

When God Asks You To Cross Your Arms

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon delves into the story of Jacob from Genesis, highlighting his journey from birth to death, focusing on his faith and transformation. It emphasizes the importance of living a life of faith like Jacob, seeking God's transformation even through challenges and hardships. The speaker encourages listeners to pursue a life that aligns with God's purpose, aiming to become more like Jesus despite obstacles and personal desires.

Scripture: Hebrews 11:20, Hebrews 11:6, Genesis 32:24, Isaiah 40:28, Revelation 14:4, Romans 8:28

Topics: "Faith and Transformation", "Aligning with God's Purpose"

Description

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Transcript

I want to show you a verse from Hebrews 11, verse 20. Now, the story of Jacob is written in Genesis. And we read about Jacob all the way from his birth, all the way to his death.

We read about Jacob even before he was born in his mother's womb, how he was twins with Esau. And how the two children were fighting in the womb, even before they came out. There are many stories about different people in the Bible.

But not many stories have stories all the way from the womb about a person all the way to his death. But Jacob, you can read about that and it starts in Genesis 25. And then you see the story of Jacob and Joseph, and he ends up dying in Genesis 49.

So remember, the Bible is inspired by God. And God in his wisdom spent 24-25 chapters about Jacob. Not all about Jacob, but Jacob and Joseph.

20 plus chapters. Now, in the New Testament, Hebrews 11 is a chapter with lots of different people and their faith. And when you see Hebrews 11, we read what the Holy Spirit now in the New Covenant talks about Jacob and his faith.

And Hebrews 11 verse 21 gives me the summary of Jacob in one verse. There are many things that happened in Jacob's life. But in Hebrews 11 verse 6 it says it's impossible to please God without faith.

So what the writer in Hebrew is telling me is, what did Jacob do by faith? There are over 20 chapters on all the things that Jacob did. But now this writer in Hebrews is saying, what did Jacob do by faith? That's what I want to write down. And what we read in there is what he did by faith.

So that's my first point. We can have many different things that happen in our lives. As you can see in Jacob's life too, if you read Genesis in the story, there are many things that he did which were not good and not right.

And just like in Jacob's life, many good things happened, some good, some not so good. But if Jacob did it, it doesn't mean I have to do it. He lied to his father.

He cheated his brother. He married multiple women. It's all in the Bible.

That doesn't mean we follow what Jacob did. But when it comes to a person's faith, we can follow that. So dear brothers and sisters, you're going to have maybe a long life.

There's lots of chapters in the story of your life. What matters though is what's going to be written in the ultimate book, in the eternal book, is what we did by faith. It doesn't matter what job I had.

It doesn't matter how many kids I had. It doesn't matter how much money I made. What did I do by faith? And in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 21 it says, By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph.

And in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 21 it says, By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph. He didn't bless all of his own sons. He didn't bless all of his sons of Joseph.

He didn't bless all of his sons of Joseph. He blessed the sons of Joseph. And I don't know if you know the story.

I don't have to go back and look at it. But when Jacob was praying for the sons of Joseph, I don't know if you know the story. When Jacob was praying for the sons of Joseph, Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Manasseh was the older one, Ephraim was the younger one. The youngest was Manasseh and the oldest was Ephraim.

But when Jacob prayed for them, he put his right hand, which is a sign of greater blessing, on the younger child and put the left hand on the older child. And Joseph tried to stop him because Jacob was blind. He said, you got it backwards.

You got to have the right hand on the older son and the left hand on the younger son. And Jacob said, no, no, no. I've got it right.

That's what Jacob did by faith. All of Jacob's life, he was so dependent on his own skills and his smarts and his own intelligence. He got the birthright with his scheming, with his deception.

He got so much more flock than even his own boss, which is his father-in-law, by deception. And he had so much skills that he was able to get so much wealth, too. Sorry.

I just got back, so it just froze for me. So Jacob got a lot through his deception. Not by faith.

If he had gone with his intelligence, he would have said, put your right hand on the older son and your left hand on the younger son. But at the end of his life, he had come to the realization that I'm going to listen to God, I'm not going to listen to my own logic. At some point, that has to happen in all of our lives.

There are a few things that have to happen in our lives. And there has to be that moment in my life, when it is said about me, by faith, that Sandeep did this in his life. He went like this.

The whole world says go like this, but one day Sandeep realized to listen to God and go like this. Not to do it the way the world tells me to do it. Not the way my feelings tell me to live it.

