

Facing the Real Problem

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[0 : 00] This morning's scripture reading is taken from Genesis chapter 32. I have sent to tell my Lord, in order that I might find favor in your sight.

And the messengers returned to Jacob saying, We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you. And there are 400 men with him.

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people who were with him and the flocks and herds and camels into two camps, thinking, If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape.

And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, Return to your country and to your kindred that I may do you good.

I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant. For with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.

[2 : 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.

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. So he stayed there that night, and from what he had with him, he took a present for his brother Esau.

Two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milking camels and their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.

Then 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.

And he instructed the first, When Esau, my brother, meets you, and asks you, To whom do you belong? Where are you going?

[3 : 20] And whose are these ahead of you? Then you shall say, They belong to your servant Jacob. They are present, sent to my lord Esau, and moreover, he is behind us.

He likewise instructed the second and third and all who followed the drove. You shall say the same thing to Esau when you find him. You shall say, Moreover, your servant Jacob is behind us.

For he thought, I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me. And afterward, I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me.

So the present passed on ahead of him, And he himself stayed that night in the camp. The same night, He arose, Took his two wives, His two female servants, And his eleven children, And crossed the ford of the Jabbok.

He took them, And sent them across the stream, And everything else that he had. And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.

[4 : 33] When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, He touched his hip socket, And Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.

Then he said, Let me go, For the day has broken. But Jacob said, I will not let you go unless you bless me.

Sorry, I lost my spot. Twenty-seven? Yes, sorry. And he said to him, What is your name?

And he said, Jacob. Then he said, Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel. For you have striven with God and with men, And have prevailed.

Then Jacob asked him, Please tell me your name. But he said, Why is it that you ask my name? And there he blessed him.

[5 : 35] So Jacob called the name of that place, Penuel, Saying, For I have seen God face to face, And yet my life has been delivered.

The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, Limping because of his hip. Therefore, To this day, The people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh That is on the hip socket, Because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip On the sinew of the thigh.

Do we have projection?

Well, this morning we are continuing our extended sermon series In the book of Genesis. And we come to a critical point in the life of Jacob.

The Lord had commanded him to return home to Canaan, To leave Paddan Aram, Where he had lived for 20 years, And return home.

[6 : 51] And so this means that after 20 years of hiding from his brother Who wanted to murder him, He now has to face the brother From whom he stole his blessing and his birthright.

And so in this section that we have come to this morning, We find that Jacob is terrified. And rightfully so. He's terrified because not only now is it an issue of him facing his brother, But also his own family is exposed to the anger of his brother.

And the Bible says he was afraid. He was terrified. But when you consider this account, What we realize is that Jacob's fear was misplaced.

His focus was misplaced. Jacob had another problem. Jacob had a bigger problem that he was overlooking, That he was more focused on, With his brother than this problem that he was overlooking, Which was his real problem.

And brothers and sisters, Jacob really is no different from us. So often we find ourselves in places of difficulty, And like Jacob, We are looking in the wrong place at the wrong thing.

[8 : 22] We are focused on something else other than a real problem that we need to focus on. Maybe like Jacob, It's a relational situation, Some relational breakdown, And we are focused on that other person, And how we want them to change, And what we want them to do.

Or maybe it's a circumstantial situation. Maybe it's a business challenge that you're facing. Maybe it's a career issue that's in front of you, And it has you perplexed.

And you're focusing on that, And believing that if only it would change, Then all would be well. And I pray this morning, Brothers and sisters, That as we consider this passage, We realize that It takes more than, Or we need to do more than just focus on That immediate problem in front of us.

But there is something else that God would have us to focus on. Something else that is our real and primary problem. Our real and primary need. And that is where we need to look.

And so this morning, May God help us to do that. And I can say it that way, Because I imagine that every single one of us Has some situation in our lives, Whether it is relational, Whether it is circumstantial, It has our attention.

