Hope In Times of Uncertainty
Genesis 28: 10-22

READ SCRIPTURE TEXT

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

First of all I want to wish each and every one of you a HAPPY NEW YEAR! I truly pray in this coming year GOD will richly bless you and your family in ways you never thought possible!

The start of a NEW YEAR is always an exciting time.

-It’s a time for a fresh new beginning

-It’s a time to forget about last year’s failures and start working toward a better future.

-The beginning of a brand New Year always brings with it the hopes of new opportunities and new possibilities.

But the beginning of a brand NEW YEAR can also be a time of worry and fear and anxiousness, because every New Year brings with it lots of uncertainty about what lies in store in the coming days.

-Will I still have my job at the end of this year?
-Will my family circle still be in tact this time next year?
-Will this be a healthy year for me or will I face unknown sickness, injury or disease?
-What is going to happen to our country in this New Year?
As the old gospel hymn goes, “We don’t know what tomorrow holds, but we know who holds tomorrow.”

Today as we look at the Life of Jacob, we are going to learn a very valuable lesson, and that is............”IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY, GOD IS OUR HOPE!”

The Uncertain Future of Jacob

Jacob was facing a very “uncertain future.”

*He had NO WIFE and NO CHILDREN.

*He didn’t have a JOB.

*He didn’t even have A HOME.

ALL THOSE THINGS ONE TENDS TO CLING TO FOR SECURITY WE ABSENT FROM JACOB’S LIFE.
Besides that, he is 70 MILES into a 450 journey on foot from Beersheba to Haran.

*There is a possibility his angry brother, ESAU, will try to track him down and get revenge on JACOB for wrongfully taking his family birthright.

*Because the terrain is barren and rugged, there is also a very real danger that Jacob could be attacked by wild animals or bandits.

Jacob sees nothing but “uncertainty” in every direction!

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Well as we come to our text here in GENESIS 28, Jacob is exhausted and decides to “bed down” for the night.

You notice VERSE 11 refers to his campsite as “a certain place.” We learn in in VERSE 19 that this place was evidently the ruins of a city called LUZ. Think of this place as a “deserted ghost town.”

But this “barren place” was about to become a very special place, because it was here GOD gave JACOB the HOPE he needed in his time of uncertainty. This too, is a message of HOPE to you and me.
First of all, IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY........

I. We Have The Hope of God’s Promises vs. 13-15

13 There above it stood the Lord, and he said: “I am the Lord, the God of your father, Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.

14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

1. The very first thing GOD does is remind JACOB of the PROMISES he has made.

   GOD is telling JACOB, “I made a promise to your father, Isaac, and to your grandfather, Abraham, that I was going to give them the very land you are now sleeping on.......and that on this land I will multiply your family and through your family, the whole world will be richly blessed.

2. When you remember Jacob had no home, no wife and no children at this point, you can see just how encouraging this PROMISE OF GOD would be to Jacob.

3. Most of our periods of UNCERTAINTY in life are the result of going through CHANGES.

   -HEALTH changes
   -JOB changes
   -FINANCIAL changes
   -RELATIONSHIP changes
   -FAMILY changes
And during those times of UNCERTAINTY brought on by change, one way we FIND HOPE is by clinging to GOD’S UN-CHANGING PROMISES.

**PSALM 121: 3-8**  “He will not let your foot slip---he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel, will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you---the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm---he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

And of course there’s that wonderful promise in ROMANS 8:28......

**ROMANS 8:28**  And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose.

**RECOMMENDATION:**  (Hold up Personal Promises Book)

If you don’t have one of these, you need to get a copy of it at the Bible Bookstore. Its called PERSONAL PROMISES FROM GOD’S WORD. It is fairly inexpensive, but more importantly (PROMISES for any situation )

**Secondly, IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY...........**
II. We Have the Hope of God’s Presence vs. 15a

15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land.

1. Here Jacob was, way out in the middle of nowhere...... he is totally isolated from all humanity, and yet he is NOT ALONE!

GOD GIVES JACOB A COMFORTING REMINDER.........

“I am with you!”