Not to do it the way my family tells me to do it. God, I want to do it the way you ask me to do it. And even if other people protest saying, no, you're not supposed to do it, that's not the cultural way to do it, that's not the historical way to do it, God, you're asking me to do it.

That transformation to listening to what God says has to happen in each of our lives. This is not about going to heaven or hell. This is a lifestyle that even many people who may end up going to heaven don't live by.

And once we have that mindset, that's what becomes most important to us. God, how do you want it to be done, not how do I think it should be done. And we become more obedient by default, by just more and more habit.

And it doesn't bother us that we used to do this for many years like this, but then now God is saying, do it this way. We say, ok, no problem, we'll do it your way. It isn't an argument.

No, no, no, I really feel I should do it this way. We become so surrendered that God, you want us to do it this way, we'll do it this way. By faith.

And that's what God said, I want to write about that for all eternity. And now you see the second half of that verse. And worshipped leaning on the top of his staff.

And that expression, leaning on the top of his staff, tells me about when that transformation happened. Jacob was not leaning on the top of his staff because he was an old man. No, he was leaning on the top of his staff because God touched his hip and dislocated his hip.

And because of that, from then on, Jacob started limping. When he was still very strong, God broke him to where he started limping, and that's why he's leaning on his staff. So we can turn there to Genesis chapter 32.

And we can turn now to Genesis 22. These things happened after many things happened to Jacob. But what God had to do was to change Jacob's way of thinking.

And Jacob begins in Genesis 25. And now we are in Genesis 32. So let me give you just a quick couple of things of what happens, good things that happen to Jacob, between Genesis 25 and Genesis 32.

And now I want to tell you a few good things that happened, as a summary, from Genesis 22 to Genesis 32. And even if it comes through deception, Jacob obtains his firstborn right and his blessing. And even if you say, this is a bad thing, he still obtained these things.

So he somehow won in these cases. And he beat his brother. And he beat his father, but he got what he wanted.

And then he runs away. And he ran from heaven to earth and back and down. That's a good thing.

And God spoke to him. You can read about that in Genesis 28. I mean, if we had that happen to us, believe us, we'd be traveling all over Romania, talking, people would be inviting us to speak in their church.

Then he goes to his relative's place and he meets this beautiful girl, Rachel, and he wants to get married to her. And he ends up getting married to her and her sister. And Laban fools him into marrying Leah, but then he ends up getting married to Rachel too.

And he's working for his father-in-law, so Laban is his boss, and he ends up becoming richer than his boss. His flock is more than his father-in-law's flock. So Jacob's winning.

You can say he's being blessed by God. He got the blessing. He sees a vision of God and God speaks to him.

He marries the woman of his dreams. He's even richer than his own boss. I mean, life's going really well.

No. That's the story until Genesis 32. He's having trouble, but God, He's having prosperity on every level.

God says, I need to break you. I need to change your mindset to going like this, to going like this. Even though everything in your mind says go like this, I need you to be so happy to go like this.

So even though everything may be going really well in our lives, like Jacob was going, that doesn't mean that we are living by faith. Even though things are going well in our lives, like Jacob was going, that doesn't mean that we are living by faith. We haven't gotten infected by the virus.

Our family is doing well, even during this pandemic. But like Jacob in Genesis 32, God says, I need to break you. And Genesis 32, from 24 onwards, you may know the story, is when Jacob wrestled with a man, I don't know if it was an angel or God or somebody.

So maybe, brother Dan, you can read Genesis 32, verses 24-28. So in verse 24 and 25, we see that Jacob is wrestling with God or an angel. And in verse 25, when nobody is winning, the angel touches Jacob's hip or thigh and dislocates his thigh.

So let's say these are his two legs, one of his legs goes like this, now it's like just dangling, right? The whole thigh, all the way from the hip, all the way down, that whole leg is just dangling like this. I don't know if you can picture the scene. The wrestling you need, your legs are so important for wrestling.

Now all of a sudden, you can't put any weight on this, it's not going anywhere on this one leg. So the wrestling match is over now, this leg can't go anywhere, it's all on one leg. But then you see what the angel says in verse 26.

I thought the wrestling match is over. No, but look at the angel saying, let me go. Jacob is still holding on, even though he's just got one leg.

The wrestling match is not over. Jacob is still holding on to the guy, he's being dragged along by the angel, he's like, I'm not letting go, the wrestling match is not over. And Jacob says, I will not let you go until you bless me.

