

“What will it take in our lives for our self-sufficiency to dissolve? Self-sufficiency keeps us away from God and prevents us from living a life of faith.” -NIV Applications Commentary pg.616

Series: *The complicated Life of Jacob* #4 Noah Largent 9/6/15

Genesis 31:3 Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you.”

Genesis 32:3-5 ³ Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. ⁴ He instructed them: “This is what you are to say to my lord Esau: ‘Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now. ⁵ I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, male and female servants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.’”

Genesis 32:6-12 ⁶ When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.” ⁷ In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well. ⁸ He thought, “If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape.”

⁹ Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, Lord, you who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,’ ¹⁰ I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two camps. ¹¹ Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. ¹² But you have said, ‘I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.’”

Genesis 32:22-28 ²² That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. ²⁴ So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. ²⁶ Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” ²⁷ The man asked him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he answered. ²⁸ Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

Background:

The story of Jacob’s life spans 25 chapters in Genesis. It doesn’t take long for him to find trouble. First Jacob takes advantage of his brother Esau by getting him to surrender his birthright, then with his mother’s assistance, Jacob deceives his father into getting the first blessing. Jacob escapes the wrath of his brother Esau by going North to live in the distant land of Haran. Now, after more than 20 years of separation from Esau and the land that God had promised him, he begins the journey back. One obstacle remains in his path, he must face his brother. What will his past bad behavior cost him now? **This is the *complicated* life of Jacob.**

1. To receive God’s blessing you have to meet God yourself.

Jacob has a lineage to brag about, but like Jesus pointed out to the pharisees (John8:33-47) genetics doesn’t entitle you to be part of God’s family.

2. It’s never too late to stop “wrestling” with others and start “wrestling” with God.

Like Jacob, we often find ourselves trying to control and manipulate our circumstances and others, as opposed to learning to trust God to guide our lives.

3. God is very patient with us as we wrestle with Him, but make no mistake, God is more concerned with our *transformation* than our *comfort*.

4. Coming to trust in God’s grace gives us genuine hope for experiencing transformation in our own lives and for the lives of others too.

Defying all expectations, Esau has had a change of heart (Genesis 33:4)! God is clearly at work in Jacob’s life and Esau’s too. We see God’s grace at work in Jacob and Esau, we shouldn’t be surprised to see it at work in our lives and the lives of others as well.

Notes:
