

Who Am I? - Genesis 32:24 - 33:3

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[0 : 00] The title to today's message is, Who Am I? Jacob has left Haran, he's left Laban, he's traveled all the way back down towards the promised land. God has told him, go back to Bethel, go back to the house of God.

And he's come all the way to the river Jabbok, and he finds out Esau is coming to meet him. And we saw last week, he kind of tailspins into this fear over that. So Jacob traveled all the way, a week or two's worth of journey with his very large family, all his flocks and herds.

And he's come down to this river, the river Jabbok, and it flows east to west. It means emptying because it empties into the Jordan. And at this point, he's sent out his message to Esau.

He said, hey, I want you to go and tell my brother that I'm coming to see him. I'm coming back home. And he's kind of living in victory in the moment. He's very excited. God has just delivered him from Laban.

And he's like, you know what? I'm going to reach out an olive branch to Esau and say, I'm coming back home. Well, then he finds out Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men. And all of a sudden, that peace he had is shattered. And we saw last week as he begins to plot and plan all on his own initiative.

[1 : 10] And we said that fear takes into its own hands what faith leaves in God's hands. So fear wants to take and own and try and control. That's the thing with fear. It's like, I need to somehow control this because I can't trust God, who's in control, to own this.

So I take it out of God's hands and try and bring it into my hands. Esau represented a broken past and an unknown future for Jacob.

He had just dealt with Laban and God had kept him for 20 some years with Laban. And now he's about to face Esau. And what Esau represented to Jacob was his broken past and this unknown future. As we dive into the chapter, our outline today, just kind of breaking it down a little bit.

Verses 24 through 26 is wrestling with the old as Jacob will wrestle with the Lord. But the old Jacob is continuing to wrestle. Verses 27 through 29 is the old made new.

We'll see what that is. Verses 30 through 32, Jacob gets a new way to walk. He learns a new walk. And then as we, we'll just do the first three verses of chapter 33, but I think we have to because it just gives us the victory of what God has done.

[2 : 19] We're going to see a whole new man. And so let's pick up in verse 24. And Jacob was left alone and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

If you remember what just happened before that, he had taken his entire family that evening, it said, that night, in the night, got them all up and went across the river, across the river Jabbok or the tributary.

This is what Jabbok looks like today. And then here is an area where it can be forded. They call this the fords of Jabbok. You can see there's kind of somebody sitting there.

It's a more modern view. And so he got his family up, all his two wives, two concubines, multitude of children, 11 sons and one daughter, and dragged them across this tributary.

He stayed on the north side. He goes back over to the north side where it now tells us he's alone.

They're on the south side. Jacob just put his entire family between him and the threat, between him and Esau.

[3 : 18] And he goes back and he's alone. And it tells us in verse 24 there, and Jacob was left alone. And I wrote my Bible, finally, finally, God has brought Jacob alone to this place.

The word wrestle means to pound or make small. And so all night long, Jacob is wrestling with a man, a man who is pounding Jacob and making him smaller and smaller and smaller.

God has spent the last 20 years bringing Jacob to this moment, this moment of self and faith where they collide. And there's going to be only one winner. Only one winner can come out of that when self and faith collide.

Who is it who's wrestling with Jacob? Put yourself in Jacob's shoes. Who does Jacob think this is? Who's Jacob afraid of? He's just put his family on the south side.

He's on the north side. And all of a sudden, in the middle of the night, somebody jumps him. Right? And he's thinking, I knew it. That dirty dog, Esau. He came around behind and jumped me from behind. He's thinking, this is Esau.

[4 : 19] This is it. Now, I don't think it took too long to figure out it's not Esau. He's probably like, that's not hairy enough to be Esau. You know, he probably went for the same old hole to use as a kid. Pulled the hair on his arm and wasn't there.

But Jacob in this moment, I think, is just scared out of his mind. He thinks Esau's got me. You know, Job says, that which I have most feared, that which I have greatly feared has come upon me.

And at this moment, I think Jacob's like, this is it. But who is this? Who is this person? We're going to find out. Jacob's going to say, I saw God face to face. So he's going to recognize that he saw something more than a man and more than just an angel.

Well, in John chapter 1, verse 14, it tells us that the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The word that became flesh that dwelt among us. The one that could be beheld. The one that could be seen. That manifestation was Jesus. Colossians 1.15 says that Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

[5 : 22] The firstborn of every creature. So he is the image. There is no other image where not to set up graven images or idols. Jesus is that image. Jesus is the word made flesh.

So wherever God, in the Old Testament, appears in the flesh, it's just a pre-incarnate Christ. Right? So here, the word made flesh. Jesus himself has come to meet with Jacob.

