

99-10-06a

Let's take a moment as we begin our study this evening to go before the Lord in prayer and seek the ministry of the Holy Spirit to give us concentration and understanding as we examine the 28th and following chapters of Genesis this evening. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the privilege of gathering together and studying your word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us, that we will be able to understand your word rightly and having understood it to see the application in our daily lives. We pray that in all things our Savior will be glorified and we pray these things in his name. Amen.

We resume our study this evening, making up for our missed Sunday morning lesson. In Genesis chapter 28, the last time we were here we saw Isaac calling Jacob and blessing him, charging him and giving him the real blessing. This is, there's no deceit, there's no strange motivation.

The bizarre desire for a bowl of stew that prompted Isaac to want to bless Esau. Isaac seems to have come to his senses here and he says to Jacob what he should have said to Esau before Esau married the Canaanite women. He says, you shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.

Why couldn't he say this to Esau? I was watching Judge, who is it? Judge, some Judge. He's got his own TV show. It's not Judge Walker, but it's another one.

He's a black man and has a mustache. Judge, the initials of his show are like J.B., Judge Joe Brown or something like that. Anyway, he's a real common sense guy.

There was a man who came up and was suing his daughter because she had taken out a \$2,500 loan and hadn't paid him back. In the course of sorting this out, it's a family court where lots of disputes arise. But the interesting thing in the little three and a half minutes of this that I saw is that they were talking about the details of the loan, why the loan was taken out, how many payments had she made, she'd made the first two and so forth.

And the Judge held up his hand and he said, Why don't you all tell me what's really going on here? This is not really about the money and it's not really about the loan, is it? And the daughter said, Well, no, it's really not. So then the truth came out and all the rest of this was just the end of a very long and gory set of circumstances. If you look closely at what we have seen in the lives of Isaac and Rebecca's children as they live under the parental roof, if you observe the clues, this would be a great case study for people that like to use the word dysfunctional and throw it around.

Probably all families and most people could be classified as dysfunctional in some way.

But there are some strange goings-on. As soon as Isaac comes on the scene, he seems to be kind of a strange fellow.

Turn back with me just for a moment to Genesis 24, verse 1. And keep your finger in 28.1. Because 28.1, this is Isaac talking to the heir, making arrangements to ensure that the heir of the blessing, the line of promise that he won't marry a Canaanite woman, but he'll get a woman that's from the family. Well, this echoes back to chapter 24, verse 1. When Abraham was old, well advanced in age, the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. So Abraham said to Isaac, Isaac, come before me and let me bless you.

He doesn't, does he? He calls in the oldest servant who ruled over all that he had. And he says, please put your hand under my thigh. I will make you swear by the Lord that you will not take a wife for my son from among the daughters of the Canaanites.

Nobody else ever did this. Isaac didn't do it for Jacob. Isaac didn't send a servant up there.

He didn't do it for Esau. When Jacob is going to bless his 12 sons and 2 grandsons, he's not going to hire out a servant or try to arrange their marriages. Most of these men, if you have a record of their marriage negotiations, they seem to have gone out and gotten their own wives.

Why is it that Abraham sends a servant? Of course, we talked about this when we're in chapter 24. The servant says in verse 5 of chapter 24, perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Should I take your son back to the land so he can persuade her? And Abraham said to him, beware that you do not take my son back there.

The Lord God of heaven who took me from my father's house, from the land of my family, who spoke to me and swore to me, all the details of the promise there. He will send his angels. You shall take a wife for my son from there.

If the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath. Only do not take my son back there. Abraham is pretty adamant on this point, isn't he? He doesn't want Isaac getting anywhere near outside the land.

When the servant returns, Isaac is off, wandering down there around Beerlehi Roy, kind of stumbling around in a field, apparently when Rebecca arrives with the servant on the camel. Isaac seems to me to be a strange fellow. There are some who have speculated that he was actually maybe only a 40-watt bulb in a world of 100-watt bulbs, that he wasn't really all that competent, because other than the brief episodes we saw in chapter 26, where he goes down to Egypt and he has the very unoriginal idea of calling his wife his sister, we don't find much initiative on Isaac's part.