[9 : 49] It's occupying our focus. And I believe the Lord would say to us, Change your focus. You need something else. And I pray we'd all hear that this morning.

But first let me just pray for us. Father, would you meet us in this time of Sitting under the preaching of your word. Lord, your word is alive.

And by your spirit, You apply it to our hearts. And so would you do this for all of us now, Lord. Myself included. Father, I ask that you would Anoint me by your spirit.

And I pray That above my voice, Your voice will be heard. Help me to be faithful Faithful To the words of scripture.

And would you do the work in our hearts That only you can do. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, those of you who are Perceptive this morning Would notice that The sermon title projected Is different from the one That's printed in your bulletin.

[10 : 56] I'm not going to ask who all noticed it. But it is different. And the reason it's different Is because I believe That the one projected Better reflects this account In the life of Jacob.

I've structured the sermon this morning Around two Two very simple points. And the first point captures What we see Jacob doing In verses 1 to 21.

He is preoccupied With finding a solution To address the serious threat That he faced From his brother Esau. Jacob was desiring A change In This life-threatening Situation that he faced With Esau.

And what he really wanted Was he wanted Some external change. And that's my first point This morning Desiring external Change. As he makes his way Back to Canaan He is terrified That he is

to face His brother Whom he cheated 20 years ago.

And the last words He'd remember As he left Canaan Was his brother's threat That as soon as My father dies I'm going to kill you. What we see though Is we see God's kindness To Jacob As he began This journey We see in verse 1 That angels met him These angels Were from the Lord The Lord sent them To Jacob And they were to be To him A sign Of comfort And encouragement And assurance That God was with him God was going to be With him As he took this Necessary But difficult Journey Of going back To the place Where he had sinned Greatly Against his brother We're not told How many angels Met him But for whatever reason Jacob renamed The place So he named The place Mahana Which means Two camps And then we see

[13:11] In verses 3 to 5 That Jacob Devises a plan He devises A scheme That he was Going to Hopefully use To pacify His brother's anger He sends Messengers ahead Of him And he says What I want you To do Is I want you To go and Find my brother Esau And tell him That I'm coming Home And I have A lot of stuff I have a lot Of flock I have male Servants And female Servants And oxen And donkeys And just tell him That you know I'm coming Home And tell him All these things For one reason I want to find Favor in his eyes That I may find Favor in his eyes I'm not sure What Jacob was Thinking By that plan Because he Didn't offer him Anything It seemed like He was more like More or less Bragging about All that he had And as if That was supposed To pacify His brother's

Anger And so the Messengers go And they Return But they don't Return with a Message from Esau They don't Say Esau Said anything All they said To him is We met Your brother He is coming To meet you He's going To shorten Your journey You're not Going to have To make The whole Trip Indicator He's going To meet you And he's Coming with 400 men Now Jacob Was smart And he understood What that meant 400 was the Size of a Militia That was a Typical militia You remember When Lot Was in Problems And Abraham Went to Rescue him Abraham had About 318 Men who Went with Him So this Was typical That you Would have This fighting Army This little Army With you And so Jacob Understood My brother's Heart isn't Changed My brother Is coming With me You don't

Need to Greet me With 400 Men That was A signal To him And so What Jacob Does is Jacob Changes his Plan He no Longer Is going To just Try to Brag About What he What he Has He's going To do Something Concrete Look at His response Starting in Verse 7 It says Jacob Was greatly Afraid And distressed He divided The people He divided The people Who were With him And the Flocks And the Herds And the Camels Into two Camps Thinking If Esau Comes to The one Camp And attacks It Then the Camp that Is left Would escape He planned For the Worse He knew That the People Who were With him Were no Match For the 400 Men Who were Coming With his Brother Esau

