

Welcome to all of our locations. We trust that God's presence will be powerful wherever you are.

I really mean that. That's kind of what my sermon is about today as well.

Listen to this in Genesis 34:30.

"Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, 'You have brought trouble on me by making me obnoxious

to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number,

and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed.'"

Now go to Genesis 35:11. "And God said to him, 'I am God Almighty;

be fruitful and increase in number.

A nation and a community of nations will come from

you, and kings will be among your descendants.'"

The NIV '84 says: "...kings will come from your body."

So, I want to preach for a moment on (and God told me to tell you this) It's Always Been in You.

God, what you showed me was so amazing, and I ask

for your help now that I could share it with them,

these people you love, this church you're building. I pray, Lord, not that I might just

preach good but that they would hear good.
Don't

just anoint me to preach; anoint them to
listen

with their hearts. You have our attention, and
we are excited to see what the outcome will be.

For the grass withers and the flower
fades, but your Word, Lord, stands forever.

We thank you that the ingrafted Word is able
to

save our souls. As the rain falls from the
heaven

and waters the earth and causes it to bud and
flourish, so shall your Word be that proceeds

from your mouth. It will not return to you
void.

This time will not be wasted. It will accomplish

the purpose for which you sent it. We agree together. In Jesus' name, amen.

I'd like to show you something before we get into all this deep theological stuff

from my oldest son's YouTube channel.

One reason I'm doing this is it makes me the coolest dad in the world to be able to

give my son a YouTube shout-out for thousands of people, so I'm going to take advantage of that.

He has this YouTube channel "dothedash."
He's a beat maker, a producer. He's good.

One of my friends who's a producer said,
"You need to know his beats actually

slap." I grew up on rock music. I said,
"They do?" He said, "They actually do."

I was proud of him, because recently he decided
he
didn't just want to make beats, but he wanted
to

do some tutorials. I thought, "That's cool."
You kind of wonder will he do it or not,

and he has been doing it. I'm so proud of you,
man. He has done two tutorials now, and I'm

proud of him. Check it out. I'll show you
just a little snippet of one of his tutorials.

[Video]

Amazing. That's "dothedash" on YouTube.

I have no idea what any of that he said meant, and I'm a musical guy.

Different generation. We did find something the

other day. We had the best time from this YouTube

channel we didn't know existed where Holly, 10 years ago, used to post videos of the kids.

I don't know why we thought that was a good idea for her to post some of these,

because some of them are kind of private. It's just stuff that I'm like, "We posted this

publicly?" But we had the best time watching it with the kids just to show them stuff.

Here's one we found. I want to show you this from 10 years ago.

[Video]

"And I went back into the beat for another measure." He was making tutorials.

It's always been in you.

It was with you on that trash drum set just like it's with you on these trap beats.

That's the same kid who was whaling on this cymbal, and now he's reverse polarizing a hi-hat,

or whatever the crap he said about the 808s.

I don't know. It's always been in you. I joke

a lot about having kids. "It's so hard, and I'm

trying not to kill them. When they are old they

will not depart from it, but that only happens if

I don't kill them first, Lord." You know, I joke.

I love it. It's my main job. I'm a way better dad than I am a pastor. I promise you. That's

my number one job. I showed you that because what

often happens that I think is one of my primary

responsibilities as a parent is to make sure that what's in him that God put there gets out

and that nobody puts anything on him

that causes him to forget or
diminish what God put in him.

The rhythm has always been in you, and what
you do with it is up to you. Getting to watch

the Bible character Jacob grow up... You get
to see (this is a rare thing) the sonogram

of the patriarch through which the whole
nation

of Israel came. I think that's a real gift
that

we get to see that Jacob was even wrestling in
his

mother's womb. Then we get to see him at age
77

running from his brother Esau who he had been in competition with his whole life.

We get to see him reconcile with Esau at age 97 after 20 years of hiding with his

uncle Laban and having a family. It's a lot we get to see. He has finally made it

to Canaan. Let's clap for Jacob that after all he went through, he finally made it to Canaan.

Oh, come on. You clap better for somebody who lost five pounds.

He made it to Canaan. He made it to the Promised Land. That's what Canaan is called.