2. During times of UNCERTAINTY in life we often feel this overwhelming sense of LONELINESS and ISOLATION.

Our circumstance makes us feel isolated from people.......and worse yet, isolated from GOD.

3. In his devotional book, EXPERIENCING GOD DAY BY DAY, Henry Blackaby writes these words:

As a child of God you are never alone! Your Shepherd is with you at all times. You never have to call Him into your situation. You never have to wonder where He is. You never have to fear He will abandon you when your situation becomes too difficult.

He goes before you; He walks beside you; He comes behind you. Just as He sees every sparrow and knows every hair on your head, so His gaze is constantly upon you.

He comforts you with His strong presence in times of sorrow and grief and uncertainty. He leads you through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He does not necessarily lead you around the Valley as you might wish. There are times when the Shepherd knows the only way to get you where He wants to take you is to lead you down the path that passes through the dark Valley......yet it is through those times He walks closely with you to remind you He loves you and cares for you.”
Yes, in Our Times of Uncertainty.......... 

We Have the Hope of God’s Promises
We Have the Hope of God’s Presence

Thirdly.......... 

III. We Have the Hope of God’s Protection  vs. 15a

15a  I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go.

1. Remember earlier I mentioned how “perilous” Jacob’s journey was. Looming over him was the danger of being tracked down by a vindictive, angry brother....... as well as potential danger from attacking wild animals or bandits.

2. Can you imagine how comforting it was to JACOB to know GOD WAS GOING TO PROTECT HIM on this journey.

3. During times of UNCERTAINTY in our life we are often overwhelmed by FEARS and WORRIES of what is going to happen to us.

Does GOD’S PROTECTION mean He will never allow anything BAD to happen to us? NO....it doesn’t mean that! But what it does mean is that NO MATTER what happens to US, GOD will give us the strength to endure and survive.
DAVID still had to face the GIANT, but GOD protected him.

SHADRACH, MESHECH and ABEDNEGO still had to go to the fiery furnace, but GOD protected them.

DANIEL still had to go into the lion’s den, but GOD protected him.

4. Remember those comforting words in ROMANS 8: 31 & 37,38

ROMANS 8:31, 37-39  What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. Yes, in times of UNCERTAINTY, we have the Hope of God’s Protection.

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Finally, in times of UNCERTAINTY.........

IV. We Have The Hope of God’s Provisions vs. 20-22

20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear

21 so that I return safely to my father’s house then the Lord will be my God.

22 and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.”
1. Remember those words of Jesus in Matthew 6?

**MATTHEW 6: 25** “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?

Then Jesus went on to say in **VERSE 33** “But seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.”

2. Long before Jesus ever spoke those words, JACOB learned this valuable truth and that is GOD ALWAYS SUPPLIES THE NEEDS OF HIS PEOPLE!

3. Let me ask you something. If God was willing to PROVIDE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON as the sacrifice for your salvation and mine, doesn’t it stand to reason that GOD will provide all our other needs in life as well?

4. In times of UNCERTAINTY we often give into the temptation to worry about anything and everything.

   -Who’s going to look after me?
   -Who’s going to care for me?
   -How can I afford to pay my bills?
   -How will I put food on the table......and keep a roof over my head and clothes on my back?

The answer to all those questions is GOD! GOD provides all our needs when we put Him first in our life.

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**CONCLUSION**

At some time or another, we’ve all read the very familiar story called **FOOTPRINTS**. Even if you’ve heard it or read it a hundred times, I think it beautifully summarizes what we’ve been thinking about here this morning. So let me share it with you again if I may.
One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. “Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, that you would walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why when I needed you most, you would leave me. The Lord replied, “My precious, precious child. I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”

Jacob came to realize that in this time of DOUBT and UNCERTAINTY, that GOD WAS CARRYING HIM all the way.

Brothers and sisters, no matter what 2010 may bring our way, we don’t have to live in fear and worry!

We have the Hope of God’s Promises!
We have the Hope of God’s Presence!
We have the Hope of God’s Protection!
And we have the Hope of God’s Provisions!

_Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose HOPE is in the Lord his God. ----Psalm 146:5_