

Genesis 35:27-29

The Most Beautiful Scenery

The latter part of Genesis Ch. 35 talks about how Jacob went back to his hometown with his family members. His return could be described as the most beautiful scenery that puts everything back to its own place. Because with his return, the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is now began its work.

In his returning process, there's not much Jacob did on his own. He always faced the crisis and whenever that happened, he experienced the spiritual downfall. But each time, God awaken him and restored him and helped him to get back on his feet so he could continue on his journey.

The content of Genesis Ch.35 is also the same. When Jacob stayed at Succoth, he didn't depend on God but himself. Depending on his own power and ability, he bought the land, built the house, and made the shelter for livestock. But his daughter Dinah get raped by the prince of that land and as a revenge, Jacob's sons killed all the males in the city and plundered the city. As a result, Jacob and his family faced danger to be revenged by other inhabitants of the land. But God used this crisis to awaken Jacob spiritually and commanded him to return to his hometown, to his 'path of return'.

Jacob obeyed God's command and set out for Bethel. Bethel is the land of grace where Jacob first met God. Even though Jacob completely forgot about that experience and lived trusting his own power and ability, God always waited for Jacob there. In that place, Jacob meets God again. And this time, he heard God's words more clearly and also realized the meaning of God's blessing more specifically compare to any of his previous encounter with God. And again, he experienced God's amazing grace that turned his crisis into a blessing.

With that experience in Bethel, Jacob was again back on his way to his hometown. But this time, his beloved wife Rachel dies of childbirth on the road. He must thought it happened because he forced the journey too hard and looking at the newborn baby who just lost his mother, Jacob must had the most devastating moments of his life. But Jacob quickly buried Rachel and hastened his way back to his hometown. How could he do that? The encounter with God in Bethel, the restoration that he experienced in Bethel, changed him. Bethel was actually the 'stopping place' before he gets to his destination. And that's why Jacob could expect God to give him greater restoration at his destination. And that's how he could face the death of Rachel without despair. To this man Jacob, the Bible calls him 'Israel' and fully encourages and supports him.

Jacob, putting all his crisis behind, arrived at Hebron, where his father Isaac lives, and settled there with his father. And when Isaac died, Jacob and his brother Esau buried him. Jacob went back to the place where he supposed to be and lived the way he supposed to live. Hebron was the birth place for people of Israel. Because it was the first land that God gave to Abraham. In other words, God wanted Jacob to return to Hebron and live there as a person who received the promise of God, the promise that everyone will be blessed through him.

Hebron, the place Jacob returned and settled, symbolize the heaven for us. The place we need to return, the heaven, is waiting for us. That's why when we face crisis in our life, we shouldn't just give up because God is with us and his restoring grace is always with us.

Let's not get discouraged in this crisis filled era but rather as a Christian, let's expect God's restoration in our life and walk on our 'path to home' faithfully.