

Genesis 27-35 Conclusion, July 30, 2017

What does this mean for us? We have not been promised the same things that Jacob was promised. He was promised land, descendants, blessing. What have we been promised? As New Testament believers, our greatest promise is that “if we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ we will be saved.” That’s a promise. And God doesn’t need our help to deliver on that promise.

I trust that most, if not all, of us have decided to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And because that’s the case, perhaps what you need to hear this morning is this: stop trying to help God save you. Stop doing things thinking that they make you more “savable.” You’re not any more saved if you go to church, or if you read your Bible, or if you pray every day, or if you give to the poor, or if you help widows and strangers, or even if you avoid sin. God doesn’t need any of that stuff to save you. He’s promised us that our salvation is in his hands and his hands alone.

You know what understanding this does to us? It frees us. It frees us from a lifetime of doubting whether we’re good enough. It frees us from the burden of keeping a list of rules. It frees us from the insecurities that come from our weaknesses. It frees us from going through our entire lives thinking that it’s all about us.

Does it make us want to sin more? After all, if God has saved us whether we sin or not, then wouldn’t we be motivated to sin more? Not at all! You see, understanding that God needs nothing from us, is what frees us to give everything to him. And that’s what he wants. He wants everything. He doesn’t need anything from you, but he wants every part of you.

This is the convicting part. The God of the universe has loved you and saved you without you needing to do anything for him, and what have you given him in return? Let me guess: some of yourself. Maybe you’ve given him a good portion of yourself; maybe 60, 70, 80 percent of your resources and energy. Of all the gifts and talents he has equipped you with, you’ve probably given some of those back to him, right? Of all the time he’s given you to grow in your relationship with him, you’ve spent some of it on that, right?

You see, we’re 21st century American Christians, which means we’ve probably in some measure believed the lie that giving God some of ourselves is the same as giving God all of ourselves. Or the lie that doing what’s good with our time is the same as doing what’s best with our time. Or the lie that victory in the Christian life can be reduced to simply not sinning.

Here’s the point that we must come away with today, and my prayer is that it encourages us and convicts us: God doesn’t **need** any of that stuff to remain faithful to us, but he **wants** way more than just part of it. He wants all of it. He wants all of you. This is what was so hard for Jacob to understand, and it’s what’s so hard for us to understand.

C.S. Lewis writes about this in his book *Mere Christianity*, and I’ll end with this quote. “The Christian way is different: harder and easier. Christ says ‘Give me All. I don’t want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don’t want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the whole tree down. I don’t want to drill the tooth, or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked—the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours.’”¹

¹ This quote found on page 196 of the 2001 HarperCollins paperback edition of *Mere Christianity*.