

# MY STORY

09.11.22 | ROCK OF GRACE KINSMAN CAMPUS | JORDAN BIEL

START by Interviewing Lauren Wiberg - get her MY STORY

- Tell us when you first felt the call of God to ministry or missions?
  - Who, if any, encouraged that calling and mentored you to trust God and say YES to the call of God?
  - What was one of the hardest things you had to overcome to get on the mission field?
  - What do you as a missionary who's sharing the Gospel across the world want American Christians to realize?
  - How can we Americans share the Gospel more often and with more effectiveness?
- 
- **Growing up a Pastors Kid**
    - Left at church twice AND left at the airport - other than that, great childhood full of riding my three-wheelers and four-wheelers...
  - **Enjoyed Royal Rangers** as a boy- a lot of great memories with my dad in Rangers. I set a LOT of things on fire. Like not just fire-pits. Like garbage, anything I could pour gas on... I almost burned Dr Harnett's woods down one day when I was 9. Good times... right Doc? LOL
  - **Loved Youth Group** when I became 12 and started playing in their youth band. That was so fun! An older guy name Nate mentored me a bit and that meant a lot to me (you never know who you'r impacting)
  - **Gave my heart to Christ** at church one night when I was 13
  - **Felt called into ministry** when I was 14 at Big Prairie Camp - Summer Camp. Stuck to the ground with the Holy Spirit for hours!
  - **I fell in love with Danielle** that same year when I was becoming 15. I know that was the age because I remember thinking "the minute I get my license and my car, I'm driving to her house EVERY DAY!"

And I did! I'm not sure how Bob felt about it lol. In fact I should tell you the story of me talking with Bob about all this. I come downstairs...

- **I started a Bible Study** in my high school my sophomore year. That was incredibly meaningful to me and I'd say a turning point for me. Ministry became real. God became very real to me. A girl who received Christ in my Bible Study - the first person I ever led to the Lord a girl named Ashley - she died only a month later in a tragic car accident. I'll never forget that.
- **Batavia** Before I went to Bible College I needed to save some money so I took a year break and lived with Jimmy and Jessie in 2001-summer 2002. I worked some long days in a flooring warehouse and I'd come home and just fall asleep - sometimes AT the dinner table!
- **Starting The Well** But there in in a town outside Chicago called Batavia, I helped start a church called The Well. I learned so much about the Lord through Pastor Jerry and was very inspired by his determination and work ethic and his incredible preaching ability.
- **Brownsville** By Aug 2002, my hair was long - I looked like an anorexic version of Fabio - it was amazing - glorious I felt. Danielle didn't. I ignored her. I was off to Brownsville Revival School of Ministry BRSM they called it. I had no idea what I was about to experience!
  - Miracles
  - Repentance
  - Holy Spirit Outpourings in Class & at Church
  - Times at the Beach in prayer and worship - alone w God under His canopy of stars. I wrote a lot of songs out there on the beach all by myself.
- **Came to OH to Serve my Dad as YP and WL** I have way too many stories of youth ministry - running out of gas on the highway on our way to Youth Convention and stealing some from a nearby farm. Or the time when I
- But I'm most grateful for the memories of students coming to the altar and meeting God - face to face. Tears of repentance. Tears of healing. So many amazing memories of being a youth pastor here.
- I've had so many amazing times of worship right here on this stage with you - or sometimes just walking around in here on a Thursday praying for the coming service.

In a minute I'm going to tell you Peter's story. But before I do, I want to give you a few take aways today. I know today's sermon is different in that it's more story telling so I want to make sure you get a few truths to apply to your own life.

## TAKE-AWAYS

- **Your story matters** and should be told because it's your testimony of God's goodness.
- **Your story can inspire someone else** to have faith in God.
  - Rev.
  - Think about the way that Paul spent time with Timothy telling him his story and mentoring him. Paul is writing to Timothy, a spiritual son of his, someone he is mentoring for leadership and he says ...

