

Parish of Ferndown
Study sheet for week commencing 24th November 2008
The Life of Jacob (4) “Facing it out with God” Gen 32:22-32

In our final study, we will see how Jacob is changed by his encounter with God. Specific themes unfold that are worthy of our attention.

BIBLE APPLICATION - Read Chapter 32

Guilt and Fear

- In what ways have we already learned that Jacob is a cheat and grasper?
- Read verse 7. Even though Jacob had been seen as a “winner” he was constantly losing on the inside. Share any times when you have looked supremely confident, but inside have felt fearful or inadequate?
- Jacob’s fears in the present brought back his past actions. Again, when have we faced a situation with the past haunting us?
- Why do we need to do business with God before doing business with our “brothers and sisters?”

Meeting God face to face

- At Bethel Jacob had a real experience of God, but it did not transform his basic personality. Peniel was the place of transformation through struggle. In what ways do we struggle with God?
- There are aspects of this story that puzzle us, but in crude terms, why did God in human form struggle with Jacob that night?
- The stranger asks Jacob his name. Jacob then reveals his name as “cheat” and “supplanter.” The stranger (God) then re-names him, “Israel” (God strives / God protects). The stranger does not reveal who he is, but he does bless Jacob. In the morning the stranger is gone....and so is Jacob! He has now become “Israel.”

- We have a new name and a new nature in Christ. In the spiritual battle we are in, why is it important to let go of our old nature and receive the new nature? (see Gal 2:20)

Our weakness and God’s strength

- In what way might we say Jacob “won” against God?
- In what way might we say he “lost?”
- In summary, Jacob is the “crippled victor” and the “wounded winner”
- The injury God gave him was a way of preventing him wrestling again. In what ways has God “injured” us so we are more able to serve him?
- Read Paul’s view of weakness and strength in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

PRAYER TIME

We often want every painful experience taken away and everything “just right” so we can enjoy life. But this does not necessarily lead to what God wants. Perhaps we should pray, ***“Lord, may my life glorify you through my weaknesses.”*** That seems to be the right way of summarising the lives of the biblical heroes including Moses, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, etc.”

- Pray for one another, asking God to use you powerfully through your own human weaknesses.
- Praise God for the story of Jacob which gives us all hope in our struggles.
- Pray for Alistair Magowan who has given us so much rich teaching these last four weeks.