

*Pastor Greg - Ministry Magnifies - true for men here / who you are on the inside eventually be seen on the outside*

Ministry has the ability to cause us to face ourselves - for every disciples we must at some point face ourselves  
The point is so that the things that are inside us can be dealt with and God can do a miracle.

Jacob is faced with a terrible situation- much of his own making, we find him left all alone with God, and is forced to come face to face with who he is (Jacob means schemer or conniver)

### **I. Wrestling with God**

#### **A. Reality of Needs**

1. We can face problems outside of our control
  - a) our story: Jacob was about to meet his brother that he ripped off- the problem was his brother had 400 armed men with him

**Genesis 32:11-12** *Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children.*

2. We can face problems that we have created for ourselves
  - a) Jacob deceived his brother, stole his birthright and final blessing from him, after all this Jacob ran away from his brother.
  - b) If we are honest there are issues and dilemmas we face that are a result of our own bad decision

#### **B. Desperations of Life drive us to two places**

1. Desperation can often drive us to God for help
  - a) Jacob reminds God of the promise He made to him- this promise would not happen if Jacob was dead

**Genesis 32:12** *But you said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'*

2. Desperation can also drive us to **doing our own thing**
  - a) Before Jacob seeks God in our text we find him trying to do his own thing

**Genesis 32:13-16** *So he stayed there that night, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau, 14 two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15 thirty milking camels and their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. 16 These he handed over to his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on ahead of me and put a space between drove and drove." **the answers you want automatically it can drive you to doing your own thing***

- b) JACOB wrestled with God and wanted God to bless him- That word bless means to congratulate, kneel (down), praise, salute, thank. in other words **"God bless my will"**
- c) **This is where men can find themselves in ministry - God Bless what I am doing**

#### **C. Contending in prayer**

1. Contending in prayer is personal
    - a) Our text- Jacob is all alone when he meets God
- Genesis 32:24** *Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.*
- b) Prayer is often times a very personal meeting with God- things we are going through that many people may not know you are going through
2. Fighting the wrong battles in prayer
    - a) Sometimes we can approach prayer as something we demand God to do
    - b) We pray the answer does not come when we want we can then stop contending
    - c) vending machine faith- I put in my demand and God responds

**Genesis 32:25** *Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.*

**Genesis 32:26** *And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"*

3. The problem is when we want **God to change the circumstances but not us**

- a) Jacob had problems that were of his own making- he was correct to seek God for help but his demand was that God fix it all w/out fixing him first

## II. Identity Crisis

### A. Facing who we are

#### 1. Truth in life: There are things inside us that can hinder our ministry

**Genesis 32:26** *And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"*

**Genesis 32:27** *So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob."*

- a) Jacob wrestles with God and God responds by asking what Jacobs name was
- b) Jacob means: Identity— Heel grabber, scammer, swindler, deceitful
- 2. The question: What is your name - not what do people call you / who are you on the inside / identity
  - a) Lust, prideful, envy, Jealousy, selfishness, fearful, carnality, ego
- 3. Seeing who we are can be painful sometimes
  - a) After the wrestling with God- God put Jacob's hip out of joint
  - b) When you think about your life- your short comings, areas in your faith where you fall short- this is painful

**1 Chronicles 4:9-10** *9 Jabez was more honorable than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." 10 Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!" And God granted what he asked.*

(1) Jabez- is name meant pain - people would no doubt ask what your name? My name is pain

### B. Gods desire is to change us: as men of God you are not a complete product / things that cannot stay the same inside us

- 1. The change needs to happen first within us
  - a) God answers Jacobs request by first changing who He is
- 2. This is repentance— Changing your mind about your sin
  - a) Requires honesty about who you are- asking the question "Why am I like this, why do I think like that, why am I struggling with the same thing over and over"
  - b) This is what Jacob does - tells God this is my name/ this is who I am/ what Ive done
- 3. The hope is we don't have to stay the same person

**Genesis 32:28** *And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."*

**Genesis 32:29** *Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.*

- a) When God changes the inside of a person then the result is that things outside begin to change

## III. Miracle of change

### A. Gods power operating in your life

- 1. Jacob's identity was forever changed
  - a) Israel means: the power of God- Jacobs name changed from selfish deceiver to the power of God- What a miracle
- 2. Gods power can operate through your life
  - a) We have to allow God to change those areas of our lives we hide from God

### B. Miracle of change when we face our selves

- 1. This is the blessing released when we repent

**Genesis 32:30** *And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."*

#### 2. Supernatural reality of what God can do for men when they humble themselves

- a) Jacob turned to Israel - God is able to change your name this morning also