

Jacob Steps in the Ring

Summer series – Favorite Stories from the bible

- Jacob wrestles with God
- Genesis – three sections
 - creation, fall, covenant
- Jacob – mom's boy, soft, deceitful, runs from fight
 - chosen, blessed, covenant holder
- Years with Laban
- Commanded to return – 31:3, reinforced – 31:31

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Gen 32:1-2 *“Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is the camp of God!” So he named that place Mahanaim.”*

- big deal, the angels of God meet him
- the problem – Esau
 - consoled with thought of killing me!

1. The Plan

- manipulate the situation
- suck up big time

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- Gen 32:3-7 *"Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. He instructed them: 'This is what you are to say to my master Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now. I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, menservants and maidservants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.' "* When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, *"We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."* In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well. He thought, *"If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape."*

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a) Lots of Stuff

- look I can afford to be very generous

b) Adopt a Submissive Posture

- words like, servant & master, lord

c) Prepare to Flee

- divide into two groups – ready to run

d) Try to Quit Shaking

- 400 men, really – what will I do

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2. The Prayer

- significant to read – not many recorded what's said
- initiated by Jacob – 1st time we see this

- 9-11 *"Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.' "*

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a) Recognition of who God is

- covenant God of our family – faithful to us

b) Prays God's Word

- recounts what God has revealed and asked

c) Posture of Humility and Gratitude

- I am unworthy

- I was broke and homeless now look

d) Problem with being Obedient

- Esau wants me dead – going there is an issue

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e) Presenting My Need

- save me please – more importantly my family

f) Promise Claimed

- you said I will prosper and my descendants will be many, you are faithful, please help

3. The Back Up for Faith

- look at what Jacob does now – just in case
 - Gifts
 - Instructions
 - Sucking Up

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“He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants, “Go ahead of me, and keep some space between the herds.” He instructed the one in the lead: “When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?’ then you are to say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is coming behind us.’” He also instructed the second, the third and all the others who followed the herds: “You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. And be sure to say, ‘Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.’” For he thought, “I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me.” So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.”

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- Jacob then gets alone

4. The Main Event

- "That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. "

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a) Jacob the Coward

- manipulated, avoided, deceived, ran from
- called to the cage match

b) Jacob Learns to Fight

- not aware it's God's face
- all night fight – doesn't tap out – new for him
- not running or being overpowered – staying in it

c) Jacob Gets Touched

- hip wrenched – could have been over any time
- not here to hurt you – teach you something

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d) Jacob the Determined

- cannot go – I desire a blessing
- Important question – what's your name
- when Isaac asked – lied and stole
- truthful answer – Jacob – deceiver, supplantor

e) New Name for New Man

- Israel – one who struggled with God
- Nation on map today – named by God himself
- received the blessing with honor – granted & earned not stolen and hoarded

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- *“So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.” The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.”*

- note no promise of resolution or safety
- promise is relationship secure – take steps ahead with faith!

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So What

1. Check Your plan carefully

- God clear about what His desire for us is
- Do we have a plan to accomplish it our way?
- filled with preparing for any outcome, any roadblock?

2. Become the Pray 1st Person

- start with who God is – character, work, word
- use the scripture to pray from – be in the word
- adopt a posture of humility, (God does not owe me) and gratitude (look what He has already done)

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- be honest with God about the things that scare you
- be clear in your request of God's intervention
- claim the promises God has given for you

3. Embrace the Fight for Faith

- allow God to use your battles to build you
- when it's right – don't tap out!
- allow God to give new character through conflict

4. Relationship is better than resolution

- you can trust God for the road ahead