**2 Timothy 1:6-7 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, <sup>7</sup> for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.**

- Two weeks ago in our prayer series, we read from Eph 6 and discussed the battle of good and evil that we are in. We read that fight "not against flesh and blood but against rulers and authorities, cosmic powers of darkness" we talked about the fact that demonic realm is real and there are are principalities who govern over certain regions and how we need discernment and to rise up in faith in Jesus AND in prayer so we 'act wisely" That text goes on to say that many in coming day will...

**"they fail to act wisely or do good"**

**The Spirit of Wisdom is the Spirit of God. What is wisdom? It is the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord will cause you to run from temptation and be delivered from evil. Wisdom IS to resist the devil.** God's word says that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"

When I defined the devil is a Poser, I said that he was a Poser, an Intruder and a Liar! ... that "The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy"

When you tell your story of how God saved you and what he saved you from, you break the back of the enemy. **Your testimony removes his power to lie to others.**

Remember the rest of JN 10:10... Jesus says "BUT I HAVE COME TO BRING LIFE AND LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY!"

You have been given victory over sin and evil intrusion!

When you share openly and honestly the evil that God saved you from it gives others hope!

Three years ago when I shared my lowest moment in life in this very series “MY STORY” I had so many people say to me that following week “Pastor that was so liberating to hear you be so honest and so real. I thought I must be the only one.”

**When you tell your testimony, it break’s Satan’s lie of shame which says “You’re the only one. What’s wrong with you?”**

The enemy’s scheme is simple:

- Accuse God in front of you.
- Convince you to live selfishly according to the sinful nature within
- Bring a load of shame once you’ve sinned - tell you to avoid God
- **What’s the cure? When you confess out loud the sin that Jesus saved you from, it breaks the enemy’s power over your life!!!! He can’t say to you “what if they find out that you...” Who cares!? You already told them!**
- **YOU’RE FREE of that sin and that guilt! JESUS really did set you free!**

• **There is supernatural power in the telling of your story!**

When Jesus formed the earth, He spoke.

When the Spirit of Jesus inspired Paul to write the words “I wish that all would prophesy” the context was the power of the spoken word of truth. When truth is spoken, the vibrations of the wave forms change the atmosphere. They bring life. When the Bible says “Words have the power of life and death” it isn’t just a nice platitude. It’s REALITY. Words of BLESSING bring actual life into the body and soul of a person.

This is why being in a LIFE GROUP is so important for you as a believer. This is why I often say “Commit to community” because there in community, you can share your story over a cup of coffee and people who are new to faith or people who’ve been in church a long time but never seen authentic Christianity can suddenly go “OH WOW! I didn’t realize this kind of honest Christianity existed!”

**The Enemy will say to you “Put on a mask. Pretend. Make sure everyone only see’s how great you are and that you are working hard to be a good person and better than everyone else.”**

That lie will only leave you exhausted and lacking joy and you certainly won’t inspire anyone.

That’s living according to the law.

But when you live according to GRACE. WOW! Everything changes.

**When you truly embrace your story - what God did for you in giving you grace and you are happy to tell it - it is liberating and gives hope to many! When the mask comes off, the truth comes out and the grace is all the more powerful!**

## **PETER'S STORY**

Becoming God's Son more than "God's Man"

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18

As you read that scripture you can almost see the smile in Peter's eyes as he's writing it knowing that His friend and Savior, Jesus, had forgiven him so many times. The more he grew in the knowledge of Jesus, the more grace He understood Jesus to have. You and I will notice the same for our own lives. We'd be wise to also pray "Lord, help *me* to grow in the *grace* and *knowledge* of You!" To know Jesus is to love Him. The more you know Him, the more you love Him.

## **THE PROMISE PETER RECEIVES**

Jesus sees Peter fishing and calls out to him... "Peter, I will make you a fisher of men."

If you haven't seen The Chosen yet, you need to. In particular the film creators hit it out of the park on this scene. Here's Pete trying in all his might to make ends meet, fulfill his bombastic promises, charm his skeptics and make enough money fishing to stay sane ... and possibly married!

Jesus knows his internal battles of course and speaks to His frustration. Jesus knows that Pete just wants his life to count - to not be wasted. He just wants his life to ... matter. Jesus knows this about Peter.

A few things stand out to me about this short scripture. We often focus on the "fisher of men" part and rightly so. But often we miss the part where Jesus says "I will..." Here Jesus speaks of the process. Jesus knew it would take some time and some effort to get Peter from where he was to where He wanted him to be. He was willing to take that journey with Peter. And He's willing to take that journey with you.

I gotta be honest, Peter reminds me of myself sometimes. I can be a big mouth. Some pastors are introverts and truly they are. They like to be quiet and alone and really only speak up when suddenly the anointing comes upon them in the pulpit. I suppose maybe that was John the Beloved's personality, but we all know Peter was the loud, quick to act, slow to think disciple who only took his foot out of his mouth to put the other foot in. Yeah... that's me. Anyone relate?

I remember once watching a basketball game once when I was a youth pastor and over the loud speaker someone announced “A wedding ring has been lost. If you have found it please come to the concession stand and so we can get it back to the owner.” I quickly blurted out “Pssh, I already found it and pawned it off an hour ago!”

What are the chances that the lady sitting right in front of me is the wife of the husband who lost the ring? Yeah! She quickly turns around and says “That’s my husband’s ring and you better hand it over now!” My blood left my veins. It took me the next five minutes to explain to her that I was kidding - that I’m the farthest thing from a thief. I literally remember saying “Mam, I’m just an idiot with a big mouth. I swear! I just like to joke. I’m so sorry I said that. I promise I do NOT have your husband’s ring!” All the while a few students from my youth ministry are sitting beside me, some laughing hysterically and others beyond embarrassed.

I remember another time a new couple came to the altar area for prayer after service. He looked about 25 and she looked about 65. I shook the young man’s hand and said “Hi, I’m Jordan.” He said “My name is ...” and without thinking (like Pete) I asked ... “And is this your mom?”

His face changed quickly as his eyebrows dropped. Her face went to shock, then slowly to anger. He says “No. This is my wife.”

Friend, I kid you not! Let’s just say my prayer was very, very short and... I never saw them again.

So trust me, I’m a lot like Pete. I got a big mouth! I’m so thankful God gives us grace and uses us despite our personalities and character flaws! He teaches people like me to be quiet and listen. I’ve only been in ministry since 2005 and the older I get, the more I listen and the less I speak. I think Pete had to learn this same lesson again and again and again.

## **PETE’S REALITY**

Even though Pete was given a promise by Jesus Himself, He would have to face reality. He would have to give up his fishing occupation. His fishing nets represented his identity, income and security. So when Jesus asked Him to lay down his nets, this was a big ask! We know that this being Jesus, had to be an incredible moment, yes. The anointing and presence of God likely came over Pete in a powerful way compelling him to follow, yes. But we can’t ignore that Pete’s fishing nets represented his entire way of life. He certainly had to think for a moment, if I lay down my nets and follow Jesus, I may not be able to provide for my family.

When Pete said “Yes” to Jesus, he said “No” to the security of a fishing trade that had put food on the table for years. When Pete said “Yes” to Jesus, he said “No” to the familiar. He faced reality.

I can stay here and live the status quo, boring life I’ve been living and be “ok” His reality was to be a fisherman just like every other fisherman.

Or, he could follow Jesus! He could live adventure!  
 I can live an adventure! You can live adventurously trusting Jesus every step of the way! You can see miracles. You can see the dead raised! You and I can be apart of something eternal! Something amazing!

### **PETE'S OBSTACLES**

Peter faced many obstacles in following Jesus, first and foremost, the man in the mirror ... if they had mirrors back then.

Pete was what we'd called a "passionate" person. He was never at a loss for words, just a loss for, let's just say, the *right* words. He had what I call "no filter" approach. Have you ever met someone with no filter? Like it just doesn't exist. Words fly out of their mouth that are completely inappropriate and it's like they don't even know it's happening? I have a good friend that's a bit like that and he somehow got put on the Greeters Ministry team at our church. One lovely late December Sunday morning, we had a guest, someone who had finally come back to church and it had been a long time. What does my friend say? "Christmas and Easter huh? Awesome."