And then We see Jacob Doing something He has That he has Never recorded As having Done before For the First time In this Account In Genesis About the Life of Jacob We find Jacob Praying First time Jacob prays As recorded In scripture Maybe he prayed In his heart But this First time We have A record Of him Crying out To God In all Of his Distress Look again At how He prays And Jacob Said O God Of my Father Abraham And God Of my Father Isaac O Yahweh O Yahweh Who said To me Return To your Country And your Kindred That I May do You Good I am Not worthy Of the Least Of all The Deeds Of steadfast Love And all The Faithfulness That you Have shown To your Servant For only With my Staff I crossed This Jordan And now I have Become two Camps 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 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 This is a Fervent Prayer This is not a Matter of Fact Prayer This is a Prayer Of a Desperate Man Pouring out His heart To God It's an Honest Prayer He expresses Both fear And faith In this Prayer He tells God His Fear He says I'm Fearful That he's Going to Come and Attack Me But then He still Says In the End But you Said I will Surely Do you Good And make Your Offspring As the Sand Of the Sea Which Cannot Be Numbered For

[18:12] Multitude If you Serve the Lord For any Length Of Time You Know This Kind You Know This Kind Of Prayer Where You Just Acknowledge The Realities You Acknowledge Your Affairs And You're Still Holding On To The Promises That God Has Made And You're Back And For Between The Two Of Them And Both Of Them Are As Real As Anything Else In Your Heart This Prayer That Jacob Prays Is A Prayer We Could Always Pray Jacob Says Of Kindness And

Steadfast Love And Faithfulness That You've Shown To Your Servant Brothers And Sisters This Is Always True With Us Even When We Are On Our Best Performance Even When We Have Done Our Best Deeds Of Righteousness We Are Never Deserving Of The Kindness And The Goodness Of The Lord This

Is Always True For Us And This Is How Jacob Pours Out His Heart To The Lord Remembering God You've Been So Good To Me Here I Am I Left With My Staff And Now I Have Two Amazing Camps Of People Who Are My Family And All This I Amass But He's Fearful And It's Okay To Tell God Our Fears It's Okay To Pour Our Hearts Out To Him There Will Be People Tell You Oh No Don't Do That You Need To Speak Faith As If We Can Manipulate God In Some Way And He Doesn't Know Our Hearts He Knows Our Hearts And So Jacob Pours Out His Heart To The Lord And He Calls And Recounts God's Promise To Him That He's Going To Do Good To Him He's Going! Comes Up With A Concrete Plan We See It In Verses 13 To 21 He Decides To Prepare A Lavish Gift For His Brother Some 580 Animals If You Take The Time To Count The Animals That He Puts Together For His Brother And Then When You Look At The Animals He Gave Animals! That Had The Potential To Multiply As Well A Lot Of Female Animals And A Few Male Animals Who Were Able To Cause The Multiplication To Happen So This Is An Amazing Gift By Any Measurement And He Decides This Is Jacob This Is Jacob Vintage This Is Vintage Jacob He Says Now What I'm Going To Do Is I'm Going To Let See The Whole Gift Once I Can Put Them In Little Groups And So He Divides This Big Gift Up In These Little Groups Puts A Servant Over Each One And He Tells Them What To Say When They Go To Esau He Says Would You Say To Him That All This Belongs To Your Lord Your Servant Tells Him To Make Sure To Tell Esau That He Calls Himself Esau Servant These Belong To Your Servant And Your Servant Jacob And He Sends Them To You As A Gift And He Has All Of Them In Succession This Is This Plan That They Are Going! That One After The Other! They Give You A Gift And Then They Give You Another Gift You Think It's Over And Then They Give You Another Gift Again And Then You Think It's Over And They Give You Another Gift And So This Is The Effect That Jacob Wants To Have On Esau And He's Very Clear As to Why He Wants To Do Look At Verse 20 He Says!

[22 : 18] Perhaps He Will Accept Me So What Is Jacob Doing Jacob Is Trying To Buy Forgiveness Jacob Is Trying To Let His Gift Do For Him What He Himself Would Not Do With His Own Words He Knows His Brother Is Angry And Rightfully So Against Them And So He Wants To Buy Peace He Wants To Pacify His Brother With This Excessive Gift He Could Have Told Them He Could Have Told Them Go To My Brother And Tell My Brother Your Twin Brother Jacob Is Coming Home And He Said That We Should Tell You That He Is So Sorry

For How He Cheated You How He Deceived His Father And Stole The Blessing How He When You Were Vulnerable And Hungry!

And He Made You Sell Your Birthright For Some Stew He Said He Is Sorry He Is Coming Back He Wants To Make Things Right And He Will Do Whatever!

Is Necessary To Make Things Right He Could Have Is Jacob Tries To Buy It Rather Than Own It Tries To Buy Forgiveness Rather Than Coming Clean And Honestly Confessing To His Brother What He Has Done And Here Again Brothers And Sisters Jacob Is Not Alone Jacob Is Not Alone How Often Do We Take A Very Similar Approach As Jacob How Often Are We Not Quick To Own Our Own Sin Towards Those We Have Sinned Against And We Instead Go To Great Length To Buy Forgiveness Rather Than Humble Ourselves And Specifically And Clearly Confess Our Sins And Ask For For Forgiveness Husbands

When we Sin Against Our Wives A Dozen Roses With Chocolates Even A Car Or Trip Or Whatever We Could Afford Is No Substitute For Owning And Confessing Our Sin And Asking For Forgiveness And Wives The Same Is True On Your Side As Well When You Sin Against Your Husband Nothing Substitutes The Honest Confession Of Sin And Asking For For Forgiveness And Likewise children When You Sin Against Your Parents Doing That Chore That You Know They Would Want You To Do Or Something Else You Think Will Bring Pleasure To Them!

[25 : 26] That's No! Substitute And Being Honest And Saying I Am Sorry I Did This And I Should Not Have Done It Would You Forgive Me And The Reason Is That True Forgiveness Can Can Be Forgiveness You Can't Buy Forgiveness Forgiveness Is A Gift Of Grace You Realize That When We Sin Even When We Confess Our Sin Even When We Own Our Sin That Does Not Merit Forgiveness We Don't Buy Forgiveness Even With Our Confession Of Sin When Forgiveness Is

Extended To Us It Is A Gift Of Grace It Can Never Be Earned And It Is Never Ever Deserved But It Is What We Must Do Why

Is It That We Find It So Difficult To Humble Ourselves And Ask For Forgiveness Confessing Our Sin Not I'm Sorry For This Morning Not That Kind Of Acknowledgement Of Sin I'm Sorry This Morning That I Was Unkind My Words Were Harsh My Words Were Critical And I'm Sorry Would You Forgive Me Why Is It That We Find That More Difficult Than Going To Great Length To Doing All Sorts Of Things To Try To Communicate Through The Back Door That I'm Sorry Why Is It That We Will Do More Going Through The Back Door Than Coming Through The Front Door And Just Owning Our Sin Jacob Went To Great Length To Try To Appease

His Brother Esau He Tried To Bribe Him With Gifts And It Appears That Jacob Wasn't So Much Interested In Reconciling With His Brother And Getting Right At Heart With His Brother He Just Wanted His Brother Not To Harm Him He Just Wanted Some Peace Between Him And His Brother But The Situation That Jacob Faced Couldn't Be Changed By A Bribe He Couldn't Change His Brother By Material Possessions And The Truth Is He Didn't Need To Change His Brother By Material Possessions Because Esau Was Not His Problem Esau Was Not Jacob's Problem Jacob's Problem Was Jacob Jacob's

Dishonesty Jacob's Hard Heartedness His Scheming His Deception Got Him Into The Problem That He Found Himself In And Yet He Thought Esau Was His Problem He Was Desiring Some External Change In His Brother Esau Thinking And Hoping That Was Going To Fix The Problem But No The Problem Was Him And That Was What He Was Trying To Do With His Brother Esau Was Not Going To Change Him It Was Not Going To Fix The Problem Which Was Jacob The Chains That Jacob Needed Was An Internal Change The Chains That Jacob Needed Was A Hard Change And This Brings To My Second And Final Point Needing Internal Change Starting In Verse 22 Jacob's Focus Shifts Away From The Change He Desired In His Brother To The Change He Needed In Himself Look Again At What It Says Starting In Verse 22 That Same Night He Arose And Took His Two Wives His Two Female Servants And His Eleven Children And Crossed The Fort Of Jebek He Took Them And Sent Them Across The Stream And Everything Else That He Had And Jacob Was Left Alone And A Man Wrestled With Him Until The Breaking Of The Day Jacob Was Now In A Place Where He Was All Alone All Of His Wealth Was Separated From Him His Wives And Children Were Separated From Him And He Now Finds Himself All Alone Commenting

[30 : 32] On Jacob Being Left Alone Deceased Theologian Derek Kidna He Insightfully Observed That Whether Or Not Jacob Felt The Need To Be Alone Before The Crisis That Was In Front Of Him God Saw It And God Saw Fit To It God Saw God Saw To It Sorry And What It Really Means Is That Jacob Being Left Alone Was More Than A Decision Jacob Would Have Made Ultimately God Was Sovereign Above It As We Heard Brother Lyndon Share Earlier Which I Was Just Encouraged By Those Words From Job This Morning A Reminded That God Is Sovereign God Was The One Who Orchestrated That Jacob Would Find Himself In This At Night No Distractions From The Demands Of The Animals That He Had No Distractions

From His Wives And His Children But He Was Left All Alone By Divine Design Even Though He May Have Thought Let Me Kind Of Clear My Head Let Me Think About Tomorrow And I Just Will Be Left For Myself No God Was In That And God Was The One Who Had Him Isolated All Alone And I Imagine He Did A Lot Of Thinking We Have No Account Of Him Praying But As You Could Imagine As Happens To Us When We Have Some Big Thing In Front Of Us We Tend To Be Thinking About It And We Can Think About It All Night And It Can Rob Us Of Sleep So That's The Place That Jacob Finds Himself We're Told In Verse 25 That A Man Wrestled With Him Until The Breaking Of The Day So It Means Jacob Didn't Sleep All Night He Had A Restless Night All Night But Here's What Is Clear Jacob Didn't Have A Dream This Was Not A Dream That Jacob Was Having That Night This Was Not A Vivid Dream That He Had We Know This Because Of What We Read In Verse 25 Look At Verse 25 Again It Says When The Man Saw That He Did Not Prevail Against Jacob He Touched His Hip Socket And Jacob's Hip Was Put Out Of Joint As He Wrestled With Him This Is A Real Experience That Jacob Was Having That Night Now Naturally The question Comes To Our Mind What Are We To Make Of This Man Who Is This Man Who Wrestled With Jacob That Night In Verse 29 Jacob Asked The Man His Name But He Refused To Answer He Didn't Give Him The Answer That He Wanted But

From This Account Of This Man Wrestling With Jacob We Are Able To See That This Man Was God Himself First Of All He Was Powerful Enough Just To Touch The Hip Socket Of Jacob And He

Run Out Of The Joint This Is No Ordinary Wrestling That Is Going On This Is No Mere Human Being Who Is Wrestling With Jacob Who Simply Touches Intentionally Touches His Hip Joint! His Hip Socket And Goes Out A Joint And Then Second Even Though The Man Didn't Identify Himself To Jacob When Jacob Asked Who He Was Jacob Somehow Instinctively Knew That He Was Wrestling With None Other Than God Himself Look at What He Says In Verse 30 So Jacob Called The Name Of That Place Peniel Saying For I Have Seen God Face To Face And Yet My Life Has Been Delivered You Probably Wondering How Is That Even Possible How Is It Possible For God To Be A Man Wrestling With Jacob I Think The First Thing To Remember Is That Nothing Is Impossible With God If God Is God Again As We He!

[35 : 07] He's All Powerful There Is No Power That Is Outside Of His Grasp Of Power He Is All Power So Because God Is God God Is Able To Transpose Himself God Is Able To Appear To A Person As A Man He Can Do That Because He Is God And He Did That That Night Clearly This Is Not Something That God Does All The Time That He Did All The Time But He Did It In This Particular!

Situation To Jacob And Even As He Did That God Is Able To Do That And Still Not Manifest All Of His Power To Jacob Think About It Like This Imagine How Some Fathers Would Do They Have A Young Boy And They Play Wrestling With The Boy And They Never Use All Their Strength And They Even Allow Their Son Every Single Time To Beat Them He's Really Happy That He Beat His Dad And He Pinned Him Down To The Mat God Was Condescending To Jacob And So Even In This Wrestling We Shouldn't Get The Idea That Oh Wow Jacob Couldn't Over I Mean Jacob Was Fighting With God And God Had A Hard Time No This Was Mediated This

Was What God Shows To Do For Jacob As He Encountered Him That Night Now That's A simple Illustration I know It doesn't Answer All the Questions That You May Have This Morning But One Of The Things We Should Remember Is This Whenever We're Dealing With God There's Always An Element Of Mystery If You Bear That In Mind It Will Help You As You Read Your Bible It Will Help You As You Live Life If You Get To The Place Where You Understand Every Single Thing About God You Can Tell God Back Over Let Me Be God For A Day Because It Means You Know Everything That God Knows But There Will Always Be Mystery!

There Will Be Gaps! We We Comprehend Him His Ways Are Beyond Finding Out We Cannot Plumb The Depths And Scale The Heights Of All Of Who God Is But We Can Truly Know Him We Can Sufficiently Know Him And That Night Jacob Had An Encounter A Real Encounter With The Lord Now Again To Be A Appreciate What's Going On Here We Have To Not Lose Sight Of The Forest We Can Get Lost In The Trees Because Then We Wouldn't Realize That We Are Even In A Forest But What Is Happening Here Is In This Encounter God Is Dealing With Jacob That's What's Happening Here In This Encounter God Is Dealing With Jacob

And God Is Bringing To Jacob The Change That He Needs Not The Change That He Desires With His Brother God Is Bringing To Jacob The Change That Jacob Needs What Jacob Needed Was To Be Changed From To God God Could Do It Notice In Verse 24 It Tells Us That God Wrestled With Jacob Jacob Wasn't Wrestling With God That's Important To See Jacob Was Really He Was Being Acted Upon He Was There God Appeared To Him God Came To Him And What We See In This Is We See Divine!

[39 : 21] Initiative We See Divine Initiative And Divine Power And It's Important To See This That Is Not The Other Way Around It Wasn't Jacob Praying! And Asking God To Do All Sorts Of Things God Came To Jacob That Night God Wrestled With Jacob That Night And The Only Reason I Believe That We See In Our Bibles This Kind Of Struggle As It Were Is That God Is Communicating That It Is Too Difficult For His Power But He Is Helping Us To See Sinners Don't Change Easily They Need Divine Power To Change And That's Why We See This Wrestling Going On In Verse 26 Jacob Insisted That He Was Going To Hold On To God Until God Blessed Him What Do

You Think He Had In Mind Put Yourself In Jacob's Shoes You The Next Day Are Going To Face Your Angry Brother Who Threat To Kill You What Blessing You Think You Would Be Praying For I Think Jacob Is Praying Lord Protect Me That Was The Blessing That He Wanted He Wanted Something Good And Something Good And Something Tangible But Jacob Got A Blessing That He Wasn't Looking For Wasn't The Blessing That He Wanted But It Was The Blessing He Needed And Verse 27 In Response To Jacob's Request For A Blessing The Lord Asked Jacob What Is Your Name Very Important To See That Look At That Again In Verse 26 Then