I don't care if you've dislocated my hip, and my leg is dangling, but you've got to bless me. I don't care if you've dislocated my hip, and my leg is dangling, but you've got to bless me. And now the question is, what do you mean by blessing? I didn't give you wealth, you didn't see God, you didn't marry the woman of your dreams, what are you trying to say? My name Jacob means grabber.

I've got this in me that loves to grab, and to deceive, and to cheat. There's something much deeper than all the prosperity in my life. There's a nature, there's a mindset that is a grabber and a deceiver that's still in there.

Everybody looks at my life and thinks I'm a success. Everybody looks at my life and thinks I'm a success. I'm invited to different churches where I talk about my vision, I have a lot of money, and I married the woman of my dreams.

But everything about me in my name is grabber. I need something deep to be changed in me. And he's like, I'm not going to let you go until you bless me.

You dislocated my hip, for the rest of my life I'm going to walk with a limp and walk with a cane, but I'll do whatever it takes, I need you to bless me. I don't need new sheep, I don't need more sheep, I don't need a woman, a wife, I don't need all the visions of God, I need a name change. I don't want to be a grabber and a deceiver anymore.

This is Jacob with one leg dangling down, holding on to this man after he's broken, and saying God bless me with a different nature. And God changed his name there. This is where Jacob said, sure, let's switch the hands, no problem.

I'm done doing it my own way. I'm not grabbing for this situation or that situation. God, you want me to switch the hands and bless the younger child? No problem.

But it began here in Genesis chapter 32. Where he wrestled with God and God broke him down to his hip. And he says, God, I don't care what you do, I don't like to be a grabber anymore.

Now, at the end of his life, it says in Genesis 11-21 that he worshipped leaning on his staff. That's what he did by faith. No mention of the woman of his dreams.

No mention about all the money he made more than even his own boss. But he worshipped God even though God had broken him. Because here's what Jacob did after God broke him.

After God dislocated his hip, what did Jacob do? That's key. This is what Jacob did. I won't let go of you until you bless me.

After he had his hip dislocated. That's when Jacob showed that he really wanted it. He didn't complain.

He didn't throw a big fit. God, why did you break my hip? He didn't complain by blaming God. God, why did you do this? Why did you dislocate my hip? I want to change my name.

I don't want to be a grabber anymore. Many times when we go through difficult situations, we complain to God. Jacob could have complained now.

He didn't complain because he wanted the blessing more. He wanted the nature of Jesus Christ and it doesn't matter now. We have to see God in this way.

Literally, God will do everything necessary to make us like Jesus Christ. Just look at what Jesus did when he was on this earth. He allowed Jesus to be killed for our sake.

He will do anything it takes to make us more like him. He is that committed. If you don't think he is committed, just look at what he did to Jesus on the cross for you and for me.

That's how much committed God is to making you like him. That's what the cross means whenever we see the cross and we see what Jesus did on the cross. Because that is the best thing that can happen in our lives, that we become more like him.

And God is saying, look what I did to Jesus on the cross for you so that you can become more like me. And God is saying, look what I did to Jesus on the cross for you so that you can become more like me. Just think about this, that God will allow us to do only those things that will make us like Jesus.

The job that you really want to get. The girl that you want to marry. And from God's perspective, God is interested in how you can become more like Jesus.

And even if the job doesn't go well, I don't want to marry the girl that I want, I will be sure of one thing. Only allow that thing that will make us more like Jesus. Only.

So if I have a healthy child, it is because God said, I'm going to use that healthy child to make you more like Jesus. And if I have a healthy child, God will say, that healthy child will help you to be more like Jesus. And if the child gets sick, we should be sure, without any doubt.

Because God can heal that sickness. And we will pray many times a day, with full faith that God will heal that child. But even if the situation will be in such a way that the child will not be healed, we are 100% sure that God did not heal because He wanted me to become more like Jesus because of that sickness or through that sickness.

That is the only reason why that sickness is still there. Not to punish me, not to punish my children. But only because God says, I want to make you more like Jesus.

This is not a punishment. And if you don't think I'm serious about making you more like Jesus, just look at what happened on the cross. He was not punishing Jesus for something Jesus did.

He was helping me when He put Jesus on the cross. He said, I want to make it so that you can become like Jesus too. So whether it's a job win or a job loss, God is always so focused on making you like Jesus.

