



The Realigned Heart Rejoices

Genesis 29:15-28

Eventually Jacob is able to rejoice in his love for Rachel. Sometimes rejoicing is not immediate, and we experience deep disappointment when God seem distant and unresponsive to our needs.

Psalm 105:1-11, 45b

The Psalmist reminds us, “Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.” (105:2-3) What is your cause to rejoice?

Romans 8:26-39

Romans 8:28, “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” is a powerful reminder of our reason to rejoice. This verse can stand on its own in defense of our reason to rejoice. - (UCJCI Preaching Themes – Sunday, July 30, 2023)

THE GOD OF JACOB

Rejoicing when Re-aligned with God

Rev. Godfrey Meghoo

In Psalm 46, we read: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof...The heathen raged; the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice; the earth melted, The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge...Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge.”

The story of Jacob is a classic example of realignment and reconciliation after families have gone haywire by favoritism and broken relationships. It tells about Jacob, the grandson of Abraham running away from home because he had tricked his twin-brother of his birthright, in effect getting their father Isaac to change his will. When the brother heard about this, he said, “When Dad dies there will be two funerals---one for Dad and the other for you!”

On the way running from home, as a refugee, Jacob fell asleep and had a dream on the roadside about a ladder stretching from

earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending. He was looking over his shoulders, fearing that Esau was pursuing him! During that night of nervousness, the LORD assured Jacob of protection and safety, giving him the assurance that he would one day return home, and things would be forgiven and return to normal. Jacob spent some twenty years in Mesopotamia, working for his uncle Laban, and amassing much wealth in goats, sheep, cattle, camels and other possessions.

Jacob’s experience is expressed by a verse from the hymn “Beneath the Cross of Jesus”

Oh, safe and happy shelter!

Oh, refuge tried and sweet!

Oh, trysting place where heaven’s love

And heaven’s justice meet.

As to the holy patriarch

That wondrous dream was given,

So is my Savior by the cross

A ladder up to heaven.

(Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane)

Do you sometimes feel like a refugee, running away because you have done some wrong, or someone has done you wrong? Psalm 46 assures us that, God is your refuge and strength, a present help in trouble! The Psalm goes on to refer to God as THE GOD OF JACOB. What a God of love, forgiveness, and grace/our God is! He knows what mistakes we have made. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, who foolishly left home and squandered his Father’s wealth in riotous living ... his Father longs that he will return home one day. “When the son came to himself, he said, “I will go back to my Father, saying forgive me, please. When he was still a far way from home, his father saw him AND RAN, FELL ON HIS NECK, AND KISSED HIM.

If God can be so loving and forgiving, how much more should I be? Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who sin against us. Simon Peter once asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive? As many as seven times? Jesus’ answer was, “Not seven times, but seventy times seven!” Are you ready to forgive like that? To make your life a life of reconciliation and re-alignment with God?

Eventually Jacob, despite his marriage problems and sleepless nights, becomes able to rejoice. He rejoices in his love for Rachel. Sometimes, rejoicing is not immediate, and we feel deep disappointment when God seems distant. Even St. Paul, who made mistakes in his life, eventually wrote more than half of the NT section of the Bible, at least four of the epistles while

he was in prison. He said, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, ‘Rejoice’.” While suffering in prison he tells us to REJOICE!

The book of Psalms in the Bible has been called the Hymnbook of the exile, used for worship when the people of Israel were not in Jerusalem, but in captivity in Babylon. Many of these Psalms were written by David. This included the 23rd Psalm that starts with The Lord is my Shepherd; Psalm 46, God is our Refuge; and Psalm 51, David’s prayer of confession. David knew that the LORD would protect him when he faced Goliath. In addition, David a Harpist, was called by King Saul/ to play music to comfort the king when he was in a bad mood. But even when he was playing music for the king, the king tried to kill David. This is because the king felt jealous of David’s growing popularity, But one day, David’s friends said, ‘This is your chance to kill the king. However, David said, it is not right to kill Saul, because he is Anointed by God to be king. I will not lift one finger against the Lord’s ANOINTED! You realize that David was ignited with God’s Love and compassion—“a man after God’s own heart!”

The Beloved Physician, Dr Luke, wrote about two missionaries, Paul and Silas, who were in prison in Philippi, not because they had committed any crime, but rather because they healed others, and now they were promoting the Name of Jesus. About midnight, in that prison, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, which shook the prison to its foundations. At once, all the doors were open, and the chains fell off the prisoners. What a time of rejoicing that was/ for the two missionaries—rejoicing additionally because the prison guard and all his family became followers of Jesus. If you have faith in God, you can rejoice even during difficulties. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great will be your reward, here and hereafter.

Before Jacob left home, his Mother, Rebecca had advised him, “Listen, your brother is planning to get even with you and kill you. Now, my son, do what I say, go at once to my brother Laban, in Mesopotamia, and stay with him for a while, until your brother’s anger cools down, and he forgets what you have done to him.” So after some twenty years, Jacob decides to make his way to face his brother. But he prays in advance: But he makes certain that he has many gifts to ask his brother’s forgiveness. “God of my grandfather Abraham, and my father Isaac. You told me, Lord, to go back to my land, and to my relatives, and you would make everything go well with me. I am not worthy of all the kindness you have shown to me, your servant. Save me, I pray, from my brother Esau. I am afraid, afraid that he is coming to attack us, and destroy us all, even the women and children.