He Said Let Me Go For The Day Is Broken For The Day Is Broken But Jacob Said I Will Not Let You Go Unless You Bless Me And He Said To Him What Is Your Name And He Said Jacob This Could Easily Be Lost To Us What Is Happening Here Because Of The Language Difference But In That Culture These Names In Particular The Name Jacob It Was A Verbal Name It Was An Action Name It Spoke About His Character So It It Almost Like When When We Would Say To Sister Grace We Would Say Grace When You Say Grace Or Hope Some People Are Given That Name As Well We Know What That Means We Know What That Means It's Not A Name Like Cedric You Don't Know What That Means I Don't Know What That

Means! Cheater Supplanter Deceiver It Means All Of Those All Of Those Things And So Here Jacob Is Asking God To Bless Him And God Says What Is Your Name?

And He Says My Name Is Schemer My Name Is Slickster My Name Is Cheater My Name Is Supplanter He Acknowledges Before God Who He Is He Confesses Who He Is That Night He Was Reminded Of Who He Was He Was Coming Face To Face With Who He Was Before God And Then Something Amazing Happened God Changed His Name God Changed His Name From Jacob To Israel Israel Means God Strives And The Picture Is This That To This Schemer To This Slickster To This Cheater God Strove With Him And Didn't Let Him Go God Pursued Him And Held On To Him God Wrestled With Him To Bring Change In His Life That's

[43 : 55] Amazing Grace That's Amazing Grace God Could Have Said To Him You're Right Your Name Is Jacob No He Doesn't Do That He Says No I'm Going To Change Your Name Your Name Is No Longer Going To Be Cheater And Schemer And Slickster Your Name Is Going To Be God Strives God Strives God Strives With Jacobs Doesn't Let Him Go By His Grace He Stays And He Sticks And He Relentlessly Pursues Them And He Brings Them To This Encounter Where They Can See Who They Are And They Can Come To Confession And Brothers!

Sisters This is A Picture Of Our Conversion Where God Gives Us A New Identity That's What He Did To Jacob A New Identity That Points To A New Relationship With Himself Jacob Rightly Calls The Place Peniel Because He Saw God Face To Face His Life Was Spared And In This Brothers And Sisters We See The Foreshadowed Mercy Of Jesus Christ Who Would Come One Day And Who Would Make It Possible For Sinners Like You And Me To Be A To Face A Holy God And Not Be Destroyed And Not Be Condemned To Do What We Did This Morning To Come Into His Presence And To Be Able To Pray Because Christ

Has Made The Way Open Jacob Experienced That And He Recognized That That Was Unusual He Said I've Seen The Face Of God I've Come Into The Presence Of God And My Life Has Been Spared This Passage Ends With The Sun Rising On Jacob As He Passed Peniel Limping Because God Had Touched Him And His Hip Socket Brothers And Sisters This Is A Picture Of What Happens When We Encounter God It Is A Picture That When We Encounter God And Indeed When God Meets Us We Don't Walk The Same Any The Walk Is Different The Sun Is Rising Upon Him And

He Is Limping When We Encounter The Lord We Walk Differently The Bible Says If Anyone Is In Christ He Is A New Creation! The Old Has Passed Away And Behold All Things Become New And Because Of That Encounter With God That Night What Was What Was Seeing Outside Of Jacob Was A Picture What Went On Inside Of Him That He Was Walking Differently Because He Had Met The True And The Living God And I Want To Say This To Us This Morning Let's Hear This Brothers And Sisters Let Us Not Say We Know The Lord If Our Lives Have Not Been Transformed By Him It Is An Indictment To Say I Know The Lord And It's Business As Us And There's No Change In Our Walk And No Change In Our Lives It's Not Based On The Things We Do I'm Not Going To Do This I'm Going To Do He Brings A Real Transformation On The Inside That's Manifested On The Outside When Jacob Was Leaving Canaan Back In Genesis 28 Very Interesting Thing Happened The Bible Says The Sun Set On Him It Turned Dark Night When God Met Him It Was Dark The Sun Set On Him It Was A Picture The Kind Of Man That He Was A Dark Man A Heartless Man Who Didn't Care About Relationships Didn't Care About His Brother And Now We See As He Is Re-entering Canaan He Left Canaan As Jacob He Is Re-entering Canaan As Israel As A Changed Man Who Met God A Changed Man Whom God Met And Changed And