He may break my head. One thing that we should never ever doubt, God wants to make me like Jesus and He will only allow that thing that will make me more like Jesus. Let's read in closing Isaiah chapter 40, verses 28-31.

Isaiah chapter 40, verses 28-31. Verse 28, God does not become weary or tired. And His last word is, you cannot figure out God.

You cannot understand God. You cannot explain God. The way He works is unexplainable.

So I do not know why God had to break Jacob's wrist. I can't explain it. So I can't explain why God had to break Jacob's wrist.

But one thing I know is that He does not become weary or tired. And He will be infinitely determined to make me more like Jesus. He may give 10 children to one, He'll give no children to another.

I can't explain it. I can't understand it. But He's committed to making all of us like Jesus.

So who will live with such a God? Who's going to be able to keep up with such a God who's so committed to making me like Jesus? Who's going to be able to keep up with such a God who's so committed to making me like Jesus? Verse 30. Youth will get tired. And furious young men, these strong men will fail.

So who's going to win? Who's going to be able to keep up? Verse 31. Those who wait for the Lord. If I would use the picture of Jacob, those who never let go of God.

And when? After he broke his hip. Even then you've got Jacob clinging onto God saying, bless me. I don't care what to do.

Even then you've got Jacob clinging onto God saying, bless me. I don't care what to do. These people who wait for the Lord will gain new strength.

They won't just run, they'll fly like eagles. Those who give up on God, they get new strength. This is the Word of the Lord.

This is so important for us to have this attitude towards God always. This is so important for us to have this attitude towards God always. These are the people who will make progress towards God.

Leaning on the staff, we can worship God like Jacob. The world tells us to go like this, God tells us to go like this, we say sure. The world tells us to go like this, God tells us to go like this, we say sure.

Let us never give up on the Lord. Let us cling to the Lord even when He dislocates our hip. Let us cling to the Lord even when He dislocates our hip.

Lord Jesus, I don't want my name to be Sandeep, but I want to be the brother of Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter how much I have to pay. You'll allow it only because you want me to become more like Jesus.

Or if you have to give somebody cancer, or you have to give me cancer, I know you'll only allow it and not heal it, because you want to make me more like Jesus. Or if you have to give somebody cancer, or you have to give me cancer, I know you'll only allow it and not heal it, because you want to make me more like Jesus. God does not get tired.

He is so determined to make me like Jesus. This is how good a God we have. He is such an infinitely loving Father.

You may not believe this all, but the best thing that can happen to our lives is that we become like Jesus. You may not believe this all, but the best thing that can happen to our lives is that we become like Jesus.

And God says, I am determined to do this.

Many people in the world are complaining against this good Father, and criticizing this good Father, and upset with this good Father who is so good. Dear brothers and sisters, let's eliminate all complaining against the completely good Father. Yes, tough things will happen in our lives, like it happened in Jacob's life.

But God has only one purpose in mind. Make us more like Jesus. Let's close in prayer.

Father, we pray, Lord, that this truth may go deep within our hearts. Light these truths, Lord, into a fire by your Holy Spirit. The devil hates when we talk about the goodness of God.

The devil hates it when we expose his lies. We want to bind all the forces of darkness, Lord Jesus, that cause us to think that you are not good. Start a new fire, Lord Jesus, in us, that will never get extinguished.

That will, 24, 7, 365 days a year, we will believe and hold fast that God is altogether good. Bless these dear brothers and sisters, and everybody who hears this message. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

That word Amen means not may it be so, but it will be so. That's the word of faith. May that be true in our lives.

God bless you. If you have any questions. I have one question.

So, God is committed 100% to become like Jesus, to make us like Jesus. So, you said that he allows sickness and other things in our life to become like Jesus, to work. Only if it will get us to become more like Jesus, yes.

Question now. These things, just a second, these things can take place over our will, for example. A Christian who does not want to become like Jesus, because it is something that God wants to transform.

I mean, he uses these things over his will. If we do not want, we do not accept this plan of his. Do you understand what I mean? He is not willing to become like Jesus, but can God trespass his will to make this Christian like Jesus? No.

I mean, what do you think would have happened if Jacob, after he dislocated his hip, just walked away? Nothing. Good. You will search, you will find me when you search for me and seek for me with all your heart.

And God says, I think somewhere else, seek for me and you will find me, and I will be found by you. The rich young ruler too, in Jesus' time. Here is what you got to do.

The rich young ruler walked away. God did not override the rich young ruler's will. Now, God did not give up on the rich young ruler.

