



Sermon Discussion Questions
Re:Gift: How will you respond?
Pt. 2

INTRODUCE IT

In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Act 20:35 ESV)

This is our theme verse for this series. Jesus is quoted in the book of Acts with these words of the benefit of responding to the His Gift by giving to others. What does that look like? How do we do that in our day and time? What are the different ways we can give ourselves to others? What has to change practically and in our hearts to make that happen? These are the things will explore throughout this series.

Tell about a gift that was significant to you because it was a surprise. Was it a surprise because you did not expect it or because the timing of it was not what you expected? How did the surprise affect your feeling about the gift?

STUDY THE PASSAGE

Read Genesis 32, 33:1-11

What do we know about who Jacob was? What were some events in his life that gave him a certain "reputation"?

Read Genesis 25 - 28 for background. Several stories show how he was a schemer and tricked people to get what he wanted.

People's names were important during the time recorded in Genesis and were often given to describe some aspect of a person. What does the name Jacob mean?

The name Jacob has two meanings, either one who takes by the heel or one who supplants. The word supplant means to supersede another, especially by force or treachery.

What does Jacob do when he finds out that Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men? What plan does he devise to appease his brother?

He divides his family and possessions into two parts, thinking that if Esau attacks one camp the other will be spared. He then sends out gifts to Esau ahead of time to appease him. After that, he plans to send his servants and then his family ahead of him.

What happens when Jacob is left alone for the night?

A strange man shows up and they wrestle with each other through the night.

There are different theories as to who the man who came in verse 24 was? What are they? What is your thought on who the wrestler was? Why?

Mike mentioned a few different theories in his sermon. One thought is that it is an angel. Some tend to think it is a special Angel of the Lord who appears at certain times throughout the Bible and speaks for God. Other scholars think it is an early appearance of Jesus, who was both God and man. While Mike tends to like this view, he admits during his message that this is not made clear in the text.

In the morning, the man gives Jacob a new name. What does his new name mean?

He strives with God, or God strives.

How does Jacob change his approach after the night of wrestling?

When Jacob meets Esau, what surprise does he receive?

Mitch's sermon dealt with how we can give the gift of space and specifically on how to give space for someone to grow spiritually. He listed seven ways we can do this with people. They were:

1. Never forget your own journey
2. Get to know another person's full story
3. Learn to celebrate any step of growth
4. God is at work even when you are not
5. Getting it wrong is not always about getting it wrong.
6. Giving space to fail is not the same as giving space to sin.
7. Physical space is great space to grow spiritually

Which of these are you most in need of? Which of these do you find hardest to give?

Use it

Mike asked us to consider a question as we left. What would it look like for you to do the unexpected for someone you love? Spend some time in your group talking together of some specific examples of how you might make this happen.

What are some ways you can give space to those around you? Especially, where do you need to remember to give space for spiritual growth to someone in your relational circles?

We were encouraged during the messages to do these not merely out of obligation, but as an overflow of the love of Jesus in our lives. During your prayer time, ask God to fill you with the love of Jesus in such a way that the overflow of His spirit shows in how you love others in unexpected ways or by giving them space where they need it.