



HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY

May 3, 2020

Main Point: God is working to change our hearts and give us new identities.

1. Listen to this Spotify playlist

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2PFq9EG6qySS7pasjKKAxB?_php=1

2. Background

In the past few sessions, we have followed Jacob as he tricked his father and brother, fled from his home, and traveled to Paddan-aram to find a wife. Even amidst more deception by Jacob and others, God was faithful to His promise to be with Jacob and bless him. Jacob departed from Laban's home with a family and many possessions.

Eventually, Jacob and his family reached the fringes of the land of God's promise, the land of Jacob's family—including his brother Esau. And this was the point of no return. They couldn't turn back because Laban was angry with them and Jacob had made a covenant not to return (Genesis 31:36-55). But moving forward meant facing Esau, who was also angry with Jacob and had threatened to kill him. They were trapped in between two angry people.

Jacob sent messengers ahead of his family to speak with his brother Esau. Jacob instructed the messengers to greet Esau, to call him Jacob's "lord," and to ask that Jacob may find favor in Esau's eyes. When the messengers returned they reported that Esau was coming to meet Jacob—with four hundred men.

This news understandably distressed Jacob, so true to his nature he began forming a plan to appease his brother and save his own family. He divided his family into two camps; if Esau attacked one, then the other might be able to escape and survive. That night, Jacob sent his two family groups to separate camps and stayed behind by himself. But he wouldn't be alone for long....

3. Read this passage two times - Genesis 32:24-32 and 35:9-15

4. Process

32:24-27. Scholars generally agree Jacob's opponent that night was God Himself. While we do not know how this wrestling match began, we do know one of the outcomes of the blow God dealt Jacob

This wrestling match is instructive in at least two ways. First, God confronting Jacob hints at the reality of Jacob's flawed character and the truth that God will not allow sin to go unpunished. We see a similar event in Moses' life when he failed to obey God's command (Ex. 4:24-26). God wanted to use Jacob, but He would change him first...One touch from God brought Jacob low. And people in a humble posture are the ones God delights in doing great things through.

Second, the man dislocated Jacob's hip, in what seemed to be a desperate act to get away before sunrise, which may point to the reason God held Jacob accountable and wanted to transform him. Before the blessing was carried forward, this sinful man—Jacob—had to be broken. Perhaps that is why the man asked Jacob about his name, which meant "cheater." Jacob's life up to this point had been in line with his name.

32:28-32. In God's wisdom, He gave Jacob the name Israel as an ever-present reminder. The true source of strength, power, and provision in his life was God. It was time for Jacob to stop fighting against God in order to receive His blessing in his life and instead fight alongside God as part of His plan to extend His blessing to the world.

35:9-15. The day after his wrestling match, Jacob met with Esau as a humbled and changed man. Jacob was no longer the deceiver or usurper; he trusted God to go before him and work in the heart of his brother. And that is what God did. He fought the battle for Jacob and when the two brothers met, they experienced true reconciliation after years of estrangement. There was victory in the changed lives of both Jacob and Esau. This victory was a beautiful end to strife and an important beginning to the nation of Israel.

4. Think About It

- How has God humbled you through circumstances to force you to rely more on Him?
- What are some ways our past mistakes try to haunt and define us?
- Based upon this account in Jacob's life, what do you think is the significance of a name change?
- Why is it important to see these moments as acts of grace on God's part and not acts of anger?
- How will we live differently each day by living, first and foremost, under the name Christian? (living under Christ's name before our own)

Join Lauren & Nathan in a Zoom Call!

Sunday, May 3 at 7:00 pm

<https://zoom.us/j/4144653655?pwd=SkYyNVVVKaS9OdGQxSTJaeUFpSU5yUT09>

Meeting ID: 414 465 3655

Password: 853104



We are here for you!

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