

# Not Without You - Part 2: The God-Touched Life

by Carter Conlon

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*God is calling us back to an old place of truth and power, where we can experience the blessing of God and be a blessing to others.*

**Duration:** 33:04

**Scripture:** Genesis 32:9, Genesis 32:27, Psalm 37:4, Proverbs 3:5-6, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 6:33, 2 Peter 3:8

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the story of Jacob wrestling with a man until daybreak. He compares the darkness and fear of that time to the current state of the world. The preacher emphasizes the need for humility and the importance of not giving up, even in difficult times. He shares a personal story of a man who came to church drunk but ended up giving his life to Christ. The preacher encourages the congregation to have a face-to-face encounter with God and to be willing to reach out to the sin-sick generation.

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## Transcript

Father, I thank you with all my heart, God. I thank you, Lord, that I sense you're leading us as a congregation to a new place. Yet it's an old place, Lord.

It's not something brand new. It's a place where your people have been. Some of us even were there at one time, but somehow escaped it.

You're bringing us back again. For this last day in which we live, Lord God, we have to be a people of truth or we will have no power to bear witness to who you are in our time. So I'm asking God for an anointing of your Holy Spirit.

I'm asking you, Lord, to take the shackles off of my mind, God, and let your mind animate me. Let your voice animate this human body. I simply yield myself as a vessel into your hands.

I can only speak one way to each heart, but you can speak a thousand ways in this auditorium. So Holy Spirit, come, speak to every heart and overturn every stone, Lord. Go into every darkened place.

Correct every crooked path, my God, and let us be a people who truly represent you on the earth. Let it be, Lord God, and we thank you for it with all of our heart today in Jesus' name. Genesis chapter 32, one verse, verse nine.

Then Jacob said, Oh God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, return to your country and to your family and I will deal well with you. Now we look at this particular verse of scripture and we realize that Jacob was being called back to an old place with a new understanding. It's a place he had once been, but he had left that place.

When I think of the church today in our generation, I'm talking about the corporate body of Christ. You look at where we began 2,000 years ago after the resurrection of Christ, and is it possible that we need to get back to an old place in this generation? I just want to ask the question and let it open just simply the doorway to your heart today, the doorway to your heart rather, just to say, God, is it possible that there is a place I've maybe never been there? Maybe I've actually seen it in writing, but I've never experienced it. Is there something that you want to take me back to? Is there a place that we need as a corporate people to return to if we are going to have an influence in this generation? Now, it was a place of blessing.

It was a place of affecting the futures of many people, even you and I today, though Jacob couldn't have been aware of how much of an impact his decision to go forward to this old place would have. You and I have no understanding. We don't fully know if we will yield to the word of God, if we will let the spirit of God lead us back to an old place in the Bible, a place that God has clearly laid out, a place where the blessing of God really is.

We have no idea today how many lives it could touch. I believe that if we were willing to walk in this place, it could spark something way beyond our present understanding or expectations. Now, Jacob had sought this place of blessing before, but he hadn't done it God's way.

He hadn't done it in truth. There's a lot of people in every generation that say, God bless me. Oh, God bless me.

But it's not a truthful seeking. It's more or less, bless me the way I think the blessing should go. Bless me the way I think my life should be blessed and bless me with the blessing that I think the blessing should be.

And we just completely negate what that blessing is all about, where it's to take us and what it's going to really look like. In Genesis 27, beginning at verse 19. Now, Jacob sought this blessing of God to come on his life like you and I do.

And he said to his father, I am Esau, your firstborn. And I've done just as you told me, please arise, sit and eat of my game that your soul may bless me. But Isaac said to his son, how is it that you found it so quickly, my son? And he said, because the Lord, your God brought it to me.

Then Isaac said to Jacob, please come near that I may feel you, my son, whether you were really my son Esau or not. So Jacob went near to Isaac, his father, and he fell to him and said, the voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. Quite a thought.

Wonder if God would say to us today, your hands don't match your voice. You know, you sit here in the house of God and say, I love you, Lord. And I lift my voice.

