

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Better Than Life, Good Good Father, More Like Jesus, Your Great Name

WELCOME

Name some things that need to be broken first before they become useful to us.

WORD

GENESIS 32:9-12, 24-32

⁹ Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,' ¹⁰ I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. ¹¹ Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children. ¹² For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered.'" ²⁴ Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵ When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." ²⁷ So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸ He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." ²⁹ Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. ³⁰ So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved." ³¹ Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh. ³² Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.

In our current Bible character study series, we consistently learn about how God uses ordinary people for His extraordinary purpose. GOD graciously used flawed characters with a lot of imperfections in their lives to accomplish His greater purpose. The process though which he did this is called BROKENNESS – which leads to a deep dependence on God. It's like the art of sculpting where a master artist uses different instruments to create a masterpiece from a block of stone or marble. The artist carefully and skillfully applies just the right instrument and pressure to come up with the image on his mind. GOD is the same with us. Many times, when GOD breaks someone, pain is involved. Still, we can be confident that He is at work and He will be faithful to complete and perfect it (**Philippians 1:6**). Let's look at one of Israel's patriarchs, JACOB. His name means a "deceiver", "grabber", or "supplanter" and Jacob had to learn from all his experiences that God had a better destiny for him than what his name suggests. The LORD used various people in Jacob's colorful life to break him out of grabbing at God's blessings and learn to grab on to God instead.

1. JACOB AND ESAU

The first interaction that reveal Jacob's character was his relationship with his brother, Esau (**Genesis 25:19-34**). There were "small" parenting mistakes that created tension between these siblings. Dad Isaac and mom Rebekah played favorites, and favoritism created resentment and jealousy between the brothers. Esau grew up with a love for hunting; and Isaac favored him for that. Meanwhile, Jacob grew up with his mother at home that obviously built her connection and affection more towards Jacob. On one

occasion where Esau came home hungry, he asked for soup that his brother made be shared with him. Jacob used this situation to successfully convince Esau to exchange his birthright for just a bowl of soup! Esau is a picture of a lot of Christians. Often, we find ourselves sacrificing long-term significance for short-term pleasure. We also see as the story progresses (**Genesis 27**) that Jacob eventually deceived his father Isaac and grabbed the blessing that was supposed to be for Esau. Esau held a grudge against his brother for this and planned on killing him. Rebekah (**v.42-43**) then urged Jacob to run away and seek refuge with her brother, Laban. Without realizing it, this was the last time that Jacob would see his mother alive and Jacob will go on to spend twenty years away from home and encounter other characters whom God will use in Jacob's breaking process.

2. JACOB AND LABAN

God did not just use people to mold Jacob's character; He also used circumstances to teach him a lesson. **Genesis 28-31** tells of how Jacob got a taste of his own medicine: deceived by his uncle Laban and made to serve 14 years in exchange for the woman he loved! The only good thing that took place in this period of trial was that God was with him, ensuring his success. Notice that God orchestrated the circumstances so that Jacob would learn that the blessings he would receive later in life were not from his deceptive interference with his father's blessing, but from the tough situation of Laban's deception and being an object of jealousy by others around him. It was God who blessed Jacob and protected him throughout the years that he spent away from home. Finally, God called Jacob to go back home and face his

WORD (cont'd)

fears. Along the journey, an encounter with a mysterious Stranger changed Jacob forever.

3. JACOB AND GOD

Ultimately, God was the one at work in the life of Jacob. Learn to connect the dots of your life--are you having problems or challenges from people or circumstances? God allows all these things to happen to bring you to a point of brokenness. This was the preparation of Jacob – the transformation of his character took various steps in the ladder of progression towards brokenness.

On his way back home to face his angry brother, Esau, Jacob was finally chiseled off from his own fears and distresses. He was forced to earnestly pray and seek God (**Genesis 32:7-8**). You will have to eventually meet God on your own. His goal is to bring you to a one-on-one encounter with HIM. For Jacob, it came in the form of a wrestling match! Like Jacob, until you see yourself for who you really are, brokenness has not yet yielded its fruit. You

have to begin to see that the only thing you really need is GOD. When did Jacob surrender? When he was in pain, struggling with all his might with the Man who wrestled with him to brokenness. Eventually, God did bless Jacob and changed his name to ISRAEL. The writer of **Psalm 46** was able to capture the very essence of this “struggle” that Jacob had (**vv.10-11**) “*Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’ The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold.*”

You may have been fighting everything in your life, refusing to submit to the countless breaking moments that God had allowed to break you. When will you come to realize that in your weakness, He is and will always be your consistent strength? The result of brokenness is blessing. So do not grab blessings, grab on to God! Yearn to encounter the GOD of Jacob and be changed forever when you have a face-to-face encounter with Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **Self-Check.** Can you relate to Jacob being a “grabber”? Share your experiences on grabbing a blessing meant from someone, or the glory due to somebody else. What consequences and lessons did you encounter?
2. **Setting It Right.** Are you wrestling with God regarding something? Maybe He is giving you a command that you keep on delaying to follow. Or maybe you have hardened your heart about something? What area will you prayerfully commit to obey Him in — ASAP?
3. **Living It Out.** There are other people out there wrestling with their own failures. As you have encountered God’s restorative power, be His instrument in leading and allowing these people around you to encounter God’s power and grace. Who will you commit to share and bless by sharing the gospel to them by Christmas?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people to come to a point of brokenness in their lives where they come to a personal encounter with Jesus. Be ready to meet your family, friends, co-workers and others at their points of brokenness, and share with them Jesus Christ, the greatest blessing that God gives to those whose lives He is already working in even before they know it!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends