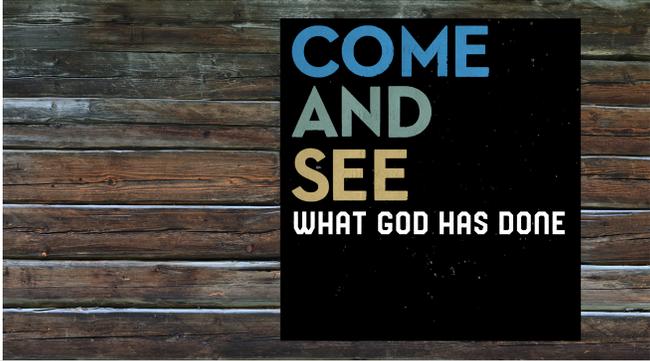


"COME AND SEE: A MAGNIFICENT STRUGGLE"

Date: January 13, 2019

Speaker: Pastor Danny Clinton



**COME
AND
SEE**
WHAT GOD HAS DONE

Being Grateful for Struggle: "Pain, Suffering, Trial, Hardship, Difficulty, and Challenge"

A great picture of this lies within the story of a man named Jacob.

- Jacob was the Twin brother of Esau, and the son of Isaac and Rebekah.
- Even before he was born, he and his brother were struggling together in the womb of their mother. (Vs) Genesis 25:21-26b

Jacob and Esau's prenatal striving foreshadowed later conflict...

- The twins grew up very different
- Jacob was "a quiet man, staying among the tents" and his mother's favorite.
- Esau was "a skillful hunter, a man of the open country" and his father's favorite.

One day, Esau returned from hunting and desired some of the lentil stew that Jacob was cooking...

- Jacob offered to give his brother some stew in exchange for his birthright—the special honor that Esau possessed as the older son, which gave him the right to a double portion of his father's inheritance.

"Esau put his temporary, physical needs over his God-given blessing and sold his birthright." – A Picture of our Fallenness

When the time came for Isaac to bestow his blessing on his sons, Jacob and his Mother contrived to deceive Isaac into blessing Jacob in Esau's place.

- When Esau found that his blessing had been given to Jacob, he threatened to kill his brother, and Jacob fled.

We are all born in struggle.

(Vs) Rom. 5:12 – "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned..."

This is why Jesus came, to remedy this reality.

(Vs) John 3:3 – Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

- Being exposed is most people’s greatest fear. Vulnerability is worse than death to many.
- **Proof:** In general, people only talk about the struggles they’ve overcome
- It’s very rare to hear someone admit, “My stuff is still present, and my story is still messy.”

Jacob is now a man on the run, “Someone Lost.”

- These deep-seated family hostilities have characterized his life...
 - He’s not just a determined man; some would consider him to be ruthless.
 - He was a con artist, a liar, and a manipulator.

Def: The name *Jacob* not only means “deceiver,” but more literally it means “grabber.”

- To know Jacob’s story is to know his life was one of never-ending struggles...
- Though God promised Jacob that through him would come not only a great nation but a whole company of nations, he was a man full of fears and anxieties...

We now come to a pivotal point in his life when, after many years, he is about to meet his brother, Esau, who has vowed to kill him.

- All Jacob’s struggles and fears are about to be realized.
- In one last effort to save himself, Jacob concocted a bribe and sent a caravan of gifts along with his women and children across the River Jabbok in hopes of pacifying his brother.
- Now physically exhausted, alone in the desert wilderness, facing sure death, he’s divested of all his worldly possessions.
- He’s powerless to control his fate. He collapses into a deep sleep on the banks of the River.

That night an angelic stranger visited Jacob...

- *(Vs) Gen 32:24-29 – God and Jacob struggle...*

**Frederick Buechner, characterizes Jacob’s divine encounter as the...
“The magnificent defeat of the human soul at the hands of God.”**

- It's in Jacob's story we can easily recognize our own elements of struggle: Fears, darkness, loneliness, vulnerabilities, empty feelings of powerlessness, exhaustion and relentless pain – When life doesn't go as planned!
- In the end, Jacob does what we all must do... "He confronts his failures, his weaknesses, his sins, all the things that are hurting him."
- And then he faces his brother. Who accepts him as he is.

What we learn from this remarkable incident in the life of Jacob is that our lives are never meant to be easy.

•We also learn that as Christians, despite our trials and tribulations, our strivings in this life are never devoid of God's presence...

"Real growth experiences always involve struggle and pain."

Many years pass...

- Jacob is dead. The Israelites that came from his family are now enslaved, and God comes to Moses.
- Moses asked God the same thing Jacob asked God...

(Vs) Exodus 3:13-15a – Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.' God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.'"

God says... You want to know what kind of God I am?

- Wouldn't you want to be the God of your good side?
- God says to Moses as he says to you today, "I'm not just the God of your strength and accomplishments, I'm also the God of your hidden parts and weakness."
- I'm not just God of your success, I'm the God of your struggle!

I'm the God of both your Magnificent Victories and Magnificent Struggles!