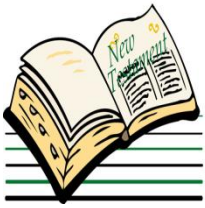


Sermon Notes



Title: "Jacob Wrestles with God Before He Meets Esau"

Text: Genesis 32:1-32

Theme: As Jacob prepared to encounter Esau, he first encountered God – when he least expected it. Whatever you might be facing today in your life, if you are facing it without Christ you cannot ultimately succeed. Your natural strength may help you for a while, but at some point it will fail you.

I. Jacob Encounters _____ (1-2)

II. Jacob Makes _____ to Meet Esau (3-21)

III. Jacob _____ God (22-32)

IV. Applications

A. Jacob's life teaches that God is at _____ in our lives to _____ us.

B. Just as Jacob became a "_____" man in this encounter with God, you, too, become a _____ person when God _____ you through the _____.

Questions to Answer, Discuss, and Consider at Home or in Small Group:

1. What did Jacob encounter after Laban left him (v. 1)?
2. Whom did Jacob seek to contact before going home (v. 3)?
3. What was the report from Jacob's messengers that alarmed him (vv.6-7a)?
4. What did Jacob first do after hearing this report (vv. 7b-8)?
5. What else did Jacob do because he was afraid of Esau (vv. 9-12)?
6. Jacob devised a strategy to appease his brother, Esau. What was it (vv. 13-21)?
7. That night what did Jacob do with his wives and children (vv. 22-23)?
8. What unusual occurrence happened to Jacob while he was alone by the river (vv. 24b)?
9. What happened to Jacob in this occurrence that physically affected him (v. 25)?
10. What did Jacob come to ask from this man (v. 26b)?
11. What did this assailant do that demonstrated his authority? What was Jacob's new name? What did it signify (v. 28)?
12. What did Jacob name the place where this happened? What does this name signify (v. 30)?
13. What significance do you see in Jacob's "struggle" with this unnamed person?
14. How do we know this person was God?
15. Do you think this "man" was Christ Jesus? Why or why not?
16. Why didn't God crush Jacob in this wrestling match?
17. How is Jacob's change of name and subsequent usage of it different from Abraham's change of name? Whose name change represents a change in the "objective" sphere as distinct from the "subjective" sphere?
18. Do you ever sense that you are in a "wrestling match" with God? How are you like Jacob? How are you unlike Jacob?
19. If we are "new creations in Christ" and all things have become new, why does so much of the "old life" remain with us?
20. Does Jacob's experience mean that a person must have a "crisis" experience with God in order for his or her relationship with the Lord to be authentic? Why or why not?
21. How has the LORD God "overpowered" you? What are the ways you have seen changes in your life as you have walked with Christ over the weeks, months, or years?

22. In what ways have you seen the Lord develop a “brokenness” in your life as you have struggled and wrestled with various issues and situations throughout life? How was Jacob’s weakness (i.e. his limp) a blessing? What spiritual “limps” do you have?