

DATE: 5 NOV 2023 | SPEAKER: PS LAM ZHENGXIN | TOPIC: SPIRITUAL BROKENNESS - WHEN JACOB BECAME ISRAEL | SCRIPTURE: [GENESIS 32:22-32](#)

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand the significance of a new name (identity) and spiritual brokenness.
2. Prioritise their relationship with God and build on it daily.

SERMON SUMMARY

We often allow our past to define who we are. We embrace the identity the world gives to us. For those of us who struggle with a stigma from the past, God desires to give you a new name. We also often rely on self-effort to grow in Christlikeness, but Scripture tells us otherwise. For those of us who have relied on ourselves in our lives, God desires to give us a new limp where we would learn to depend and rely on God.

SERMON RECAP

Jacob Wrestles with God: Context

- At this point, Jacob has been through two major deceptions in his life.
- The first one is after deceiving Esau of his birth-right and blessing from Isaac. Jacob sought refuge with Laban his uncle after Esau vows to kill Jacob.
- The second one is when Jacob was deceived. Laban deceived Jacob by giving Leah to him instead of Rachel. Then Laban tried to cheat Jacob of his fortune, and they tried to out-cheat each other, which caused Jacob to flee Laban.
- Jacob's life is filled with the theme of deception and manipulation.

Part 1: The Crisis

- Jacob fled Laban by returning home, but he was afraid as remembers that Esau wanted to kill him. Therefore, he sent out parties to recce and received news that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men ([Genesis 32:3-6](#)).
- Jacob was greatly distressed. In his fear and distress, Jacob did three things (refer to notes)
 - 1) He divided his contingent into two camps so that if one was attacked, the other camp might flee (v7-8).
 - 2) He prayed to God to deliver him from the hand of Esau (v9-12).
 - 3) He presented a peace offering to Esau in hopes that it would appease him so that Esau might spare his life (v13-21).
- It was in this moment of crisis that Jacob had an encounter with God.

Part 2: The Encounter

- [Genesis 32:22-24](#)
- For the first time in his life, Jacob found himself in a position of helplessness. He has done everything that he could. He was now at the mercy of Esau.
- At this juncture, Jacob wrestled with God. Scripture does not make clear what God was wrestling with Jacob about. But we can infer two significant things from the result of this wrestling:
 - 1) Jacob was given a new name.
 - 2) Jacob was given a new limp.
- The blessing came in the form of a new name. In the OT, the giving of a new name is significant (e.g., Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah).

Application #1

A New Name: God gives us our identity. Our past does not.

- Jacob has been a cheater and manipulator since birth. His name, which means heel grabber, supplanter, or cheater, bears testament to that too.
- [Genesis 27:36](#) – We allow our past and the identity that others gave us to define who we are.
- In his encounter with God, Jacob received a new name ([Genesis 32:27-28](#)), Israel, which means God fights, God rules, God prevails.
- The significance of the name Israel is that now God fights for Jacob. God rules over Jacob.
- “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” – [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)

Application #2

A New Limp: Spiritual Brokenness – Coming to the end of ourselves.

- [Genesis 32:25](#)
- Jacob has always been self-reliant through manipulation and deception.
- God was removing Jacob’s self-sufficiency and broke his self-will.
- Jacob now recognised that he is not a self-made man. He is now a God-made man.

Part 3: The Transformation

- Jacob is now a new man. He is transformed ([Genesis 33:1-3](#)):
 - 1) He placed others before himself.
 - 2) He no longer tries to manipulate the situation but is now surrendered to God’s sovereignty.
 - 3) He came before Esau with humility.

Conclusion

- The mystery of Christian maturity is found in the paradox of weakness and brokenness. It is only when we come to the end of ourselves that true maturity in Christ can take place. This usually takes place in two scenarios.
 - 1) When a crisis happens in our lives.
 - 2) When we tried everything but still fell short.
- There is this self-sufficiency that we carry, that until it is broken, will always be the lid in our Christian maturity.
- The essence of our faith is not to try harder, but to become more dependent on God. This means placing a greater emphasis on our relationship with God and less emphasis on our Christian behaviour.
- The new work is this: God wants to give you a new name (identity) and to create a permanent cripple in you so that from this moment on, you will recognise that we cannot do anything on our own. We must learn to depend on God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. As you bring yourself to the Lord, what does He speak over you? What is the new name that God wants to give you today?**

Leader's Notes

Are you defining yourself:

- By your past?
- By how others see you?
- By external factors such as your job, your position, your station in life?

All these are not important because they are not your identity. Your identity is God-given. Jacob was defined by his life experiences (deceiver, manipulator) and lives by them, but God bestowed a new identity and name upon him – Israel – meaning God fights, God rules, and God prevails.