Give me back what you owe me or I'm going to choke you until you pay me to worship you. You wronged me. I will never forgive you as long as I live.

I'm not pointing it to you. I'm just talking. You see, the blessing is coming from God.

And it's an amazing thing. He says, your voice and your hands don't match my son, but yet you're asking me to bless you. And he did not recognize him because his hands were hairy, like his brother Esau's hands.

And so he blessed him. Then he said, are you really my son Esau? And he said, I am. Are you really who you say you are? Oh yes, Lord.

Oh yes, I am. Do you speak truth? Oh yes, I do. Do you love your brother unconditionally? Oh yes, I do.

Oh yes, Lord. You know, you can count on me. Are you willing to go wherever I lead you? Oh, you know, I am.

You know, I am Lord. Where you lead me, I will follow. Are you really my son? You're really my daughter? Oh yes, Lord.

I am. I'm genuine. And he said, bring it near to me and I will eat it in my son's game.

Bring your sacrifice, bring your sacrifice near to me and I'll partake of it so that my soul may bless you. So he brought it near to him and he ate and he brought him wine and he drank. And then his father, Isaac said to him, come near now and kiss me my son.

In other words, embrace me. And it's verse 26 speaks to me about the pretended embrace of the responsibility of the blessing, because there's a responsibility that comes with the blessing of God. In Jacob's case, it was a self-focused pursuit of an incredible promise that was once given to his great grandfather, his great grandfather, Abraham.

In Genesis chapter 12, listen to what he says. Now the Lord said to Abraham, get out of your country and from your family and from your father's house to a land that I will show you, that I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great.

And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So who would not want that blessing? That was a blessing that was promised to be passed down from generation to generation.

It was given to Abraham by promise. He gave it to his son, Isaac, who's now passing it on to Jacob. In you, all the families of the world shall be blessed.

Now, some people fall a little short of what this blessing was. It's a blessing to make you great. And I've heard that, oh, greatness is in my path.

Greatness lies before me. I had a man called me one time when I was pastoring in Canada. He said, pastor, I was in my devotions this morning and the Lord told me that greatness is in my future.

I said, well, I'm so glad to hear that because our janitor just quit this morning and we need somebody to clean the church. And then he said to me over the phone, well, that's not exactly what I had in mind. You

see, we have a vision of greatness that might not line up with the word of God.

Remember Jesus himself said the greatest among you will be what? Your servant, be the servant of all. We have a tendency to think, hey, the guy who's standing in the pulpit, now that's great in the kingdom of God. Not necessarily so in the sight of God.

It might be the person in the yellow jacket coming down the aisle right now, right beside you. That may be the greatest in the kingdom of God. Remember when we stand before Christ one day, many who are first are going to be last and many who are last are going to be first.

Greatness in the sight of God is not the way you and I would like to think sometimes that it is. I will bless you. He says, and make your name great and you shall be a blessing.

And I will bless those who bless you. And I will curse those who curse you. Now who doesn't want that? They will walk down the street and know that the protective hand of God is on you.

And he's going to fight against your enemies and all these other things that are really part of the doctrine of the Christian church and in our generation. But there's a last little part in this. And in you, all the families of the earth are going to be blessed.

So it implies that the blessing is not just for you, but the blessing is something God is going to do to flow through you for the sake of other people. In you, all the families of the earth are going to be blessed. Unfortunately, many people in the body of Christ, they take the blessing and they really fully embrace the first half, but they kind of push away the second half.

They want a great name. They want a great position. They want a great title.

They want a great future. They want to know their enemies are not going to prevail, but they don't want part B that says through you, through you, the blessing of God is going to become known everywhere you go. And families everywhere are going to be blessed.

In other words, brought to the knowledge of God and touched by the presence and the power of God. Now God is calling Jacob back to this place, this place that he sought by deceit. He didn't seek it.

Honestly, this true blessing that was his, but he didn't seek it. Honestly, not according to truth, not according to divine purpose. Now God is calling him back to that place.