No. Joke.

The guy turns around and leaves and has never come back! Yeah, that's what Pete was like. Whatever came to his mind, POP! It came out his mouth.

### **HOW ABOUT A TENT!**

Have you ever read the story of Pete tagging along with Jesus up a mountain to pray? It's hilarious. If you look at Matthew 17

Now we know this is actually a beautiful moment when Jesus is signaled as the true Messiah being the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah) are meeting with Jesus as if to confer with one another. So Peter takes this incredible moment and immediately opens his big mouth with ... "Oh! Let me make a tent! I'm good a tents! I'll build each of you a tent. Moses, one for you! Elijah, one for you! Jesus, one for..." Jesus is like "PETE! Hush child! I don't need your little tent bro!"

Jesus is being signaled as the one to fulfill the law entirely. Jesus is being signaled as the Word of God Himself. He wouldn't be only delivering the Word like Elijah and prophets of old, but He is the Word of God made flesh and all Pete can say is "Ya'll want a tent?"

Pete cracks me up! I wonder if Jesus just looks at me sometimes and shakes His head like "No man, I don't need you to ..." I just want you. I just want your heart. I just want your presence right now. That's all I need from you. Be in the moment. Don't build. Don't work. Just be in the moment and see Me for who I am. WOW.

Obstacles develop our character and strengthen our resolve and ultimately make us more Christ-like. Obstacles allow us to be broken.

Romans 5:1-11 “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup>Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

<sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— <sup>8</sup>but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” ESV

Why does God need us to be broken? Why does God “desire a broken spirit”... like the Word says?

Broken does not mean destroyed and ruined. Brokenness means you're submitted. It means you're submitted to God, your Master, ready to be used to accomplish His goals, His desire, His will.

Matt 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men that they see your good works and praise your father in heaven...”

Broken people shine. The light of Christ may be in you, but until you're broken and cracked, the light can't come out!

Wait, is Jesus confused here? I mean, wouldn't it make more sense for Him to say “Blessed are those who are healthy. Blessed are those who have no need. Blessed are those who are financially stable. Blessed are those who keep peace and make compromises to make everyone happy...”

Wouldn't we say “I see you've been very profitable lately, you're blessed.” “I see you never seem to go through any grief; you must be blessed.” ???

But that's not how God sees things! God knows it's NECESSARY for us to go through difficulty, to identify with Christ in what it means to die to self and be broken for us to extend His Kingdom.

Let me give you an example:

Carol Hetherington's story – I was talking with Carol Hetherington the other day and we were getting to know each other better (Carol, wave at us so everyone knows who you are – my goal is to embarrass you right now =) ... so I asked



“What’s something difficult you went through but turns out it was God’s plan after all?”

For being such a quiet woman, she had actually had quite a few stories! =) If you don’t know who Carol is, she is the widow of Jim Hetherington, and they pastored this church years ago before my dad and anyway, most of these stories being a pastor’s wife were funny ones and again – I had asked her to mention some of the difficult things she experienced and she listed a few - even working on a roof one time! But one story in particular stayed with me. She said, they moved up here from Florida IN FAITH, not having a job or home or anything, in fact their story was quite similar to my parents. But they arrived here, found a home that wasn’t even for sale; they asked if they could rent it and part of their payment would be to fix it up and now Carol was tired of working and really wanted to just be a mom. She did NOT want to go back to work! But her husband had asked her to so she did. She was broken – in this sense I say that because it’s important for you to know that she was in submission to her husband and in doing so, she was broken and made useful to the Lord. By a curious chain of events, she got this job as an administrative assistant at a Bible College – a job she DIDN’T WANT – but a few months into, her husband Jim that God wanted him to further his education and get a counseling degree. She happen to share this with her boss and he said “Well, since you work here, your husband tuition is completely free!”