That same night, as Jacob prepared to meet his brother, he wrestled with an angel until almost daybreak. In that wrestling match, the angel said to Jacob. “LET ME GO. I WILL NOT LET YOU GO, UNLESS YOU BLESS ME. What is your name? My name is Jacob. Your name will no longer be Jacob, but your name will be ISRAEL. Jacob said, ‘I have seen God face-to-face, and I am still alive’ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

The next day, on the journey back home, Jacob had many gifts ready to give to his twin-bro Esau, to make peace with him. He had an advance party of bodyguards with him. “What about that other group I met?” Esau asked. “It was to gain your favour.” Jacob thought. I will win him over with these gifts. Maybe he will forgive me. In a short while, Esau said. “I have enough, my brother...Keep what you have.” No, please, if I have gained your favour, accept these gifts...To see your face is for me, like seeing the face of God, now that you have been so friendly to me. Jacob kept insisting until his brother accepted. What a time of reconciliation and reunion that was. That is the way believers in God should live, in order to see God’s face!

Have you seen God? Remember that God sees you when you are sleeping, and when you are awake. God sees you and cares for you when things are going well, and when you are worried about your present circumstances, as well as your future.

Verse from the Hymn – “There were Ninety and Nine”

*Lord, Thou hast here thy ninety and nine:
Are they not enough for Thee?
But the Shepherd made answer-This of mine
has wandered away from me.
And although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep.*

*And all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep;
There arose a cry to the gate of heaven,
Rejoice! I have found my sheep.
And the angels echoed/ around the throne,
Rejoice for the LORD brings back his own.*

(Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane)

Broadening Perspectives

It is easy to become mentally confined to our small world and Church. There are two simple reasons for this. For one, our immediate environment necessitates our constant and active engagement, which is fully understandable and necessary. Two, it takes intentional effort to look beyond our small world and seek legitimate, trustworthy, and reliable sources. Fortunately, this can be easily addressed because there are sources we can trust, which can help increase our awareness and broaden our perspectives. Not only that, but these sites also feature, on occasion, news items on our UCJCI. That is because our Church is an active part of the Ecumenical community.

The term ‘ecumenical’ comes from the Greek word ‘oikoumene, meaning ‘the entire inhabited world.’ The aim of the ecumenical movement is to overcome divisions and barriers that may exist between Christian churches, to foster a sense of shared purpose and understanding among believers of various denominations and to collaborate, where possible, in joint projects, missionary activities, social initiatives, and actions to address common challenges, (social justice issues, poverty, environmental concerns, and global peace, etc.). The movement

also serves as a united voice to address global issues, aiming to contribute to building a more cooperative and compassionate world.

There is a great chance that by looking into what's happening in the lives and churches of fellow sisters and brothers around the world, and the issues and challenges that affect their existence and ministry, we can develop greater awareness and understanding, we can become more compassionate and even instrumental in making a positive impact, even if in a small way only.

We would recommend the following online ecumenical sites to visit time and time again:



The **World Council of Churches (WCC)** is a fellowship of 350 member churches in more than 110 countries and territories throughout the world, representing over 500 million Christians and including most of the world's Orthodox churches, scores of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed churches, as well as many United and Independent churches. (<https://www.oikoumene.org>)



The **World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)** is the largest association of Reformed churches in the world. It has 233 member denominations in 110 countries, together claiming 100 million people. (<http://www.wcrc.ch>)



The **Council for World Mission (CWM)** is a worldwide partnership of Christian churches. The 32 members are committed to sharing their resources of money, people, skills and insights globally to carry out God's mission locally. CWM was created in 1977 and incorporates the London Missionary Society (1795), the Commonwealth Missionary Society (1836) and the (English) Presbyterian Board of Missions (1847). (<https://www.cwmission.org>)

SAVANNAH UNITED CHURCH VBS

By Ms. Camile Watt



The Savannah United Church held its Vacation Bible School in the week of July 3-7, 2023. The Sanctuary, Hall and Sunday School Classrooms were transformed to reflect the theme: **Babylon**. The theme featured Daniel and his amazing adventures in Babylon.

The Craft & Music Shops offered activities to the children to make their own fun art and craft and learn to play an instrument or two.





The Palace Playground was the scene of sports and recreational games.

Overall, a total of 89 children and 13 teens attended the Savannah United Church Vacation Bible School with the support and assistance of 26 Adult Leaders. Special thanks to all the sponsors and volunteers for facilitating the VBS.







**CIRMC
PEACE
INITIATIVE**

BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE


ITEMS NEEDED:
 School bags – unisex designs
 Lunch bags
 Water bottles
 Pencil cases
 Vouchers (No.1 Shoe Shop,
 the Uniform Center, J Michael,
 Cost U Less, Grocery stores)
 Cash

DEADLINE: DELIVERY OF ITEMS TO COUNCIL OFFICE IS 31ST JULY

Remember in your prayers!

All those God has placed on your heart and those brought to your attention in some way. Please include in your prayers especially the family of the late Mr. McFarlane Conolly (EEUC), also Mr. Mike Bowerman and his wife Mary (EMUC), Rev. Joe Crawford and Rev. Harry Boddin.





**WORSHIP
THE
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on Radio Cayman 89.9
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July 30, 2023
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