

November 21, 2021

Genesis 32:22-28

Relate

I. Intro

A. Pastor Stephen has been explaining the reason behind our name change from Lynchburg First Church of the Nazarene to Compassion Church of the Nazarene: It better reflects our vision, our history, and our global mission.

B. So, we've been asking: What's in a name?

1. The first week, we explored how a name has the power to form, shape or create. We talked about God naming as He created and then inviting humanity to name with Him - effectively inviting Humanity to co-create with Him. Naming is a way to create.

a) How many of us would name our kids something that we found out meant "village idiot?"

b) There is something in us that realizes names can form and shape as well as identify.

c) So, by naming this church Compassion Church of the Nazarene, is it possible we are not only identifying as compassionate people, but forming/creating a compassionate people? I hope so.

2. Then, last week, we talked about the new name we will all be given - the promise found in Revelation. God has a name for us that we will receive when we've overcome.

a) It is what God longs for us to become - it's personal and powerful.

b) This name compassion is for a group of people. But, it can also be personal. We asked if you would be shaped and formed by Compassion.

c) After all, if we are going to be compassionate, you and I must personally become compassionate.

3. Today, we're going to continue talking about the power of a name...It has the power to initiate a relationship.

II. **Names and Faces are the foundations of relationship.**

A. My kids used to love getting stuffed animals...

B. The first thing they did was name them.

C. A relationship has a history...a story.

D. The stuffed animal before being bought by my daughter was just sitting on a shelf and she didn't even know it existed. But a name brings it into her story.

- E. I was in a coffee shop earlier this week and there were people all around me. They were drinking and eating. But, their stories and my story did not really overlap because I didn't know any of their names.
1. Then someone from our church came in.
 2. We spoke for a while while we waited for our coffee to be made.
 3. I knew her name...we had a history...a shared story because we were a part of the same church.
- F. Let's look at a name-change that reflects a shared story.
1. **Genesis 32:22-28 (NIV): "22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,^g because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."**
 2. This name-change doesn't take place in a vacuum, there's a story here.
 3. When Jacob was a twin and he was born right after his older brother - in fact, he came out holding on to his brother's heel. So, he was given the name, "Jacob" which means He grasps the heel. This is a Hebrew phrase which means deceiver.
 - a) If there was anyone who lived up to that name, it was Jacob.
 - b) He tricked his brother to sell him his birthright for a bowl of soup.
 - c) He tricked his father into giving him his brother's blessing.
 - d) All this trickery, placed him on a path of conflict and fear.
 - (1) His own brother wanted to kill him so he had to flee his home.
 - (2) He came to his uncle's house and worked there - with nothing. But, this time, the deception he sowed was being payed back to him.
 - (3) Laban tricked him into serving for 14 years without getting paid. He promised one daughter and gave him a different one.

- (4) Up until this point, Jacob's life was marked by deceit and trickery. It was the center of who he was - deceit.
- (5) When the angel asks Jacob who he is, he answers, "deceiver."
- (6) All of his relationships have been built on this premise.
- (7) His story was built on deception.
 - (a) Whenever Jacob gave his name, he was opening the door of deception into a relationship - because that is who he was.
 - (b) But, something changed after this interaction - was named Israel. Let's explore that.

G. Israel is a complete sentence mashed into one word: **Show This Picture:**
https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https://i.pinimg.com/originals/a1/90/c2/a190c2183a3693bc96a4f88681a40a64.jpg&imgrefurl=https://www.pinterest.com/pin/478648266629413225/&tbnid=UJozbFsjY6pafM&vet=1&docid=nYUV_slvOpl6jM&w=1200&h=1200&itg=1&hl=en-us&source=sh/x/im

1. Let's geek out for a second...This is a unique name that is translated so many different ways because it's tricky.
2. The beginning is pretty easy, it means He
3. The end is pretty easy, it means God.
4. It's that middle SR section that is debated. It's not really a word...it's a noun that means prince or ruler. It's a common word in the Hebrew bible.
5. But, with it's placement after y, turns it into a verb. This is the only place it is used as a verb in the whole Bible. It's like the author was forcing this word into a verb.
 - a) Just a little more geeking out, I promise it's leading somewhere.
 - b) The pictograph **x** is a picture of a thorn representing a turning, the **r** is a picture of a head. Combined these mean "turn the head". The turning of the head to another direction.
 - (1) This makes sense with the meaning of Sar as "ruler or Prince" when used as a noun.
 - (2) It also makes sense to describe wrestling - turning the head. And these two ideas aren't far off...if any of you have ever led anything, it can feel like wrestling!