I wonder in America today, there's been such a self-focus in the house of God. Everything is about me, isn't it? Just go on the internet, start listening to preaching, turn on the radio. It's all about me.

It's all about my character, my future, my relationship, my bank account, my job, my, my self-image. Everything's about me. What about the second half of the blessing? What about the reality that the presence of God is supposed to flow through my life? All the families of the world are going to be blessed through you was the promise that was given to Abraham.

Of course, that was fulfilled in Christ and ultimately through you and I as the church of Jesus Christ. So technically we are the fulfillment of the promise of the blessing that God made to Abraham. Now on his way back, there's something that he had to face and it was the fear of his brother.

You'll look at it in Genesis chapter 32. If you go from verse nine all the way through to verse 23, you're going to find that he was afraid of his brother. He was, he was afraid.

And a lot, a lot of people in the body of Christ today, I'm using that just as a type now of something else, but a lot of people are just afraid of what it might cost to be given to go back to this place. What it might cost to, we love to talk about the book of Acts. We love to, we love to philosophize.

We love to put on Christmas productions. We love to do all this stuff except go back there ourselves. Go back to the place where we're fully given.

We come out of that upper room, impassioned with the presence of God, moving towards a sin sick generation, willing to be put in jail or even lose our freedom or lives in their case for the sake of other people. And there's a fear of what it's going to cost. If I go back, what's it going to cost me? If I go back to that place where I'm saying, God, use my life for your sake and for the sake of others, what's it going to cost me? And there's a fear in his heart that he has to get through and he has to face.

And in order to face that fear, he ends up in a face-to-face encounter with God. And I feel in my heart, that's where we are in this generation as the church of Jesus Christ. We're in a face-to-face encounter with God.

You felt it all day, just like I have. Many people are wondering, what is it I'm feeling in the atmosphere? Why does it feel so heavy? What's going on in my life right now? No, you are in, and I am in a face-to-face encounter with God. And the reality is how deep do we want to go as the people of God? How much do we want to be given to a sin sick generation? How much are we willing to be that blessing of God and say to this generation, I'm going to heaven, but not without you.

I'm destined for glory, but not without you. I'm blessed, but not without you. I'm going to let God channel that blessing through my life.

And you may spit in my face as you did my savior. You may slap me as you did my savior. You may lie about me as you did my savior.

You might even put me in a place I don't want to go because of my savior. But for your sake, I'm going to go the full distance. I'm not going to draw back because of my fear of the discomfort it might bring into my life or the fear of your rejection or the fear of what you might do because Christ loves you.

And he put his spirit upon me and he called me to go to where you are so that I don't have to go home alone, but I'm going to take you with me. I'm talking figuratively now to people all over the place who, without a savior, they have an eternity without God ahead of them and all that that entails. In Genesis chapter 32 and verse 24, it says, and Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled.

Now, we know this man to be the pre-incarnate Christ. He is in a face-to-face confrontation with the Son of God. I love that about the Son of God.

I love that about Jesus. He's willing to confront us in our weakness. Can you imagine wrestling with God? Can you imagine what he could do? He could flick me off into the universe, the edges of the universe with a flick of his finger.

The humility of God to even wrestle with ordinary men or women like you and I. And Jacob was left alone in verse 24 and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. In other words, it was dark. It was fearful.

Very much like our day. We live in a dark time now. You know that.

We live in a fearful time. Now, when he saw that he did not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of jointed as he wrestled with him. It's kind of ironic.

I hurt my back this week. I was just getting up off the floor. That's what happens when you get to be 66, folks.

You're just getting up and you hurt yourself. When he did not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip. This is the son of God now touches Jacob and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as he wrestled with him.

And he said, let me go for the day breaks. But he said, being Jacob, I will not let you go unless you bless me. Now, I thought he already had the blessing.

What is it that he's looking for when that blessing has already been passed down to him through his father? So he said to him, being the son of God, said to Jacob, what is your name? Remember the last time he went for the blessing and his father said, what is your name? Esau. He declared himself to be a man that he was not. You know what his actual name means? Deceiver.

