

What Do You Do When God Breaks You

by Sandeep Poonen

The sermon delves into the story of Jacob, highlighting his life marked by deception and blessings despite his deceitful ways. It emphasizes the importance of true transformation and holding onto God even in moments of brokenness. Jacob's encounter with God, where he wrestles and refuses to let go until he receives a blessing, symbolizes the perseverance and desire for a new identity that leads to true change.

Scripture: Genesis 32:24, Isaiah 40:30, Proverbs 4:18, Amos 5:4, Psalm 51:17, Hebrews 12:6, 2 Corinthians 12:9, James 4:8, Romans 5:3, Philippians 3:13

Topics: "Transformation", "Perseverance in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

I wanted to share from the story of Jacob and how God dealt with Jacob. We read about Jacob that he starts off his life with a very bad introduction. He is born almost with a bad reputation.

He comes out of his mother's womb and they're struggling with each other. And Jacob's hand comes up holding on to Esau's heel, fighting with each other, and they called him and the father calls the son Jacob as deceiver or one who you know takes from somebody else. I've never heard of anybody in my life who from birth had a negative description about him.

In his very birth, imagine your dad and your mom calling you a deceiver. That's the beginning of the story of Jacob and that begins to be the story of his life. And he, you know, he deceives Esau.

He tells Esau to sell him the birthright and then he deceives Isaac, his father, and gets the blessing and then has to run away and then he goes to father-in-law and other things like that. But if you read the story of Jacob, you see that Jacob keeps getting blessed. Even though he's being so deceiving, he gets blessed.

He gets blessed with the birthright. He succeeds in deceiving Esau. He succeeds in deceiving Isaac.

He succeeds in escaping from getting killed by his brother and he goes and on his way to Laban, he sees, I mean, a ladder. He gets a vision of God and a ladder ascending and descending and angels. He calls that place house of God.

Then he goes to Laban and he gets, you know, two wives. He gets the wife that he wanted for after many years and then we read that how he deceives again and he prospers and how his flock was greater than his boss's flock. He was able to deceive even his boss, who was his, you know, father-in-law.

So in spite of all of these deceivings, he's prospering. And so one lesson I've learned from this is just because you're prospering doesn't mean that everything's okay. You can be prospering in so many different ways and you can see, well, guess what? God was with me.

Look, I got a vision of angels ascending and descending. That means God must be with me. No, that doesn't mean that God is with me.

Underneath all of it, Jacob knew that he had been gaining all of these things by being a deceiver. And so when things are going in our lives, when prayers get answered, when situations go in our favor, that's not necessarily a sign that God is with us. We have to ask ourselves, Lord, what is underneath all of that? Am I still a deceiver? Am I still fooling people? Am I still interested in money? Do I still have an unforgiving spirit? This and that, despite all the blessings and answers to prayer.

And in Genesis chapter 32, we see that he finally meets with Esau and he wrestles with God and God breaks his hip. And I just wanted to, I do not know if you know the story in Genesis chapter 32 verse 24. You can turn there because many of us, when we hear the story, we can get the wrong picture of that story.

So I just wanted to underline something about brokenness and how God breaks us and the fruit that God intends to come out of it. In Genesis chapter 32 verse 24, it says that Jacob was alone, right, before he was about to meet Esau and he wrestles with a man until daybreak. And then when God or the angel, whoever it was, couldn't prevail against Jacob, this man or this angel or God, whoever it is, touches the socket of his thigh and the socket of Jacob's thigh, I believe into the hip, gets dislocated.

And I've never had a dislocated bone, but I've had friends who had dislocation and it's not painless. It's very painful. Dislocation can be very painful.

This is the scene of brokenness and extremely broken situation. But what I wanted to show you was verse 26, that the angel dislocates Jacob's hip, thigh, right from the hip. So you can almost picture that this Jacob is wrestling this man and his leg is just dangling, right? The whole leg is just dislocated.

So he's just hanging like that in deep pain and this angel tells Jacob, okay, just let me go. I've dislocated your hip. Your leg's just dragging along.

Just let me go. And Jacob says, I'm not going to let you go until you bless me. This is Jacob in deep pain, this awful looking picture of a leg just hanging from the hip, dislocated.