Go to God today and ask Him for a new identity. Or perhaps you've heard from God during the sermon. Do share what you received from Him.

Transition

Our identity does not come from our self-effort. Our identity comes from God's grace.

- 2. Reflect on spiritual brokenness. What does spiritual brokenness mean to you? Have you been spiritually broken before?**

Leader's Notes

This question calls us to reflect on what we think spiritual brokenness is. Brokenness is widely applied to various situations and experiences, and we may conceive the wrong idea. By sharing our experiences, we can also learn from each other what spiritual brokenness is.

Here are some resources on spiritual brokenness:

- Spiritual Brokenness can Give you Freedom – <https://www.gracelifeinternational.com/spiritual-brokenness-can-give-you-freedom/>
- The Meaning of Spiritual Brokenness: Being Broken in the Sight of God – <https://e360bible.org/blog/the-meaning-of-brokenness-truth-about-being-broken-in-the-sight-of-god/>

Transition

It's important to have a healthy perspective on spiritual brokenness so that we will not shun from it.

- 3. Today you might be facing some difficulties or going through a crisis. Will you continue to try and fight in your own strength, or will you surrender to God?**

Leader's Notes

"But Christ says to you, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"
– 2 Corinthians 12:9

What you are facing today may be an opportunity for God to do a new work in you. The new work is to create a permanent limp in you. Once you allow God to create a permanent limp in you, you will forever recognise that you are weak.

The essence of our faith is not to try harder, but to become more dependent on Him who holds our life in His loving hands. How can we be more dependent on Him? By placing less emphasis on our Christian behaviour and a greater emphasis on our relationship with God.

Closing

Your life is not in your hands but in God's. When you recognise that you are dependent on God, this new dependence will become your newfound strength.

WORKS

Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- Pray for God to give you a new identity and to constantly reaffirm it.
- Pray for complete surrender so that we rely on Him totally.

2. RiverLife

- Pray for our church that as we have concluded the 21 days of prayer and fasting, we will determine to live in a new normal – one that follows after the example of Christ.
- Pray for our upcoming mission trips, as well as the Marriage Retreat that will be happening soon.

3. World

- Pray for Singapore as we experience a new wave of COVID-19 and haze.
- Pray for the conflict in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Hamas, that a peaceful resolution can be reached soon.
- Pray for the escalation of violence between Myanmar's military and ethnic armed groups.
- Pray for Italy as they encounter Storm Ciaran
- Continue to pray for the Russia-Ukraine war and the avoidance of using nuclear weapons.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to bless us as we step out to reach a pre-believer.
- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. **Bible Equipping Sessions by Pastor David Lim - Book of Leviticus Set Apart for The Gospel: Encountering God's Holiness.** "Rules and regulations" are unfortunately what go through many believers' minds whenever they encounter the book of Leviticus. In fact, its current name can be traced to a misconception that the book contained merely instructions to the priesthood, and thus was not relevant to the rest of God's people.

But why did God give this book to Israel right after the completion of the Tabernacle? How were the various rules related to the fact that God's holy presence was now dwelling among His people? The first half of Leviticus focuses on the significance of Israel's sacrificial system, culminating in the central theology of the atonement, while the second half explores the specific instructions concerning different aspects of daily lives and how they are meant to reflect the holiness of God.

This series comprises 4 sessions:

1. Fri, 17 Nov, 8-10 pm
2. Sun, 19 Nov, 11.30am-3.30pm (with lunch break)
3. Fri, 24 Nov, 8-10 pm
4. Sun, 26 Nov, 11.30am-3.30pm (with lunch break)

Pre-order your lunch for the Sunday sessions by Sun, 13 Nov: rlc.sg/lev-lunch

If you have not attended the Genesis book study series, please watch *Introduction to the Pentateuch*: rlc.sg/intro-penta (First 30 minutes)

2. **Seniors Survey for RiverLifers aged 55 & above.** We're inviting RiverLifers aged 55 & above to participate in our survey for seniors! This survey, initiated by our newly set up ministry for seniors – Caleb Ministry, seeks to understand seniors and the ways they would like to serve or be involved in church life during this season of their lives. Caleb Ministry is part of our ongoing churchwide discipleship efforts, and aims to encourage, equip, and empower our seniors to live an abundant life (John 10:10) in their autumn years.

Kindly submit your response by Thu, 30 Nov: rlc.sg/calebsurvey

3. **The RiverLife Welcome Lunch. Sun, 19 Nov | 11.30am-1pm Grace Chapel (Level 1)** Specially for those who started joining us at service or cell this year. Relationships matter to us because church is family. If you are new to RiverLife, come join us for this Welcome Lunch so that we can get to know one another better. You'll get to meet fellow RiverLifers as well as our Senior Leaders and Pastors too. This session is for those who have not attended a Welcome Lunch previously. Due to capacity constraints, each guest may be accompanied by up to two family members or friends (including their host).

