

## Jacob

So we have this cute little story about using a rock for a pillow, a ladder, angels, and blessings. All of this for a man who was a dirty rotten scoundrel!

That's right! Jacob was, to be kind, a rascal!! He tricked his brother Esau, not once but twice. He took advantage of his aging father Isaac – remember Isaac.....the boy who's father took him up the mountainside to sacrifice him to God! Well now Isaac was well on in years. His body was failing him and his sight was nearly completely gone. Jacob conned his father in law out of most of his livestock and eventually his daughters. Jacob was never satisfied!

As a child did you ever sing, "We are climbing Jacob's Ladder?" It comes from the Book of Genesis, chapter 28 beginning at verse 10. He is camping. He has used a stone for a pillow. In his dream, angels are racing up and down a ladder that went from earth to heaven. And in the dream God spoke to Jacob and said that He was going to give him, all this land, and descendants to live here, and that blessings would flow, and that God would be with Jacob forever. (Slide #1 youtube video)

All these blessings to a dyed in the wool, double barreled con artist. God showered him with His love. Yet another reminder of God's incomprehensible grace....God does not love us because of who we are, God loves us because of who He is!

Camping for the night, before crossing over the river Jabbok to the promised land, out of the deep night, it happens - a stranger leaps. Beuchner writes," He hurls himself at Jacob , and they fall tot he ground, their bodies lashing throught ht e darkness. It is terrible enough not to see the attacher's face, and his strength is more terrible still, the strength of more than a man. All the night through they struggle in silence until just before morning, when it looks as though a miracle might happen. Jacob is winning. The stranger cries out to be set free before the sun rises. Then, suddenluy, all is reversed. He merely touches the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and in a moment Jacob is lying there crippled and helpless. The sense we have, which Jacob must have had, that the whole battle was fated to end this way. Jacob exerted all his strength. He almost won, until he knew for sure that he was truly defeated. He knew that all his shrewdness, all his

brute strength, and will were not enough. Still Jacob would not release his grip on the stranger, but now it was not a grip of violence, but of desperation like a drowning man.

God is the enemy that Jacob fought that night and who in one way or another we all fight. God – the beloved enemy.

Buechner calls us to consider Jacob....limping home into the dawn of the new day. Remember Jesus of Nazareth, staggering on broken feet, out of the tomb toward the resurrection, baring on his body the proud insignia of the defeat which is victory, the magnificent defeat of the human soul at the hands of God.

Amen