That's what Jacob means. Swindler. That's what it means.

So he's wrestling now at the son of God. The son of God gives him a limp and he says, let me go. He says, no, I'm not letting you go until you bless me because I'm afraid to face my brother.

I'm afraid to go into that place where the blessing is leading me. I'm afraid of what it's going to cost me. I'm afraid of the anger of my brother that may meet me there.

And so bless me. You have to bless me. I can't go if you don't bless me.

And then he says, what is your name? I love that about God. It's been a long time. He lied to his father.

He went into what I call uncle Laban school of ministry. He had an uncle who was also a deceiver and uncle Laban, uncle Laban taught him a little bit more about deception that he didn't know until he had to flee from uncle Laban. And it's as if there's been no passage of time.

You can run from God for most of your life. And he's run from God. And he says, bless me.

And he says, excuse me, what did you say your name was again? It's been a lot of years, but God hasn't forgotten. Remember a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years, like a day. What did you say your name was? And finally he's willing to be honest with God.

He says, my name is Jacob. My name is deceiver. I sought the blessing without the responsibility that comes with it.

And he said, your name shall no longer be called Jacob. You see, when we have a face to face, honest confrontation with the son of God, our nature is changed. We are brought into that place where we

become a new creation.

We are giving, given new passion. We are given new giftings. We are, we're given new power.

We're given new vision. We're given new speech. We become a different person than the person we were when we stopped trying to get the blessing our own way.

And we say, Lord, bless me your way. And the Lord says to him, tell me first, your name. Jacob says, I'm a deceiver.

I tried to get the blessing through lies. I tried to get it my way and not God's way. And he said, your name is no longer called Jacob, but Israel for you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed.

That's an amazing thing. It's how you ask yourself the question, how did he prevail with men? He's not even wrestling with men. He's wrestling with God, but God's telling Jacob, no, your face to face encounter with me has given you an authority that will move the hearts of men has given you something that only God can give that will unlock prison doors, give sight to the blind, heal the bruised in heart.

Those that are captive will be set free. There's going to be a spiritual authority in you. And because you've wrestled honestly with God, you have prevailed not just with God, but with men, there will be power in your speech.

Every time you walk into a room, God says, I'll walk in the room with you. And there'll be something of my presence that follows you everywhere you go. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

It's time for the church of Jesus Christ to come back to that place of power. Again, that place of blessing that is only found in God through Jesus Christ. It's time for you and I to operate in the gifts of the Holy spirit.

It's time for you and I to say, God, give me influence in this generation. Give me strength. That is not my own.

Give me vision. That is not mine. Give me a life plan.

Oh God, that is so much deeper or so much more profound than anything I could ever hope to come up with in my own strength. In chapter 33 and verse 12, he encounters his brother Esau. Esau is what I call the self-made man.

He's in the lineage of God. He's in the family of God. He was the first inheritor of the blessing, but he didn't want it.

He sold it off for the satisfying of his own belly. He didn't want the presence of God in his life. He didn't want that promise that through him, all the world would be blessed in Esau's world.

It was to heck with the rest of them. I just want soup from my belly. That's all I'm concerned about.

Remember that one of the writers in the New Testament talk called a certain type of person, an enemy of the cross was God is their belly. That was Esau. Just feed me, clothe me, give me a nice house, make me comfortable.

That's all I'm looking for in life. Then Esau said in chapter 33, verse 12, let us take our journey. Let us go.

And I will go before you. You see, that's the heart of the Christian. I will go before you, me first.

I want the best place. I want the preeminence. I want to be a conqueror.

I want to be the first in to every situation. I want to be known as a warrior and a victory. And Esau's got 400 soldiers with him.

He's got 400 men who are just like him, galloping off to conquer something, galloping here to conquer this, galloping there to conquer that. But Jacob is now a God-touched man. There's a difference in Jacob.

Jacob is completely different than his brother Esau. And Jacob said to him in verse 13 of Genesis 33, my Lord knows that the children are weak and the flocks and the herds, which are nursing are with me. And if men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die.