- (3) It makes sense with what is happening in this story - Jacob is wrestling with (turning God's head). So, he is named Israel because he turned God's head...
- (a) There's a number of things operating here...
 - (b) God is making Him a mighty ruler, the prince of a people - sure.
 - (c) But, God is saying He turns God's head...he has God's attention.
 - (i) There was some point when all of my kids were young that they wanted my attention.
 - (ii) They would sit in my lap and if my head turned to pay attention to something else, they would grab my head and turn it towards them.
 - (iii) Just the other day, Gia was trying to talk to me and I was looking at something on my phone. She took my phone and put it down and turned my face to her.

6. With that image in mind, just listen to a few of these Scriptures:
- a) **Numbers 6:24-26, "24 "The Lord bless you and keep you;25 the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;26 the Lord *TURN HIS FACE TOWARD YOU* and give you peace."**
 - b) **Psalm 102:2, "Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly."**
 - c) **Daniel 9:17, "17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake ^[a]cause Your face to shine on ^[b]Your sanctuary, which is desolate"**
 - d) **Psalm 27:8-9, "When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, Lord, I will seek." 9 Do not hide Your face from me;"**
 - e) **Psalm 69:17, "Don't turn your face away from me. Answer me quickly. I'm in trouble."**
 - f) **Psalm 104:29, "When you turn your face away from them, they are terrified. When you take away their breath, they die and turn back into dust."**

(a) I could go on and on...this phrase is all through the Scripture.

(b) Where did these people of the Bible get the idea that they could turn God's head?

7. What a privilege to be called Israel. We see how much this meant to Jacob in the next part of the story...

H. **Genesis 32:29-30** " **29 Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel,^[a] saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."**

1. Saw God face-to-face...that means He looked at God and God looked at him.

a) If you want to know a good way to understand solitude and silence - that's a good one - alone, looking at God and God looking at you.

2. See how Jacob related to God before this name-change:

a) **Genesis 32:9 (NIV): 9 Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac..."**

b) Now, see how he related to God after the name change:

c) **Genesis 33: 18-20, "After Jacob came from Paddan Aram,^[b] he arrived safely at the city of Shechem in Canaan and camped within sight of the city. 19 For a hundred pieces of silver,^[c] he bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, the plot of ground where he pitched his tent.20 There he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel."^[d]**

d) El Elohe Israel can mean mighty is the God of Israel.

e) Before this naming, God was the God of Abraham and Isaac. After the naming, God was the God of Israel.

3. This name opened the door to a relationship - a way for Jacob to relate to God and for God to relate to Jacob.

III. What does this mean for us?

A. Here is where we enter the story.

B. Genesis 33:8-10, "Esau asked, "What's the meaning of all these flocks and herds I met?" To find favor in your eyes, my lord," he said. But Esau said, "I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself." "No,Please!" said Jacob. "If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably."

- C. Jacob saw the face of God just before this and looked like Esau accepting him with forgiveness and calling him brother.
- D. You want to know what God's face looks like? It looks like compassion.
1. Some of you are terrified of God's face...what if God saw you?
 - a) There's phrases I've heard like, "If I go to church, the building would cave in." if God were to see me, he would strike me down with lightning...
 - b) This is based on a belief that God's face toward you is angry and mean.
 - c) But, it is filled with Compassion.
 - d) **Matthew 9:36, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."**
 2. What kind of face do we put on if we want to represent God to our community? One of compassion.