Now what does Jacob do? He wants to wrestle. God met Jacob where he was at and he joined with him in his struggles. See, Jacob's going to wrestle all night. But Jacob, excuse me, he's not wrestling God.

Jacob and God are wrestling the same person. They're wrestling Jacob. At the river of Jabbok, God was emptying Jacob of all he held dear. He's emptied him of his fear, of his resources, of his family. And now he's emptying him of himself. Up to this point, who's Jacob? How is Jacob interfaced with the Lord? He's seen angels. He's had visions and dreams.

[6 : 22] But now he's meeting God face to face. The one who said to him way back in Genesis 28 or 6, was it, where he said, I will be with you. I will bring you to Haran and I will bring you back and I will faithfully keep you.

He is going to see him face to face. In verse 25, so he's wrestling all night here. He's being pounded and made small at this place of emptying.

And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, this is the man wrestling him. When the man wrestling him saw that he prevailed not against him, prevailed not against Jacob, well, he touched the hollow of his thigh.

And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. So you think, okay, Jacob was just this strong dude. How old is Jacob right now? 90-some years old.

He was 70-something when he went to Haran. 20 years in Haran. The dude is strong. And I think he knew it. The Bible says the glory of young men is their strength. It also says in Corinthians, I think, that the glory of women is their hair.

[7 : 29] It's their beauty. Guys are like, yeah. You know, if you say, honey, did you see that guy? He just benched, he just deadlifted 1,000 pounds. Yeah, but he's got bad hair. It's like, but who cares?

Look what he lifted. It's just, I think Jacob, he was a strong man. When he showed up in his 70s to Haran, he rolls back the stone off that well. And now he's in his 90s and he's like, I can take Esau. I can take this guy, whoever he is. I got him. But it doesn't mean that Jacob was so strong that this man couldn't overcome him. Because all he does is touch his thigh.

It's over. Jacob's done. So it's not about physical strength. There's something else going on here. The word prevailed. It says he prevailed not against him. It means to be made able or to have power.

So if we read it as that, it says when he, the man wrestling with him, saw that he had no power, that he was not made able against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh. Jacob was unwilling to surrender to this man, to who he was.

[8 : 34] And I think by this time, he's getting an idea of who he is. And so he touches his thigh. The thing that Jacob revealed in, the last thing Jacob had. He didn't have his resources.

He didn't have his family. All he had left was his strength. And God touched that. In wrestling, the hip drive and the legs are like the most important thing. Right?

As you wrestle against someone, there's a lot of hip drive there. As you get down on the ground, you're using your core and your hips. So man, I don't know if anybody here ever had their hip out of joint. I did not.

And not to get too graphic, but man, the hip is just a ball and socket joint. There's like nothing there holding that sucker in place.

Like some cartilage that it slips along there. And if you look on the one side, there's just nothing there. But it also has one of the greatest amount of mass of muscle in that area covering the hip, pulling on the hip.

[9 : 32] And you just think of the design that God put into that, that each one of those tendons and muscles pulls in the right way to hold that in place. But one's not pulling too hard so that your legs always catch forward or off to the side.

They have to hold that thing just perfectly. But if you look at that big tendon running vertical, that is the hip flexor. And that tendon, we're going to find out later at the end of the chapter, it says that it was touched and shrank.

And it did not have the strength that it had any longer to hold that hip in place. And it just went out of joint. And there's Jacob wrestling. In the midst of wrestling, God touches his hip.

God touches the center of his strength and pulls that out of joint. But in verse 25, it says, And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him.

So there's this desperation that in this tremendous amount of pain and debilitation, he's still trying to wrestle it out. There's another preoccurrence of Christ, another Christophany in the Old Testament, where Jesus shows up in physical form to a leader, to the representative on earth of God's people at that time.

[10 : 41] And he comes to Joshua in Joshua chapter 5 after he's just crossed the Jordan and he's there facing Jericho. And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho that he lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand.

And Joshua went unto him and said unto him, Are you for us or for our adversaries? And he said, No, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua knew who he was because he fell on his face to the earth and did worship and said unto him, What says my Lord unto his servant?

If that was Jacob, Jacob would have drawn his sword and just attacked. We'll ask questions later. Let's just, you know, show him this guy who's boss. But here Joshua has this surrender, this heart of surrender. And Jacob did not at this point.

God was bringing Jacob to this point where Jacob needed to realize that God's blessing, God's presence, God's faithfulness was not dependent upon Jacob. Not dependent upon his strength and his ability.

His relationship with God, the promises of God, the blessing of God had nothing to do with Jacob. Back when he promised him and said, Jacob, I'm going to be with you. Jacob tried to grab a hold of that and make it his own.