You see God was ordering their steps because they were broken before Him. God supplied them with a financial miracle! They would’ve had a school loan for years if they weren’t being led by the Holy Spirit.

The Lord truly does order our steps! NEXT> Psalm 37:23 “The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives.”

### **PETE’S ENDURANCE (BARELY)**

Peter endured but... barely.

He was struck to the core by the Holy Spirit’s conviction after Jesus rose from the dead.

### **PETE’S SUCCESS**

Peter preaches his very first sermon and 3,000 people were saved! Now if that didn’t give him the feeling of “success” I don’t know what would’ve. He had been following Jesus for three years. He’d walked on water with Jesus. He’d seen miracle after miracle. He’d seen those that were tormented and demon-possessed set free. Now Jesus was in Heaven and he and his band of brothers were on earth and now they gotta do this thing Jesus trained them to do. It’s their turn. He preaches with conviction, with passion and with clarity. And 3,000 people gave their hearts to Jesus Christ!

Peter experienced success with the disciples the minute they began ministering. Acts 5:12-16 “The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers use to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. No one else dared join them even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on the beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns and around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.”

Yes, they faced opposition and they endured that. But we can’t ignore their success. Peter had to be tempted at times to think “I must be pretty amazing.” This is why I say the stage of “Success” is the most dangerous and difficult to navigate. The minute a leader begins to see massive impact he can believe the lie that he got himself to that point of influence. Remember Daniel. Remember when Pharaoh asked him if he could interpret the dreams, he said “I can not. But God can.”

Peter responded to the praises of men in similar fashion.

It only takes reading Acts 5 for another minute and you can see that the next thing to take place in the life of Peter was persecution and jail. The Sadducees were filled with jealousy and they “arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out! ‘Go and stand in the temple courts and tell them about this new life!’” WOW!

I want to say again that every time you face opposition or obstacle in standing for Jesus, it can become an opportunity for a miracle! Peter and the Apostles knew this first hand. There were times though when the jail cell doors weren’t broken open. There were long nights in prison for Peter. There was accusations. There were likely friends that disowned him for his preaching of Jesus. None of this stopped him. Peter endured. And you can too!

### Peter Discovered The Value Of **Son-Ship**

Let me ask you, when everything in your life is stripped away, is God enough? Can I tell you that God doesn't let the season of brokenness last forever. It can be long sometimes.

### How We Respond

It’s funny when Peter encounters Jesus and Moses and Elijah and then Peter’s like “Wait everyone! Let me build something like a monument.” Jesus is like “No. Peter we don’t need you to build anything.”

LOL

Jacob did the same thing when he wrestled God. He built an altar and this was actually part of Jewish custom. People would often pile up a heap of stones wherever God had met with them in a powerful way so as to create a place of remembrance. Yet **Jesus is less concerned with *what* you build than with *who* you build.**

Is it good to build buildings for houses of worship? Of course. Is it good to build physical things God tells you to? Yup. I'm challenged by the Lord to build a School of Ministry, DavidU. It takes a bldg and financial miracles to hire the staff and build the systems but the point is that we want to build ministers. But my point is that God is more concerned with *WHO* we are going to minister to than *WHAT* we are going to build. God's concern is people not buildings. Buildings do support the goal of building people but you can never get those two things switched in your priority. You can build a huge, gorgeous building, but if you aren't building people, the building will only become a burden.

Like our friend Peter, when we say to God "Ooh, Ooh, let me build you something" He might be like "Nah. No thanks." lol  
And that's OK! God wants our hearts more than our buildings. God wants our friendship more than our allegiance. He's a Father, not a dictator. Yes you should fear Him and in that God will grant you friendship. But never just build something because you saw someone else build something. **Build something if God, your friend, in the context of friendship, tells you to build something. Psalm 25:14 "Friendship with God is reserved for those who fear Him." (NLT)**

When I hear this verse, I think of Peter. Peter sees Jesus not just as Savior but as the friend who never gave up on him. To Peter, Jesus is "the friend that sticks closer than a brother"

Jesus knows that Peter denied Him three times. This is why He verified Peter's call to ministry three times over breakfast after He rose from the dead. Jesus wanted Peter to know "Hey friend, you're still in. You're still on God's team of leaders ...and... You're still my friend."

