

Top 150 Bible Stories Week 8 February 21

Esau and Jacob

Genesis 25:19-34

My favorite children's book to read out loud is Kate DiCamillo's The Tale of Despereaux. Have you read it or heard it read? It won the 2004 Newberry Medal for the "most distinguished contribution to American literature for children" for that year. The story follows a famous plot that I believe comes out of the writings of Scripture. The plot is about the weak -Despereaux Tilling- helping, rescuing, overcoming the strong - Princess Pea. In this Bible story we see how the almighty God works in ways that are very different to the way that we might work. By His own choosing, God determines how the nations are formed (v.23). And His control of life (v. 21) is absolute, because God oversees all things. God says the older will serve the younger; the weak will overcome the strong. God's gospel works that way too. So it is opposite to the way we think. Being saved is based on God's grace, not on our works. In this story, Esau (the oldest) despises his birthright. By this choice, he rejects the God of his fathers (his Faith). We are to know God's ways and seek Him (not reject Him) in all that we do.

Jacob's Ladder

Genesis 28:10-22



There are a set of steps in Odessa, Ukraine that are so high that the city finally built a tram next to them so people wouldn't have to climb up. I visited those steps on a church mission trip years ago. I have never seen that many steps, and they go up, up, up very high. Every time I read this story of Jacob's Ladder I think of those steps. The "ladder" was probably more like a flight of steps. The steps reached from earth to heaven (v.12); and that's high! This Bible story tells us how God is one who never leaves us (v. 15) as He works out His promises in this world. His covenant with Abraham is re-told to Jacob, including the promise of His constant presence (v.15). In Jacob's dream, the ladder (v.12) connecting heaven and earth is a foreshadowing of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ is the one who makes the connection to God (v.13) for us. It is through Jesus (our ladder), that we have eternal life. Also

in this story and throughout the Bible when someone realizes that they are in God's presence, they are drawn to worship (v.17). We are to commit to worship and to live a life in a way that pleases God.

Parables of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:44-52

Kids usually love a great "hidden treasure" story. Do you? That's why I included the story "The Legend of Mother Murphy" in the first of the Juli-with-an-i books. In that story the kids of Ponderosa had been told about this legend of a hidden treasure in their town. The treasure had been buried a 100 years earlier by a mother turned outlaw who was robbing banks to take care of her children. The buried treasure inspired Juli-with-an-i and her friends into a search for it every summer. The search for the treasure and the prospect of its riches created great excitement and joy for the kids. Our Bible story from the book of Matthew is about God and His kingdom and how it is like a valuable treasure (v. 44, 45). The treasure is desired above all else. It is desired because of the King who reigns over it in goodness and love. God's kingdom is for those who God saves. God is the one who causes us to find (1) the treasure, (2) the pearl AND God finds us in (3) the net. We are found and given faith in Jesus, as a gift. Since it is a gift - no one can boast. We are to "sell all that we have" (v. 44, 45). This means that we treasure a relationship with God, through Jesus, above all else. And it gives us great joy (v. 44).