



THE WAY OF BLESSING

MARCH 14, 2021 / A NEW NAME / 32:22-32
THE GOAL OF YOUR FAITH IS TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON GOD

Having departed from Laban in secret Jacob is on his way back to the land he has been promised. He has to pass by Seir, the place that Esau calls home. Jacob did not leave either Esau or his father-in-law on good terms. He receives a message that Esau is coming towards him with 400 men and having made a covenant with Laban, he has no options to retreat backward. Jacob's attempts to pacify Esau with a gift thinking he could buy back his brother's favor and make up for the blessing he stole that sent him on the run in the first place. The news is not good for Jacob and he is now forced into a place of acting in his fear or out of his faith. Essentially, he realizes just how helpless he is.

The events that take place next point us to how God breaks his people down to bring them to faith and build them up into people who look to God for their blessing.

READ GENESIS 32:22-32

1. What is Jacob afraid of? What strategies does he use to alleviate these fears, and do they work? (see Genesis 32:9-12)
2. Do you think Jacob's prayer is sincere? What does it say about his relationship with God?
3. Have you ever prayed a prayer like Jacob's? Is that wrong or alright? Why?
4. The man renames Jacob, "Israel" because he had "struggled with God and with humans and has overcome" (Israel means, "wrestles with God"). Jacob lost the match, so in what way did he overcome?
5. Have you ever "wrestled" with God? About what? What was the outcome?
6. What "limps" do you have in your own life and journey of faith? Do they help you trust in God, or do you often find yourself continuing to wrestle?
7. How does it speak to the need to daily surrender our lives and pursue humility in Christ?

LORD, ALL WE HAVE IS YOURS, YOU HAVE GIVEN IT ALL TO US. HELP US TO LIVE IN FAITH, DEPENDENT ON YOUR GRACE AND MERCY, AND NOT OUR STRENGTH.