Peter as you know did succeed in his faith. He preached it's estimated between 10 and 15,000 people were saved that day after Pentecost because they only counted men in the Jewish custom. Peter eloquently preached the Gospel and shared the "my story" of Israel. He told them how they had ignored even killed the prophets God had sent to teach and preach repentance and how Jesus was God's son.

Peter didn't run and hide in shame and stay there. He tried to.

But GOD GOT A HOLD OF HIS HEART and reminding him of GRACE. God's Spirit reminded him of the moment over breakfast where Jesus looked into his eyes and three times said "FEED MY SHEEP"

Oh the anointing of God's Spirit that must have been felt in that moment. Isn't it beautiful when you feel the Spirit - the anointing in a moment - in a conversation - in spoken word of prophecy that breaks the lies of shame and fear and brings encouragement and love!

**There's an anointing on the moments in your life where you wrestled with God.**

I want to turn to Genesis 32 and I want to briefly tell you about a time in Jacob's life when we see this anointing. I bowed my head and prayed this morning over my sermon and ask God as I usually do early on Sunday mornings 'Holy Spirit, is there one more nugget of truth that You want us to hear today?' And in my mind's eye I saw Jacob wrestling with God then building an altar. What comes next is BEAUTIFUL.

In Gen 32 we read about Jacob trying to make amends with his brother Esau. If you don't know, Jacob and Esau were Abraham's sons. I think it was about 4 weeks ago I shared in a sermon how God spoke to Abraham, gave him a promise to be the "Father of Faith" and the Patriarch of Israel, God's people. Promise was that God would give him a son and from there all the nations of the world would be blessed - even the Messiah would come from this line. But he rushed the process. If you recall, he slept with Hagar and they had a son Ishmael. Who would actually receive the same multiplication blessing btw. A few years later Abraham's wife DID get pregnant as God said, and she had a son named Isaac. Isaac had two sons Jacob and Esau and from the Biblical text we see that Jacob was always trying to outsmart people and deceive them. He deceived his brother Esau numerous times and now years later in their adult lives, Jacob wants to make amends and he hears about Esau coming. He's afraid for his life. He thinks Esau is going to get revenge for stealing his livestock and so Jacob sends out a message to him saying "look I've got livestock and oxen you can have. No problem!"

But Esau ignores the message and just keeps coming.

So in Gen 32, he sends out FIRST the children, Leah and thinking they will soften his heart! I mean seriously read this with me! Gen 32:6

His servants said ... "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him." <sup>7</sup> Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps, <sup>8</sup> thinking, "If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape."

<sup>9</sup> And 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, that I may do you good,’ <sup>10</sup> I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of 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 camps. <sup>11</sup> Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. <sup>12</sup> But you said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’ ”

[\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Ge 32:6–12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Next he creates this huge peace offering for his brother. He splits his enormous livestock in half, sending ahead of him goats and sheep and cattle and tells his servants to tell Esau bc he will meet them first, LOOK THIS IS A GIFT FROM JACOB.

Pick up in vs 22

<sup>22</sup> The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup> He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. <sup>24</sup> And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup> Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” <sup>28</sup> Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have wrestled with God and with men, and have prevailed.” <sup>29</sup> Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.” <sup>31</sup> The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

[\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Ge 32:22–31). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Go to chapter 33, verse 4

<sup>4</sup> But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. <sup>5</sup> And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, “Who are these with you?” Jacob said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.” <sup>6</sup> Then the servants drew near, they and their children, and bowed down. <sup>7</sup> Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down. And last Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. <sup>8</sup> Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company that I met?” Jacob answered, “To find favor in the sight of my lord.” <sup>9</sup> But Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.” <sup>10</sup> Jacob said,

“No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. **For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me.**

[\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Ge 33:4–10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

You see when Esau gave grace to Jacob, Jacob felt grace from God. Likewise, when you are willing to share your story and simply give grace to people - people who have lived deceitful lives - they see the face of GOD in you and **THEY FEEL THE GRACE OF GOD IN YOU.**

This is how we react to someone else’s story - WITH GRACE and LOVE.

