

Discover More: Together Small Group Study

Together in Community

Check in with one another.

- + If there is a new person, welcome them and introduce group members.
- + (High) Share something good or eventful that you give thanks and praise for?
- + (Low) What has been a challenge or a prayer concern for you?

Discover More about the Message

Message Introduction: Sometimes, we discover God through wrestling with fears, hopes, and uncertainties. In the reading, Jacob's past is catching up to him, and he wrestles with God through the night. At the end of the night, Jacob receives a blessing from God, and he is given courage to face the future, though it comes at the cost of a limp.

Reflect on the message you heard in person or on-line.

- + What is something you heard that was interesting or engaging?
- + Is there anything that raised a question or needed more explanation?

Discover Scripture and Life

+ Read the scripture.

Genesis 32:22-30.

³Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, ⁴instructing them, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have lived with Laban as an alien, and stayed until now; ⁵and I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male and female slaves; and I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.'"

⁶The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." ⁷Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies, ⁸thinking, "If Esau comes to the one company and destroys it, then the company that is left will escape."

⁹And 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 kindred, and I will do you good,' ¹⁰I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. ¹¹Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him; he may come and kill us all, the mothers

with the children. ¹²Yet you have said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because of their number.'"

²²The same night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. ²⁴Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.

²⁵When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." ²⁷So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." ²⁹Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. ³⁰So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved."

- + Do you tend to see the glass half-full or half empty? Who was an important influence on your views that way?
- + What was one meeting your dreaded? Angry boss? In-laws? Outlaws? Judge? Hostile sibling? What happened?

- + See vs 9-11 Have you ever bargained with God for a better outcome than you deserve?
- + Have you experienced a narrow escape, or rather that you avoided the consequences of your actions. Did you see that as an act of God's grace?
- + Jacob wrestles during the night, like a sleepless night, or a dark night of the soul, when you wrestle with fears, thoughts, doubts. Have you had an experience like that? Can you remember what you wrestled/worried about? What happened?

Together for the Coming Week

- + What did you take away from the message? What will stay with you this week?
- + As you look to the coming week, what is one word that summarizes how you are feeling.
- + Do you have any prayer concern that you would like to share? What is it?
- + Close in the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Five Minutes with God **Genesis 32:22-30**

Introduction: Have you noticed how important blessings are in the Bible? Blessings are given, stolen, and even wrestled for. They're serious business as they send people on journeys, change lives, and even give new names. But there's also a humbler side to blessings as well. Whenever we bless someone or something, we ask God to bring the grace and goodness of God into the stuff of daily life: meals, good-byes, relationships, and even sneezes. Blessings are more than feel good words. They are also a radical response to the meanness and pessimism that so often shows up in our lives.

Spiritual Practice: Speak blessings this week! You don't need elaborate words or techniques. Simply saying "bless you" to someone (silently counts), pausing before you eat, or asking God to bless a new project qualify as blessing. Perhaps there's a tense situation or relationship in your life that could use some grace and goodness. Try blessing it. Keep your eyes open to the ways you already are blessed, giving thanks for these blessings. May we be blessed this week with grace and goodness as we speak blessings.



First Lutheran
discover more : together

Small Group Devotion
October 10-15