At that point, that is the moment of truth. It is when Jacob is broken completely and he's helpless. That is when Jacob proves his true metal.

He proves that he really wants to follow God because he says to God, I will not let you go until you bless me. It isn't Jacob wrestling that caused the blessing. Let me repeat that.

It wasn't Jacob wrestling with God that caused the blessing. It was Jacob holding on to God after he was broken. That's what triggered the blessing.

That's when he says in verse 27, the angel of God, a man says to Jacob, what is your name? And he said, my name is deceiver. I have been blessed in so many different ways. I've got the woman of my dreams.

I've got flock and my business profited more than my boss's business. My flock profited more than my boss's business, but I'm not going to let you go because you need to bless me because underlying all of these blessings, underlying all of these blessings is this fact that I am a deceiver, that my name is Jacob. And it is into that, that God says, okay, I'm going to change your very name.

I'm going to change your very identity. I'm going to change who you are. I'm going to change your heart of stone of a deceiver.

I'm going to give you a heart of flesh. I'm going to give you a soft heart, but this happens in Jacob's life, not because he wrestled with God. It's not because he wrestled with the angel.

It is because he held on and said, I won't let you go. God, after I have been broken, that's where God says, this person deserves to be blessed. And it's the perseverance to go to God and say, God, I'm not interested in the blessings because I got a ton of blessings, but I'm wrestling with angels.

I'm wrestling with God because underneath all the blessings, I want a new nature. I want a new name. I want a new attitude towards loved ones.

I want a new attitude towards coworkers. I want a new attitude towards enemies, those who persecute me, whatever it is. I want a new attitude towards lust.

I want a new attitude towards anger. I want a new identity. Lord, you're blessing me through So this and that, my children are receiving the word of truth, they're showing me ways which are better.

But deep down, I know my name, there's still the curse of Jacob over me in different areas of my life. And God says, okay, if you're going to cling on to me and you're going to wrestle me saying I want this, I'm going to break you. And it's in this deep pain and with a leg hanging down as if it can't move.

This pathetic picture of Jacob, that is what God reduces Jacob to, a pathetic picture. And then God says, now the real test begins. That's the real moment of trial when you say, God, I want you, I will not let you go.

Even though I used to have two legs, now I have one leg dangling, but I'm not letting you go. That's where God meets with him and changes his name and says, now you'll be called Israel. One who persevered with God.

So dear brothers and sisters, let's remember that there's no benefit in being broken by itself. What happens is what you do when you are broken. Broken is the pathway to blessing, but don't seek to be broken.

Seek to be broken and then seek to hold on. That's the question because let me tell you, when God breaks you, it is a lot more painful than you expect. It's a lot more painful.

So when we pray for God, please break us. We honestly don't know what we're asking for because it comes in very, very subtle ways and deep ways and ways that cut so deep, like Jacob's tie being dislocated. And what ends up happening is in that moment of trial, what we end up saying is, God save me.

Just stop this painful dislocation. Rather than we say, God address this underlying nature of mine, dislocated tie or not. I want my name changed.

I want my nature to have a different end result out of it. So if you're going through a trial and God's going to choose to break you, it's going to be more difficult than you may expect. That's the pathway of brokenness.

It's never going to be easy. But what the message of hope is, don't let go of God. Don't let go of God with your underlying name change.

The things that have been associated with your name for a long period of time, much more than maybe anybody else in the world knows. Jacob's issue went all the way back to the womb. Some of our issues may go all the way back to our culture, all the way back to the way we were raised.

So many things. We don't have to analyze or microanalyze or beat ourselves up over it. Jacob was not responsible for his name being Jacob.

He was born that way, pulling something in the womb. Could you blame him for that? For wrestling with his brother in the womb? But he took accountability for it. And he said, Lord, I may have come out of the womb this way.

I want a name change. I want a nature change in these areas. Where there's unforgiveness, I want love.

Where there's bitterness, I want love. Where there's lust, I want love. Where there's anger, I want love.

And God will break us. And in that time, let us be like Jacob. Painful, dangling hip.

Hold on to the Lord. I'm not going to let go of you, Lord, until you bless me. I don't need money.

I don't need anything on this earth. I want an identity change. I want a name change.

And as it says there in verse 31, in Genesis 32, 31, then the sun begins to rise. Then, as we heard, Proverbs 418, the path of a righteous is like the sun that rises to its moonday height. Now the sun begins to rise.

