

“Your God-given Identity”
Woodbury Community Church
John Kimball, Guest Speaker
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Introduction: “I am not who *I* think I am. I am not who *you* think I am. I am who I think you think I am!” – Mike Perkinson (This is bondage).

Let Us Pray...

I. Jacob’s Old Name

- Jacob was born grasping the HEEL of his twin brother Esau. (Gen. 25:24-26)
- Jacob was true to his NAME.
 1. He took his brother’s BIRTHRIGHT. (Gen. 25:33)
 2. He stole his father’s BLESSING. (Gen. 27:22-30)
 3. He tricked his father-in-law out of his SHEEP. (Gen. 30:31-43)¹
- Jacob’s whole life and identity centered on SCHEMING and DECEIPT.

Transition: Things are about to change for Jacob. He has finally settled with Laban after being pursued and is now preparing to meet Esau for the first time in many years. It is during the night before that meeting that Jacob encounters the Living God!

II. Jacob’s New Name

Read: Genesis 32:22-32

- Jacob sent all of his family and possessions on ahead – he was ALONE (vv. 23-24).
- He spent all night WRESTLING with God! (vv. 24, 30)
- God gave Jacob a permanent REMINDER of his encounter and struggle. (vv. 25, 31-32)
- In the midst of the struggle, Jacob pled for a BLESSING. (v. 26)
- God gave Jacob a new name (IDENTITY) and explanation. (vv. 27-28)
- Jacob was no longer the SCHEMER, but was now known to be the one who “Struggled with God and with men and have overcome”! (v. 28)

Transition: The personal struggle with God and man can be physical, emotional, spiritual or any combination of these – but it is not the struggles we face that are important! It is the identity God produces in us through them that is so critical!

III. YOUR New Name

- Who does God say that YOU are?
 1. There are those who have accepted Christ with mental ASSENT
 2. There are those who have received Christ because of some kind of RELIGIOUS experience
 3. And then there are those who have come to Jesus, just as they are, and have really WRESTLED with him over their belief, their calling, over lifestyle issues, because of their personal baggage, because of suffering, or simply because of what he requires of them. The faith of this last group has been tested and the result is a transformed identity in Christ!
- If you are truly devoted to Jesus, then the Bible says that you are a SON or DAUGHTER of God! Let that sink in. Do you realize what that means?
- If you are truly devoted to Jesus, then you are fully ACCEPTED. Your past, your sins, your personality quirks, literally everything about you is cleansed.
- If you are truly devoted to Jesus, then you have become part of a community – a family – that borne on LOVE and FORGIVENESS, and that is on this spiritual journey to Christ-like character and maturity *with* you!
- If you are truly devoted to Jesus, then you have a new NAME! No longer are you known for the challenges you face or the garbage in your life! No! Now God calls you “my precious Child”! (John 1:12-14; Romans 8:12-17; Galatians 4:4-7)

Conclusion: You are who GOD says you are!

Do you believe that enough to actually live by it?

¹ Laban himself was a trickster (Gen. 29:16-30)