

Gen.37:1 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

37:2 This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

37:3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors.

37:4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

37:5 Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.

37:6 So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:

37:7 "There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

37:8 And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

37:9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

37:10 So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"

37:11 And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

37:12 Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

37:13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am."

37:14 Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

37:15 Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

37:16 So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks."

37:17 And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' " So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

37:18 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

37:19 Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!"

37:20 "Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

37:21 But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him."

37:22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"-that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

37:23 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him.

37:24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

37:25 And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

37:26 So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?

37:27 "Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened.

37:28 Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

37:29 Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes.

37:30 And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"

From today's sermon.

Jacob wrestled face to face with God, and God faced Jacob's worries and fears with a firm confrontation. His strong request was answered, "Bless me," but it was not a victory for him. But it was not a victory for him, but an event of "God is victorious (=Israel). His ambition to grab his brother's heel and snatch the firstborn's right was crushed, and he was transformed into a man of faith who hid behind God the Victor and asked for blessings. Once again at Bethel, he cast aside the idols of his family and worshipped the Lord, saying, "I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my affliction and was with me on my way. In the past, it was meant to be an altar to hold on to God's protection as he went out into the unknown, but not anymore. It was a sign of gratitude, trust, and obedience to the God who had indeed protected him.

And so begins the story of his twelve sons.

The other brothers grew to hate their father, Jacob, for his favoritism toward Joseph, who had dressed Joseph, the son of his late beloved wife Rachel, in the finest of long robes. Then he had a dream. His brothers wanted to kill him and tried to kill him as he walked in the field, but he was barely saved by his firstborn son Reuben, who tried to protect him, and Judah, who later took over the reigns of the family, and was sold into slavery far away. Who could have imagined that he would lead his people to Egypt?

Good morning, everyone. I hope you have been well during these cold, cold days.

The days of continuous snow and sub-zero temperatures have finally eased up a bit. But it seems that another cold wave is coming this week. It is not expected to be as strong as it was the other day, but please take care of yourselves. We have only this week and next week left in this month. Next weekend is already March. Let us get over the last of the cold weather as we look forward to the arrival of spring.

Last week's Bible was Genesis 32. We wrestled with God face to face, and God faced Jacob's worries and fears in a very real way. His strong request, "Bless me," was answered. But it was not a victory for him, it was an event of "God is victorious (= Israel). His ambition to grab his brother's heels and snatch the rights of the firstborn was crushed, and he was transformed into a man of faith who hid behind God the Victor and asked for blessings. And once again at Bethel (the house of God) in Genesis 35, he cast aside the idols of his family and worshipped the Lord, saying, "I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my affliction and was with me on my way. In the past, it was meant to be an altar to hold on to God's protection as he went out into the unknown, but not anymore. It has become a sign of gratitude, trust, and obedience to the God who has indeed protected us.

There is a loop bridge called the Orochi Loop on the border between Hiroshima and Shimane Prefectures, a 2,360 meter section that twists and turns, connecting places with a height difference of 105 meters. The bridge rises from Shimane to Hiroshima, and when you follow the path at night, you can see the lights of the bridge over the canyon in the distance, 105 meters above the final ascent. There, the road does indeed continue, but it is a round and round and round and up the hill again and again, and you wonder when you will reach that high, bright place, and if you will ever make it there. But every step I take is surely bringing me closer and closer to the final bright spot, and at last I can run beside the light of that beautiful bridge that I have seen from below, that I have glimpsed from the depths of the earth,

that I have seen in the heavenly world, with that light by my side, with the world far below that I used to pass through, that high, high, heavenly world below me, and I can run with ease. Jacob could run through that heavenly world with a sense of ease.

I believe that for Jacob, that heavenly gate, the house of God, was a place like rock bottom for him. He was sleeping in a desolate wasteland, exhausted to the point of using a hard, hard stone as a pillow, with nothing in his hands. In his place, God opened a ladder from heaven and showed him the beautiful world above. And then Penuel. God looked at him, face to face, body to body, and met him face to face, receiving him, teaching him, training him, accepting all his thoughts and feelings, leading him from the fear of his life disappearing to a positive attitude, saying, "Bless me, please bless me. Bless me."

He used to be an ambitious man, grabbing his brother's heels and standing on his own before him, pushing, overtaking, and grabbing the rights of others.

28:20 Jacob swore an oath, saying, "God be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and give me bread to eat, and clothes to wear,

28:21 If he will let me return in peace to my father's house, I will make the Lord my God.

28:22 And I will make this stone which I have set for a pillar the house of God. And I will surely give you a tenth of all that you give me.