But the wonderful thing is that God blesses him. God is going to identify himself for the

rest of history as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. The great thing to me about this, as we see Isaac kind of mess up the whole blessing thing, and his sons don't help his wife, and the deception and so forth, but Isaac is largely to blame for this whole sordid scene and series of scenes.

He's the head of the house. He seems disorganized. His excuse for having the blessing is he's hungry for some food, the same excuse that Esau uses to lose his birthright.

But the bottom line here is you have to look hard to find anything commendable to say about Isaac. But God blesses him. God uses him.

He is a necessary link in the chain of divine promise. And one thing Isaac has that his half-brother Ishmael does not, that 99.5% of all the pagans living in the land of Canaan do not have, he has a relationship with God. It's not always a good relationship.

He doesn't always seem to be paying attention. But he has faith in God, and it's his faith that God honors, and it's his faith that God blesses. And even though he doesn't appear to have sound judgment, Abraham certainly doesn't trust him to go find a wife for himself or to leave the land and find his way home or come back without being distracted.

He occasionally runs across people who just don't seem to have a gift for making their own way in the world, and perhaps Isaac was one of those. But again, just like the judge, if you listen between the lines here, there seems to be a lot more wrong than is overtly or explicitly described by the narrator. But the wonderful thing is, when Isaac pursues what he knows about God and when he acts in the light of what he knows about God, he prospers, he's blessed, and he does the right thing.

And after the deception and after his abortive attempt to try to give all of the blessing to Esau, which was a terrible mistake, to try to do it in secret, which was unethical by ancient Near Eastern standards. He didn't call in one son and bless him in secret and leave nothing for the other son. And it isn't any more happy to look at the Rebekah Jacob side.

But this seems to kind of shock Isaac awake. And you can compare the first part of 28 with the first part of 24 and gain some insight because Isaac seems to wake up. And he says much the same thing that his father said.

He says, You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethelot, your mother's father. Even in the language here, you still detect this rift in the family where it's Isaac and Esau, it's Rebekah and Jacob.

Isaac himself is related to Bethelot, isn't he? He's his nephew. But he doesn't say, My uncle or my kinsman, go to my kinsman's house, Bethelot. He says, well, it's your mother's father.

Go to your mother's father's house. Go to your grandfather's house. But the way that he states it, he relates it to Rebekah.

Take yourself a wife from there, of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. He repeats it again. And just reading through all of chapter 27, when you look at the way people talk and the way they refer to different members of the family and so forth, there's just more and more evidence that there was this schism.

The other amazing thing, you remember when we reviewed this last time, when you get down to verse 5, Isaac sent Jacob away after reiterating the promise, and we've been through that. Every element of what Isaac says in verse 3 and 4 is a phrase from the previous statements of the promise. Isaac knows these things.

He knows and has told his sons, apparently, what went on in earlier days, what God spoke to Abraham. Abraham communicated it to Isaac, and Isaac remembers it. And Isaac states word for word the different parts of the covenant that were spoken to Abraham.

God is going to bless you, make you fruitful, multiply you. You're going to be an assembly of peoples, give you the blessing of Abraham to you and your descendants with you, to inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham. He doesn't say which God gave to me, does he? Even though God did.

The promise went from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. But Isaac seems to... Everything is other people's responsibility. You're going to your mother's father's house.

You're going to inherit the land that God gave Abraham, not the land that God gave to me. And he's a strange man. He sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethel of Assyria, and the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob, and Esau.

And we park Jacob there for just a moment. This is one of those, I've told you what's going to happen, but I'll back up and tell you how it happened momentarily. But then, here's another mark of the strangeness of the family.

Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac.

