

SO30113a – 04/26/26

“Hurt by God?”

Genesis 32:22-32

Introduction – Read Genesis 32:22-32

- This Wednesday we will cover the section from which this morning's Bible study is taken from – Genesis 30-33

We will see different sides of Jacob

- We will see his determination, he says he wants the speckled and spotted sheep and goats as his wages and Laban is overjoyed because most of the sheep and goats came out solid colors, so no worries and yet Jacob takes the goats and the sheep and has them mate in front of the speckled and spotted poles and somehow almost all the babies come out speckled and spotted
 - And we are how that is even possible?

Next this Wednesday, we will then see Jacob frustrated with his uncle Laban and yet before he leaves he needs to convince his wives to go with him

- And why that has to happen, when we think of the ancient world as women having no rights is very interesting
 - And again we will cover all of that this Wednesday and the confrontation with his brother Esau, the man who wanted to kill him last he saw him, it is going to be so good, I hope you can be with us

But this morning I want to direct your attention to one of the most famous stories concerning Jacob, and that is the one where he wrestles the Lord

- And I think the Lord wants to show us a few things we rarely see out of this passage
 - The context for the passage we just read is the fact that Jacob is between two trials - Behind him is his uncle Laban who is chasing him because he left without telling him

Now Jacob hadn't done anything wrong to his uncle, his uncle had spent the better part of the last twenty years ripping him off

- And Jacob was tired of it, and so he took his two wives, his two other ladies, and his 11 sons and a daughter and he secretly left Haran, which is in modern day Iraq
 - And Laban is upset because as we will see this Wednesday he knows God is blessing him because of Jacob, so Laban doesn't want that blessing to stop, so he is angry at Jacob for leaving and is coming with a small army to get him

So Laban is behind him, chasing him

- In front of him is Esau
 - Twenty years before Jacob fled from his father and mother's house because Jacob had just tricked his blind Father into thinking he was his brother Esau
 - And when there was no blessing left for Esau, Esau was telling everyone – I will comfort myself by killing my brother
- So Jacob is leaving what is modern day Iraq and he has uncle Laban chasing him from there and he is heading right toward Esau, who last Jacob saw him, Esau wanted to kill him
 - So we could really call this Bible study this morning between Iraq and a hard place – ha! I worked so hard

But as Jacob is heading toward his brother, he sends massive gifts ahead of him to appease his brother

- To let him know I don't need any of dad's wealth, he sends waves of gifts – flocks and servants – and another wave of flocks and servants – 550 animals in totality
 - All with the message – this is my gift to you my brother
- And the messenger with the first group comes back to Jacob and says – we found your brother and he is coming to meet you and 400 men are with him

Oh no - Laban behind him – Esau with 400 men are ahead of him, probably not to throw a party

- We will see what will happens this Wednesday

But for this morning Jacob is between two trials, between Iraq and a hard place or a rock and a hard place

- **The River Jabbok (red arrow pointing to the river)**
 - used to be the ancient boundary between the nations of Bashan and Hesbon, both of which were nations Israel conquered on the way to the promise land and the river Jabbok was their ancient boundary

Picture of the River Jabbok

- So Jacob crosses that river right there, the river Jabbok

Jabbok means “emptying.”

- And it is called this because this river which is East of the Jordan River, empties the water of what is today, Ammon Jordan, into the Jordan River
 - But the name “emptying” is going to be very significant for what happens to Jacob in this place
- So Jacob crosses this river, sends his family over another tributary and Jacob stays behind by himself
 - And that night a man shows up

But it is not just any man as you can see in the text “M” for man is capitalized there in verse 24 and that is because this is not just any man – this is the Lord!