But God did not give up on the rich young ruler. Maybe there were more opportunities through Peter, through Paul. And there are opportunities even if we were like the rich young ruler in the past.

God has hope for us until the day we die. And then God says, then there is the judgment. Hebrews 11 or Hebrews 10.

Once a person lives, there is lots of hope, infinite hope. But then a person dies, then God says, now I have to judge you. So until then, God is constantly trying to reach us.

I mean, they said that there will be Christians who do not have a life like this. And they will all be in hell, in heaven. Which means that the desire is important.

And besides the fact that God has this purpose, we have to assume that purpose so that we can get there. Otherwise, we remain like this somehow. We enter, we do not enter, we stay.

So that's how you assure me. Right? Yes. I approached you.

Okay. Andrei said that in heaven will be people who assume this life of Jesus and the other. And he said this.

You said this. That in heaven will be people who didn't live according to the standard of God. You said that in heaven will be person that their life is not like the life of Jesus.

The purpose of them was not to become like Jesus. Yes. So what I'm saying is they did not live that life with that mindset fully.

Yes. And I know you can read about this in Revelation chapter 14. And it talks about a group of people and it gives a specific number, 144,000, who have very specific characteristics of them.

And it says about them that they followed the lamb wherever he went. Now, in Revelation 7, it talks about a different group of people, all who are in heaven, and it talks about them as being multitudes that cannot be counted. So there is a multitude that cannot be counted that will be in heaven.

But there is a smaller group, it seems like, that followed the lamb wherever he went. Now here is the warning. If you seek to be in this smaller category, you will definitely make it to heaven.

If you don't want to be like that and you want to be just in the general category, I can't be as confident. You might make it. There seems to be people who made it.

You might make it into that bigger category of people. It is possible that you will make it into the bigger group, this multitude that cannot be counted. But I can't have that confidence because there is more debate whether I will even make it to heaven.

But I can't have that confidence because there is more debate whether I will even make it to heaven. Because there are many warnings and many stories of people who were lukewarm, who lost their first love, who had a name that they were alive and they were dead. And God's warning is pretty clear.

I will spit you out of my mouth, repent or I will remove you. There are some pretty strong warnings. And there are some pretty strong warnings regarding a certain category of people, those who were lukewarm, those who lost their faith.

And God's warning is pretty clear. I will spit you out of my mouth, repent or I will remove you. But I can live with full confidence that I am protected by God.

But this is only if I go with God wherever He wants me to go. I hope this helps you understand. And I wanted to say that it is very important that we want, as he said, that we want to fulfill this purpose.

We will desire this purpose for us. Absolutely. I want to thank you.

Very, very important. You know, and also like the boy with the five loaves and the two fish. Five loaves and two fish is nothing.

But God needs that small nothing to do the miracle. So we have to give Him what we have. But we should also know, no chance of that small thing doing anything if God doesn't do something with it.

So then we never become proud of the five loaves and the two fish. It's all we have. But the need is to feed 5,000.

The problem with feeding 5,000, my five loaves and two fish is not going to do that. And the problem is that I have to feed those 5,000 with those 5,000 people with those five loaves and two fish. And I give it to God and say, Lord, now You do the miracle.

This is the story, throughout the stories in Scripture you see that. You pour the water into the wine. You pour the water, I'll turn it into wine.

I told you, hey, can you give me a cup of water? Yeah, you go get me the cup of water. Turning water into wine? No chance. That's how so many of the miracles of God happen.

Can we take everything that is happening in our life like a purpose that God will make us more like Jesus? Only if I have this purpose. Romans 8 verse 28 and 29 gives me 200,000% confidence. If we love God and we are called according to that purpose, He'll work all things.

He works everything for good. And what is the good is described in verse 29. Everything means everything.

Little or big. Good and bad. Good or bad.

From our point of view, good or bad. When people misunderstand me, when I get wrongly accused for doing something I didn't do, it's not easy to know that that was allowed by a good father. And the devil will come and try to tell me, good father is not behind this.

And I know he'll do that because he did it to Jesus. After Jesus was baptized, he heard a voice from heaven saying, I am well pleased with you. You are my son.

You are my beloved son. Then he goes into the wilderness and the devil says, you are the son of God? Even though he heard a voice from heaven just a few days back. The devil had the guts to tell Jesus, I don't know if God is really your father.

How much more will he try to do that to you? So we have to be prepared. It's not easy.

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