It's kind of like he's just now figuring this out. He's been married to these two Hittite women for some time, long enough for it to be a bitterness of soul to Isaac and Rebekah, but apparently it never came up. It was never... This was a stew boiling back behind the tent flap, because it seems as though Esau is just now realizing when Isaac sends Jacob to get a wife from kinfolds that maybe he didn't please his parents when he married the

Canaanite women.

And it's kind of like it dawns on him late, and you wonder if Esau is playing with a full deck or if this family is so noncommunicative. Isaac couldn't bear to bring it up to his favorite son or wouldn't speak and tell him, he certainly doesn't say what he said to Jacob, You shall not take a wife from the daughters of the land. And he should have.

So there's this strange relationship between Isaac and Esau where apparently Isaac never told Esau he didn't like his wives or never discouraged him from marrying them. And so there must have been this talk out of the hearing of the wives and out of the hearing of Esau. This is a very unhealthy thing.

This can go on in families, it can go on in churches, it can go on in organizations or places of business where when someone's in the room or someone is with present company, everything is great and all the talk is beneficial and uplifting and so forth. But you never want to be absent when the group is together because the absent person, all the real feelings and the mild and the bitterness and the jealousy or the gossip or the backbiting or the criticism or whatever it may be comes up when that person is not around. It's a wonderful thing to be a part of a group where even when someone is away, people, if they have something they don't particularly care for, it's just kept to themselves.

And there's a feeling of comfort knowing that when you yourself have flaws and things, they're unlikely to be getting aired out amongst you. If you're the first to leave the family reunion or if you're the earliest out of the parking lot at the church or whatever it might be, that there are people tossing parting shots that you can't hear. But that happened in this family.

And you can see the division. You can see the bitterness. You see the awful treatment between brothers, the treatment between parents and children, the division between husband and wife, between father and son.

The father and the younger son seem to have virtually no relationship. Esau and Rebekah, there's no record of them ever speaking to each other in the Bible. And here Esau, belatedly, after the deceptions, after the charging and the departure of Jacob, he suddenly realizes, wow, my mother and father really don't approve of my wives.

And they've sent Jacob now, and it's all what, he actually doesn't say mother and father, does he? He says my father. When he saw that Isaac had charged Jacob and blessed him. And that's what Esau cares about is what Isaac thinks.

And when he sees that Isaac seems to be giving Jacob the high road to take, he says, well, I can get a wife from the near relations. But he doesn't understand the principle behind it. He's still in the blindness that Isaac seems to be just now waking up from.

And he thinks, well, any relative will do. I kind of like those Ishmaelites. They think like I do.

They live out there at Beerlehai Roy. They're out in the wilderness. They like the nomad life.

And so he goes to Ishmael. If you figure it out chronologically, Ishmael by this time has probably passed away. But when it says he went to Ishmael, it means he went to the house of Ishmael.

And took Mahalat, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife in addition to the wives that he had. And so this is somehow going to patch it up. But we don't have any further mention of if this impressed Isaac.

It's just a quirky, the more you look at this, the more unnatural the whole household of which Isaac is the head seems. But, and we could just observe that and move on. The great thing is, there's lots of us that have strange households or that may be strange ourselves.

Or that don't have personality traits that mark us out as great heroes of biblical proportions. And isn't it amazing that throughout the Old Testament God is going to say to generation after generation, I am not just the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac.

And I am the God of Jacob. And our functionality or dysfunctionality, our failures, we can make a lot of mistakes. We can leave a wrecked trail of strange debris behind us as we go through life.

The only thing that counts and the only thing that matters in the eternal perspective is not where we have been, but where we are going. And even Isaac at this late date can wake up. He's virtually on his deathbed.

He says, I don't know when's the day of my death. I'm blind. I've got to feel around.

You can fool me with a fresh goat skin. Can't tell the difference between a goat skin and a sun. But, he can wake up.