Please let my Lord go on ahead before his servant. And I will lead on slowly at a pace where the livestock that go before me and the children are able to endure until I come to my Lord and say here. You see, Jacob has become one with the heart of God.

He's walking at the pace. You see, this is, this is the mark of the God-touched man or woman. We're not willing to go any faster than the slowest among us can go.

The youngest or the oldest, the strongest or the weakest. It's the mark of the God-touched. The Esau's of this generation might even be in pulpits around the nation and they're just out to conquer.

And the people are just things to be counted in their victories. But to the God-touched man, the God-touched woman, every soul is precious in the sight of God. Everyone counts for God's kingdom.

Everyone is precious in the sight of God. There are no big people. There are little people.

Nobody there is just to be counted. Every soul has been blood bought by the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. And the true shepherd of God, the true woman, the true man of God says, no, you go ahead.

You conquer Esau. You do your thing. You go out there and you boast about all your numbers and you boast about all you're doing, but I'm not going any faster than the weakest among us can travel.

I'm not leaving anybody behind. The motto of my life is the motto of Christ's life. I'm going to heaven, but not without you, not without you.

We're going together. All of us are going together. Praise be to God.

Praise be to God. Praise be to God. Jacob, and you and I are God-touched when we become one with the heart of God, when it's no longer all about me, it's now all about you.

That's the evidence. It's the mark of a God-touched man or woman. When we don't walk any faster than the slowest in our ranks, when we're able to look to the left and we look to the right and we just see if there's anybody that needs help.

Is anybody else limping? And God's grace gave that man a limp. Do you know that? God's grace gave him a limp. I thank God for every struggle.

I thank God for every trial. I thank God. I thank God for everything the Lord has ever allowed into my life that has kept me from running ahead of him.

And running ahead of his people. I just thank God with all of my heart. And every once in a while, if I get a little bit ahead of him and myself, he just touches my hip one more time.

And just reminds me, slow down, son. You're going just a little bit too fast. You're getting ahead of me and you're getting ahead of the people.

Oh, I thank God. I thank God. I would rather die with a shepherd's heart than live as the pastor of a hundred million people.

I'm telling you right now, I'd rather die with a small flock with the heart of a shepherd. That is the mark of a God-touched life. It's not about all the numbers, although the numbers may come.

Although the blessing may come. Although they may come in from the North, South, East, to West. I thank God for that.

But it's not all about that. It's about the people. It's about the people.

I pray for a lot of you. I shake hands at the door some Sundays, not every Sunday, but some. God brings your faces back and I pray for you.

There's a young girl that used to attend this church. She'd come in every Sunday night and I'd just grab her hand and say, promise me you won't give up. Promise me you won't give up.

Promise me you won't give up. Because I felt there was a spirit of suicide on that girl. Promise me.

And then one day I walked into the sanctuary and she was sitting over here on a Sunday night. And for the first time in a long time, her hair was washed and she was standing there and her hands were raised and she was glorifying God. And I thank God with all my heart.

Promise me you won't give up. Promise me you won't give up. Don't give up.

And if you're struggling, still come into the house of God. I had a man show up at the door one time, very prim and proper man, nice suit. And he had a hat on and he says, I'm drunk, but I'm here.

I said, well, maybe tonight is your night. And he said, you never know. This could be my night tonight.

So he sat one of these seats roughly in the middle here. And so I'm standing at the back. Pastor David is preaching.

He gave an altar call and I went and got him. I said, do you want to go? Do you want to give your life to Christ? He says, okay, let's go. So we walked down together and I could hear the collective grasp in the audience gasp.

It was like our pastors responded to give his life to Christ to get saved. And I honestly don't care because there was a man coming to the altar that needed a savior. That's what it's all about.

That's where the blessing is. That's where the glory is. When I get to heaven, this pulpit is not going to be there.

When I get to heaven, this church building is not going to be there. My clothes are not going to be there, but you will be there by the grace of God. So not without you is what we're talking about.

