Jacob to Israel â?? A Life Transformed â?? 9

Description

Jacob sends messengers ahead of his company to try to prepare the way. A cunning plan, a plan that Jacob thought might protect him from the wrath of his brother. There is still some of this cunning old self life left in him, even after 20 years since his â??God Encounterâ??. There is always some of this old cunning self life left in all of us. This cunning self life that God wants to release us from and the only place He can do that is in the lonely place of solitude. A place that Jacob would later find himself.

The messengers return with scary news, Esau is coming to meet you and he has 400 men with him. Jacobâ??s immediate reaction is one of fear, so he divides his family, servants and flocks into two groups with the sole aim of at least retaining some of his acquired wealth. He then does something quite amazing, he calls on Almighty God and confesses his weaknesses and reminds God of His promise. Jacob has begun to recognise his weakness and his flaws. He has now come to a place where he understands that he cannot go through this ordeal alone Genesis 32:9-12. It is in this weakness where Jacob finds strength and a God given answer of pure genius, the dividing of the company into two groups. The dividing of the company would not be the easiest of decisions as he would have had to decide who of his family would go into which group, who should he split up, who should he place in a position of responsibility etc etc. Jacob was able to do this because he had learnt the secret, â??*Those that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up on wings of eagles,they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint*â?• Isaiah 40:31

Jacob sends droves of presents in the form of livestock to go before him and his family with the specific instruction that they are to say â??*they are a present from your servant Jacob and behold he is behind us*â??. Jacob is no longer seeking to be master but is prepared to be a servant. If we want to be great in Godâ??s kingdom then we must first learn to be a servant.

Jacob sends all that he has on before him over the brook Jabbok and he is left alone, a place where God wrestles with him. Jacob is a very tenacious man he fights back and wrestles, he agonises with God and comes to terms with the fact that this could be the end, and in some way it is, the end of the old man Jacob and the beginning of the new man Israel. All that he has he has placed in Godâ??s hands. The â??God Experienceâ?? that happened so many years ago is now finally beginning to become a reality. Instead of the 10% Jacob promised to God he has placed all he has into Godâ??s hands, his family, his wealth, his livelihood and above all himself. God wants all of us. In Genesis 32:24-31 we find Jacob wrestling with a man. He wrestles till the break of day and eventually the man asks Jacob his name, an encounter with God always comes down to this, God wants us to face up to who we are. Jacob acknowledged he was a twister, a trickster, a selfish individual who only thought about himself and confessed his name, Jacob; Genesis 32:27. In that moment Jacobâ??s name is changed from something that means trickster to something that means a Prince with God all because he had wrestled with God and had prevailed. We also see in Genesis 32:29 that Jacob wants to know the name of the man that he has been wrestling with and utters words that some of us might find quite challenging â??*I will not let you go until you tell me your name*â??. Do you want to know God like that? Charles Wesley the great poet and hymn writer supposes Godâ??s answer to Jacobâ??s question and pens â??My nature and my name is loveâ?•. God deals with us on His ground through a name and

nature of love.

Do we wrestle with God like that, have we got that kind of tenacity that demands to know who God is and are we prepared to hold on to Him until He reveals who He is to us personally?

This is when it all changed for Jacob, he had finally come to an end of himself and accepted that God knows best. Just like Abram to Abraham Jacob became Israel, his nature and his name had been changed by the Grace of God but Israel bore in his body the living proof that he had wrestled with God and prevailed. What a legacy, what a testimony to have this proof that God had touched him and he had prevailed. What is it that God has done for us in response to the wrestling that we have done with Him?

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