[11 : 53] And here God is bringing him to a point where he sees, Jacob, my blessing is not dependent upon your strength or your ability. Verse 26. And he, the man, who would be Christ, the Lord, says to Jacob, he says, let me go for the day breaks.

And he said, I will not let you go except you bless me. So we know it's not his great strength that's holding on, right? We just saw that he can just take a finger and kind of flick Jacob off like a fly.

He just took his hip out of joint. But he says, let me go. He's holding on tight to him. And I think of where we just looked in the resurrection account where Jesus appears to Mary at the tomb.

And he says, don't cling to me. I'm not yet ascended to my father. He's saying, you got to let me go. You can't hold me so tight. And that's that desperation I think Jacob has here. He's clinging so tightly to this man.

Jacob had nothing left, did he? Except what? Except the one he was holding on to. He's like, you're all I got left. Think of when the disciples went up on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus.

[12:57] He took Peter, James, and John, right? The special needs class. Boys, you're coming with me. Can't leave you alone for nothing. And they fell asleep. That's kind of their thing that they do. And they woke up and it says they saw Jesus and two others and their clothes shone as white.

Their garments were white and shone brightly. And it says as they were leaving, and it was Moses and Elijah. They saw him talking with him. It says as Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter says, Lord, it is good for us to be here.

Let us build three tabernacles. One for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. Right? The law and the prophets is leaving. Peter says, no, no, no, no, no. They need to stay. And Jesus, no, no, no. Then the cloud overshadows them, right? And Peter hears out of that. They hear out of that the voice saying, this is my beloved son. Hear him. You cannot hold on to the law and prophets. Let them go. You have the son.

And then it said when the cloud left, it says, and they saw no man, save Jesus only. I think of that here as Jacob, he has nobody left. He has nothing left. He has Jesus only.

[13:59] Jacob did not hold the Lord with his strength, but with his faith. It was with his faith as he now knew who this was. Jacob had discovered the source of all blessing, and he wasn't about to let him go.

He was holding on tight. Jesus began to preach later on in his ministry as he set his face firmly to Jerusalem. He began to preach and say that he would be offered up and crucified.

He began to say crazy things like, hey, you must eat of my body if you want to be a part of me. And he said many then turned back, would no longer follow him. Many that followed him from the baptism of John to that point, they're like, this is crazy.

We're out of here. I don't understand this. And Jesus then said unto his 12 in John chapter 6 to the apostles, he says to them, are you going to go also? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go?

No, you have the words of eternal life. We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. Peter's like, Lord, I don't understand everything you're saying, but I know these are the words of life and I'm not going to go away.

[15:02] You know, as we read the scripture and as we're in the word and there's stuff you look at and you go, I don't understand that. But I know this is the words of life. So I'm not about to abandon this to try and find something that's more palatable to my mind.

Maybe what my mind needs is like what Romans 12 tells me, to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. And as my mind is renewed and transformed through the word, sometimes you come across things that you're like, I didn't understand that and now I get it.

That's pretty crazy. We've had a lot of those moments I have going through Genesis, just seeing different things where it's like, I never knew that. I didn't realize that. I've been in this stuff since I was a little kid. But when you begin to take it in and accept the scripture as the words of life for yourself, God begins to open up things that you wouldn't have imagined before.

As we move into verse 27, Jacob holding on to this man, not willing to let him go. The man saying to him, let me go, where he could just kick him off.

But Jacob's faith is holding him fast. He says to Jacob now, he says, what is your name? Who are you? Jacob has to identify who he is.

[16:12] Jacob has to ask himself, who am I? 90 some year old man, right? 20 years he's been with Laban.

Before that, he's run away from home after trying to take the blessing from his older brother. Ever since he was a little kid, his mom had told him, Jacob, when you were in the womb, it was crazy, you and your brother.

I thought I was going to die of pregnancy. It was so wild. I thought you guys were going to bust out. And I went to the Lord and I said, Lord, what is this? And he said, well, there are two nations in your womb. And there are two peoples.

And the elder shall serve the younger. God has a plan for you, Jacob. You're the younger. But God has a plan for you that you are going to be his man. And Jacob has been trying his whole life to be this person, to be this man of the covenant, to be this chosen one.

And God now says to him, what is your name? And Jacob has to go after 90 some years. I've overcome Laban. I'm not Esau, but I'm still not the man I want to be. I am Jacob.

[17:16] I'm a supplanter. I'm a heel catcher. I'm a thief. I'm Jacob. It wasn't Esau. It wasn't all of his wives and concubines.

It wasn't his parents. The problem was that Jacob was facing the fact that the man of the covenant God had called, this person that God wanted to bring the Messiah through his line, that this person was still Jacob.