He made it all the way to Canaan, which is really

remarkable because of the fact that along the way

to Canaan, where God was bringing him back to, he had to deal with so many... Talk about pressure.

Jacob is the grandson of Abraham.

Not like the son of a pastor...the son of the progenitor of the faith of multiple religions.

"Make something of yourself, kid." From the time

he comes out of the womb named Jacob... Jacob means

to grasp or to supplant, and he's trying to make

sure he gets out ahead of his hairy brother Esau,

his red brother Esau, this beet red beast of a man Esau, who is trained in the ways of warfare,

but he can't quite do it, so he comes out second, but he tricks his way into being first.

I was watching Tim last night. He's preaching a remix of some sermons I did

about Jacob back in 2013. It's so fun watching you preach them. I love it. He's going through

all this stuff, how Jacob got Esau to give him his birthright for a bowl of stew. There are no

beans in the world that delicious, but you'd be surprised what you'll trade when you're tired.

Esau, famished, came in from the field one day, and as we like to say

in preaching terms, he gave up what he wanted most for what he wanted now.

The only problem with Jacob's plan was that Esau was good with weapons and Jacob

was good with an apron. The Bible says he was a good cook but Esau was a killer.

Let's do a rock paper scissors. Sword beats spatula every time. Jacob's mother said to him,

"You've got to get up and go to Paddan Aram and stay with my uncle. When Esau finds

out what you did, he's going to kill you." Now, this is not the bowl of beans. This is

the blessing Jacob stole. Jacob went in to his father Isaac, dressed up, pretending to be Esau,

and he got a blessing from his father.

When he got the blessing from his father pretending to be Esau,

it was the kind of blessing that can come from people, but it leaves something internal

unsettled, and it sent him in the direction of running for 20 years of his life.

While he was with his uncle Laban, some interesting things happened. He tried to

marry a girl named Rachel, but Laban did, I guess

you would call it, a switcheroo and put Leah...

Now, Leah is the sister of Rachel. She's the older

one, and she's the one with the good personality,

as we say in PC culture. Rachel is beautiful.

I'm not going to preach on this, because I've already preached on this before, but I'm just

trying to give you some background of all that Jacob has been through to get to this point.

He worked seven years to have Rachel in marriage,

ended up with Leah on his wedding night, and then had to work seven more years for Rachel.

And he did it. Then he stayed six more years.

So that's 20 years at his uncle's house.

Now God has called him back to the land of Canaan, and against all odds, he made it.

Not only did he make it to Canaan, but check this out. He has reconciled with his brother Esau.

In Genesis 32, Jacob realizes that before he can go back to Canaan and really settle, he has to

reconcile, or in his mind, he has to pacify his brother Esau. But it's the craziest thing,

because when he finally meets up with Esau, Esau isn't even mad about it anymore.

Esau is like, "Come on! Bring

it in. Let's hug it out. Jacob,

it's good to see you. Look at how blessed I am. Look at how blessed you are."

The real struggle of Jacob's life was never with his brother.

Now let's put everything in context. He escaped from Laban, who was chasing him,

because Laban was upset about Jacob outwitting him. He has reconciled with Esau, and now

he has finally made it to Canaan, and he arrives at this place called Shechem.

When he gets there, he takes 100 pieces of silver

and pays for a plot of ground and puts up

a tent so he can stay in Shechem. No sooner

can he make it to Canaan than a tragedy strikes in

his own family. One day, his daughter Dinah, the

one he had with Leah, goes out exploring in the

town of Shechem, and one of the men of the town...

It was actually the son of the leader. His name

was Hamor. This young man's name was Shechem.

He took her and raped her. When the news of this reaches Jacob,

he doesn't know what to do because he's in a strange place.

I feel for him in this moment, because he has had to run from so much to get here.

The Bible says he makes it safely to Canaan, the place of the promise, only to be struck by what I call a Promised Land problem.

The reason I call it that is because when he arrives in Canaan where God has him,

something so terrible happens within his own family. This is where I want to break away from

the narrative and preach to somebody. Often, you

get to a place, a place you imagined in your mind.

