

PRE-PRAYER

A HEART AFTER GOD

JANUARY 17 • Craig Rees, Lead Pastor

THE HEAVENLY CLIMB

BIG IDEA

God has prepared a place for prayer by gifting me the Spirit who, in times of earthly struggle, enables me to turn my gaze heavenward to Christ, in whom I am hidden.

KEY SCRIPTURE

Genesis 25-35

Psalm 106:5

Numbers 11:4, 33

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Revelation 3:17

1. Pastor Craig said, “What often fuels our happiness does not always satisfy our soul.” Can you think of a time when you desperately wanted something, even asked God for it, but when you got it, didn’t satisfy you as much as you thought it would? What lessons can you learn from that experience?
2. Genesis 28:10-21 narrates Jacob’s first encounter with God. What strikes you about that encounter? Think back to your first encounter with God. This could be the time you opened yourself up to the possibility of Christ or the time you came to Christ. How did you respond?
3. Jacob is so caught up in the challenge he is facing that he omits any reference to God’s promise in his response. His “if...then” prayer addresses food, clothes, and his father’s household but does not deal with the specifics of God’s promise itself. The point is, we can encounter God but still respond to Him in a natural way. When we pray only out of our earthly, unspiritual state, we miss out on the greater blessing of God.
 - a. Can you think of a time when you prayed out of an earthly, unspiritual state?
 - b. What did that cost you emotionally and relationally?
 - c. What do we miss out on spiritually when we fail to maintain a heavenly perspective?
4. Because of your position in Christ and the gift of the Spirit, you have the ability to bring God’s perspective to bear on every aspect of your life. Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. In the context of understanding and revelation through the Spirit, how would you explain the phrase, ‘we have the mind of Christ’ in verse 16? As you answer this remember that there is a wisdom that all Christians have by the mere fact that they have the Spirit living in them.
5. Jacob received food, clothes, and prosperity but these brought him neither satisfaction nor peace. In Genesis 32:26, as Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord, he asked for blessing and received it (v29). It was there, having been broken by God, that Jacob’s face turns heavenward. He had ‘seen God’ and ‘lived.’ This moment marked a turning point in Jacob’s life. While Jacob still had struggles (see Genesis 34), his spiritual resolve deepened (33:20; 35:2). He was a changed man.
 - a. When you hear the phrase, ‘broken by God’, how do you understand that term?
 - b. Have you ever been broken by God? What caused it and what were the results?
 - c. How has your experience of brokenness changed you?
6. We can all escape the earthly way of interpreting life by yielding ourselves to the Spirit. Here are five simple steps when we sense our interpreting life from an earthly perspective:
 - i. Start with Honesty
 - ii. Spot the Earthly
 - iii. Consider the Heavenly
 - iv. Recommit Spiritually
 - v. Repeat as required.

In what areas of your life are you tempted to interpret things from an earthly perspective? Ask God to help you turn your gaze heavenwards towards Christ, in whom you are hidden.