No matter how far he got along in his walk with the Lord, he recognized, man, I'm still Jacob. It's still in there. And Jacob had finally come face to face, not with God, but first with who he was.

Jacob now is recognizing face to face. He says, this is who I am. In Isaiah chapter six, so six chapters into the book of Isaiah, Isaiah has been prophesying to the nation Israel.

And something remarkable happens in Isaiah's life. The king, conservative, righteous king, who had ruled politically for 52 years, 52 year reign.

[18:21] Could you imagine that? 52 years of a conservative, righteous, reasonable government. He dies.

He dies. It tells us in Isaiah six, in the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah says, I saw the Lord sitting upon the throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

The thing that was so stable in Isaiah's life, the thing that his ministry had flourished under, that he'd been so used to his whole life, and all of a sudden it's gone. Instability everywhere. God, how am I going to go forward?

How am I going to be able to do this? But in that moment, in that year, he saw the Lord high and lifted up. And in verse five, then he says, as he comes face to face with the Lord, he says, Woe is me, for I am undone.

Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Six chapters. He's been a prophet. He's been prophesying to Israel.

[19:20] This is Isaiah. And only at this moment, this far into his ministry, this far into his walk with the Lord, he's realizing who he really is. I'm a man of unclean lips.

Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken from the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this has touched your lips. Your iniquity is taken away.

Your sin is purged. Only when he first saw who he was, after recognizing who God is and who he is before God, could he then be cleansed, right? The love that Jesus has.

For God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son. Do you know that love is only available to sinners? That love is, that for the whole world, the only sinners can experience it. Only the wicked, the sinful.

Jesus said, I came not to call the righteous. I didn't come for the sick. I came for the, I mean, for the healthy. I came for the sick sinner. You know what I do when I see sick sinners? Jesus loves them.

[20:23] They are the only people. Only those who recognize that they are a Jacob can experience his love. Verse 28. And he said to him, after Jacob now confesses this, this whole thing comes out and he says, I'm Jacob.

For 90 some years, I've tried to run away from myself. And I can't. I can't change the broken past and I don't know what my future holds. All I know is that in every place I go, Jacob is still there.

And he said, your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel. For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and has prevailed. Israel means he prevails with God or prince of God.

It occurs over 2,560 times in scripture. It's something like 2,564 or 66 or 68. Depends on how you word it. But over 2,560 times, this name now, Israel, has been given to Jacob will appear in scripture.

Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel. Prevailed. Made able and have power. You have prevailed with God. How did Jacob prevail with God?

[21:30] Because of his strength? Well, no, we saw that. God took care of that. Did he overcome him? Jacob prevailed with God? Excuse me. Because Jacob first let God prevail over him.

And then Jacob prevailed. Jacob is now called this prince of God. God takes him and says, you are no longer Jacob, a supplanter.

Someone who's trying to gain something, but you are someone who's been given something. I've given you this title. A prince of God must first be ruled by God, right?

I made up a word for today. Only God could do for Jacob what he could never do for himself. He could de-Jacob-fy him. Only God was able to do that.

Only God could do for Jacob what he's tried his whole life to do. Trying to de-Jacob-fy himself.

Trying to validate himself as a prince of God. Trying to say, yes, God, I'm going to be your man.

You called me and I can live up to that.

[22 : 27] Our man of the covenant, Jesus, has de-Jacob-fied us too, hasn't he? 2 Corinthians 5.17, therefore, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature. Old things are passed away.

Behold, all things are become new. But what's the condition there? If any man be in Christ, you have to be in Christ. You're not going to do it on your own. 2 Corinthians 5, Paul is writing about the resurrection.

And he says this in verse 4. He says, For we that are in this tabernacle do groan in these bodies, this dwelling place, this temporary dwelling place, being burdened. Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

In other words, he's saying, it's not that I just want to get rid of this body and then be unclothed to have no body. He's like, no, I'm looking for something greater. What I recognize is I need something to, in essence, replace the problem that I have.

And he says, Now he that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God. In other words, God who's created us and purposed us for this, that we would receive this new tent, this new body, this new person.

[23 : 35] He also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit, the one who does these things on our behalf. And then lastly, for this section right here, I want to look at Ezekiel 36.

If you remember in verse 26, it says, A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I'll take away the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a new heart. We hold that promise.

We say, yes, God is going to take away my stony heart. God wasn't writing that to the church. He was writing that to Israel, right? Who is Israel? Well, as we've just been talking about this morning, how they've been attacked and they're God's people.

We say, well, wait, I thought I was God's people. I'm in the church. Aren't I God's people? Israel is God's chosen people in the earth. They're the people, he said, I've chosen to put my name upon you, not because you're mighty or strong, but the opposite, because you're weak, you're despised, and you're lowly.

