

relationship of trust, love and respect.

At this point of time in Jacob's life he gets a feel of what it's like to have your identity shaped by the LORD God and also to have your security as a person defended by the LORD God. The image that we get from this story is two people wrestling. Jacob doesn't have anything other than himself, he can't play games. It's person to person, which is just the way Jesus loves it.

At times I know I'm tempted to be like Jacob, manipulating, planning, scheming, thankfully I'm not very good at it. But it is so easy to avoid the person to person struggle of life. Which is Jesus' passion. He loves

getting person to person, in fact that's his plan for saving the world; Discipleship. That's getting personal and sharing life person to person, so the character of Jesus rubs off on us. So we pick it up like a child does from their parents.

I believe that's part of the reason Jesus calls us to have faith like a child. That doesn't mean simple, but our faith comes from our life with Jesus, just like a child learns to speak their mother tongue because of life shared with their parents. And if you have children you'll know that life can be a wrestle.

This week dive in and wrestle with Jesus, be real with him, talk from the heart that's why he's created you with

emotions. Wrestle and discover your identity and your security in him, and then always live true to who you are.

Let us pray.
Jesus forgive me for the times I've played games with you and other people. Forgive my excuses for not doing what you call me to do; I know I'm never too young, or too old, or unqualified. Jesus help me walk with you person to person, being real as you have been real with me. Help me to wrestle with you learning to trust you with my identity and with my security. Grow me as your disciple; as I share time with you, watching and absorbing your character and nature, and then living it. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

10 June 2012

ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

E100



If you were planning on saving the world what sort of people would you use? Someone well passed retiring age. A joker. A schemer, who deceives and manipulates?

Last week we recalled how the world has fallen into deep trouble. We witness this every day in many ways; the flu, relationship stress, a huge portion of the world in poverty, starving to death, while another portion is overindulging, dying from excesses. The world is in trouble; so what's the solution?

The solution starts by knowing the cause of our problem. We all know that if all you do is treat the symptoms without dealing with the underlying cause nothing lasting will change. Last week we

were reminded of the cause. A broken heart, because of broken trust, leaving a shattered relationship.

So God's solution is to rebuild trust. He picks a couple in their seventies and then tells the husband, who by the way don't have any children, that he will be the father of a great nation, and through him the world will be blessed.

Now if a seventy five year old told me this, and his wife was also in the seventies I'd be more than sceptical. I'd be suggesting a visit to the doctor to check on his medication. It's farcical, but that's precisely what God chose to do in Abraham and Sarah.

Not only that but he then waited twenty five

years, till Abraham was a hundred and Sarah was in her nineties before he gave then Isaac; the joker. Isaac means; he laughs. How would you have coped with those twenty five years? I would have struggled, but Abraham trusts the LORD'S promise.

This strongly reminds me that Jesus can use me. Age is no barrier. Jesus can use you in his plan to save the world. He has committed himself to you out of an amazing love for you. Jesus has given his life for you. Jesus has won forgiveness for you. Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to be with you. Jesus will return and declare before the whole world that you are one of the Father's chosen children, marked by his love, the delight of his life. That

is all set in, not concert, but Jesus' flesh and blood. And Jesus even allows you to be reminded of that wonderful fact each time you come to feed on him in communion.

Yes Jesus can use you. Do you believe him? Are you willing to take him at his word and leave everything else behind?

I'd love to say an unqualified yes, but I know I wrestle with my fears and insecurities. I know that I'm tempted to look to my bank balance to alleviate my fears. I know I'm tempted to look to my successes to deal with my insecurities, looking for praise and acceptance from others. It's a struggle.

The LORD called Abraham; "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you." (Gen. 12:1)

Abraham packs up shop and goes. Goes where he's never been before.

I like to have a plan. I like to have things mapped out and well financed. I like to know where I'm going. What an amazing act of trust we see Abraham take. Of course Jesus is calling us to trust him

How easy it is to discard people!

and do the same thing.

I'm always amazed with the stories of Jesus calling his first disciples. He says; 'follow me'. And then want do they do? "At once they left their nets and followed him." (Matt. 4:20) They drop their security, their

identity and follow Jesus. He's now their security and identity. They are not fishermen; how often do we find identity in what we do,

they're Jesus' disciples. This is their identity.

So I suggested to one group to stop calling me Pastor Tim. My identity isn't found in my role. I'm Tim, Jesus' disciple, following his call. I'm Jesus' disciple, Tim, fulfilling the role of Husband, Father, and Pastor. Some days simply doing the best I can, then remembering to let Jesus do the best he can through me, in me, with me.

Yes Jesus can use you. Age is no barrier. Let Jesus be your security and identity, not your age. "Abraham believed the LORD, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Gen. 15:6)

To be honest it can be a real wrestle to trust Jesus implicitly, letting him determine my identity and give me security. It's a wrestle, because if I'm honest at

times I feel lost, frustrated, betrayed, useless, incompetent. My identity takes a battering, as every day I face criticism, 'you could have done better', 'you forgot this', 'you're not as good as the other guy'. Every day criticism comes, some from other people but most from myself. My identity takes a battering. It can be a wrestle.

That's why I like the story of Jacob. How would you like to live life with this hanging over your head; 'Jacob means he grasps the heel, a Hebrew idiom of he deceives.' Wouldn't that be great; 'Oh here comes the deceiver.' I reckon with that tag my identity would be a wrestle.

What a most unlikely person Jacob was. If I was employing someone to save the world his resume would have seen me discard him on first glance.

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I live in a world where we are marked by our resumes, where we are continually graded. If God had used our way of employing people then Jacob would never have been a consideration. But the

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LORD God does use Jacob in a powerful way. Jacob becomes the father of the twelve patriarchs.

For me this is Good News. It means Jesus can use even me, a discard. Actually I'm happy to be one of the world's discards and find my identity in Jesus; a forgiven, chosen, loved child of the Father who he delights in sharing his life with. I want to be one of Jesus disciples,

and give up judging people, discarding them because they don't come up to what I want.

Where are you tempted to read a person's resume and discard them?

Thank Jesus he doesn't read our resume, because we'd certainly be discarded. Thank God that in Jesus he's come to walk through life with you, to join you in the wrestle of life, so that you can

begin to live life the best he knows how.

So the LORD does a wonderful act for Jacob, he changes his name. He calls him 'Israel' which means; 'he struggles with God'. Jacob's identity is no longer the 'Deceiver' but now 'One who walks through life with the LORD in a real relationship'. That's what it means to wrestle; to be real with each other, in a