

Today - the *camera of scripture*
puts a **LASER FOCUS** - on **Jacob**

The **father of Joseph**
& *the Patriarch* of the **12 Tribes of Israel**

But today - we have a "*Special Name*" for Jacob
today Jacob gets the name - "***Negative Nellie***"

& I'd like to really **ask us** - to use **Jacob** (AKA *Negative Nellie*)
as a **Mirror** for our own lives

& I'd like us **to gaze into** Jacob's life **& ask** the hard question
is it possible that - - "I Am a Negative Nellie"?

Just in case you're *not familiar* with the term "***Negative Nellie***"
It's formally called **an alliteration** . . .

& it's **used to describe** someone who **sees everything**
from the **NEGATIVE** side
from the **NEGATIVE** view point
from the "**WOE IS ME**" perspective

Now - **ALL of us** (at times) get the "***Woe is me***" feeling

But when that "***Woe is me***" feeling - becomes such a **habit**
that it actually begins **to define** who we are

Then we are well on our way to becoming - ***A "Negative Nellie"***

Jacob - as the **father** of the 12 Tribes of Israel
Should **NOT** really be defined as a "**Negative Nellie**"

But the Holy Spirit is so good - to show
not only the **Worthiness** - but also the **Unworthiness**
of those that God uses

& today - we get another **example** of the **unworthiness**
of the father of the 12 Tribes of Israel

& we get another LESSON from Jacob
on how **NOT** to approach our lives
& how **NOT** to "train up" our children

OK - Let's Pray - & we'll visit **Negative Nellie in Canaan**

Let's begin today - by contrasting our "**Negative Nellie**" (AKA Jacob)
With "**Positive Paul**" (AKA Apostle Paul)

Let's put just **One Vs.** up for each of these two **men of God**
& **we'll see** (easily) the extreme **contrast**

Let's start with "Positive Paul" - **Phil 1:12-14 - ESV**

**12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me
has really served to advance the gospel,
**13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial
guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.**
**14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the
Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the
word without fear.****

Man - that's what you call "**Looking on the bright side**"

Paul was in **prison** - awaiting **possible execution**
& all he can say is:

"I want you to know that **God is using my trials**
to **Advance** the Gospel,
to show that my trial is **for Christ**
& to give others **Boldness** to speak the Word "

Paul says - "Praise God - He is **AT WORK** - for **GOOD**
in the midst of my **BAD** situation !"

Do you know that you & I - today - **can have** that **same** attitude

We can have **such confidence** in God -
such assurance in God's Plan

That we can actually *begin to see* God **AT WORK** for **GOOD**
right in the **MIDST** of *our* **BAD** situation

Or . . .

we can CHOOSE the more Natural route
the Route of our **sin nature**
the "**Woe is Me**" route

That **route** that some of us have **allowed** - *to become a RUT*

so much so - that it has begun to **DEFINE** who we are

Maybe we've been on that "**Woe is me**" route soooo long
that we might even be known as - a "**Negative Nellie**"

That's where **Jacob** is right **now**

So let's compare **Positive Paul's Perspective**
With **Negative Nellie's Nay-Saying**

in Phil 1 - - Paul said

- 1)** What has happened to me - has served to advance the gospel!
- 2)** It's become known to all - that my trials are for Christ!
- 3)** Because of my trials, others have more boldness to speak the Word!

Now let's contrast that with "***Negative Nellie***"

Gen 42:36

36 And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. All this has come against me."

Oh Woe is ME . . . Woe is ME - - You have robbed ME

Joseph is no more (Not True)

Simeon is no more (Not True)

Now you would take **Benjamin** (Not True) . . .

All this has come against ME - - *That certainly is NOT True*

For Positive Paul - the truth of his circumstances are forgotten
in the Light of what God is Doing

For Negative Nellie - The truth of what God is doing
is forgotten in the Light of his circumstances

We **MUST** know today - **We have a FREE WILL**

when it comes to how we **VIEW** a thing
& **when it comes** to our **PERSPECTIVE** on our circumstance

I wish it weren't true - but God will allow you
to be immersed in your NEGATIVE NAY-SAYING
to wallow in your SELF-PITY
to be buried by a LACK OF FAITH

He **WILL ALLOW IT** - But **it is NOT** His Will for you !!!

