

THE SECRET PLACE - Intro

*Genesis 32: 6 And the messengers returned to Jacob saying, We came to your brother Esau, and also he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him. 7 Then Jacob was greatly **afraid and distressed**, and he divided the people with him, and the flocks and herds, and the camels, into two bands. 8 And he said, If Esau comes to the one company and strikes it, then the other company which is left shall escape. 9 And Jacob said, Oh God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Jehovah, who said to me, Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you: 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have done to Your servant. For with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I have become two bands. 11 Deliver me, I pray You, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau. **For I fear him**, lest he come and strike me, from mother to sons.*

*Genesis 32:22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two slave women, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. 23 And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over what he had. 24 **And Jacob was left alone**. And a Man wrestled there with him until the breaking of the day. 25 And when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh. And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with Him. 26 And He said, Let Me go, for the day breaks. And he said, **I will not let You go** except You bless me. 27 And He said to him, What is your name? And he said, Jacob. 28 And He said, Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for like a prince you have power with God and with men, and have prevailed. 29 And Jacob asked and said, I pray You, reveal Your name. And He said, Why do you ask after My name? And He blessed him there.*

We have just come out of a series dealing with faith and you can agree with me that faith is a major building block in the life of a believer.

Allow me to start this morning with a question: What do you do when you find yourself in a fix?

From time to time, life throws a curve ball on us – whether we like it or not, at some point we find ourselves in a fix of some sort.

I don't know what has been tripping you up lately:

- Disappointment of not finding a job
- A lack of peace in your marriage
- A sickly body
- Unending turmoil at work or in your extended family set up

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Knowingly or not knowingly people develop survival modes and self-help mechanisms in the process – some have powerful networks that have been propping them up during financial challenges, some have aunts who seem to always have a listening ear whenever they have issues.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with all these remedies but there is one solution, one weapon that God has given to the church by which His people should have as their main default for dealing with their troubles – that weapon is called the secret place.

This brings me to the title of our brand new series – **THE SECRET PLACE**. For the coming 6 weeks or so, we are going to explore **Strategies for the secret place**. We are going to explore what is that secret place and strategies that will make your secret place a place of victories.

When it came to praying, Jesus alluded to the notion of the secret place.

Matthew 6:5 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

- Your prayer life is one of the most private affairs of your life which has the most impact on your public life.
- Each person ought to have a prayer life – a prayerless life is an empty and powerless one.
- Your level of maturity is not measured by how much you read the word, or how much you come to church, it is measured by the amount of time you spend in the secret place.
- It is possible to read the word but without praying but it is impossible to be a prayerful person who does not get into the word.
- Where we have read in Genesis, we find Jacob on his journey back home – going back home meant that he had to confront his brother Esau.
- Jacob had a reputation of always making a plan in order to make it in life – many believers are like that.
- Our inclination is to try and make things work in our own strength. We try to have a natural solution to all the challenges of our lives – but our natural ideas will always fall short.

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- God is calling believers to move from the realm of natural based solutions to the realm of secret place solutions.
- When Jacob was about to confront Esau his brother, he realized that his natural tendencies of always making a plan were not going to cut it this time around.
- He knew how he had cheated his brother of the first-born blessing and was afraid for his life.

*Genesis 32:7,11 Then Jacob was **greatly afraid and distressed**, and he divided the people with him, and the flocks and herds, and the camels, into two bands...11 **Deliver me, I pray You**, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau. For **I fear him**, lest he come and strike me, from mother to sons.*

- You can feel the sense of fear and desperation in the voice of Jacob – he was not prepared to lose all that he had worked for, neither was he ready to face his imminent death.
- Until you are desperate enough for divine intervention for your situation, you will not create a secret place for yourself.
- People don't pray because they lack a sense of urgency, they have not come to appreciate what they are missing for not praying to the Lord.
- Some mediocracy in our lives is a reflection of the absence of a secret place
- A secret place is a place where heaven meets earth and the influence of heaven is permitted to infiltrate the affairs of the earth.
- When you reach an appropriate level of desperation all you need is time alone with the Lord.
- Jacob reached that level – look at this verse with me:

*Genesis 32:22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two slave women, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. 23 And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over what he had. 24 **And Jacob was left alone.***

- The situation was so intense for Jacob that he had to let go of everyone in order to do business with God.

Matthew 6:6 "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

- As long as we can still play church, as long as we can only pray in a crowd – we are not yet ready to break certain barriers in the spirit. Certain spiritual barriers and forces of opposition can only be dealt with in the secret place

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- The secret place is called secret because it is out of the public eye – your prayer life is a private matter.
- The moment that Jacob was left alone, it looked like heaven's attention was drawn to him.
Genesis 32:24 And Jacob was left alone. And a Man wrestled there with him until the breaking of the day.
- The moment we decide to create a secret place, God and the heavenly host is drawn to you. God loves it when we want to spend time with Him in prayer.
- Jacob wrestled with the Angel of God until day break – he was not going to let go until he had an assurance of a victory against his brother.