

Jacob: Rebuilt (Genesis 32)

There are parts of our lives that are broken beyond our ability to repair. But there is hope because we have a God who can fix the unfixable and fill the unfillable parts of our lives. He can give you a new name with a new future, and all you must do is cling to Him.

Jacob schemed, manipulated, worked, and struggled for years to try to fix the brokenness in his life... to no avail. He's broken and desperate. That's when God shows up.

1. A desperate need (32:3-8)

- Jacob knows that Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men – a militia
- Jacob is in danger and feels trapped. He has no army, and he can't turn back
- This is a terrifying moment for Jacob.
- **Lesson 1: You see God most clearly in your moment of greatest need**
 - “God whispers to us in our pleasures, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” – C.S. Lewis
 - There is hope in suffering (James 1:2)

2. A prayer & a plan (32:9-20)

- Jacob begins with a desperate prayer (32:9-12)
 - This prayer is very different from his last prayer (28:20-21)
 - Jacob is truly broken and humbled; he has changed
- But just because Jacob is humbled and dependent doesn't mean that he's passive; **he makes a plan** (32:13-20)
- **Lesson 2: Prayer and planning are not mutually exclusive**
 - Trusting God with your future and making plans for your future are not contradictory, as long as you remember which one is most important
 - Plan for your future... but submit your plans to God (James 4:13-15)

3. An unexpected encounter (32:24)

- The setting of this encounter is very similar to his first encounter with God. Jacob is: alone in the dark, in the middle of nowhere, with nothing
- What's really surprising is not that God comes, but that God **ATTACKS!**
 - **Why?** Because God wanted Jacob to finally realize that he'd spent his life wrestling the wrong people! “You fought Esau for his birthright and Laban for his daughter because you thought those things would fill you and fix you. Don't you see Jacob? It was only ever ME who could fill you and fix you. It was ME you should have been struggling with!”
- **Lesson 3: Too many of us spend our lives wrestling with the wrong people**

- “There is a God shaped vacuum in every human’s heart that cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God through His Son Jesus Christ.” – Pascal
- “You have made us restless until we find our rest in You.” – Augustine

4. A debilitating touch (32:25-26)

- Jacob is overpowering the man until the man dislocates his hip with a touch
- This is when Jacob finally realizes what we already knew: **this is not just a man**
- That realization changes everything (32:26)
 - Jacob stops fighting and starts clinging. He refuses to let the man go until he receives a blessing
- **Lesson 4: For God to fix the unfixable, you must cling and plead**
 - You can’t bargain with God or force his hand or earn His help
 - All you can do is cling to Him and plead for His help
 - Jacob clung to God and pleaded for blessing, and God responded

5. A new name for a new man (32:27-31)

- God asks Jacob his name because He wants Jacob to confess, “I am the heal-grabber”
- Jacob confessed who he was... and then God blessed him with a **new name**
 - “Israel” = “God fights/rules for you”
 - From now on, God will fight for you
- God is in the business of renaming broken people throughout the Bible – Peter, Paul
- **Lesson 5: Who you were in the past does NOT DEFINE who you will be in the future because God can give you a new name**
 - Addict, anorexic, gossip, failure, workaholic, victim
 - You do not have to be defined by that name ever again!
 - You may always struggle with that issue, but it no longer defines you
- **Lesson 6: To receive a new name... you meet God in His weakness**
 - Why did Almighty God let Jacob wrestle Him to a tie?
 - It’s like wrestling with my kids – I could crush them
 - So what do I do? Get on my back, limit myself
 - **Because I love them, I take all the risk, I suffer all the pain**
 - It is a demonstration of the cross, of Jesus taking all the risk and suffering all the pain to give us a new name
 - John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - If you’ve placed your faith in Christ, you have a new name
- That new name makes you a new person, just like it did for Jacob

- Nothing in your life is beyond hope. If you will cling to God and plead for His help, He can rebuild whatever is broken.