God's Will for you is;

to **KNOW HIM** in every situation, in every circumstance
to **SEE HIM AT WORK** in every trial, in every difficulty
& to **RUN THE RACE** -
whether Abounding or Abasing
whether Having Plenty or Suffering Need

God's Will is for you to say

*"I can do **ALL THINGS** thru Christ Who strengthens me"*

That means - I can meet any **situation** - face any **circumstance**
Thru the One Who gives me **Supernatural Strength !**

NOT Woe is me **BUT INSTEAD** Christ is IN me!

NOT - All Things are against me **BUT INSTEAD** God is ALL for me!

NOT - What am "I" going to do **BUT INSTEAD** What is "GOD" doing
right now - in THIS situation

Is our PERSPECTIVE **important** ??

Absolutely YES - because it effects **EVERY** decision we make !

Is our PERSPECTIVE **contagious** (especially to our children)

Absolutely YES - & we'll see that exact truth as we close today

When we **last saw** the brothers
they **had left Joseph** (*not knowing it was him*)

& they had found **their money** in their **sacks** on the way home

So now - they return **home**
to explain to Jacob all that had happened

Gen 42:29-35 - ESV

29 When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying,

30 “The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us and took us to be spies of the land.

31 But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we have never been spies.

32 We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.’

33 Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way.

34 Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men, and I will deliver your brother to you, and you shall trade in the land.’ ”

35 As they emptied their sacks, behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack. And when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid.

RIGHT NOW - Jacob must make a **crucial decision** -
A decision of **PERSPECTIVE**

Right Here - Jacob can either take **Positive Paul's Perspective**
or he can take **Negative Nellie's Nay-Saying**

& what an opportunity for the Patriarch of Israel to say:

*"Boys, God is **AT WORK**, He has shown us His hand
by placing your money back in your sacks . . ."*

*"we **are** honest men, and we serve the Almighty God who is **at work**
in this situation, so let's pray & see what God would have us do"*

DADS - I hope you **DON'T THINK** that is an **Unrealistic Response**
Because **it's NOT** !

WE have **Circumstances Staring Down** our **families** right now

& *your family* is **WATCHING** your *response*
& they **WILL ADOPT** your *response*

& we **MUST respond** in light of **WHO** our God is -
& **with a confidence** - our God is **AT WORK** in *THIS* situation

Jacob (AKA Negative Nellie) - **FAILS Miserably** at this point

& **his Perspective** becomes one of **SELF-FOCUS** - & **SELF-PITY**

Gen 42:36 - ESV

***36 And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me
of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and
now you would take Benjamin. All this has come against me."***

Joseph's sons had returned;

with **Food** to sustain them

with all their **Money** returned to them

& with a **Promise** to be able to trade freely in Egypt

& **ALL** Jacob can see - is **UNTRUE** - & **NEGATIVE** - *Outcomes*

Heb 11:1 - NLT - says

Faith . . . gives us assurance about things we cannot see

THAT is NOT what Negative Nellie is experiencing here

Instead - he has the SELF-FOCUS "*Woe is me*" perspective

& so - in classic Dysfunctional Family form

Reuben (oldest) tries to make a deal with Negative Nellie

Gen 42:37

37 Then Reuben said to his father, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you."

An "Over-reacting father" leads to an "Over-reacting son"

"you can kill MY 2 sons, if I do not bring Benjamin back to you"

But now - it gets worse - look at the next Vs very closely

because in it - are signs of a father with a very serious problem

Gen 42:38 - ESV

38 But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol."

My son . . . his brother is dead. . . he is the only one left

Jacob makes it sound like he only has TWO sons

(but he's talking to his other 10 sons)

Many try to let Jacob off the hook here - - But the truth is . . .