Even after being shown the ladder from heaven, he was still a little skeptical about God's blessings and protection that would come after this, and he wanted to set up the stone on the pillow, make it God's house, and keep God here in this promise of blessing. He made this place God's home after the covenant and set up the stone monument as if he wanted God to remember to fulfill his promise. He was an ambitious man who never stopped seeking. But God was not satisfied with this, so he decided to train him by showing him God's power by knocking him down in a sense. God thought this was good enough and crushed him by removing his peach joints while lifting him up and saying, "You win. And he was no longer Jacob grabbing at his heels and outsmarting people, but Israel, "God wins," was given him the name. Instead of him winning on his own, him calculating and planning and lifting himself up on his own, he was crushed and reached the truth that "God wins," that he stares at God, the victor, and is helped and guided by His power. Instead of using God to accomplish his own plans and rise to power, he was transformed to a way of life in which he hid behind God the Victor and received victory through God's guidance.

In Genesis 35, we again read of the exchange between God and Jacob at Bethel (the house of

God).

35:1 And God said to Jacob, “Stand up and go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and build an altar to the God who appeared to you when you first fled from the face of your brother Esau.

35:2 And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the different gods that are in you, and cleanse yourselves and change your clothes.

35:3 And we will go up to Bethel, and there we will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my affliction, and was with me on my way.

35:4 So they gave Jacob all the different gods that they had, and the earrings that they had in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the terebinth tree by Shechem.

35:9 Now when Jacob returned from Padan-aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him.

35:10 And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob. But call your name no longer Jacob. But call thy name no more Jacob: thy name shall be Israel. Thus He named him Israel.

35:11 God also said to him, “I am God Almighty. Thou shalt bring forth, and thou shalt multiply. One nation and many nations shall come out of thee, and kings shall come out of thy body.

35:12 I will give thee the land which I gave to Abraham and to Isaac. And I will give it to your descendants after you.

35:13 And God went up from the place where he had spoken with him.

He no longer said to God, “Remember this as a place to keep your promise of blessing, and if you give me blessings and food to eat, I will give you a tenth in return,” but “We will go up to Bethel, and there I will build an altar to God who was with me in the day of my affliction, and in my way. He praised God for all the works of grace He had already done for him. He has already finished his ascent and is with God right in front of him. He has cast away the false gods from his family and thanked God unconditionally for His grace. Even though he still had unresolved worries and anxieties within himself, he made it God's home, gave thanks to God for His unlimited grace and powerful guidance, unconditionally entrusted his future steps to the Lord, and became a person who offered his heart in complete trust and obedience.

And so begins the story of his twelve sons.

37:1 Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojourn, the land of Canaan.

37:2 The descendants of Jacob are as follows. Joseph was seventeen years old, and he had a flock of sheep with his brothers. He was still a child, and he was with the children of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives, when Joseph told his father an evil rumor about them.

Jacob ended up with twelve children by four wives.

35:23 That is, the sons of Leah were Jacob's firstborn sons Reuben and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

35:24 The sons of Rachel are Joseph and Benjamin.

35:25 The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's keeper, are Dan and Naphtali.

35:26 The sons of Zilpah the servant of Leah are Gad and Asher. 35:27 These are the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

His beloved wife Rachel died after giving birth to Joseph's brother Benjamin. And it is written that Jacob doted on Joseph, who was now 17 years old.

37:3 Because Joseph was an old man's son, Israel loved him more than any other, and made long-sleeved garments for him.

37:4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his brothers, they hated him and could not speak to him peacefully.

Jacob gave Joseph special treatment and put a long-sleeved jacket on him that went all the way down to his palms. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his brothers, they hated him and could not speak to him peacefully.

In the midst of all this, there is a controversy among the family members about a dream Joseph had.

37:5 On one occasion Joseph had a dream and told it to his brothers, and they hated him more and more.

37:6 And Joseph said to them, "Please listen to the dream that I had.

37:7 When we were binding our bundles in the field, my bundle arose and stood, and your bundle came around and worshipped my bundle.

37:8 Then the brethren said to him, "Will you indeed be our king? Do you really rule us?" and they hated him more and more because of his dreams and his words.

37:9 And Joseph had another dream, and told it to his brethren, saying, "I had another dream. The sun and the moon and the eleven stars worshipped me.

37:10 And he told this to his father and to his brethren, and his father reproved him, saying, "What is this dream that thou hast seen? Is it true that I, your mother, and your brothers will

go and lie down on the ground and worship you?

37:11 And the brethren were envious of him; but Father took these words to heart. But his father took these words to heart.

The story of Joseph and the dream had already begun here. Of course, in Egypt, he was used in God's leading with his exceptional gifts, but this was the beginning of the story. His father Jacob and his brothers had no idea what he was talking about, and they were jealous of his doting and exultant attitude, but here was God's truth. The Bible teaches us that God's guidance can have its beginning long before we are able to understand it, when we are not able to understand it. The unjust love of Jacob, the envy and hatred of his brothers, and the weakness of man, but God takes even these sordid situations and places them in His penetrating work.

37:12 Now when the brothers had gone to Shechem and were tending the flocks of their father's sheep, Joseph, who had been in the land of Egypt, was in the midst of the flock of his father,

37:13 Israel said to Joseph, "Do not your brothers keep sheep in Shechem? Now I will send you to them. Joseph said to his father, "Yes, I will go.

