

Punk to Patriarch: Wrestling

Pastor Rob Steinbach // Genesis 32:1-32

Jacob is finally leaving Laban and heading back to the land God has promised him. However, one problem remains. He needs to reconcile with Esau. He learns Esau and his army is on their way to meet Jacob and his family. Without knowing Esau's intentions, Jacob is gripped with fear and he wrestles with God. He wrestles in prayer and physically with a mysterious "man" by the river. Through this experience he is transformed from the punk to the patriarch God has been calling him to be. This is a central passage for understanding Jacob's story with God and one we can reflect on ourselves. Enjoy!

Read Genesis 32:1-8

What is happening in the story? Why is Jacob afraid?

Read Genesis 32:9-12.

What is Jacob's response to his fear?

What are the various aspects you see in his prayer?

How could we apply a similar prayer to the fear we may feel over COVID-19?

In his prayer, Jacob reminds God of his promises to get through his fear? What are some of God's promises that have brought you through fear or a difficult time? When is the last time you prayed... "God you said...?"

Read Genesis 32:13-21.

What else does Jacob do other than pray? Is praying and action at odds with one another? Why/Why not?

Read Genesis 32:22-32.

Who is "the man?" (Also see Hosea 12:3-4a)

How and why is Jacob humbled in the wrestling match?

What is significant about Jacob's name change from "Jacob" to "Israel?"

What spiritual paradox does the name "Israel" represent?

Do you think it's true that, "A life for God includes a wrestling with God?" How has God invited you to wrestle with him over something in your life? Was a type of 'wounding' a part of the outcome?

Prayer: Spend time praying over what you learned from this study as well as for our city, state, nation, and world as we face COVID-19 together.