And I will show my power through the fact that I can keep you and will keep you, and you'll be my people in this earth. Now, the church is God's chosen people out of the earth, spiritual Israel.

[24 : 37] We come into the promises of Abraham through the spirit, right? And we know, as Paul says, that we are the unnatural branch that has been fitted into the vine. The natural branch Israel has been temporarily cut off.

But then he says, oh man, what a fit it's gonna be when the natural branch is brought back in. When physical Israel joins with spiritual Israel, that is gonna be amazing. And that is called the millennial, the thousand-year reign of Christ.

But in Ezekiel 36, God is speaking of this. He says, for I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries, and I'll bring you into your own land.

Did anybody see that happen? Next month, we celebrate that, right? May 14th, 1948, Israel became a nation. Shall a nation be birthed in a day? Well, it was. He took them from all their countries.

No nation, no ethnic group outside of their own country, in their own land, has lasted more than 200 years. Does anybody know a Hittite? A Babylonian? A Mayan?

[25 : 38] You know? I got a bunch of Mayan, but they're not your own. Does anybody know those? No. They don't exist. But Israel, over two, has lasted since they've been out of their land.

Since 70 AD, Titus Vespasian. Flushed them out of their land. Israel has lasted as an entity. And then God brings them back into their own land, their own nation, their own language.

And he says, And then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. Has that happened? Not yet. We are living right now in that gap between verse 24 and 25.

The age of grace. Where God hit a pause on his work with Israel to bring in us. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I'll take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I'll give you a heart of flesh.

And I'll put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments and do them. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave your fathers. You shall be my people, and I will be your God.

[26 : 40] And one day they will say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord when Jesus returns. And we will be there too to see physical Israel united and becoming one with spiritual Israel. And if you think it's amazing to be in the church, it's going to be an amazing time to see that take place in God's promises.

But in the same way, as God has promised Israel a new heart, he's given us a new heart too. A heart in the spirit. And so God has conquered. Jacob has prevailed because God has prevailed. Jacob has persevered through the struggle until he was conquered, right? He is struggling, and he's wrestling. Did Jacob conquer? God conquered Jacob, right?

Jacob as a prince, as God calls him a prince, what does that mean? What does it mean to be a prince? I think there's certain characteristics we can pull out of this to see what this means now in Jacob's life. You and I, we are kings and priests with God, Revelation says, that we have a new standing before the Lord that we could not have except because of what our man of the covenant had gone through.

Jacob as a prince, he now becomes an heir, doesn't he? He now has all the rights and privileges as an heir because a prince is a child of the king. He now has entered into that inheritance.

[27 : 57] Jacob as a prince was now royalty. Well, that's new. And with it, all the privileges and rights of royalty. Jacob as a prince now possessed authority.

An authority not his own. A prince has no authority. A prince has authority because of his relationship to the king. And Jacob, lastly, is under the king.

Jacob can't just declare himself prince. I am Prince Jacob, right? You have to have the king to have the prince. And Jacob now is under the king. And Jacob asked him, I think Jacob is so excited here. He's so elated. He's just like, he's been born again, essentially. He's been renewed, remade. He's been made Israel. And so in excitement, he said, well, tell me your name, I pray thee.

And he, the man, the Lord, said to him, wherefore is it that you do ask after my name? And he blessed him there. He's like, why are you asking my name? In John 14, Jesus is preparing to leave and go to heaven.

[28 : 59] After the crucifixion will be the resurrection. He's preparing his disciples. He says, boys, there's a lot of new things coming. I want you to be ready. And they're kind of excited. And then everybody's amped up. And Jesus says, if you had known me in John 14, verse seven, you should have known my father also.

And from henceforth, you do know him. And you've seen him. And Philip, kind of like Jacob, so excited about this, says, well, Lord, if you show us the father, if you show us the father, well, that, that's enough.

We'll never ask you anything else again. I promise. And Jesus said unto him, have I been so long a time with you? And yet you've not known me, Philip? He that has seen me has seen the father.

And how sayest thou then, show us the father? Jesus says, Philip, you know the father. Have you seen me? Well, yeah. Do you know me? Yeah. That's what he looks like. That's what he is.

God's blessing reveals who he is. Jacob says, well, what's your name? He's like, why are you asking my name? I'm going to bless you. That's going to tell you everything you need to know about me. God's blessing reveals who he is.

[30 : 02] And God's blessing, in the same way as Jesus has been a blessing, has revealed the father to us. God blessed Jacob at the place of his greatest fear, in struggle and pain, and in weakness and surrender.

That was the place Jacob received the greatest blessing of his life. His greatest fear had come upon him. He was struggling. He was in pain. He was in weakness and surrender.

And God said, finally, let me make you new. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel. For I have seen the face of God, and my life is preserved.

