

THE GOD OF JACOB

TEXT: Genesis 32:24-32

SUBJECT: How God's Power Can Change The Human Heart

Introduction

1. Jacob (the "schemer" or supplanter) is an illustration between flesh and spirit.
2. His life is one that illustrates the power of the old nature, as well as the power of God's grace.
3. Jacob reveals the ability of God in subduing the carnal nature.

Jacob In Us All

Fact: Jacob had an inner longing for God's best,

Fact: But, Jacob also had a longing to obtain God's best with carnal means.

Fact: Jacob wanted the things of God (but in his own way and in his own time).

Jacob Teaches Us All

◆ That using carnal methods to attain spiritual goals is never acceptable to God! (Repeat!)

The Setting Of Our Text

1. Jacob has arrived at his most critical moment in life.
2. He is about to face Esau whom he had cheated out of his birthright years before.
3. This is the second great spiritual crisis in Jacob's life:
 - At Bethel he saw the ladder (now at Jabbok he sees the Lord).
 - At Bethel he became a believing man (now he becomes a broken man).
 - At Bethel he died to sin (now he will die to self).
 - At Bethel he would leave with a spring in his step (from Jabbok he will leave with a new limp in his walk).
 - At Bethel his name was Jacob (now at Jabbok his name is changed to Israel).

(Jacob's Process In Prevailing With God)

I. Jacob's Confirmation (32:1-2)

Fact: Jacob and Laban (his father-in-law) have just made a covenant not to cross over the boundary to harm each other. (31:52)

Fact: Laban goes his way and Jacob goes his way toward Canaan.

Fact: Jacob goes on his way and is confirmed by God in two ways:

◆ **Jacob sees something** "And the angels of God met him." (v. 1)

Fact: An unseen angel escort had been with Jacob.

Fact: Jacob now understands that his deliverance from Laban was because of God (not his own cleverness and wisdom).

◆ **Jacob says something** "This is God's host" (v. 2)

Fact: And the vision of angels confirms to Jacob, that God is still in control (and hasn't given up on Jacob. And God hasn't given up on you either!

II. Jacob's Confusion (v. 3-23)

Fact: Even with the vision of angelic escort, Jacob is still Jacob (filled with unbelief).

Fact: Jacob is afraid of Esau and begins to scheme again how he can appease his brother.

A. Jacob Tries Negotiation (Vs. 3-5)

- He sends his messengers to flatter Esau: *“Tell Esau I’ve been with Laban and I have oxen, flocks, servants and want to find grace in your sight.”* (v.5)
- He hears a non-comforting message in return: *“We went to your brother Esau and he’s on his way to see you and 400 other men are with him.”* (v. 6)
- He is greatly afraid and in distress: *“Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.”* (v. 7)

B. Jacob Tries Desperation

- He pleads with God about God’s will. (v. 9)
- He confesses he is not worthy of God’s mercy. (v.10)
- He begs for deliverance from Esau. (v.11)
- He reminds God of the promises God had made. (v.12)

(But Jacob is still Jacob.)

Fact: As soon as he finishes praying, Jacob returns to his own scheming and planning.

Fact: He plots how he can appease Esau by giving him possessions. (Vs. 13-19)

Fact: He’s not even sure if his plan will work. *“Peradventure he will accept me.”* (V. 20)

- Jacob is still full of Jacob, in charge and plotting his own deliverance. So much so...
- That in vs. 21-23, Jacob sends his household across the brook of Jabbok for their own protection.

III. Jacob’s Confrontation and Change (V. 24-32)

Question: How did Jacob prevail with God and see his name changed?

Steps To Remember in Prevailing with God

#1. **Jacob was “alone”** *“And Jacob was left alone.”* (v. 24)

Fact: The family and the servants were sent over the brook.

Fact: Jacob’s plan was to guard against the possible night attack of his brother.

Fact: It was God that permitted and orchestrated this night for Jacob.

Fact: This night was the night of change, the turning point in Jacob’s life.

Question: Why is solitude not so bad at all?