He can recall the promise of God. And when he starts thinking about the promise of God, he starts dwelling on the significance. You get the idea that by the time he's ready to dispense this blessing on Esau, he himself doesn't care much more about it than Esau does.

It's an excuse to get a meal to him. But when these circumstances transpire, and it shocks him awake and he remembers what the blessing really is, he starts thinking about what his father said about the promises, you see him kind of come to and start to once again function in an honorable way. And when you see Isaac in these first several

verses, he seems back to his old self.

At any rate, by the time you get to verse 10, Jacob, we're retracing our steps now to see what happened to Jacob after he left the household. This may have been one of the best things that could have happened to Jacob, is to get out from under this roof and have a fresh set of experiences. And God often uproots us from a situation and puts us in something that may initially seem to be far worse and yet is ultimately for our benefit.

And Jacob is going to learn some things. We're going to get kind of a snapshot of Jacob's thinking tonight as we see him on the road to Paddan Aram. And then we'll see him arrive and spend 20 years out of the land, away from his home, out from under his mother's influence and his father's indifference and his brother's hatred and everything else.

He's uprooted. He leaves with very little to take with him. He appears to just be on foot with a backpack.

We know one thing he's got with him is a flask of oil because he's going to use it here shortly. But Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there all night.

This may be Jacob's first night away from home. He was a tent dweller. He stuck pretty close to the house there and was very domestic.

Esau was the one that went out and liked camping. He was the one that liked to go out and sleep under the stars and hunt animals for days on end. Jacob, this could be his first night out.

He came to a place, and normally travelers would go to a civilized place. You find later on in the biblical record we've seen where travelers are out on the road. It was a custom.

It was a part of eastern hospitality, the ancient Near East, to invite someone in and extend hospitality to them. It's still a tradition there today. You remember the messengers that Abraham hosted, that Lot hosted, and that the men later on in Judges and the tribe of Benjamin and thereabouts would host travelers.

They were strangers. They would say, come in and spend the night under my roof. Let me give you a meal and send you on your way.

But nobody does that. He's near a town. He's near the town of Luz.

But for whatever reason, Jacob finds himself out alone, and he just has to bunk down under the stars by himself. It was always better to be with a group, because this is still in the days where there are wild beasts, there are vagabonds and ne'er-do-wells out and about, and a man alone is not near as safe as a man in a group. This is why for centuries

they've traveled in caravans there.

It's very atypical for someone to travel alone. But he came to a certain place in verse 11 of chapter 28 and stayed there all night because the sun had set. He didn't have headlights, didn't have flashlights.

When the sun sets, if there wasn't much of a moon or if it was overcast, there's really no practical way to travel. He needs his rest since he's traveling apparently on foot. So he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.

When it says he took a stone and put it at his head, this tells us it's not an exceedingly heavy stone, or he wouldn't be able to move it around. So you would think this might be sort of a coffee table-sized stone. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, its top reached to heaven, and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Now, is Jacob having a sense of déjà vu here? Has he heard these words within the last 24 hours? This is what Isaac spoke.

To you and your descendants, God is going to give you the blessing of Abraham so that you will inherit the land in which you are a stranger. But here is God himself, and we noticed this last time. If there was any doubt in Jacob's mind as to whether, after all of the machinations back at the home tent there, if he really is the heir of the promises, God himself, just as he did to Abraham, just as he did to Isaac, appears personally and affirms that these are in fact promises to Jacob.

The land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth. You shall spread abroad to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south.

In you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. What is the stated purpose of Jacob's journey? It's to find a wife, isn't it? Wouldn't it be great if you started out in a direction and God appeared to you at night and said it's going to be a success? Basically God is telling him when you get to the end of this journey you're going to find a great woman and you're going to have kids all over the place. You and your descendants are going to fill up this land and own it and perpetuate all the families of the earth.

You're going to have so many kids and descendants. They're just going to be innumerable. You think about this.