And obviously, Peniel just means the face of God. Fear had blinded Jacob to who God really was. But faith had opened his eyes. And it's the same for us. Faith is what opens our eyes.

When we let go of the thing that we're most afraid of, which is usually my own self-preservation, death to myself. It's that thought that, Lord, I know if I surrender to you. You're going to make me do the hardest thing, the thing I hate the most.

[31 : 02] I know it. You know I don't like really just going up to people I don't know. And I know it. You're going to make me go door to door to a bunch of strangers and open the door and say, Hi, do you know Christ? And begin to share with them. And that's not how you gifted me.

But you're probably going to make me do that just so I can die to self and get over myself. I'm sure that's what you're going to do. That's not the Lord. The Lord brings a blessing, not a curse. He doesn't force us to try and strive in our own self-effort. And so as we let go of that fear, and by faith we put it back in God's hands, well, now we're no longer focused on the fear and we can see something we hadn't seen before.

We can see the face of the Lord. Romans 5 verse 1, Paul says that, Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. What has faith done?

Faith has opened our eyes, opened the door of opportunity where we can now have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

[32 : 01] Faith gives us access to what we never had before, to what Jesus has given us freely. We are saved by faith through grace, that not of ourselves. Faith isn't a work. Faith isn't an effort, but it is our part.

Faith is the part God has given us to do. We have to exercise faith. We're not going to get to heaven and get a lot of credit, like, oh, wow, because you had faith, oh, I'm so thankful. No. All the credit and all the glory is to the Lord.

He's the Savior. We just recognize, thank you, Lord, you saved me. I want to receive that salvation, right? If I'm in the bottom of a pit and I'm stuck there and I'm dying and I'm lost and alone and someone comes and says, I can rescue you.

Would you like to be rescued? You know, and he pulls me up out of the pit. I'm not going to tell everybody I know. You know, I had a part in that rescue. If it wasn't for me, I wouldn't be standing here now.

I was amazing. You should have seen me. He said, you want to be rescued? And I said, yes. But some people act like that. It's like, well, you know what I've done? I've said yes to the Lord. Ooh.

[33 : 03] You know, Jesus said, if you have a faith the size of a mustard seed, then you can say to this mountain, be removed into the sea. It's not about the size of our faith, right? It's about the size of our God. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

God gives us, our faith is a gift, a gift in which we are able then to access all that God has for us. And as Jacob now sees the face of God, only those who bear a new name and a new nature will ever see God's face.

And here Jacob is, what's he approaching? What is he getting close to? God says, come back to Bethel. Come back to the house of God. But before he gets there, he's like, Jacob, we got some work to do. You can't come as Jacob.

You can't see my face as Jacob. You can't enter my house as Jacob. So I'm going to take care of that for you. Because for 90 some years, buddy, you haven't been able to do it. 1 Corinthians chapter 13, verse 12 says, For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.

Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known. But then face to face. We shall see God face to face. How? Because we've been made new.

[34 : 12] We've been born again. Only those who have received a new nature and a new name will ever see God face to face. And as he passed over Peniel, the sun rose upon him and he halted upon his thigh.

Jacob's hip is still busted. That sinew that shrank, it's still there. Jacob's walk had completely changed, hadn't it?

He had met the Lord face to face and he has a brand new walk. A walk that's in weakness and struggle and pain, right? But it's in the light. Look what it says there. As he passed over Peniel, as he passed over the face of God, the sun rose upon him and he halted upon his thigh.

Here Jacob, his walk was not perfect. He's limping along, but it was in the light and it was before the face of God. Matthew 18 verse 8 says, to us, Jesus says, hey, to the disciple, if your hand or your foot offends you, cut it off.

After the service, we'll be having a hand and foot cutting ceremony. If anybody needs that, just come and see me. No, that's not, right? People say, do you take the Bible literally? I take the Bible seriously.

[35 : 23] And I believe what it says. And when it's literal, it's literal. And when it's an illustration, it's an illustration. Wherever of your hand or your foot offends you, cut it off and cast it from you. It's better for you to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Better to enter into life maimed. I have many areas of my life that are still maimed because I've met God face to face, because he's given me a new name, because he's changed my life. But there's areas that are maimed. They'll be maimed until eternity.

And I'm happy they are. I don't want to go back to them. I don't want to have to deal with them.

There's areas of my life that I have to safeguard against because like, that's not for me. I can't, I can't handle that. And that's okay.

Far better to limp through life as Israel than to walk in the strength of Jacob. Right? I would rather to walk like Israel before the face of God in the light, limping along.

Well, I thought you used to be so strong, Jacob. Yeah. But you used to be the man, the can-do man. You had every answer and you knew what we were going to do and you were like, yes, this is what's going to happen with my family. And yeah.