Jacob **DID NOT consider** his other 10 sons
on an **equal level** with Joseph & Benjamin

& That is Really Unhealthy !

growing up - I really struggled with these **types of feelings**

& to my amazement - to some extent - each of my children
have **struggled** with some of these feelings

Dads - we must do **ALL we can**
to help our kids **NEVER feel this way**

ALL of our children are **equal** in God's eyes -
& must be **Equal** in Our eyes (& we must **convey** that to them)

& Joseph **FAILS** miserably in doing that

& then (worse even) he **FAILS** to do **ANYTHING AT ALL !!**

He totally **IGNORES** the situation - & goes on living his life
While SIMEON is in PRISON in Egypt !!!

This is called Chronic "***Head-In-The-Sand-Itis***"

We **CANNOT** be - "***Negative Nellies***"

We **CANNOT** have - "***Head-In-The-Sand-Itis***"

Jacob unfortunately - has **both** of these **maladies**
& so he **just goes on** as if it all weren't happening

Gen 43:1-2 ESV

1 Now the famine was severe in the land.

2 And when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go again, buy us a little food."

So the food's gone

& Jacob's head comes out of the sand just enuf to say

"Hey, why don't you guys go buy us some more food"

He is still trying hard - to IGNORE the situation his family is in

So Judah (# 4 son) tries to get dad's head out of the sand

Gen 43:3-5 - ESV

3 But Judah said to him, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.'

4 If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food.

5 But if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.' "

Jacob now has another opportunity
to change his PERSPECTIVE

But the truth is

Every day that we see things from a Negative Nellie perspective

We get a little better at being a Negative Nellie

Until eventually - Negative Nellie becomes who we are (*God help us*)

Jacob is consumed with a NEGATIVE PERSPECTIVE

So - faced w/ the situation again - He Strikes the same Chord

Gen 43:6 - ESV

6 Israel said, "Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?"

Great - - Now it becomes **his sons fault** - - **Un-be-live-able**

*"Why did you treat **me** so badly - what have you done to **me**
Oh Woe is **me** - you've been so bad to **me** . . ."*

MAN, Jacob - you are **lucky** that God's **Covenant** is **Unconditional**

Cause you deserve to get **Knocked Off** your position of
Patriarch of Israel - right about **NOW**

Guys - this is a **VERY UGLY** response
from a "***Negative Nellie***"

& Notice - - Jacob *is ACTUALLY SAYING;*
"Oh, why did you tell him the TRUTH ??"

& now **Jacob's sons** have to **justify** to their father
How they could have **the audacity** - to "***Tell The Truth***"

Gen 43:7 - ESV

7 They replied, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' What we told him was in answer to these questions. Could we in any way know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

Dad - - We're so sorry we let you down by **telling the Truth**
we know you must be **so disappointed** in us . . .

& then - *in an attempt to save his family*

Judah steps back in - & **does** something **incredible**

Gen 43:8-9 - ESV

8 And Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones.

9 I will be a pledge of his safety. From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.

Notice carefully - A "Negative Nellie" **MUST**
find **someone** else to Bare the Blame

& here **Judah** steps us - & says "**DAD - You can blame me**"
"Let me bear the blame forever"

NOT - **Trust** God , God will **Provide** , God will **Protect**
NONE of THAT !

ONLY - "**DAD - I know you need to blame someone,**
so you can **blame me**"

How incredibly SAD !

But **it does the trick** for Jacob - & Jacob gives in

but he **doesn't** give in to **FAITH**
instead he gives in to **CONNIVING**

Our study is not on the Life of Jacob - Otherwise we'd know Jacob's name means "Heal-Catcher" or "Conniver"

& truthfully - thru-out his youth - he was a Conniver

& at one point he used the SAME Conniving method to soften up his brother Esau - that he's about to use here

Gen 43:10-12 - ESV

10 [cont'g the conv. from above - Judah says] ***If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice.***

11 ***Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry a present down to the man, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds.***

12 ***Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight.***

This was Negative Nellie the Conniver reverting back to his old tricks - to soften up a potential enemy

But because of his PERSPECTIVE because of his Negative outlook & his lack of faith . . .

he was conniving to try to soften up what he thought was a potential enemy - that was really his own son !!

How incredibly sad - when God has it all worked out for good & we are so convinced it's going to be bad

That we act as if God Himself were our enemy & only our conniving plans can save us - How incredibly sad !