Maybe it's an age, a stage of life, a certain type of success,

a certain accomplishment, a certain achievement,
something you got to that you worked really hard

for. No sooner can you pay for it with
100 pieces of silver and put your tent up

than disaster strikes your very own family and
threatens to destroy what means the most to
you.

When Jacob's sons heard about it, particularly
his sons Simeon and Levi, they both decided
to

take matters into their own hands because
their

sister had been defiled. Because they were
greatly

outnumbered, they decided the only way for them
to defeat their enemy was to make their enemy
vulnerable, so they used something that was a part
of their own covenant with God called
circumcision

against their enemy. They told the men of
the city, "Okay, look. You can keep Dinah,
and we'll settle with you. We'll
intermarry with you." They were lying.

"We'll share with you all the sheep and all the
flocks and herds, and you can marry our
women,

but first you have to do the thing our
people do to signify our covenant with God

and be circumcised." And they did it, all of the men of the city. I mean, Shechem must have

been very convincing, because he got all of the males in the town to go through this procedure.

Come on, y'all. Y'all wouldn't even join the church

if I made you take a class. They got circumcised.

On the third day during their recovery, Simeon and Levi snuck in and killed

all of the males of the city. So now Jacob is in Canaan, but he's still in danger.

It's a tricky thing, because he's where God was

leading him all along, but he's not safe anymore.

Maybe we would say it this way
for our context: He's an adult,

but he doesn't feel very "adultish."

He's a leader, but he doesn't feel very certain
of his own direction. He's in the place where

God had promised not only him but his father and
his father's father, and he's in great danger.

So then he says something to his sons. I want
to read it to you again now that you know the

context. Verse 30: "Then Jacob said to Simeon

and Levi, 'You have brought trouble on me...'"

On top of all the pressure Jacob has to be the father of the tribes of Israel,

to be the one through which God would continue the seed of his promise to bless the entire earth...

On top of all that, now he is dealing with the consequences of somebody else's decision.

He has a lot on him. In fact, he says, "You have put all this trouble on

me." Have you ever had somebody download their drama on you? This is tricky, because did his

sons do the right thing? Did his sons do the wrong thing? Were they right to fight back

or were they dumb to attack somebody they didn't have the strength to defend against?

Jacob doesn't know, and he's in Canaan, but he's not safe. He's in the place God promised him,

but he's now in the greatest danger of his life.

He doesn't know what to do, and he has a lot on

him. Not only is it the fear of the Canaanites,

that they might hear about him and attack him,

but it is the decision of what to do next.

I want you to see what God told him to do in

Genesis 35:1. I really want to start preaching my

sermon now, because this is what God said to do.

"Then God said to Jacob, 'Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who

appeared to you when you were fleeing from your

brother Esau.' So Jacob said to his household and

to all who were with him, 'Get rid of the foreign

gods you have with you, and purify yourselves

and change your clothes. Then come, let us go up

to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God,

who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone.'

So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods
they had and the rings in their ears,

and Jacob buried them under the
oak at Shechem. Then they set out,

and the terror of God fell on the towns all
around them so that no one pursued them.

Jacob and all the people with him came to
Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan.

There he built an altar, and he called
the place El Bethel [the House of God],

because it was there that God revealed himself
to him when he was fleeing from his brother.

Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was
buried

under the oak outside Bethel. So it was named

Allon Bakuth. After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him.

God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob;

your name will be Israel.' So he named him Israel.

And God said to him, 'I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation

and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will [come from your body].'"

What confused me about this passage was that Jacob has been to Bethel before.

The first time he went to Bethel, he was running

from his brother. This time, he's going back to Bethel at the instruction of God,

so it's different this time. We encourage you as

a pastor, "When you're in an uncertain situation,

go back and revisit all of the things God already

did for you in previous seasons of your life."

Maybe God brings you back to Bethel sometimes just to remind you of when you killed it when

you're struggling, and maybe God brings you back

to Bethel sometimes to remind you of things you

accomplished that really defy your educational background or your pedigree or anything you were

taught or trained to do. Maybe God brings you back to Bethel sometimes to remember all of the

ways you even surprised yourself. "Wow! I didn't even know I could do that."

