Bits of Torah Truths | Parashat Vayishlach

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What do you think Righteousness is about?

This weeks reading is from Parashat Vayishlach (*Bereshit / Genesis 32:3-36:43*). This week we read that Jacob, before crossing over the river Jordan into Eretz Canaan, wrestles with a man (32:24) and realizes that he has seen God face to face and lived (32:25-31). God instructs Jacob to go to Bethel and dwell there (35:1). The Lord appears to Jacob again and confirms his name change from Jacob to Israel (35:9-15). The Parashah ends with Esay, the land cannot sustain the flocks of both Jacob and Esay, so Esay moves his family and all that he owns away from Jacob (36:1-43). The opening verses of Parashat Vayishlach reveal to us that at this point in Jacob's life he is at a major turning point. Jacob realizes that encountering Esav is inevitable when he returns to Canaan and prepares for meeting his brother. Jacob calls out to the Lord saying that He is unworthy of God's grace and truth (32:11). Jacob encounters God at Peniel (جَנָיאָל) and sees God face to face. The Lord changes Jacob's name to Israel and strikes his hip changing both who he is and the way he walks. Has your encounter with God changed you in both who you are and in the way you walk?

כתבי הקודש / The Holy Scriptures

ספר בראשית פרק לב Bereshit / Genesis 32:24-28

כה וַיָּוֶתר יַצֵּקֹב לְבַדּוֹ וַיֶּאָבֵק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֵלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר: כו וַיַּרָא כִּי לֹא יָכֹל לוֹ וַיַּגַּע בִּכַף-יִרֵכוֹ וַהֵּקַע כַּף-יֵרָך יַעֵקֹב בָּהָאַבְקוֹ עִמוֹ: כז וַיֹּאמֵר שֵׁלְחֵנִי כִּי עֵלָה הַשַּׁחַר וַיֹּאמֵר לֹא אַשַׁלֵחָד כִּי אִם-בֵּרַכְתָּנִי: כח וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַה-שְׁמֶד וַיֹּאמֶר יַעַקֹב: כט ויאמר לא יַעַקֹב יָאמר עוד שַמָד כַּי אָם-יִשָׂרָאָל כִּי-שַׂרִיתַ עָם-אֵלהֵים וָעָם-אַנַשִׁים וַתּוּכַל: 32:24 Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. 32:25 When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him. 32:26 Then he said, 'Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.' But he said, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me. 32:27 So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' 32:28 He said, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.' (NASB)

Did you know that "righteousness" is terribly misunderstood in the body of Christ today? Is righteousness something we do or something we are? I have heard it said that "you are not righteous because of how moral you are, your level of self control, how many scriptures you read each day, etc," and "we simply must just believe in Jesus and we are righteous." Is this really what the Apostle Paul was saying to the Romans? Often Romans chapters 3 and 4 are quoted as proof texts for example in Romans 4:14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified (NASB) thus "if righteousness can be obtained by our work and effort then faith would become void" and therefore the Law has passed Romans 3:27-4:8

away because we are not to do anything "by the Law." Some also quote 3:27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of from Romans 10:3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 3:28 For we maintain to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. 3:29 of God. 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles who believes. NASB ($^{4}\tau\epsilon\lambda_{OC}\gamma\lambda_{P}$ vóµou Xpistòs eis sikaiosúvny $\pi\alpha\nu\tau$ i tõ ify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith π_{10} τεύοντι) and say therefore Christ is the end of the Law, it is gone. I have $\frac{100}{100}$ is one. 3:31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it even read some say to just believe in Jesus, you are righteous and you do not <u>never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.</u> 4:1 What then have to live a righteous life, God's righteousness will just seep from your shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, pores. Again I ask, was this what Paul was saying to the Romans? How has found? 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has does one reconcile Romans 3:31 that we do not nullify the Law through faith something to boast about, but not before God. 4:3 For what does rather we establish it? Having a closer look at Romans 10:3-4, Paul is trying the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to address the issue of the people not subjecting themselves to the righteous- to him as righteousness.' 4:4 Now to the one who works, his ness of God. They thought they were righteous enough. Paul says τέλος γάρ wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 4:5 But to vόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην (telos gar nomou christos eis dikaiosunen) the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, 4:6 just as David "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." The word telos is a also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits neuter noun and translates to mean "the end-goal, purpose" in the sense of righteousness apart from works: 4:7 'Blessed are those whose "reaching the end (aim)." The Torah is the aim, the end-goal that directs us lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been to understand Yeshua the Messiah is our righteousness. How so? The Law is covered. 4:8 'Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take a school master that trains us in the righteousness of God. The point is we are into account.' (NASB)

unable to reach the goal on our own (we fall short). We are expected to live both holy and righteous lives; i.e. the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin validating (establishing) the requirements of the Law in our lives. We then seek the Lord by the power of His Holy Spirit to empower us to produce the fruits of righteousness and faith, the very meaning of faith and works (see James 2:24). Jacob was touched by God and he walked differently the rest of his life. Have you been touched by God? Do you walk differently today in Christ? As believers, we are to strive for righteousness and holiness in our lives and seeking God, in Yeshua the Messiah, by the power of the Holy Spirit to help us to live in obedience to His Word. We are not told to declare our righteousness in Christ and go on living as usual. The Lord calls us to a greater standard, 1 Peter 1:16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." (NASB) The Torah is not something to run from, it helps us to understand who the Messiah truly is and most importantly that we are in need of a Savior!