Now here's the best part of this story - here’s what I noticed this morning I’ve never seen before -

GEN 35:1-15

God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” <sup>2</sup> So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. <sup>3</sup> Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that **I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.**” <sup>4</sup> So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

Vs 6 And Jacob came to Bethel, which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, <sup>7</sup> and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother. Vs 9

<sup>9</sup> God appeared to Jacob again, and blessed him. <sup>10</sup> And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.” So he called his name Israel. <sup>11</sup> And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. <sup>12</sup> The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.” <sup>13</sup> Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him. <sup>14</sup> And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. **He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it.** <sup>15</sup> So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.” ESV

**[Here’s what I want to say to you today if you miss everything else in the service ... There’s anointing oil in your story - your distress - your wrestling with God - your story of when you were trying to hide from God but He found you. Every time you tell it, there’s anointing on it.](#)**

That pillar of stone that Jacob build and poured oil on - it smelled like oil to everyone who walked up to it and for years to come. The smell of oil tells the story.

In a MOMENT, in a fraction of a second, people passing this area, would see this stone altar, walk up to in curiosity and what would happen? They would smell the fragrance and instantly they'd think "OH YES. This is where GOD wrestled with a man named Jacob. Kids have you heard this story!? COMe here let me tell you."

I want to say it agin - there's oil in your story.

There's anointing to break the lies of the enemy when YOUR STORY is told!

What does Jacob have in common with Peter?

They both made some terrible decisions but God continued to choose them.

They both found that their anointing from God came from wrestling with God - being open and honest. Notice it says in vs 3 "God has always answered in my distress and been with me everywhere I go."

Isn't that truth for all of us?

### **MESSAGE MASH-UP VIDEO STARTS HERE**

God has always been faithful to us - everywhere we have gone - every time we had to pick up and move our family because of our job or the military assignment - God was with us. Every time we worried over our finances, God was with us and supplied our needs. Every time we blew it and thought surely God must have written us off... nope. Someone comes and shares hope and grace with us and prophesies to us and reminds us that GOD is still good and GOD is still wanting us in HIS FAMILY. Surely GOD has been good to us everywhere we go.

Maybe you're like Jacob and you tried to hide behind your wealth and possessions - you tried to find your identity by being the smartest person in the room or wealthiest or most important, but maybe today God wants to meet you like He met Jacob ALONE.

Usually your story has a moment when no one else was around. God lets us at times come to a place in life when our friends are gone, our possessions don't satisfy anymore and our stories have no good endings. When you are alone - alone with your fears - alone with your questions - alone in your distress - alone in thinking that all your bad decisions have caught up with you and now you're going to pay the price - THAT my friend is where God meets you... alone. He met Jacob alone at Bethel that day.

He met Peter alone on the shoreline and made him breakfast and reminded him that he was not only forgiven three times but called into ministry three times "Feed by sheep... do you still love me? Because I still love you!" WOW

He met me when I was alone in Bible college hearing a doctor tell me I would never have kids. I want to have kids. I was dating Danielle for 5 years at the time - though hundreds of miles away from her, I couldn't wait to marry her and have kids and this

doctor was telling me I could not have kids. I was mad at God. Angry! Then God healed me and now I have more kids than I can handle!

When you're alone - your prayers are not answered yet - your questions certainly aren't answered yet - THAT is where God meets you! Wrestling with GOD is NOT a bad thing. You need to have a faith crisis in order to have a faith that stands. More Christians need to walk with a limp like Jacob because they no longer rely on their own wisdom or strength but upon the Lord's. God met people in their time of need when they were alone.

**That is their story and that that is your story and that is my story!**

Let's end today with worship - please stand to your feet and let's say OUT LOUD how thankful we are for God's grace.