Put yourself back in your teenage years when you had a lot of decisions to make. It seems like the world is before you. Where will you go? What will you do? If, when, how,

who? Is marriage going to take place? It's a very unnerving prospect for a lot of teenagers to try to just cope with the number of choices and the heavy weight knowing that once you choose, you've limited your options.

When you're still sitting on the swing in the backyard of your parents' house, you haven't committed. You haven't said, well, I'm going to go to this city and this school and meet these people. But once you go, you've set a course and it's very unlikely you're going to be able to backtrack and do something different.

Well, this is Jacob. Jacob's leaving home. He's striking out and he's going to go look for a wife.

At that level of uncertainty, are they going to accept me? I'm coming in penniless. I remember the stories when Granddad Abraham sent the servant up to Pat and Aram and had ten camels and all kinds of riches and gold rings. What a wonderful story.

Here I am. I'm kind of a raggedy one-man show here showing up with nothing but the shirt on my back, so to speak. I wonder what kind of reception I'm going to get.

If I don't have the ten camels and the gold rings, they may shoo me off with a broom. And here, his first night out, he puts the rock next to his head. He's laying down on the cold, hard ground under the stars.

He falls asleep and God appears to him and God says, in effect, if Jacob will stop and think about it, your journey is going to be a success. You're going to get married. You're going to have kids.

And you're going to be the father of just generations of people through whom all the earth will be blessed. So this is quite a thing. It would seem that his journey is already off to a smashing start.

I don't recall ever embarking on something that I was unsure of and having this level of affirmation take place. Verse 15, I am with you. Now see, here's the other thing.

Take a look at what God says, beginning in verse 13 and going through verse 14. This is all great, but it's all future, isn't it? God says, you are eventually going to have all these offspring. All of these things are in your future.

But not only does God give him assurance for the future, hope for the future, but he also gives him confidence in the present because God says it's not just pie in the sky, by and by. I am with you now. I will keep you now.

Wherever you go, I will bring you back to this land. You remember when we were over in Psalm 91, we memorized a section of that. And as it continues, there's the portion that we ran across in Luke that Jesus quotes, actually Satan quotes to Jesus, trying to get him

to be distracted and make decisions that are outside the plan and purpose of God.

He says in Psalm 91, verse 4, He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you shall take refuge. His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling, for he shall give his angels charge over you.

What's in the background? What's in the context here while God is speaking these promises to Jacob? There are angels on the big escalator to the sky, aren't there? Some of them are going up, some of them are coming down. Why is that? Why is that a part of this vision? Why couldn't there just be a flash in the sky of God standing at the gateway to heaven saying, Jacob, don't worry, everything's going to turn out great. Why this angelic procession up and down? Well, this is the means, isn't it? This is the concrete, visible... It's just like it says here.

You will see with your eyes the reward of the wicked. You will see with your eyes the refuge that God will be for you and the protection that God will provide for you. So, these are the angels that are going to bring this about.

God has his messengers. God has his operatives on the scene. Maybe this was the change of the watch.

Maybe they go in shifts, and this was the middle of the night. In the ancient sailing days, they had the watches that changed every four hours. Well, this might have been the midnight watch, and the angels going off duty or heading up, and the angels coming down to watch over Jacob while he sleeps, heading back to earth.

But God not only affirms the promises that are future, and this is something that is a new element that really Abraham and Isaac didn't hear when God talked to them. He says, I am with you. I will keep you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land.

So, this tells Jacob that he's on solid ground, so to speak, leaving the land, because God's going to be with him wherever he goes. If he leaves the land, God's going to be with him. Apparently, Abraham had the suspicion that Isaac might go and never return if he was allowed to leave.

Here's Jacob on his own, and God says, I'll stay with you no matter where you go, and I'll bring you back. I'll make sure you return. I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.

What a tremendous promise. Jacob awoke from his sleep. This apparently is his first personal encounter with God.

