

## Sermon Outlines

### “Jacob’s Ladder”

*“And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven:  
and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”  
(Genesis 28:12)*

The ladder in Jacob’s dream at Bethel stood for communication between God and man. There was and still is great need for this. Here is man on earth, and there is God in heaven. How shall they communicate with one another? Emerson’s answer was, “Hitch your wagon to a star.” But that is impractical, for here is my wagon and there, out of my reach, is the star. Even in this modern age of swift, easy communication, man has not bridged the chasm between earth and heaven. There is, therefore:

#### I. The Need of Communication

1. A ladder is a common article, but missed if unavailable. Used not only in the household but also in mountain-climbing, fire-fighting, etc.
2. The distance between heaven and earth is as great in our day as in Jacob’s. From Genesis 3 on, through Isaiah 6 and Luke 16, “there is a great gulf fixed.” But what about:

#### II. The Means of Communication

1. A ladder must be long enough. Jacob needed assurance of this.
2. Today men are making their own ladders: church membership, good works, orthodoxy. These are like Jacob’s ladder in that they are all good and they all stand on the earth — but none of them can reach to heaven.
3. There is only one ladder which can — the Lord Jesus Christ — and He used this simile of Himself in John 1:51. Through Him there is both revelation and communion. But some may need proof, so note.

#### III. The Safety of Communication

1. A ladder must be strong enough. Can it bear weight?
2. The tests of Christ as Ladder between earth and heaven may be thought of as steps, or rungs, five in number. At this end, He is Man (first rung); at the other end, He is God (fifth and last rung). In between: He must be a unique Man, and this uniqueness may be represented by His life, by His death, and by His resurrection and ascension (second, third and fourth rungs).
3. Since that time, millions have used this Ladder, and it has never even swayed under their weight. Then there is:

#### IV. The Freedom of Communication

1. The steps are convenient. The angels used Jacob’s ladder and they are said to use “the Son of man” (John 1:51).
2. The steps are unobstructed. The angels:
  - a) Ascend with man’s need and descend with God’s provision.
  - b) Ascend with man’s prayer and descend with God’s answers.
  - c) Ascend with man’s devotion and descend with God’s acceptance.

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#### Conclusion

1. Where else shall man find a means of communication with God? Christianity is the only faith which has one. Other religions have aspirants, but “a saviour not quite God is a bridge broken at the other end.”
2. How shall we use this means of communication? The use of a ladder takes both hands and feet. J.G. Paton of the New Hebrides found the word in the native tongue nearest to our word “faith” was one which signified “leaning the whole weight.” “Trust” — (feet) — and “obey” — (hands).
3. Then let us up and use this Ladder! Let us, leaving earthy things behind, appropriate Christ as Saviour and Lord and Mediator. He offers us His presence, His protection, and His power — until we are welcomed into the Father’s House.

*“Higher still, and higher, bear the ransomed soul,  
Earthly toils forgotten, Saviour, to its goal,  
Where, in joys unthought of, saints and angels sing,  
Never weary raising praises to their King!”*

*. . . . W.H. Griffith Thomas, D.D.*