

# The Trek of Faith

Genesis 32: 22-28

Trek: a journey, especially a slow or difficult one under rough conditions.

## Through the trek God is working on our character

We are all a diamond in the rough. There are rough edges to be trimmed.  
To mature in spiritual character it takes a journey – often a long journey.

All of us experience highs and lows, successes and failures, deserts and oasis in our spiritual trek. Face it – it is part of life.

## Through the trek God is preparing us for eternity

Ephesians 1:11 *“In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will...”*

Philippians 1:6 *“Being confident of this that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

## Jacob’s difficult Trek (about 40 years)

- Jacob’s faith journey is slow and difficult.
- Jacob is so human. He makes many mistakes, he falls many times but God’s grace is working in him and through him.
- God is working out His will.

## Jacob has 3 powerful epiphanies throughout his life

Epiphany: a moment or experience of revelation, a powerful spiritual experience.

- 1/ The dream at Bethel of the angel ladder (Gen. 28:10-22)
- 2/ The night he wrestles with the Lord (Gen. 32:22-32)
- 3/ When he returns back to Bethel and a revival takes place (Gen. 35:1-15)

- Throughout Genesis 29 and 30 we see Jacob making his own plans. He didn’t seek God’s will regarding marital and monetary matters.
- He is filled with self-confidence and felt quite capable of handling his own affairs.
- For 20 years Jacob led a sad life with many struggles. They were wasted years.
- Galatians 6:7 says, *“A man reaps what he sows.”*
- Dysfunctional family. After he had married Leah and Rebecca, his home became a battlefield where 2 embittered women fought and struggled for Jacob’s affection.

## The most desperate and fearful day (Genesis 32)

- Jacob fears the encounter with Esau. He hears that he is coming to meet him with 400 men.
- This strikes great terror in Jacob.
- Jacob tries in all his planning to make it up to Esau, to find favour in his sight.
  - Verse 5 Jacob sends his servants to give material goods to Esau.
  - Verse 11 Jacob is shaking, feels trapped, and fears for his life.

- Verse 20 Jacob tries in his human strength and wisdom to appease his brother.
- Verse 23 Jacob sends his family across the river for their safety.
- Now in verse 24 Jacob is all alone.

### All Alone and Scared

-He is caught up against a stone wall, nowhere to turn except to be alone with God.  
 -Often our time is so structured with much activity and responsibility, maybe because we dare not be left alone with absolutely nothing to do but face God.

-It was midnight and he saw the wretched failure of his life. ***Spiritual discontent.***  
 -If Jacob was very much alone he was also very much alive – for he wrestled.  
 -I believe it was Jesus in his pre-incarnate state because later Jacob calls the place Peniel, which means “I saw God face to face.” (Gen. 32:30).  
 -The person wrestling with Jacob was getting nowhere with him.  
 -The old carnal, stubborn, obstinate, self-sufficient, unyielding Jacob was very much alive. How long would it take for Jacob to realize he was wrestling with the Lord?

\*The Lord had come to confront Jacob with his desperate need to surrender his life to God.

-For those whom God loves He will confront them to remove the obstacles that hinder spiritual growth and vitality.  
 -That night was the climax of 20 years of God’s patient dealing with obstinate Jacob.

-It may take a crisis in life for God to get through to us, through our stubborn spirit.

-In Genesis 32: 25-27 we see Jacob now a broken man by God, no longer fighting but clinging.  
 -When we are broken and emptied of self all that we can do is cling to God.  
 -In Gen. 32:26 we see the basic difference between Esau and Jacob. Jacob, with all his faults, deep down in his heart he wanted the blessing of God; Esau never did.  
 -We see Jacob clinging and confessing. He did not want the presence of God to leave until God did something for him.  
 -Here we have the heart of prayer – to not let go of God until He blesses you.

Isaiah 64:7, “*No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and have given us over to our sins.*”

-Jacob’s hip was out of joint. Jacob was a broken man. When we are broken before God he changes us. A broken spirit and a contrite heart God will not despise (Psalm 51:17).

-Jacob finally meets his brother face to face the next morning. It is an incredible turn of events. For the first time Jacob is humble and broken. He bows down 7 times as he nears his brother.

The next moment is incredible. Esau runs to him, embraces him and kisses him. They both weep in forgiveness.

### **Revival (Gen. 35)**

- Revival – a great change in Jacob’s character and behavior.
- In verses 2-3 finally Jacob puts his house in order, puts things right with God.
- He comes to his spiritual senses and realizes no more doing it his way.
- In verse 5 we read that God’s protection came upon his family, and that God’s presence was with him.
- In verse 10 God changes his name from Jacob to Israel.
  - Jacob: means supplanter, to take the place of another by cheating.
  - Israel: means, one who has struggled with God.

### **Conclusion**

Jacob’s character was purified by tremendous hardships. His trek was long and difficult. Most of his troubles were brought upon himself because he was obstinate, self-determined and doing things his way rather than God’s way. When our senses are clogged with sin we suffer the consequences.

But in spite of all he went through, God was working in his life.

In Genesis 48:15-16 Jacob realizes that God never left him and guided him and protected him throughout his long difficult trek. We read, *“Then he blessed Joseph and said, “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm—may he bless these boys...”*

We do not realize this at the time; but there is never an experience in life without the watch of that great Shepherd of our souls. Take heart when you go through the valley of the shadow of suffering or death. The Shepherd is beside you, though you do not see Him. His voice will speak comfort to you, “Do not fear.”

Philippians 1:6 *“Being confident of this that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*