He has been steeped in the history and in the teaching that he got most likely from his mother, Rebecca, who herself knew of God from her ancestry through Nahor. We're going to find out here before too many more paragraphs go by that Nahor, the father of Abraham, was a believer and had a relationship with God. But Jacob awoke and said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.

And he probably should have, because he says, This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. He rose early in the morning, took the stone he had put in his head, set it up as a pillar, poured oil on top of it. Remember, he's not just overly stocked with supplies here, and he apparently wasn't planning any sacrifices.

So this oil that he's pouring on this stone, this is what he had with him for food. He's probably got some biscuits and some oil. These are necessities.

Oil had many uses. It was medicinal. It was a part of a diet.

It was used as a lotion if he got sunburned. It has many uses. And he's probably just got a flask with him because he's on foot.

There's no mention of any animals anywhere in this story or any companions. So when Jacob takes this oil and pours it out on the rock, this means something to him because this is pretty much all he's got. And he's serious.

This has made an impression on him. He set the rock up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. When I used to hear about this story, and I think even the flannel graph, you think this is sort of a six-foot tall stone.

It's a big monument thing that people would walk by and remark on and so forth. It's a little coffee table-sized stone. He just rolled it up on end.

People would do this all the time. It wasn't like the engineers and things we have that build highways and put up all kinds of signs and, you know, historical landmark here and this many miles to the next exit and all that. To my knowledge, in the ancient world, they didn't have road sign one.

Later on in the Roman Empire, I think they had some signs. But in this day and age, there are no signs. So how did people know where they were going? If they were going to navigate by landmarks, what were their landmarks? They probably didn't even have maps.

So people would pile up rocks. They would set up a stone. Later on, we're going to have that name.

Do you remember Ebenezer, Eben-Etzer? Eben is stone and etzer is help. Eben-Etzer, stone of help. This is the place where I memorialize the fact that God is my help.

So he just rolls this rock on end. He says, this is an important place. I need to mark it.

This is the house of God. This is the gate of heaven. Now, this reflects some knowledge on Jacob's part, doesn't it? Jacob knows that there is a heaven, doesn't he? He knows what a house of God is.

He knows what Beth-El is. He called the name of that place Beth-El, house of God, Beth-El. The name of that city had been Luz previously.

Have we ever seen Beth-El before? Turn back to Genesis chapter 12. Look at Genesis chapter 12, verse 6. Actually, the end of verse 5. They came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh.

The Canaanites were then in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said to your descendants, I will give this land. And there he built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him, and he moved from there to the mountain east of Beth-El, and he pitched his tent with Beth-El on the west and Ai on the east.

There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. So Abram, on the way into the land, had a similar encounter with God, similar, though apparently briefer, statement of the promise. He built an altar there.

Of course, Abram had flocks and a wife and a herd and a whole bit, so he built an altar and did the sacrifice and did the whole nine yards. Jacob does as much as he can do with what he's got. He's got a rock and a flask of oil, and so he anoints the rock and sets it up as a marker, and that's his Beth-El.

And it's likely to have been the same place, because it is on the way. That's how you would go. If you're going to go up to Haran, if you're going to go to Paddan Aram, that's how you go.

And he's basically retracing his grandfather's steps in reverse, and he didn't even realize it when he bedded down for the night that apparently he's very close to, if not in, the same place where God had appeared to his grandfather, Abraham. So, verse 20 here is quite interesting. Jacob made a vow.

Why did he decide to make a vow? What's the whole idea of a vow? If God will be with me, keep me in the way that I'm going, give me bread to eat, clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, isn't this everything God just told him he was going to do? And Jacob says, well, if God does that, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that you give me, I

will surely give a tent to you. So now we've got two things that raise little, at least in my mind, raise question marks. We've got a vow, we don't seem to do much vowing anymore, and we've got a tithe, and we don't seem to do much tithing anymore.

So what's this all about? We're going to have to pause and take our break. When we come back, we'll see if we can gain some insight into those ideas.