- We see this again when the prophet Hosea talks about this same encounter in Hosea chapter 12, Hosea says about this event

“Yes, he (Jacob) struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept, and sought favor from Him. He found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke to us— that is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name.” – Hosea 12:4-5

- Hosea makes it clear, Jacob wrestled not just with any man, but the God man, and specifically that part of the Trinity, who will later be called “Jesus” who is the part of God that becomes flesh and meets with us in this world

Jacob is wrestling God, and notice in verse 25, when it says that He, that is God, saw that He did not prevail... Now this obviously confuses people – God could not prevail? – oh we have to understand what it means – it doesn't mean that God couldn't beat Jacob

- It instead speaks to the fact that Jacob would not surrender – he kept battling

It is like when you wrestle your kids – some of our kids won't give up, they keep coming at you over and over again

- Now obviously if you really wanted to, you could knock them out, but you don't because that would be child abuse and you love them
 - But they won't stop, they just keep coming and that is what the Bible is describing
 - God could have killed Jacob with a word, but Jacob just kept coming
- It is not that God couldn't have swatted Jacob to the moon if He wanted to, God could have killed Jacob with a word, with a thought, but Jacob just kept coming
 - So verse 25 is speaking more to the fact that Jacob will not give up

This act describes Jacob to a tee

- He will not give up – He will plot, He will scheme, He will do everything in his power to get what he wants until he is dead - That is Jacob

When he happened to be born second – He kept looking for a way to get Esau to give up that birthright he was given by being born just a few minutes earlier than Jacob

- And after years of scheming – that moment came when Esau wanted the bowl of beans Jacob was selling – and he purchased the birthright

When he heard that Isaac his blind father was going to bless his brother with the birthright anyway, Jacob and his mom schemed

He was willing to glue goat hair all over his body and put on his brother's smelly clothes

- he saw it to the end no matter how long or how many times his dad said – “are you really Esau?”

And when Jacob fell in love with Rachel, even though he didn't have the bride price for a dowry

- He worked seven long years to marry that girl and when uncle Laban snuck in Leah
 - He was willing to work another seven for Rachel
 - This is a guy who no matter what it takes, no matter how long it takes - he is going to get what he wants

And let's be honest, there is a part of us that is impressed by that

- That kind of cannot be deterred attitude is what I want people that work for me to have
 - I don't want people who work for me quitting because it's too hard or they can't do it
- This is the type of attitude is what we want our children to have
 - We don't want quitters and excuse makers

This is the kind of person we want to our pastor to be

- Someone who has goals to reach North County and doesn't think of terms of “It can't be done”
 - It can't be done? – Maybe it can't be done by you but here we go!
 - Most of us love that!

And where this determination might be good in business and life – it can really be a detriment when it comes to our spiritual life

- When I think – Lord I can do it – I don't need help, I don't need you – I got this, you will see, I got this
 - Some of us are like that
- And again – great if you my lawyer –great if you are my doctor
 - But not so great if you treat God that way

And here is Jacob doing exactly that

- And so notice and look with me
 - Notice what God does in verse 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 32:25

- Jacob would not give up and give in
 - And so God touched his hip and took it out of socket
- You see what I mean about God being in control the whole time – they have been wrestling all night – and yet God just touches his hip and it goes out, which God could have done hours ago

Now if you have ever had a separated shoulder or a hip go out – then this is not just a nice Bible story for you

- You know the pain Jacob is feeling at this moment
 - And I want you to think about something most Bible teaches don’t want you to think about at this moment
- Most Bible teaches don’t want you to think about it because they don’t know what to say next but...

God did this to Jacob

- God hurt Jacob
 - God caused Jacob real serious pain
 - The God of love, hurt Jacob on purpose!

And that should bother you just a little bit

- If He, if God really loves me, loves me more than a father could ever love his human children – more than a mother loves her children
 - If God loves me enough to die on a cross for my sin
 - Then why does He choose at times in my life to hurt me? – we wouldn’t do that and it bothers us

It bothers us because let’s be honest – this is not just Jacob’s story – this is our story as well

- Most of us have had times in our lives, and if you haven’t yet, just wait

Where the God of heaven at the very least allows you to be hurt

➤ And He at times even causes pain in your life, on purpose
And of course the enemy is right there to say – see, I told you He is not love, He is not nice, He is not kind – He is mean and vengeful and hateful, like I have always said

- And of course our emotions play into that and think –
“yeah – how come you allowed this to happen, God who is in control?”