But the more I meditated on it, I realized that wasn't really what Bethel meant to Jacob,

because the first time he went to Bethel, he was scared to death.

Now Jacob is in a place in his life where he has never been more uncertain,

and God leads him back to a place
where he had never been more uncertain.

When he is in need of the greatest faith, God
takes him back to the place of his greatest
fear.

The first time Jacob went to Bethel, he had no
idea what would happen next. His brother
wants

to kill him. His uncle is someone he has never
been exposed to, he has only heard about.
Jacob

is 77 years old the first time he goes to
Paddan

Aram and stops through a place called Bethel.

Bethel was not a place where Jacob shouted
and danced. Jacob was not in Bethel feeling

goose bumps. Jacob was not in Bethel singing praise songs. Jacob was in Bethel wondering,

"Will I make it?" So now God says in the season

of your life...I'm preaching to somebody...where

you have no idea how you have enough to defend yourself from the attack that's happening...

You have a lot on you right now. Some of it is your fault, some of it is decisions

others have made, and none of it is anything you have ever experienced, because you are

the oldest you've ever been and you have never progressed through this season of your life,

this stage of your development. You have never been through this emotional place before.

So now what does God do? He doesn't call you back

to the place where you felt the greatest faith.

He calls you back to the place where you felt the greatest fear, but you made it anyway,

to remind you what it really felt like when God revealed himself to you. We

whitewash our understanding of what it means to remember what God did.

I wonder, do you remember how it really felt at certain stages in your life?

Close your eyes. Let's go to Bethel. We can't go to a place. We're not going to load up the

church vans or anything like that. There are

too many of y'all and you're too spread out.
So

close your eyes. We have to go to Bethel, but
we

have to go in our imagination. Remember the
time,

anytime you want (I have enough to choose from;
I

have an entire cafeteria of times to choose
from),

when you thought you wouldn't make it.

"I'm not going to make it another day.

There's no way forward for this."

Remember "I'm not going to make it."

Like, to me, "I'm not going to make it up to
the pulpit. I have nothing left to say. I'm
not

going to make it through what I feel right now.
I

think I'm losing..." All right. You got it? I
know

that for some of us it's a hard place to
visit,
but I want you to go there for just a moment.

"I'm not going to make it." That's how
Jacob felt the first time in Bethel.

He saw a vision while he was asleep,
and he saw a ladder resting on the

earth and reaching to the heaven and the
angels of God ascending and descending.

Twenty years later, God calls
him back to that same place

called Bethel where he thought he wouldn't make it. You thought you wouldn't make it.

On the inside, everything was telling you, "You're not going to make it.

You're not going to make it." Open your eyes. You did.

No, no, no. You did.

Jacob is now instructed to build an altar in the place of his greatest fear.

That's where God calls you to build an altar and

to believe him: in Bethel. In fact, one time the Scripture calls God the God of Bethel.

I'm not sure if I like that, because Bethel

is scary. Bethel is when you don't know.

Bethel is the place where you can't figure it out and all you have is faith.

God said, "I'm the God of Bethel. That's where my house is. That's where my habitation is.

That's where I live. That's where I reveal. That's where I show myself.

That's where you get to know me. I'm the God of Bethel."

Jacob is afraid, and God says, "I want you to go

back to the place you were most afraid and build

an altar there, because if you don't, what's on

you is going to cause you to forget what's in you.

I need you to go to the place where you didn't think you would make it. I want

you to go to the place where you didn't know what was next. I need you to go to the place

where you realized..." This is the crazy thing about Bethel. This might be your Bethel right now.

What you are going through right now might be the place you go back to in the future

when your family needs to know that God is a promise keeper and a way maker.

So, I need to teach you about a concept. This is

not a pop culture concept. It's the concept of

covenant. Jacob isn't just going off of a good feeling. Jacob isn't just going off of a track

record. Jacob isn't going off of a fortune cookie.

Jacob isn't going off of an emotional high.

Jacob isn't going off of something he read in one Bible verse of the day.

He has a covenant. In the Bible, a covenant can

be... First of all, it can be with another person.

In the Bible, the context of marriage was not convenience; it was covenant.

In the Bible, the context
of my relationship with God

was not my behavior; it was my covenant with
him.