[36 : 26] I met the Lord. 2 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul says, my grace is, that Paul's rehearsing here, reiterating to us what the Lord had said to him. He says, my grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Just like we said at the beginning, only sinners receive the love that Jesus has. Right?

Only the weak and the infirm can receive the strength Christ has. You want to be strong in the Lord? Then be weak in yourself. And here now, Jacob, what is he bearing in his body?

He's bearing the marks of what it cost a Jacob to become an Israel, isn't he? Revelation 5, 6 tells us, John says, behold, and lo, I beheld in the midst of the throne and in the midst of the four beasts, in the midst of the elders, there stood a lamb as it had been slain.

For all of eternity, the only man-made thing in heaven will be those marks Jesus bears. And he will bear them as evidence that each of us have a place to be there. That each of us are now a prince of God.

[37 : 36] That we are heirs and we have all the full rights and privileges as royalty. And if someone says, and they won't then because we'll be in heaven, but until then, the enemy's continuing to accuse. He's the accuser of the brethren.

And Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us. And I think when the enemy comes and goes, do you know what that Jacob did and he's supposed to be Israel? That the Lord goes, they're still there.

Ah, and Satan goes away. I'll try again next time. The sun arose this morning upon the man of the covenant who now bore in his body the price of a new name.

Jacob was now a broken man, but also a new man. And only a new man is fit to enter Bethel, the house of God. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night because he didn't want anybody to know that he was associating with this radical rabbi.

And he began to speak to him. And Jesus responds to this master of Israel, this teacher, and he says, truly, truly, I say unto you, Nicodemus, except a man be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God.

[38 : 39] And Nicodemus said to him, how can a man be born again when he's old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? How can Jacob become anything but a Jacob? I can't change myself.

How can I, can I rebirth myself into something different than I am? And the older I get, the longer I live, I got more and more stocked up against me. I got more of a broken past. Oh, as I look into the future, it's so unknown.

And Jesus said, truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit because only a new man, one born of the spirit, is fit to enter the house of God.

And then verse 32 kind of gives us a little insight into the effect this had on the whole nation that eventually came from Jacob. therefore the children of Israel, they do not eat of the sinew which shrank, that muscle that goes over the hip, which is upon the hollow of the thigh unto this day because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

And so, an Orthodox Jew today, unto this day, they will not eat the muscles of the leg. that they will use none of the leg at all.

[39 : 58] They will get rid of it if they don't have someone who's skilled enough to take that muscle out. Interesting though what it says. Look at the beginning. We take that for granted. The beginning of verse 32.

Therefore the children of who? Israel. Not the children of Jacob. The man of the covenant's new name and new nature would now be passed down upon all of his children.

Jacob, this man of the covenant, has been made new. He has a new name that he has to give to his children. And they would all become partakers. And then in commemoration of what God had done, right?

To commemorate this work, this they did in remembrance of him. Didn't they? They chose to eat a certain way to remember what God had done with Jacob.

Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me. Right? We do the same thing. I was that close doing communion. We just did it a couple weeks ago. And that we also, we commemorate the work that Jesus did to give us a new name and a new nature by what we choose to partake of.

[41 : 04] Right? That ends chapter 32. But the first three verses of 33, I think they're just like Jacob's triumph. It's just fantastic.

We have to cover them. And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, Esau came. Dun-da-da-da! Here he comes with 400 guys. And with him 400 men and he divided the children unto Leah and unto Rachel and unto the two handmaids and he put the handmaids and their children foremost and Leah and her children after and Rachel and Joseph hindermost are in the back.

Now I don't think this is what he had done originally where he tried to separate them and he thought, well, if Esau kills one group, maybe the other will survive and then the other. I mean, Esau and his 400 men are here.

No matter how he stacks them up, they're not going to escape them. I don't think that's it at all. I think in Jacob's mind, he's saving the best for last. He's just letting Esau see, this is what God has done for me.

This is what God has done for me. This is what God has done for me. And then look at this. This is what God has done for me. He's just stacking up the evidence of what God has done in his life. And look at the difference of what's happened in Jacob, now Israel, in his life.

[42 : 14] In verse 3, and he passed over before them. They're not in front of him anymore. He's not putting all of his resources and all of his family and everything else between him and the problem trying to take care of the problem because the problem is taken care of.

It no longer mattered whether Esau came in peace or war. Jacob had prevailed with God and had been conquered by God. And for Jacob, God had conquered not only Jacob, but God had conquered Esau to Jacob.

For Jacob, the broken past and the unknown future, God took care of that at Peniel. And so now he passes over before them. He bows himself to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother.

