

Tenacious in Transition

(Genesis 32)

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Come along with me and try to fathom the drama of what was happening in the life of Jacob around the time of Genesis 32. I hope that Jacob's story - the whirlwind of influential players, crossroads in life, and major transition - can speak something to our life situations today. Welcome to Jacob and his whole family (Leia and Rachel, two concubines and eleven children), workers, possessions and flocks in the desert of Israel – date approximately 2000 BC. Yet, God was there.¹

So, what happens when the life baggage of your past, present and future calling all collides at once? A firestorm? A death? A resurrection? Or will there be a dramatic redefinition of life perspective? Possibly – all of the above!

Do you relate to any of these situations? Jacob's dad and granddad had big callings, but made big mistakes (they had a mixed bag of good and bad character traits).² Mom and Dad favored different kids in the family.³ Uncle Laban played wheeler-dealer in marrying his daughters off and granting inheritance. Jacob, himself, was no novice at deceiving. Jacob had been running from his brother, Esau, for about 20 years (another relationship debacle), and recently barely escaped his uncle's land and wrath. He just covenanted to not go back there.⁴ Jacob is finally free to be on his own and start fresh. But now he discovers his revengeful brother, Esau, is waiting ahead with 400 fighting men to kill him on the other side of the Jabbok River. No escape.

Either you wrestle with God or with man.

What did he do? Jacob front-loaded his encounter with Esau as best he could with presents and the emotional appeal of mothers and children. But one thing was lacking - the blessing of the Lord. You see Jacob had wiggled his way through life. God was with Jacob. He had survival grace and deliverance mercy to escape punishments, but he never had a true liberating blessing that could only be received by a transformed heart. And for this he wrestled with God all night.

Imagine this heavenly, man-like representation of God (Angel of the Lord) pinning him time and again, saying, "You lose, now let go and give up." He even dislocated his hip. And Jacob would hang on and say, "No, not until You bless me"⁵

Let's apply this to our lives. Is God removing your temporal security systems, taking away your props, trying to pin you down, and finally getting you where he wants you? Are you between a rock and a hard place? **Don't get angry, don't get even – wrestle with God for His greater blessing. He wants to give it to you!**

There is a blessing from heaven that brings favor beyond circumstances, has no sorrows or deals attached, and makes even your enemies to be at peace with you.⁶ It equips you for the next season of

life, changes your character, and causes God to back up your words and actions because you are in harmony with Him at a higher level.⁷

He finally encountered Esau after 20 years of exile. Jacob not only found favor with Esau, but he was given his name of destiny for himself and his descendants – Israel (Prince with God). Could it be he finally understood “son-ship” and that King God was his true Father? And that God the Father’s blessing comes from yielding and intimacy, not from striving, conniving, performance, or the hands of man. It is favor bestowed to a son/daughter’s heart that rests, belongs to, and knows Him.

A time comes when yesterday’s methods do not work; a new you “wine skin” is needed for a new dimension in God’s “new wine.”⁸ You cannot declare a change, prophesy it, get it imparted to you, cast out the demons, or force others to see things your way. **You need to wrestle with God in a secret place.**⁹ It may seem like a dark battle in the night, be tenacious with God in this time of transition. He will meet you there in the sweat of the transition and pin you down . . . but you both get a victory.

It is never too late. Like a butterfly leaving a cocoon at the right time . . . you will finally get your wings and fly!

Notes:

¹Genesis 31:3 God’s presence does not always mean His approval of your ways. He is sovereignly working a change in your journey for good.

²Genesis 12:13; 26:7 Both Abraham and Isaac gave away their wives to save themselves.

³Genesis 25:28

⁴Genesis 31:52

⁵Genesis 32:24-26

⁶Proverbs 10:22; Proverbs 16:7

⁷Job 22:21-30 Note the favor on Job after his trials in Job 42

⁸Luke 5:37-39 No matter how good the old wine skin was, it eventually becomes old and cannot contain the new thing God is doing.

⁹Matthew 6:6