

Sermon Title: The Struggle is Real!

Sermon Text: Genesis 25-35; Genesis 35:9-12

- Has anyone ever had struggles in their life?
- Has anyone ever thought that if/because I am a Christian that my life will/should be easy?
- If God promises that He is **“working all things for the good”**, and that we are a **“chosen people”**, then why is life often so hard, & filled with struggle?

As Christians, as God’s chosen ones, **we are not exempt from struggles!** Why? H.C. #127 – *We have “sworn enemies – the devil, the world, & our own flesh that never stop attacking us.”*

- The devil...

“For we do not (just) wrestle against flesh & blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” – 1 Peter 5:8.

“The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ...” - 2 Cor. 4:4

- The world...

Jesus said, **“You are not of this world, but I chose you out of this world, therefore the world hates you.”**

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.”

“A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” – excerpts from Jesus in John 15:18-21

- The flesh...

“But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness... it deceived me & through it killed me.”- Rom. 7:23

“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, & the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other...”

Galatians 5:17-21 - “Now the works of the flesh are evident...

We are in a battle, and the struggle is real!

In **Genesis 25-35** we see this clearly played out in the life of Isaac & Jacob! The struggle was physical, spiritual, from within, & from without!

Genesis 25 – Isaac’s son Jacob takes advantage of his brother Esau to gain the promised blessing of the “birthright!” **These twin sons were at odds!**

Genesis 26 – A famine comes & forces Isaac to go to Gerar. **He lies about the true identity of his wife, calling her his sister.** God prospers Isaac there thus making enemies with the Philistines anyways! And they force him out!

Genesis 27 – Rebekah (Isaac’s wife) & Jacob (Isaac’s son) conspire to deceive Isaac & steal away Esau’s blessing! **Which led to Esau conspiring to kill Jacob.**

Genesis 29 – Jacob goes to live with his uncle Laban to flee from Esau, but also to find a wife. He falls in love with Rachel & agrees to work for 7 yrs for her hand in marriage. Laban takes advantage of Jacob... & of God’s blessing upon Jacob!

Genesis 30 – Leah (Jacob’s 1st wife) is blessed w/children, but the one he loves, Rachel, struggles! Laban continues to cheat Jacob. Jacob does the same!

Genesis 31 – **Jacob flees with his family.** Rachel steals Laban’s gods. Jacob vows death to whoever did it, not knowing that it was his own wife!

Genesis 32-33 – **Jacob encounters Esau again & fears for his life,** & those of his family & livestock! He tries to appease/bribe Esau with his possessions!

Genesis 34 – Jacob’s daughter Dinah gets defiled by a foreigner (Shechem). Shechem falls in love with her and wants to marry her. **Two of Jacob’s sons devise a sinister plot and they kill Shechem and all the men of his city.**

Genesis 35 – **Jacob’s favored wife Rachel dies in childbirth!**

No one ever said life would be easy in this broken and fallen world! Actually, Jesus promised the opposite in **John 16:33** – **“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”**

Jacob didn’t get to experience that peace! He struggled against the devil, the world, and his own flesh. **He also wrestled with God!** That struggle is real too!

Genesis 32:24-31 - How many of us struggle with God & what He is doing in our lives? It’s ok to wrestle w/ God! He is wrestling with us too! **He will prevail, but he also makes provisions for us** – the greatest of which is Christ & His blessings!

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- The _____
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