RSVP online by Sun, 12 Nov: rlc.sg/welcomelunch

4. **RiverLife Community Services (RCS)**

- 2023 Faith Goal: \$920,000
- Amount raised to date: \$574,046

RiverLife Community Services is the community arm of RiverLife Church. It is our hope that through RCS, we will be able to bring Kingdom transformation to local communities by reaching, nurturing and empowering individuals and families. Your contribution to RCS will help sustain the programmes and support extended to low-income beneficiaries.

How you can give:

- Indicate your donation amount on this form: bit.ly/feeddreams
- Donate digitally or in-person at the Atrium on 15, 22, 29 Oct & 5 Nov (10.45-11.45am).
- As a token of appreciation, with every donation of \$50, you will receive one complimentary meal voucher from your choice of our partner restaurants.

5. **Serve in SuperLife.** Serve in SuperLife as a Teacher or Tech Support Crew!

- Teacher's role:
 - Support the running of weekly SuperLife services for preschool children
 - Care for and manage the children during service
- Tech support crew role:
 - Serve at our children's services for Kindy (aged 5-6) and Nursery (aged 3-4) levels
 - Operate the Pro-Presenter software on a laptop for videos and slides support

- Operate the sound panel and microphones for audio support No prior experience needed as training will be provided.
- Sign up to serve: rlc.sg/serve

6. Current Pulpit Series – In the Wake of Awakening.

- **Part 2 – Revivals (15 Oct – 26 Nov).** We survey seasons of awakening in Israel’s history throughout the Old Covenant. From restorations of relationships to spiritual warfare, we will glean from Israel’s obedience and failures following seasons of renewal.

CHURCH CALENDAR

1. Church Calendar Highlights

- **Quarter 4**
 - Water Baptism Service – 12 Nov
 - Equipping Series - Leviticus: 17 & 19, 24 & 26 Nov
 - Marriage Retreat – 24 to 26 Nov
 - Leaders Huddle – 3 Dec

2. **YA Gatherings (For Young Adults in their 20s). First Saturday Every Month, 5pm-8.30pm Victory Chapel (Level 1).** The YA Gathering is a space where young adults can get together to connect and build community. This gathering is made up of two components – Community Conversations & Communal Dinner – both with a focus on relationship building and life conversations. If you are currently in a cell, register your attendance with your cell leader. If you are currently not in a cell, do register online: rlc.sg/YAgathering-apr-reg.

3. RiverLife Prayer Meetings.

RiverLife Prayer Room. Tue, 8-9.30pm, Victory Chapel.

RiverLife Revive Nights. Wed, 8pm – 9.30pm, Victory Chapel (livestream: rlc.sg/revivenights)

CHURCH MINISTRIES & OPPORTUNITIES

1. **9M Ministry.** The 9M Ministry provides prayer support for expectant mothers on their 9-month journey of pregnancy. Sisters-in-Christ who are fellow RiverLifers are assigned as Prayer Buddies to walk alongside mums who sign up to receive prayer support.
 - Receive Prayer Support: rlc.sg/9m
 - Provide Prayer Support: rlc.sg/serve
2. **Missions Microsite.** Discover how you can go, give and pray for the nations. Let's make a difference in the nations together! For more information, visit rlc.sg/missions.
3. **RiverLife Cares Opportunities.** Signup: <http://rlc.sg/serve-rlcar>
4. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. fear, worry, etc), you can sign up for RLC’s RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>

RESOURCES & CONNECTING WITH US

1. **Bible Reading Plan.** The church has provided 3 undated Bible Reading plans that will serve as a resource for those who wish to follow a Bible Reading plan. Link: rlc.sg/brp
 - 2 Year Chronological Bible Reading Plan.

- 3 Year Bible Reading Schedule (Alternating readings between Old and New Testament passages)
 - Redemptive Historical Bible Reading Plan (At your own pace, focusing on the redemption story)
2. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search **'The RiverLife Podcast'** on Spotify.
 3. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
 4. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.
 5. **Stay Connected with RLC.** Follow us to stay updated on latest church news and happenings.
 - **WhatsApp Broadcast:** Text 'Subscribe' to 8923 1939
 - **Telegram Channel:** t.me/RiverLifeChurch
 - **Facebook & Instagram:** [@riverlifechurchsg](https://www.facebook.com/riverlifechurchsg)

GIVING LINKS & QR CODES

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