

Daily devotions for
2019



Day 14
Jacob, part 4

Grief and blessings

Genesis 35 v9-18, v27-29; 37 v3-4, v31-35; 45 v23-46 v1-7, v29-30;
also, Genesis 48 and 49 – and all the story of Joseph if you wish!

“May the God before whom my fathers walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm – bless these boys.”

Genesis 48 v15-16

The final part of Jacob’s story is marked by much grief as he loses his beloved wife, father and son.

Before these deaths, God meets with Jacob as El Shaddai, ‘God Almighty’ - reminding Jacob of his amazing promises – preparing him for what is to come.

With each loss comes a blessing.

Rachel, dying in childbirth, calls her son Ben-Oni ‘son of my sorrow’. Jacob, knowing the importance of names, blesses his son with a new name of hope, Benjamin ‘son of my right hand’.

Isaac is buried by Jacob and Esau, blessed in reconciliation.

The ‘loss’ of Joseph resulted in blessing for many as God used him to save lives during seven years of famine.

But Jacob suffered these losses sorely. He ‘refused to be comforted’ – “in mourning will I go down to the grave”.

I guess many can relate to this. Grief overwhelms. Comfort can be difficult to perceive or receive. Some push away this most uncomfortable, unpredictable feeling and withdraw from any real connection with themselves, others and God – afraid of the overwhelm, afraid of the depths - rather than trusting that God meets us at our depths and is the God of all comfort.

But there is a happy ending! Jacob is reunited with Joseph. At the end of his life, surrounded by his family, he praises God and blesses each of his sons for the individual futures God has revealed to him – including Judah the lion cub whose descendant is the Lion of Judah!

Prayer

Father, El Shaddai, we place ourselves in your hands. Help us to trustingly come and allow you to comfort our grief and our fears knowing you will bless us and long to use us to bless others.