[48 : 42] The Sun Was Rising Upon Him It Was A New Day For Him He Left As Jacob He Came Back As Israel Because God Changed Him We're Going To See Next Week That What Made The Difference When Jacob Met His Brother Esau Was Not The Gifts That He Gave Him We'll See It Wasn't Those Gifts What Made The Difference Was When His Brother Saw Him His Brother Saw A

Changed Man His Brother Saw A Man Who's Limping Walking Differently He Was Weaker And He Was More Humble You'll See That He Bowed Down Seven Times To His Brother As They Were Going To Meet And The Clear Account Is

His Amazing Gift That He Put Together Had Nothing To Do With The Reconciliation That Happened Between Him And His Brother What Made The Difference Was He Changed Because God Changed Him He Walked Differently Because God Touched Him He Was Not As Confident He Was Not As Self Dependent Self Reliant As He Was He Was A Weaker Man And God Did That Not Just To Prepare Him To Meet His Brother God Did That To Prepare Him To Fulfill The Promises That He Made To Him As He Would Go Back Into The Land Of Canaan And So Brothers And Sisters This Morning Whatever Problem We Face Whether It Is Relational Or Whether It Is Situational That's Not Our Real Problem Our

Real Problem Is That We Need To Encounter The True And Living God Our Real Problem Is We Need To Get In God's Face We Need To Get Alone With The Lord That He Might Do For Us What Only He Can Do For Us And For Some You Need To Do That For The First Time For Some Of You Who Don't Know Jesus Christ You Need To Come To Jesus And Confess Who You Are To Him And What You Will Find Is That He's Not To Throw It Back In Your Face He's Going To Give You A New Identity He's Going To Forgive You He's Going To Restore You He's Going Give You A New Name You'll Be Christian You'll Be A Member Of The Family Never To Be Turned Away Never To Be Turned Away The External Humanly speaking, some things need to change and be adjusted. I'm not saying to ignore them. What I'm saying is they must not be our primary focus. Our primary focus must be get before the Lord. Cry out to God. Oh God, would you meet me in this difficulty? Meet me in this circumstance that I find myself in. Would you change me? Husbands and wives, what difference it would make in our marriages if we stop looking at our spouses and recognize, you know what?

[52 : 20] I need to change. Only God can change me. God, would you change me? Rather than spending the energy, spending the time trying to change our spouses.

Let's get alone with God. Allow Him to do the gracious work of touching us and changing us. That's the real problem that we face.

That's the real need that we have. We need to meet the Lord. Whether for the first time or for the umpteenth time, we need to meet the Lord.

And I pray that all of us today would consider our circumstances in this life. That more than needing that situation to change, more than needing that person to change, we need to change.

And we need God who alone can change us. Let's pray. Father, we are needy people.

[53 : 31] Lord, like Jacob, we will go to great lengths to do all manner of things, to change external situations, and we overlook that we need internal change that only you can bring.

Speak to our hearts this morning, Lord. Father, I pray for any under the sound of my voice who does not know Jesus Christ.

Oh, Lord, would you help them to see their need to face you and to confess who they are before you and their need for you. Oh, Lord, would you touch them by the power of your Spirit, change their name, give them a new identity, give them a new walk.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's stand for the closing song. Amen.