He's limping, the permanent reminder of his brokenness. But he's got the name change. He's got the nature.

There's love that's starting to burst out of this dry land. God promises to do it. It is not a painless way.

It'll be a painful way. But he's not interested in breaking us so that we stagger and fall, as that Wilkerson quote that I mentioned and shared. It is so that he can lift us up and give us a new name, give us a new nature.

The way is always good. His ways are always good. He wants to change that filthy name and nature that's associated with you.

Brokenness is just a pathway. When God's breaking you, hold on, hold on. And hold on tighter to God.

Let me end with Isaiah 40, verse 30. This is what we do when God breaks us in small ways or big. Isaiah 40, verse 30, 31.

Youth will grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly. But then it says, those who wait upon that Lord. And that word wait, I've explained that before in a message, which is those who wait expectantly.

And I use that expression of intertwining yourself with the rope. The way the ropes are intertwined with each other. That's what that word means, that word wait.

It's a Hebrew word, kava. And it means to intertwine. So when young men will fall away and vigorous young people will stumble badly, what we do is we intertwine ourselves more tightly with the Lord.

That's the picture we must have of Jacob. Lord, you broke my hip. Well, what am I going to do? What's the response when God breaks my hip? Intertwine yourself more deeply with the Lord.

Why? Because he's your father. He's the father who loved you. He's the one who saved you when you were dying and you had eternal hell in your near future.

He sent his son, he gave him everything for you. Because of that, because he's your father who loves you, because he gave up everything for you, because of the slain lamb that is before you. Because of that, when he breaks you, when he dislocates your hip, and it is more painful than you can ever imagine, intertwine yourself more deeply with the Lord and say, I'm not going to let go of you.

This is the biggest moment of trial, is when he's breaking you and you say, Lord, I want to intertwine myself with you. I want to wait for the Lord. We gain a new kind of strength.

Even as we're limping, the sun is rising over our lives. The son of God is shining in a new way. And when we are weak, then we are strong.

May God make this true in our lives. May God allow breakings to happen in different ways. From COVID to slimming down, to resurging again, to schools being more difficult with parents having to work or different things.

Income being affected. I praise God that most of us in NCCF have not been affected. Massive ways, some have been, we're praying for them.

But I was speaking to some churches in India, and it's much worse over there. A lot of people who had jobs have had to go from working jobs in offices and sales and marketing and different things, to being day laborers. Think about that, dear brothers and sisters, if we had to become day laborers.

I'm pretty sure we'll do it. But there are so many people because of this COVID resurging, where in countries like India, they have it really bad. So we pray for them, we're deeply thankful.

But breakings can happen in many different ways. So this is a warning and an encouragement. Cling closely to God at that time.

Don't give in to doubt, fight the doubts and anxiety. Be brutal against it. Encourage your wives and your husbands, especially in the breakings happen.

This is not the time to take it easy. We need to lean closer into the Lord. Tie ourselves more tightly to the rock of our salvation.

Lord, we want an identity change. We want to become more like you. You can take away our jobs, you can take away many different things.

But Lord, I won't let go of you until you bless me. I want to be a better reflection of you. I want to be a better, I want more of your glory to come out of you, out of me one year from now.

I won't let you go until you do that. Let's do that in the breaking. Then the sun will shine and we come out shining, leaning on the beloved and shining with his glory.

May that be true. Let's close and pray. Father, we pray that this may be true in our lives.

We pray, Lord Jesus, that we may wrap ourselves more tightly. Hold on to the father of love. Crawl onto your lap and hold on more tightly, Lord Jesus, when the breakings happen.

You discipline the ones you love. You break the hips of the ones you love because you want to give us a name change. And we want to give up anything, Lord Jesus.

Our reputation, all of our things that we've held on to, Lord. We're willing to give it all up and lay it out for you. Even though it is painful, we want the name changes, Lord, in our lives.

We want to become sons of the living God. We want to become younger brothers of Jesus Christ. We want to hold that name with honor.

We want that name over our lives written on our foreheads. More and more, Lord Jesus, do what you have to do to break us. We want to hold on more tightly to you.

Thank you, Lord, that it is your word and you will complete what you've started. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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