Now - watch in the next Vs's
as Jacob gives in to the circumstance

He makes a stab at having a bit of Faith
but then he falls right back into his Negative Nellie Position

Gen 43:13-14 - ESV

13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man.

14 May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

"OK - maybe God Almighty will grant you mercy.
& as for ME, if "I" am bereaved of my children, "I" am bereaved"

Oh my GOSH Jacob - Get some FAITH MAN !!!

Listen to the words coming out of your own mouth !

The term he uses for God Almighty here is EL SHADDAI !!

EL SHADDAI is the ALMIGHTY GOD !!

The God able to do all - ALL Powerful - ALL able God
NOTHING can stand in His way

THAT'S OUR GOD !!

& HE WILL Grant us Mercy - & He WILL Go before Us

& NO WEAPON formed against us will prosper

& We can face ANY circumstance thru His Power

EL SHADDAI - GOD ALMIGHTY - IS WITH US !!!

So why . . . oh why Jacob . . . are You So Negative ??

because he's been Negative *for SO LONG*
that he's become a "**Negative Nellie**"

& NOW - it's become his '**Natural Response**'

But it doesn't **have** to be *HIS* "**Natural Response**"

It doesn't **have** to be *OUR* "**Natural Response**"

God Wants to **TRANSFORM US**

He wants to Radically **CHANGE US**

& it starts - with us **Admitting**

that we've become a **Negative Nellie** - & Repenting . . .

& then taking the **Necessary Steps** with God

for Him to Transform us - into a **Positive Paul**

Unfortunately - for today - **we have to end** this study

by looking again at **the effect** of **Negative Nellie** - on his **sons**

Gen 43:15-17 - ESV

15 So the men took this present, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon."

17 The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph's house.

Joseph is preparing a **Huge Feast** for these brothers
& he's about to **ble**ss** them** beyond their **wildest dreams**

BUT - Remember - I said our **PERSPECTIVE** is **CONTAGIOUS**
especially to our children ??

Watch now - as Jacob's sons handle this **uncertain circumstance**
the exact same way their father has **taught them** - *by example*

Gen 43:18

18 And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, "It is because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may assault us and fall upon us to make us servants and seize our donkeys."

OH NO - NOT SEIZE OUR DONKEYS !!!
(I'm not sure why THAT is the pinnacle fear)

BUT NONE of that is true
in fact it's the *furthest thing* from the **truth**

They're reacting **just like** *their Dad did*
when *they told him* about **this situation**

The saddest thing to me here - is that **Negative Nellie**
is on his way **to cloning himself** - *10 times over*

Because these **10 adult sons** are on their way
to having the **same Perspective** - - *they've grown up with*

We must seriously consider - the effect our **PERSPECTIVE** has
on those around us - - *especially our children*

In closing - - the **most incredible truth** to me . . .

is that **God knew** all of Jacob's **hang-ups** & **DYSFUNCTION**
& He **used** Jacob **ANYWAY**

He **used him** to raise **a nation** of people that God *calls his very own*

& God has done the **same thing** with *you & me*

He calls us *His Very Own* - even with our **struggles** & **hang-ups**

Because God is **BIGGER** than **ALL OUR HANG-UPS** !!

HOWEVER - - the **FACT** remains . . .

The JOY or FRUSTRATION - of your Walk with the Lord

Is **DETERMINED** . . . **NOT** by your *circumstances*

But by your **PERSPECTIVE** on your *circumstances*

Your JOY or FRUSTRATION is determined

By how you **view God** - & how you **view Life**

in the MIDST of those circumstances

& **TODAY - EACH of us - is in the Process** - of **DEFINING** our lives
as **EITHER** a **Positive Paul** - or a **Negative Nellie**

& those closest to you - are **LEARNING** - by your **ACTIONS** !

Let's **CHOOSE** to Believe God Almighty - **EL SHADDAI**

Let's **CHOOSE** to Trust Him - *Right in the Midst of **THIS** situation*

& **Let's be** a **Positive Influence for FAITH**

on those who are **watching** us . . . **OK ?**

Let's Pray