37:14 And his father said to him, "Please go and see if your brothers are safe, and if the flock is safe, and let me know. And his father sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

37:15 And a man met him, and he was wandering in the field, and the man asked him, saying, "What are you looking for?

37:16 He said, "I am looking for my brothers. 37:16 He said, "I am looking for my brothers; let me know where they are keeping their sheep.

37:17 The man said, "They have left. I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan. So Joseph went after his brothers and met them at Dothan.

37:18 And before Joseph came near them, they saw him afar off, and measured to kill him, 37:19 and said to one another, "That dreamer is coming.

37:20 Come, let us kill him and throw him into the pit, and say that the wicked beast has eaten him. Then we will see what happens to his dreams.

Joseph wanders in the field, searching for his brothers. The brothers, seeing their chance, look at him from a distance and consult with each other, burning with murderous intent.

Now, what will happen to this extraordinary dream in which his brothers bow down to him, and even his father and mother fall down to him? Will God's seemingly insane and unrealistic plan be shattered here as something ridiculous? Will the poor, adored Joseph be killed by the envy of his brothers and end up being laughed at as a good-for-nothing? What about us, the weak and helpless? Ever since we swore an oath to believe in God, God has been leading us, leading us over high mountains, showing us God's power. What will happen to God's plan? Will God's plan to give us visions, aspirations, and dreams be shattered by the evil schemes of the saboteurs?

37:21 When Reuben heard this, he sought to deliver Joseph out of their hands, saying, "We shall not take his life."

37:22 Reuben also said to them, "Do not shed blood. Throw him into this pit in the wilderness. Do not lay a hand on him. This was to rescue Joseph from their hands and return him to his father.

The firstborn son, Lupin, was excited. And so was Judah, who would later take over the reigns of the family.

I think it was the firstborn son, Lupen, who was jealous of Joseph's invasion of his position, and he wondered how his father Jacob would grieve if he had lost Joseph.

This was to rescue Joseph from their hands and return him to his father."

The word "hands" appears three times in verses 21-22 and once in verse 27.

The word "hand" is used in the sense of killing Joseph with their own hands.

It is the work of those dark scheming hands that conspired together to lay hands on Jesus Christ, the Son whom God the Father loves so much.

How many dark and wicked hands have man played with in all his history?

But there was also the work of the hand that sought to protect Joseph from that evil hand.

This was to deliver Joseph out of their hands and return him to his father."

37:23 Now when Joseph went to his brothers, they stripped him of his clothes, the long-sleeved garment he was wearing,

37:24 And they seized him and threw him into a pit. 37:24 And they took him and threw him into a pit, and the pit was empty, and there was no water in it.

37:25 And they sat down and ate bread. 37:25 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw

the caravan of the Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, having spices, frankincense, and tares on camels, to go down into Egypt.

37:26 Then Judah said to his brothers, “What good is it if we kill our brother and hide his blood?

37:27 Now we will sell him to the Ishmaelites. He is our brother, our flesh and blood, and we shall not lay a hand on him. And the brethren obeyed.

37:28 And the Midianite merchants came by, and they brought Joseph up out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

Unaware of such a helping hand, Joseph was so happy to see his beloved brothers that they pulled off his special robe and threw him into a pit. The hole was like a reservoir for rainwater, and if there had been water there, he would have drowned. Lupin thought he could sneak in on the trail and come to his rescue.

Now Judah was also one of those who wanted to help Joseph. He thought that even though Lupen's voice would not tear him to pieces on the spot, someone would surely come later and pull Joseph out of the pit to finish him off, so he decided to sell him to the slave witness.

37:27 Now we will sell him to the Ishmaelites. He is our brother, our flesh and blood, and you shall not lay a hand on him. The brothers listened.

Here again we see the words, “Do not lay hands on him. When we put down our hands, are we really sure of the work of our hands? Are they good and in accordance with God's will? It really searches our hearts.

Psalm 90:17 May the joy of the Lord our God be upon us. Let the work of our hands be sure for us; let the work of our hands be sure.

90:17 (New Translation) May the LORD our God's lovingkindness be upon us, and may the works of our hands be sure. And let the work of our hands be sure. And let the work of our hands be sure.

37:29 Now Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, so he tore his garments,

37:30 And he returned to his brothers and said, “He is not there. Oh, where can I go?”

For Lupen, the result was not what he had planned and he was in a panic, but even though Joseph was sold into slavery, he was able to avoid only pouring his blood into this wasteland.

The work of good hands used by God is used to fulfill His will. God's work is done. We, too, with a good will guided by the Holy Spirit, are looking forward to the Lord's mercy and salvation, hoping to advance in the work of this week by using our good hands before God.

◇Prayer; Heavenly Father, we thank you for today's worship.

The land of the wilderness, which was once in uncertainty, became the gate of heaven and the house of God. The land that was once a place of anxiety became the gates of heaven, the house of God, and the land of inescapable fear, where the danger of life was the greatest, became a place of prayer where we could meet God face to face, a place where we could beg for blessings and have them granted. But that misery was transformed into God's guiding event for the family. Please bring all sufferers into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and communities. Use us. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.