1 John 4, 18, there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out all fear. It doesn't say it casts out the thing that we're afraid of. It doesn't say God removes that thing I'm afraid of. It just takes away the fear because they don't have to fear because there's nothing to be afraid of with the Lord, is there? Jacob now faces his future with faith, faith in God, confidence in who he is before God, and humility as he goes to his brother. And Jacob, who had previously used his family as a shield to his troubles, was now out in front leading them forward into an unknown but conquered future.

[43 : 32] And guys, we have the same promise. We go forward into a conquered future. Romans 8, 37, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Jesus has already conquered. Has he conquered you? Has he conquered me? Has he prevailed? Am I like Isaiah, six chapters in, to God using me, to my walk, to my life with the Lord?

Am I 90 years old and still I'm wrestling with God because I've not let him conquer something in my life? We are more than conquerors. How are we more than conquerors? Because you don't have to conquer. If Christ is the conqueror, I no longer need to be the conqueror.

So I'm now more than a conqueror. I receive of the spoils. But what has he conquered? Well, if we move back a little bit in Romans, verse 35 of Romans chapter 8, it says, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? That word who, it means who, which, and what. Who?

[44 : 34] Is there somebody in your life causing tribulation, trials, somebody distressing you? Are you feeling persecuted? Are they taking your resources? Are you in peril? Are they threatening you? They can't separate you from the love of Christ.

What? What in our life? Is there something that's doing that? Well, it can't separate us because we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. And no matter which it is, whichever one, we have that promise.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And the last thing we need to realize that cannot separate us from Christ is this creature, this created being that I myself cannot separate myself from the Lord. He is able to prevail against me. Ephesians chapter 2. We asked that question in the beginning and you said, who am I?

[45 : 44] Well, who are we? Well, in Ephesians chapter 2 Paul reminds us as we have been conquered by Christ and now we are conquerors in Christ. He says, wherefore remember, don't forget this, that you were once in time past Gentiles in the flesh who are called the uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands.

You were once not part of God's covenant. There's no way for you to become part of it. I can't become a Jew. Much as I wish I was Jewish so I could go and make Aliyah and live over in Israel, I'm not. I've looked in my past.

Polish, not Jewish. We can't make ourselves. We can't de-Jacob-fy ourselves, can we? I can't force myself into that. That at that time you were without Christ.

Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world. You had no hope at all. You had no promise given to you as a Gentile. You were outside of God's covenant.

But now in Christ Jesus you who were sometimes afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ for he is our peace who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

[46 : 55] Who are we in Christ? Through Christ our man of the covenant both our broken past and our unknown future have been conquered. And today we can stop wrestling. I don't have to try. I don't have to try and become part of his covenant promise anymore.

I don't have to try and de-Jacob-fy myself. I can be no more and no less than who I am but in Christ. And that's enough. And I can let God conquer me instead so that we like Jacob we can prevail as Israel.

Paul tells us right here you now have all the rights and privileges that a child of Israel has. You have all the rights and privileges of a prince of an heir.

So as we close to worship the Lord what are you wrestling with? I mean I it's encouraging and discouraging to see like wow Isaiah and Jacob 90 some years old Isaiah and his ministry still wrestling with things but you know God didn't cast them off.

God didn't say man I am so through with you. I've been trying. Jacob I have knocked on this door for 90 years. I'm going to find someone else. Now his promises don't fail just like we read about his covenant with Israel.

[48 : 06] As the mountains are about Jerusalem so is the Lord around his people. He's going to keep them. Father as we come to you thank you for your word and closing out Lord this time together hearing from you receiving from you Lord we recognize Lord that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood Lord we recognize that the conqueror is not my abilities it's not my effort it's not my good deeds and Lord I recognize as well that it's not by my might or power but it's by your spirit just as you said to Nicodemus that which is born of flesh is flesh but that which is born of the spirit is

spirit.

Nicodemus you must be born of the spirit. Jacob you must let me de-Jacob-fy you. You can't do this on your own. Lord I look in my heart and I can see so many things that I'm gripping so tightly to instead of you.

I can see things I'm wrestling with instead of letting you conquer them conquer them I'm trying I'm trying to take a hold of them I'm trying to own that and control that instead of by faith release that. And so Lord I pray that like Jacob you would bring us to that place where we would see you face to face we would see ourselves for what we are and we would let you prevail Lord by your grace by your spirit that you would prevail greatly in our lives and that Lord we would live in this world as people made new fit for our father's house ready to go to Bethel the house of God able to walk in the light before our God before the face of God and that Lord just like Jacob when the Lord excuse me when the world looks at us they would see us out in front they would see us Lord living in faith in confidence and without fear looking to you we love you Jesus we pray you come quickly thank you for making us new Amen