Covenant. Jacob is moving, not in
certainty; he's moving in covenant with God.

The relationship I have with God is not based
on

the same covenant Jacob had. Jacob had a
covenant

with God that "God will be with me." That's
awesome. How many thank God that he's with
you?

That's awesome. But look at what happens. On
our end of the bargain, we can't keep that up.

Oh, so you followed God perfectly through

every season of your life? Of course in the valley you faint. Of course in the hard times you get led astray. Of course your heart is drawn to other gods to worship things you can see instead of the God you can't see or figure out. God said in Jeremiah 31, "I'm going to give you a different covenant."

"'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the

people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I

made with their ancestors [Jacob] when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt,

because they broke my covenant, though I

was a husband to them,' declares the Lord.

'This is the covenant I will make with the people

of Israel after that time,' declares the Lord.

'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.'" That's the inside.

"For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did

by sending his Son Jesus in the likeness of sinful man." I don't have the Jacob covenant.

I have the Jesus covenant. I have a covenant that whatever you put on me,

God put something in me that is greater than what you put on me.

So, I know you have a lot on you,

but I came to preach. There's something in you that has always been greater.

Are you getting this revelation?

It's in me. When Jacob said,

"God has always been with me..." I know why he has been with you: because he's in you.

So, going back to the place means not allowing anything that someone puts on you.

Do you know what Jacob had them do before they went back to Bethel? It's a very small detail,

and I don't know if we caught it, but it's in Genesis 35:3. First of all, he said,

"Bring me everything you picked up in Shechem that
can't go with us into Bethel, all of the idols.

Then I want you to bring me all of the
things... Even down to the gold earrings.

I don't even want you having gold you'll
be tempted to melt into an idol that will

remind you of what you depended on
that wasn't God. Down to the jewelry.

Let's bury that. But before we go to Bethel..."
Look at verse 2. He said, "Change your
clothes."

(Don't worry. This is as
far down as I'm going to go.

It's just a limited illustration.)

"I want that off you, because if you go back to Bethel dressed like Shechem..."

This is what has to happen for you to realize and

really fulfill the purpose God has put in you.

Everything that has been put on you... Remember, for Jacob's family, Shechem represented shame...the

shame of what had been done to Dinah, the shame

of what they had done in response. If you go into

what God has for you wearing the shame of what was done to you... You have to get it off you.

I realized a couple of years ago that what the Enemy would do to shut down my gift God gave me

was to try to put layers of guilt on me. He would

want to use things that were imperfect about me or

others to keep me from ministering freely. I'll

tell you about one thing. Holly leaned over to

me one night. I was struggling with feelings of

resentment. People were criticizing our ministry

a lot in this particular season. I'm sure they still do now. I just don't look as much because

I'm not as stupid as I was back in the day, thinking God had prophets in the comments section.

Listen to what happened. I began to think everybody was like that, and I took it on me.

She looked at me one night and said,
"You can't keep preaching out of anger,

and you can't keep leading this defensively, because you love people." Well, when she

said that, it contradicted exactly how I felt about this species she mentioned called people.

Even the look on my face... I remember her rubbing my eyebrows a little bit because

they were so furrowed. Sometimes I have that RBF,

resting believer face, resentful believer face.

She was rubbing my eyebrows, and she goes, "You've always loved people."

She said, "Do you remember in college how everybody on that campus...?"

We couldn't even go when we were dating... We went to this strict school, this Baptist school. They

wouldn't let you go into each other's dorms, and that was probably a good thing. Co-ed dorms... They

didn't let us do that, so we'd be trying to sit outside on a bench or something. She said, "There

was always a receiving line of people who
wanted
to talk to you, not because you had a title,

just because of what was in you.
You've always loved people."

She said, "I was scared to go outside with
you,
because I didn't feel like talking to them,

because I don't love people like you love
people."

But there was a lot on me. Jacob said,
"You put a lot of trouble on me."

I was allowing what was on me to make me
forget
what was in me. Have you ever done it before?

