Growth Group.

Please share with us some information about yourself:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_ Landline no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Growth Group (if you already have one): \_\_\_\_\_

*Today is **8/9 September 2018**, and I attended the **8 a.m.**, **10:30 a.m.**, **3:00 p.m.**, **5:30 p.m.** or **6:00 p.m. (Sat)** (encircle the time).*

Write below *any* inquiry or prayer item that you want to ask or share.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

For hospital or house visitation, dedication service, or funeral service requests, please call or text 0917 532 7794.

# God's Way to Heaven

## THE GOSPEL

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."  
*(1 Corinthians 15:3-4).*

## THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

**God is holy and righteous:** "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory" (*Isaiah 6:3*). **He requires holiness of us as well:** "Be holy, for I am holy" (*1 Peter 1:16*).

## THE TRUTH ABOUT MAN

**Man is sinful:** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (*Romans 3:23*).  
**Sin demands a penalty:** "For the wages of sin is death" (*Romans 6:23*).

## THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST

**Christ is the expression of God's love for us:** "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (*Romans 5:8*). **Christ paid the penalty of our sins and died for sinners:** "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (*1 Peter 3:18*). **Through Christ, God offers man reconciliation:** "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (*2 Corinthians 5:18*).

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

**Believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior:** "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (*Romans 10:9*).

---

PRAYER: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I believe that you died on the cross in my place, to save me from my sins, and I accept you as my Savior, and the Master of my life forever. Amen.*

## Need someone to talk to?

Visit the Emmaus Road Counseling Center at the GCF Mezzanine floor or contact 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80 or 0917 532 7794 for inquiries.