

November 18, 2012

IN BROKENNESS... GOD SHOWS UP

That night Jacob got up and took his wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 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. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob", he answered. 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." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Penuel, saying "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

Genesis 32:24-32

The story of Jacob has been one of the most told stories of the bible.

Isaac and Rebekah had twins and during the time that Rebekah was pregnant, the bible says that the children struggled within her. And so she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord told her: "Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples will be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger." When the children were born, the first was Esau and his brother was born holding on to Esau's heel and so they named him Jacob. The bible tells us that as the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter while Jacob was a peaceful man living in the tents. And that Isaac favored Esau, while Rebekah favored Jacob.

In Genesis 25: 28-34, we read about how Jacob manipulated Esau into giving up his birthright for a bowl of soup. After which, he pretended to be Esau and received his father's blessings.

In "despising" his birthright, Esau showed that he did not put importance in the spiritual promises of God to Abraham (concordance), Jacob, on the other hand, manipulated his way into obtaining the promises of God. Instead of waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises, he manipulated the situation in order to hasten his blessing.

Do we sometimes find ourselves in situations where in we tend to go before God and not wait for His answer or appointed time? Do we try to manipulate our circumstances, our understanding of God's message, or even God's promises in order to justify certain decisions in our life?

Often times, we scheme when God has promised wisdom.

We worry when God has promised peace.

We steal when God has promised provisions.

We lie when God has promised protection.

We strive when God has promised rest.



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Sundays
945 AM
Heart
Preparation

1000 AM
WORSHIP

Dgroup Schedules

Tuesdays
700 pm
1102 E Swanee Lane
West Covina, CA

Thursdays
730 pm
2617 N Parish Place
Burbank, CA

Fridays
700 pm
5124 Ashworth St
Lakewood, CA

Fridays
730 PM
4706 Ivar Ave
Rosemead, CA

After Jacob steals Esau's blessings, he runs away to Paddan-aram in Genesis 28. Here he meets Rachel. He had asked his uncle Laban to give him Rachel in exchange for 7 years of working for him. But on the wedding day, he discovered that Laban had given him Leah instead. He again worked for another 7 years for Leah. He got a dose of his own manipulation, but the story does not stop there. He continued to work for Laban for an additional 6 years, during which he became exceeding prosperous. At the end of the 20 years, God told Jacob to go back to Canaan. (Genesis 31)

The concept of going home here, is a way of God instructing us to go back and face unfinished business — it could be unforgiveness, a broken relationship, a broken promise, a debt owed. But these are matters that God wants us to set right before we go home to God.

But with the instruction of going home, God promised Jacob that He would be with him. And yet Jacob continued to manipulate the situation, he did not rely on God's promise of protection instead he began to strategize his approach home and his meeting with Esau.

Do we sometimes find ourselves trying to strategize and not depending on God's provision? Do we prefer to rely on our own efforts rather than waiting for God's leading? Do we not have enough trust that God will provide for us, protect us and see us through the challenges?

In Genesis 32, we see the story of God wrestling with Jacob.

There are times that we have to be alone with God, and so God slows us down so that we stop and be alone with Him. Because it is only during the time that we are alone with God that we come face to face with our weakness, our inequities and our frailness . . . And this will make us see how much we need God. How much we need His strength, His comfort, His wisdom, His power. It is only when we are alone with God, that we learn to surrender and depend solely on God.

Why did God wrestle with Jacob? Or for the matter — why does God wrestle with us? God uses this time to get our undivided attention so that we get entangled with Him. During the time that He wrestled with Jacob, He cripples Jacob. In the same way, the during the time God will cripple us of the things we are most proud of — it can be our work, our profession, our health — anything that we put in higher esteem in our lives over Him. He does this so that we give Him our total surrender and realize that how much we need Him. And when we are crippled — broken then God can deal with our true character. And when He does, then our brokenness can be mended because it is only in total surrender that God can work in us and through us.

Brokenness us where God strips us of our self sufficiency. When we accept that we cannot make it on our own, when what we have is not enough. Brokenness is when God shows us our sin and character, our failures and inadequacies. But it is also in brokenness that we realize His love, His grace and His mercy. Because when we realize this, then we begin to strive to become more intimate with Him, we understand that our purpose is not to have a comfortable life here on earth, but rather to take part in His plan and purpose for us.

What is God stripping from your life? Is there something that you have put between you and total surrender to God? What is it that you trust more than God? What is it that you love more than God?

After Jacob wrestled with God, he was given a new name — God asked Jacob, what is your name? What God is really asking is, who are you really? Confess to me your sins. Because it is only when we admit and confess our sins to God that God can truly heal our character. Often times the hardest truth is the truth about ourselves. But when we humbly admit and confess our sins, God will give us a new name, a new heart and a new walk. And only then can we receive His blessings.

Brokenness is essential in pursuing intimacy with God. But this doesn't necessarily mean that we are weak, pathetic or frail rather it means that we are pliable, that we are willing to be molded in the hands of the Potter, that we are willing to be shaped and fashioned in the image of Christ.

Discussion:

1. Have you experienced crisis in life?
 2. Have you come to a point of being broken?
 3. After that experience, what has transformed in you?
 4. Are there still things in your life that God need to break?
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Works: Journaling task

What is your name?

My name is _____ (envy, anger, gossip, cheater, pessimistic . . .)

God demands that you answer His question, that you confess your true nature to Him. Because it is only when we are faced with our true nature that we become broken before God.

Is your cup full?

What is in your cup? Is it full of self sufficiency? Pride? Anger?

God asks that you empty your cup so that He can fill it with His love, His grace and His mercy.

Time to go home

Is God asking you to go home and repair a broken relationship? Heal old hurts? Settle unfinished businesses?

God requires that we all look at our past in order to come face to face with our hurts, our failures. . . Of people we have hurt, or maybe stepped on. God is asking us to find restoration in our relationships.

Remove and Replace Principle (Rev Edmund Chan)

Several months ago, we were taught this principle. Let us now put it into practice. What are the things that God is asking you to remove from your lives? And what are the things you can replace them with?

Eg. Too much time working ——— spend more time with family

Not health conscious ——— better eating habits, healthier lifestyle

Shop-a-holic ——— Godly stewardship

Impulsive ——— learn to wait on God