She said, "You love people.
You had a secret handshake

with everybody on that campus." It's
really true. Then I was thinking,

"Well, you don't even know the half of it."
When my high school class was graduating,

280 people at Berkeley High School, I hugged
every one of them on our graduation night. I
mean,

down to the last one of them, the people I
couldn't stand, and all of them. That was in
me.

Now I realize the pressures and the
problems of what life puts on you,

things like offense and bitterness, can

keep you from remembering what's in you,

but if you really go back to Bethel
and remember, it's always been in you.

Tony, I had my best friend Eric come with me
to

the recording we did in January, because he
was

with me at the college when we had
a choir. My choir was not good, but

it was in me then. Then
through what God has given you...

It was amazing, because Eric said, "This is
it.

This is what you were trying to do in
college,

but you sucked at it, and that guy

did it, and now you took part."

I said, "Yeah, it's always been in me."

It's always been in you. You were beating on that... It sounded like a trash can, but it was in

you. The rhythm was in you. It's in you. What you

have to be so careful about is not to let people

put anything on you... I'm not just talking about failure; I'm talking about success.

Jacob's biggest issue is that he always identified himself by something external.

So, when it came time to make peace with Esau, he sent gifts ahead of him,

because he thought, "Maybe
my gift will bring me peace."

Some of us are like that. We always think we
have to make a good impression. We're always

living in an avatar. We're always living in
some

version of ourselves that seems presentable.

Or we're always identified (I talked to you
about

this last week) by what we can do. In doing
what

we can do, other people will identify you by
what

you can do, and then they will limit you by
what

you can do, and then you will begin to think
you

are what you do, and then you will lose yourself

and gain the world, and Jesus said, "What good is it?" Don't let anybody put anything on you

that will cause you to forget what God put in you. That goes for your struggles.

See, I think Jacob... His name means supplanter,

but his new name Israel is almost just as bad. It means struggles with God.

So, he's trying to get him to see, "You've never been fighting with Laban.

You've never been fighting with Esau. The fight you have to win for your life

has not been with them. It's always been in you. Because if you believe it's in you, there's nothing anybody can put on you that can cancel what I put in you."

"Before you were born I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

It's always been in you. That teaching gift has always been in you. You just had to get past

what you had put on yourself, the idea that "I'm not a preacher; I'm just a little girl.

I don't have anything to say." That was always in you.

It was in you when you were sitting at Life Action

revival listening to Steve Canfield six
nights

a week and God was filling you with his Word.
It just took the right rain to bring the seed

out of the soil for what God put in you when
you were just a little girl. It's always been

in you. There's nobody who can leave my life
who

can keep God from keeping his covenant with me.

I'm not in covenant with a person. I'm
not in covenant with a political party.

I'm in covenant with God Almighty! "I am God
Almighty." Get that off you! That's not your

name. That's not your station. That's not your
end. It's in me! It is God who worketh in
you!

It's always been in you. The struggle has never been with someone else; the struggle

has been within yourself. God gave Jacob a new name, Israel, but he still has to struggle.

Are y'all confused? I'm confused. God already gave him his new name in Genesis 32. I'll show you.

This is right before Jacob made peace with Esau,
and Esau had already made peace with Jacob.

Jacob had to make peace with Jacob.
It's in you. This is what the Lord said:

"Your name will no longer be Jacob,
but Israel, because you have struggled

with God and with humans and have overcome."
Hold

on. Why is he telling him again in Genesis
35?

I'll tell y'all next week. Goodbye. If y'all
want

to know now, call me back, because I already...

I thought, "Well, God must have told
him something extra the second time

that he didn't tell him the first time," so
I compared the two. In Genesis 35:10 he says,

"Your name is Jacob, but you
will no longer be called Jacob;

your name will be Israel." God actually said
less the second time than he did the first
time.

Then I thought maybe it wasn't what God said,

it was what he didn't say that
would show me what we needed to know

about the struggle we find ourselves in right
now.

See, the first time, God
focused on Jacob's struggle.

"I'll call you Israel because you've
struggled with God and men and have
overcome."

The second time, God didn't mention
his struggle. He mentioned his seed.

Because Israel was more than a name.

Look at verse 11. "I am God Almighty; be

fruitful and increase in number. A nation..."

Did you catch it? "A nation."