We're talking about something a whole lot deeper than just a sermon series in this church. It's a heart that only God can give to his people. Not without you that it's a heart that it's not just for me or somebody like me in a pulpit, but it's for you and your neighborhood and on your job, you're sitting there, you're looking at the person beside you and in your heart, you're saying, I'm blessed.

I'm going to heaven, but not without you. And you say, God, give me the right words to speak. Give me the right heart and Lord, let me even suffer the beating if necessary for the sake of that soul.

But don't let me get to heaven without that person. Don't let me get to heaven without that mom and her three kids across the hall. Oh God, give me a way to reach them.

That's the old place. That's the old place. That's where the church began.

Just like Jacob, we left the old place and we went to a new place. Now many of us are done with uncle Laban. We want to go home and God's calling us home to something deeper than we've ever known in our lifetime.

And yes, we are afraid of the cost. We are afraid because we don't like inconvenience and we have been raised on a rather soft message in America and our generation, but the Lord's speaking now. He's calling us home.

He's calling us to something deeper. He's calling us to be a blessing. Who knows? Who knows? Mordecai said to Esther, who knows, but that you were born for such a time as this? Who knows that if we will receive this, we are on the internet now as a church around much of the world, 204 countries on Tuesday night alone.

Who knows that if we will actually move in this direction, who knows? Jacob had no idea getting up and going back, what it was going to produce. He had no idea the lives that were going to be touched. He had no idea that he was carrying in his physical DNA, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He had no idea he was carrying the church. Jesus Christ, you and I, in his simple act of obedience, he became the fulfillment of the blessing in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. He just by getting up and going back to that place again.

And this is what I feel the Lord's been speaking to my heart. I can't even articulate it clearly. It's something deeper than I'm able to preach, but I think you're feeling it in his spirit.

He's calling us to something of himself. He's given this church, I'm speaking to Times Square Church now, he's given this church a worldwide audience now. And so what will they see when they come in on the cameras? I shared it this morning.

Will it be truth or will it be just a good display of 104 nationalities getting together and having a good singalong and learning more truth? Or will he see a people that are actually going somewhere in God? I believe, you see, if we weren't willing to get up and go home, he wouldn't give me this message. I believe we are. I believe you and I are willing to say, Lord, take me deeper, take me farther.

Give me the heart of compassion that sent you to a cross. As much as my human body is able to bear, give it to me, oh God. Don't let me live in indifference when people around could be blessed, if I would let your life flow through me towards them.

So Father, I thank you with all of my heart this day. Thank you, Lord, that you're calling us to something much deeper than we can understand. I thank you, Lord, that you're taking us out of the shackles of self-focus.

You're bringing us all into something much bigger than just being worried and consumed with ourselves. You're helping us to understand your heart, the heart that sent you to a cross, the heart that should beat within each of us because we claim to have your Holy Spirit living in these earthen vessels. Forgive us, Lord, if we've sought the blessing any other way, if we've tried to impress you with our voices but deny you with our hands.

I ask, oh God, for great grace, great grace, Lord, in the future. Let a love that can only come from heaven be birthed in this church first and then go out from us, Lord, everywhere we travel, everywhere we go. I pray that if the services and the worship of this church goes out on the internet, that people's hearts will melt all over the world, in countries, in prisons, shut-ins, people everywhere will begin to realize how loved they are of you, Lord.

I'm asking you, Lord, to do something through us that we can't even hope to do for ourselves, something more far-reaching and profound. How could Jacob have known what a simple act of obedience would produce in the world? He could never have understood it, and neither do we, Lord. But we know you're leading us to go back to a place, Lord, where many may have left it behind.

So God, I thank you, Lord. Help us to deal honestly with you, Lord. Wrestle with us, oh Son of God.

Help us, Lord, all of us, God, to deal honestly with you again in the way that we need to. Help us just to be real about who we are. You already know.

Nothing is hidden from you, Lord. It's only hidden from us. So God, I thank you.

I thank you and I praise you in Jesus' name.

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