Answer: *“I will lead her into solitude, and there I will speak to her.”*
(Hosea 2:14)

- It was alone that God worked with Moses, David and Elijah.
- And it is alone that God will work with you and me!

(Away from the world, the noise and the business of life. Why?)

1. To become absorbed with Jesus.
2. To become conscious of His presence.
3. To become familiar with His voice.

Never Forget These Beloved

- Solitude is a place of freedom (to hear those Divine Whispers from God).
- Solitude bears the fruit of letting God be your justifier in all things.
- Solitude (in the dark nights of life) allows God to work an inner transformation.
- Solitude allows you to reorient your life so that your words can be few and full.
- Solitude teaches us how to overcome impulsiveness and hurriedness.

#2. Jacob Was In Pain

“...and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.” (V. 24)

(What A Wrestling Match)

1. The Lord appeared in the form of man to wrestle with Jacob.
2. Jacob resisted continuously (he felt he could still manage his own affairs).
3. Jacob's old, carnal, stubborn, self-sufficient life was still very much alive.
4. Jacob tried to resist what God wanted to deal with.

Question: Is there anything God is dealing with you about?

Question: Are you resisting the Lord in any area of life?

Question: Do you need a “breakthrough”? Do you need God to subdue some area of life?

Remember:

- For over 20 years, God had been dealing with Jacob in the spiritual realm (God was patient) but now it was time for the night of change!

Why did God Touch Jacob's Thigh? (V. 25)

1. Because Jacob wouldn't yield to the Lord.
2. Because God wanted Jacob to surrender his self-will.
3. Because God had to break Jacob's self-reliance and get his dependence upon God.

Fact: Because Jacob would not surrender, the Divine Wrestler dislocated Jacob's thigh.

Fact: Jacob had depended too much on himself to accomplish what needed to be done.

Fact: Jacob learned a valuable lesson that the flesh must die!

#3. Jacob Was Desperate (V. 25)

“I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”

Fact: Before the dislocated thigh, Jacob said, *“Leave me alone.”*

Fact: After the dislocated thigh (and Jacob was a broken man) he says, *“I will not let you go except thou bless me.”*

(What a change takes place)

- Jacob changed from cunning to clinging.
- Jacob changed from resisting to resting.
- Jacob changed from self to submission.
- Jacob changed from scheming to surrender.

#4. Jacob Was Honest (V. 27) *“What is your name? And he said, I am Jacob.”*

Question: Didn't the Lord know Jacob's name?

Answer: Of course He did!

Question: Then why did God ask him his name?

Answer: To see if Jacob would admit he was Jacob and confess to all that his name stood for: (His name represented his character.)

1. A Sham
2. A Fraud
3. A Cheat
4. A Supplanter
5. A Contender
6. A Deceiver

(Here's the change.)

- ◆ Jacob answered his name was "Jacob" and confessed to being all that his name stood for. (Which reveals a powerful truth)
 - That our effectiveness in prayer will never rise above our willingness to stand searchable and come clean before God. (Repeat)

#5. Jacob Was Changed

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince has thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." (V. 28)

Question: Why the name change?

Answer: Because Jacob finally acknowledged God as his commander in chief!

Fact: "Israel" means "Prince with God".

Fact: The new name indicated that Jacob was now in submission to God.

Question: What follows absolute surrender?

Answer: That anointing from God alone.

"He blessed Jacob there." (V. 29)

"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face." (V. 30)

1. A sense of awe sweeps over his soul. (God's presence overwhelms him.)
 2. A sense of approval comes to Jacob's heart.
- Because Jacob was **broken, blessed and branded!**

Conclusion

(V. 31) *"As He passed over, He halted upon his thigh."*

Ask: Can you see Jacob crossing over Jabbok?

Ask: Can you see him limping into camp where his wife and children are?

Ask: Can you imagine how they questioned dad?

"What happened to you?" they asked, (and Jacob replies)

"Last night I met the Lord, and will never walk the same again!!!"

"For years I schemed and worried about Esau, but now I've surrendered it all to God."

Amen
Bill Kirk