

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday September 19, 2021. "Terraform: Building a Better Life. Know Where You Came From"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're pushing through 2021, and in spite of the current number of COVID cases, we're still fully committed to gathering in person. A growing group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's, youth areas and coffee spot have been fully open also and we're seeing a good response. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Sunday.

Sunday we began a new series that needs some explanation and context. It's based on a book by hip hop artist and activist Propaganda. The basic idea is we have agency, control, over how we live our life. Yes, there are external circumstances that affect us that we can't always control. But we get to choose how we respond to those events, situations, and what we will do with them. The concept behind the phrase "terraform" comes from the science fiction world of bringing sustainable life to a dead planet. Prop, (as he calls himself), states that the first step is to understand, and rewrite our origin story. This means we often carry untruths, hurts, hidden issues, and more from our childhood into our adulthood. And holding onto these, and not bringing them out into the light, will hurt our ability to bring life to wherever we find ourselves now. The first step is to identify, name, and own our origin story. Throw away what holds us back, and keep what we can use to bring 'life' to our current life. We began by asking these three questions.

What do you want out of life? Why?

What are you currently doing to help you get there?

What do you need to change, do differently, to get there?

Basically this first Sunday we talked about where we came from, and some specific ways for us to make peace with our past to move forward. We're also doing something different on each of these Sundays, by bringing an actual real person up for a Q&R, (we like responses rather than answers, because honestly...who of us actually has answers?). And Sunday you got to meet Nick Griffin...or coach Griff as he's known. We're not including any of that conversation in this devotional. But it was amazing so PLEASE go watch that conversation in the service. The scripture used was **Genesis 32:22-32**. It's just a small part of a lengthy and pretty complicated story about Jacob and Esau. If you're not familiar with this story, go back and start reading in the middle of Genesis 25.

From the **32:22-32** passage I want you to answer these questions.

What jumped out to you from this particular account?

Did you come to any conclusions about what it means to understand your origin story?

A few truths were brought out from this account that can help us deal with our own upbringing, and how to make peace with our past and move forward.

A. Three questions for you personally and also for us as a church.

1. What are you carrying around, from your past?

This is an overall inventory of what got you to where you are now. Jacob had to come face to face with all the deception, lies, manipulation that had been a part of his entire life. Practices and beliefs. Spoken and acknowledged. And unspoken expectations. Scars. Trauma. Unresolved issues. Memories. Needs. Desires. Nostalgia. Practices. Knowledge. Wisdom. We have to be aware of ALL of it. We have to remember, **origin stories are descriptive but not prescriptive**. They describe the path of our life, but they don't have to dictate the future...unless we don't grow a self-awareness of our past. This includes the personality we developed to help us find love and belonging. but we're not bound by our past. We GET to do our own thing, our new self is dependent on doing this first part well.

2. What do you need to wrestle with from your past?

Not everything from our past needs to be discarded, there's some good and helpful stuff in our story. But some of our past, where we came from, **MUST** be dealt with. Have to admit; *"I may have done that, come from there, have that past, but that's not ALL of who I am now"*. Jacob had to get rid of a name that limited him from being all God had created him to be. He had to admit he was a deceiver, then let that story about himself go. **Where and with what, do you need to make peace?** Again, we may have done that, come from there, have that past, but that's not ALL of who we are now. Some stories need to either stop being told, or told differently talking about the things in our past.

3. What can you take with you from your past?

Not everything from the past, where we came from, is bad. This is not about just bashing all of where we came from. It's just our story. Some of it we may not be proud of, or want to wallow in, but it is who we are. Take that experience, knowledge, understanding, uniqueness, with us as we terraform our life, and make our own future. We pull everything out, all the stories we tell about who we are, wrestle with the things that are holding us back, limiting us, keeping us from being who we can be. We name the truths...out loud. Then we highlight, save, hold onto the things we know we can use to build our better future. Interesting thing about Jacob. What Jacob took with him, even as he became Israel, was a limp that always reminded him of where he came from. This work is hard, requires a lot of wrestling, and in all that he still can find God. AND live the life of your deepest desire.

III Challenge.

Based on your current understanding of your upbringing, where could you begin to more deeply understand how your origin story has made you what you are now?