



#DEATHTOSELFIE

sermon highlights

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WEEK FIVE: CALL IT WHAT YOU WANT

In the fifth week of *Death To Selfie*, Pastor Steven walked us through the story Jacob and the naming rights of his son Benjamin. Jacob refused to let the sorrow of Rachel's death define his son's life. There are so many application points that your eGroup will be able to discuss in this week's sermon.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

[Genesis 35:16-21](#) [Genesis 26:18](#) [Romans 4:16-17](#) [Luke 1:5-25; 57-80](#)

CALL IT WHAT YOU WANT

- As Jacob is heading back home, he is expectant of good things ahead for he and Rachel. There was great joy in the camp when Rachel began to give birth; there was a sense of joy that God was blessing Rachel and Jacob. But then, she begins to have 'great difficulty' in labor.
- Sometimes we ask God for things that we don't know how much it will cost or the magnitude of the request. Rachel prayed for this child for so long but she did not know it would cost her very life.
- They called the midwife and she said, 'Don't despair because you have another son.' As she breathed her last breath, Rachel says that her son should be named Ben-oni, which means 'son of my sorrow.' Ben-oni could also possibly mean 'son of my strength.' No one is quite sure; she is naming him out of her pain. In fact, Rachel never even had the opportunity to hold the child that she'd prayed for over so many years.
- Pastor Steven preached, 'At all times in your life, there is something that is being born and something that is dying. There is something new that God is giving life to and others that are dying. It's not 'all good' for anyone.'
- As they report to Jacob, we imagine that he was conflicted; he wanted to honor Rachel and her chosen name of Ben-oni, but he deliberately changes his son's name to Benjamin and removes the ambiguity surrounding his name. Jacob declares, 'I will not let my son be called 'my son of my sorrow.' I refuse to look at him as a burden.'
- Pastor Steven preached, 'Often times, true strength is only produced by great sorrow; maybe someone's strength in a situation was born out of a time of sorrow in their life.'
- In ancient culture, the father had the official naming rights. Knowing this, Jacob overrides her recommendation and declares his name will be 'Benjamin', which means 'son of my right hand.' The right hand is the hand of blessing; the father takes the right hand to bless the first born son. Jacob is declaring, 'I choose to call him a blessing!'
- Pastor Steven said, 'If life has labeled you in some way outside of God's word, take the label off because the only one who gets to name you is the one who made you.' Then he expounded, 'There are some situations in your life that you need to rename, and there will be a blessing in it when you do.'
- Pastor Steven continued, 'I can call whatever I'm looking at right now a blessing. It's about my perspective.'
- In Genesis, Adam didn't get to create the animals but he did have naming rights; in the same way, we don't get to choose what happens to us but we get to choose what we call it. And, whatever you call it, that becomes its name.
- He continued to emphasize, 'You can live in regret and and 'call it like it is' but wouldn't it be better if you called it what you want! Today, don't let your situations dictate your destiny; if you call it what it is and it will always be what it is, but if you call it what God calls it, it will become something brand new. You have two choices: Call it what it is or call it what you WANT. You have naming rights! The situation might not change but you give it a new name!'
- 'Sometimes, you have to start with Ben-oni before you get to Benjamin.' If someone has hurt you, it's okay to name it; but, from the sorrow, strength can arise. Call it what you want. It takes no faith to call it what you think it is. It's time to change some birth certificates in your life; there are some things you are going through right now that are sorrowful, but a bad situation doesn't define you.'
- Pastor shared the example of Pastor Levi Lusko who lost his daughter to an asthma attack. The family refers to her death as, 'When Lenya went to heaven' and not when 'Lenya died.' This is a great example of renaming a tragedy in your life. They recognized that this is not the end of Lenya life! She is in heaven with Jesus!
- In verse 20, it says that Jacob set up a pillar, blessed Benjamin, and then the text refers to him as 'Israel.' It says that 'Israel moved on.' Pastor Steven continued, 'That's a message to us. It's not too late to move on!'
- Jacob moved on with some losses and with a broken heart. He moved on without the one he had given the best years of his life to and for. But he still moved on again. Don't label your life on what you lost. If you ever look at what you have remaining in your life, you might have to 'limp' but you can move on.