But we can't pretend like the text doesn't say it, it does, God hurt Jacob on purpose - Now let me clarify something before you send your email

- Do I mean by that, that every bad thing that happens to us is God wanting that to happen, a death of child, the death of a loved one – Is God in heaven saying – good, that's what I wanted?

- That is what the enemy will tell you and some freaky Christians will tell you, but that is not the truth

The truth is we live in a fallen – a world that is fallen by the way because man listened to Satan and introduced sin into world

- Sin and death was not part of God's plan
 - And we are not sitting in the of Eden today because we choose to sin
- And that decision brought sin and sickness and death into this world and those disgusting things affects us all
 - And someday sin and death and sickness will be over and we will be in heaven with Him
 - But until then this is the world we live in

Not everything bad that happens to you is God doing it to you

- But that said precious people, there are things He actually brings into your life on purpose to hurt you, to wound you
 - And we may not want to think about it
 - We may want to push it out of our minds

But we better understand why or the enemy will have a field day with us - Why would God who says in Malachi 1:2

“Jacob I have loved...” – Malachi 1:2

Why would the God that clearly loves Jacob, hurt Jacob?

- And maybe a better question is why does the God who says He loves me, who demonstrated that love for me on the cross, why would that God allow or even at times orchestrate something in our lives that causes us pain
 - There are two things I want you to consider before we go our way today

Why would God hurt Jacob?

#1 – Because by it, God changed Jacob’s nature – v 25-29

- God touches Jacob’s hip and it comes out of socket and look right away he is still being Jacob – He is still fighting – I won’t give up – I won’t let you go until you bless me
 - But please understand something is changing

For unlike how we picture this, with Jacob having a hold of God – bless me! Again the book of Hosea gives great insight

“Jacob took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed, he wept and sought favor with Him.” – Hosea 12:3-4

- the language there shows us without a doubt that Jacob’s crying out was not just after the fact – it was while he was wrestling – It was him that was pinned
 - He had a hold of God’s heel – Jacob, heel catcher one more time had a hold of a heel, but it wasn’t like when he grabbed Esau’s heel – saying I want to be you – I want to have what you have first born
- No this time – Jacob was saying, not I want to be you, but I want you

And God says to Him – what is your name?

- Remember his father had asked him that same question and he had lied and said, “Esau”

And so God has him come clean and admit – my name is Jacob and remember...

The name “Jacob” means “deceiver or heel catcher.”

- And God changes his name – no longer shall you be called Jacob, but you shall be called Israel

The name “Israel” means “governed by God.”

- I know some of your study bibles say “prince of God”
 - Or others even say “One who wrestles with God”
 - And the reason there is much debate is because the two words that make up Israel basically mean

“Isra” – “Governor or Prince” “el” – “God”

- So they see that and they say well that means Israel means Prince of God
 - but listen Bible students, whenever the name of God “el” is used in a conjunction of two words – always, always, always, it is God who is doing what the other part of the Word is saying
- Elohim, Elroy, The God who saves, the God who sees - it is God who is doing what the other part of the word means

So it is the same with Israel

- Not “prince or governor of God”
 - Because it is God who is doing the governing
- That is why the proper way to understand the name Israel is to see it means “governed by God”
 - And God gave Jacob this new name

Jacob you have lived your whole life trying to figure things out on your own

- You have lived your whole life leaning on your own understanding, on your own ability to get things done

And you have left a trail of heartache because of it – your uncle wants to kill you, your brother wants to kill you

- That is who you have been
 - But no more Jacob
- By me hurting you – you are learning that unless I bless you, you can’t go forward, you can’t go on

You will for the rest of your life, walk with a limp, with a cane, but it will teach you to lean on Me

- And because you now have to live out that lesson, you can't do what you always used to do which is run from trouble, now you have to lean on me
 - From now on Jacob, your nature will change – from now on, deceiver, trickster, you will be “governed by God”, a man that is under the control of a Holy God

And how we need to see this church family

- Why would a God of love allow me to be hurt?
 - Why would He allow difficult times to come?