Israel wasn't just a name;

it was a nation. Simeon and Levi, the ones that

Jacob said, "You're bringing me all this trouble,"

who were teenagers at the time,
were the forefathers God would use

to birth a nation through which God would
extend his covenant with all peoples.

But you will never produce your
nation if you don't know your name.

This word is for anyone who has had so much on
you. I'm talking about shame. I'm talking
about

regret. I'm talking about pressure. I'm talking

about the things that make you anxious, questions,

that you've forgotten what's in you and how God met you in your Bethels along the way.

This season of your life is going to be a Bethel you will return to in future days.

There are kings in you. There are crowns in you. There's legacy in you.

There are dreams in you. There's ministry in you. There is medicine in your leaves.

There is healing in you. There are things God desires to release through your life

that will change the generations
that will share your last name.

So, do not let what's on you kill what is in
you.

You are Israel. There are nations
in you, and it's always been in you.

There was nothing you could do to change it.
The
gift has always been in you, and so has the
fear.

They both wrestle with each other in the same
womb

until the day you die. But do not let anybody
or situation or setback put a name on you

by which you call yourself that will cause
you to forfeit what God had put in you.

I believe there are some things I need
to bury under the oak in Shechem today.

I believe God wants me to turn this
church into a changing room today,

where you remember that it is not circumcision
or uncircumcision that counts. None of that

external stuff matters, not when it comes to
the heart of God. What matters to God has
always

been in you. If you win this in you, there
is nothing that will happen around you

that can keep God from establishing
his covenant in the earth.

You have a covenant with God.

Have you made your covenant with your struggle greater than your covenant with your God?

You allowed the pressure of it, the fear of it,
and the terror of it... God was dealing with all

the external stuff. God was preventing the enemies from even attacking Jacob.

If you pay attention to what's in you,

God knows what's on you. He knows you've been trying to manage and multitask.

He sees all of that, and he knows all of that, and he knows you don't know

what's next. That's why he gave me the

Bethel revelation. "I'm the God of Bethel.

I'm the God of 'I don't know what's
next.' I'm the God of your new name,

and there are nations in you." And it's
always been in you. It's always been in you,

since you were a little girl,
since you were a young boy.

God said, "Be fruitful and increase.
Bring forth what I planted. Don't let

anything stop you from it. For I am
God Almighty. I put a nation in you.

Those teenagers you stand with today are going
to

be the heads of the nations." Stand to your
feet.

Father, in this moment, I don't know what to say, so I'm going to ask you to say it.

There comes a point where
my message and my stories

and my points and my subpoints
can only take the hearer so far.

That's why we need your Holy
Spirit to write it on our hearts.

For just a moment, we're not focused on what's
around us, even what's on us, but what's in us.

It is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

It is God that works in you both to will
and to do according to his pleasure. So,

let's bury those idols.

Let's change those clothes.

Let's go back to Bethel and build an
altar in the place of our anxiety,

build an altar in the place of our fear, and
build an altar in response to our questions.

Lift your hands to heaven.

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God
of Jacob, we call on you right now,

and we ask you to speak into each
Bethel that is represented in this room

and online around the world.

I thank you, Lord, that the stages
of our lives do not surprise you

and the weakness of our flesh does not repel
you.

I thank you, Lord, that you don't
just give us a name; you make us

a nation. So we're coming back to Bethel today
just to remember that we felt afraid before

and you saw us through. We were so
confused before, and you made it clear.

We felt too little then, but you were
more than enough, and you are right now.

O God of Bethel, I pray that belief
would rise up, supplanting doubt

and burying the idols of our false dependence.

Your name is Israel, and greater is he that
is in you than he that is in the world.

We thank you for your presence,
Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.

Everybody who receives this word,
give God a hand clap of praise.

I don't know who this is for,
but the Lord said one more thing.

He came back to Bethel, but the last time he
was there he was alone, and he wasn't
anymore.

The difference between this time and last time
that you were here... You're not alone anymore.

God, we thank you once again for this amazing
revelation that you do not wait for a place

of our full understanding and cooperation to
bless us with your presence. God of Bethel,

we praise you one more time for meeting us at
all points in between. In Jesus' name, amen.