Because He loves you

- It is not because He is cruel
 - It is not because He is bored in heaven
- It is because He loves you
 - He looks inside your heart and He sees even better than you do what's in there and for most of us, it is dark

We want our own way – we want to do it ourselves – we want a little bit of the glory – to see what it tastes like (sorry for that)

- But it's true! – We want to be the hero, we want to be the god of the situation we are in, the god of our families, the god of our job... and God sees it and He knows it's not good
 - And so God will hurt us
 - Not because He isn't love, because He is
- Because He knows that in that pain I will lean on Him, that I will cry out to Him and my name, my nature that has been so dependent on me, will now begin to learn to depend on Him
 - You see Psalm 34:18 says

“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart” – Psalm 34:18

- In that nearness something changes in my heart

I realize I am not the answer - I am not what the world needs - I will not figure this out on my own

- And in those times, all of us go from a nature that is deceitful and plotting and crooked
 - To a nature that is dependent on God and therefore governed by Him

Why would God hurt Jacob?

#1 – Because by it, God changed Jacob’s nature – v 25-29

#2 – Because by it, God changed Jacob’s legacy – v 30-32

- After the battle is done, God blesses Jacob and renames him Israel

And as the sun begins to rise, Jacob comes hobbling along and crosses that river and rejoins his family

- And then Moses who is writing all of this years later remembering adds the commentary that this is why the children of Israel, the Jewish people, don’t eat that mussel on the hip socket of an animal
 - They don’t eat it out respect for their father, they don’t touch it because they remember this event

And what does that communicate to you?

- That what most influenced Jacob’s kids was not his can do attitude
 - It wasn’t his ability to talk his way out of anything or deceive the smartest people in the room
- What so marked their remembrance of their dad from this day forward was how differently he was after his brokenness

How differently he treated them

- How differently he treated their mothers
 - How differently he dealt with situations
- They were so moved by the difference in their father from this moment forward
 - That they changed their menu to honor the new nature their dad had from this day forward
 - And by this Jacob’s legacy was changed

**Hear me on this fathers and mothers, grandparents
We not only need a new nature, but we also need a new
legacy, we need something else we are passing on to
these kids and grandkids**

- We sometimes think – my kids will be impressed by my can do attitude
 - My kids will be impressed by my ability to get ahead and surpass the achievements of others
 - My kids will be impressed by my wealth and my stuff

**But listen to me – they won't if you achieve those things
by being a Jacob, by being a deceiver and a supplanter**

- But when they see you really meet with God
 - And the brokenness that will be developed in that – where you are learning to lean on Jesus because there is no other way
 - It is that which will mark them in a great way forever
- And precious church family the rub of that is – that learning to lean on Him, that won't be developed in times that are good
 - It will only be developed in the times of brokenness
- When God if you will, hurts you, on purpose, allows you to hurt - Not because He isn't love, but because He is

You see the Good news is our nature can change

- You don't always have to be “the deceiver, the liar, the bitter one, the lustful one
 - You can have a new nature
 - A new name if you will

The good news is our legacy can change

- That what your kids remember is not the questionable business deals or the trail of hurt you left behind
 - You can have a new legacy
- Where they remember you leaning on the Lord and growing in Him day by day
 - The good news is you can have a new nature and a new legacy

The bad news is those wonderful things often come through times of brokenness

- Where the Lord allows you to be hurt
 - Not because He doesn't love you, because He does
 - And in those times He changes you from the inside out for the better

And our job this morning is to realize that

- To not rebel and run away when things get difficult
 - When the painful touches come
- Our job is to cling to Him even tighter – to keep crying out until He blesses you, until you have a new nature and a new legacy to pass on to the precious generation that is coming behind us
 - Amen? Amen!