MESSAGE THREE

Chosen, Dealt With, and Broken

Scripture Reading: Gen. 25:22-23; 31:38-41; 32:22-32; 34:30

I. Jacob was chosen by God; therefore, in Jacob we see God's selection—Gen. 25:21-26; Rom. 9:11:

A. God loved Jacob and selected him—v. 13; Mal. 1:2; Eph. 1:4; 2:4.

B. Jacob was chosen before his birth, even before the foundation of the world—Gen. 25:22-23; Eph. 1:4:

1. Jacob was chosen by God; it was not of his own works, nor was it the issue of his own struggle and strife—Gen. 25:22-23, 26.
2. Jacob's being chosen was of God who calls, of God's mercy, and of God's grace—Rom. 9:11.

C. Like Jacob, we were chosen, selected, before the foundation of the world—Eph. 1:4; 2 Thes. 2:13; John 15:16a:

1. Christ is the sphere in which we were chosen by God—Eph. 1:4.
2. God chose us according to His foreknowledge—1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 8:29.
3. God's selection depends on His sovereign mercy; as those who have been chosen by God, we should cast ourselves upon Him and trust that He will bring us to the point where we are pleasing to Him—9:11-13, 16.
4. God's selection of us in eternity past was followed by His predestination and by His calling of us in time—8:28-29; Eph. 1:5.
5. We have been selected and called for God's purpose—Rom. 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9:
   a. Genesis 1:26 reveals that God's purpose in His creation of man was that man would express Him in His image and represent Him with His dominion.
   b. God's purpose for Jacob was to deal with him until he was transformed into a prince of God, bearing His image to express Him and exercising His dominion to represent Him; this is God's goal—47:7, 10.

II. Jacob's life is a life that represents God's dealings, and the God of Jacob is the God of dealings—31:38-41:

A. God destined Jacob to live a struggling life all his days; from his mother's womb to the end of his life, he was struggling—25:22-26; 27:1-29, 41-46; 28:1-5; 29:1—36:43.

B. In the life and experience of Jacob we see God's dealings—25:19—32:21:

1. God sovereignly arranged the circumstances of Jacob's life; God's sovereign hand was upon Jacob to deal with him.
2. God's dealing with Jacob was not God's punishment; rather, it was for the purpose of Jacob's transformation into Israel—v. 28.
3. Under God's sovereignty, through the sufferings in his circumstances and through God's direct dealing, Jacob was transformed and matured so that he became Israel—35:10.

C. Jacob's history is a picture of the discipline of the Holy Spirit—47:9; 48:15-16a; Heb. 12:9-11:

1. The discipline of the Holy Spirit refers to what the Holy Spirit is doing in our outward environment, to His arranging of all people, things, and happenings, through which we are being disciplined—Rom. 8:28.
2. Through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, God completely tears down our old creation so that the element of the new creation may be built up in us.
3. As our natural life is dealt with through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, Christ is constituted into us—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a.
4. Everything and everyone in our environment are instruments of sovereignty used by God for our transformation—Rom. 8:28.

III. Genesis 32:22-32 relates a vital and crucial experience in the life of Jacob—his being broken:

A. The Lord wrestled with Jacob in order to expose to him how natural he was and how great his natural strength was—v. 24:

1. The Lord "touched the socket of Jacob's hip at the thigh muscle" (v. 32); the touching of the socket of Jacob's hip at the thigh muscle, the strongest muscle in the body, signifies the touching of Jacob's natural life, his natural strength—v. 25.
2. After Jacob was broken by God, outwardly he was the same as before, but inwardly his natural life had been dealt with; it was not the outward living that was touched by the Lord but the inward, natural strength that was broken by Him—33:1-4; 32:25, 32.

B. Jacob's experience shows us that God has to break our natural life, that He has to touch our natural life in a drastic way—vv. 22-32:

1. The way of religion is to change man's outward behavior; the way of God in His economy is to touch man's inward life in order to change his inward being—2 Cor. 4:16.
2. When the Lord touches us at a certain crucial spot, we are lame and can no longer be the same in our inward being; from then on, we limp and are no longer whole—Gen. 32:25, 31.

C. Every believer needs to experience the breaking of the outer man—Heb. 4:12:

1. In order for Christ to be released from the imprisonment of the soul, our outer man must be broken—Eph. 3:16-17.
2. Our outer man needs to be broken for the release of the spirit—Heb. 4:12.
3. In order for there to be a pure flow of the life of God from within us, we must be broken—John 12:24-26; 19:34; 7:37-39; Exo. 17:6-7:
   a. The operation of death within us, spoken of in 2 Corinthians 4:12, is our being broken.
   b. The Lord needs broken vessels to be channels of living water; the more we are broken, the more the life of God will flow out of us—John 12:24-26.
4. Every part of our soul needs to be broken by God—Matt. 16:24-25:
   a. For the soul to be broken does not mean that we no longer use our mind, express our emotions, or exercise our will—1 Thes. 5:23.
   b. Our mind, emotions, and will still function, but they have been broken, that is, dealt with, subdued, and made submissive to our spirit—2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 4:23; 2 Tim. 1:7.
5. There is the need for the breaking of the "alabaster flask of ointment, of very costly pure nard," containing "ointment of great value," so that the ointment of pure nard may be released and that the house may be "filled with the fragrance of the ointment"—Mark 14:3; Matt. 26:7; John 12:3:
   a. Unless the flask (the outer man) is broken, the ointment of pure nard cannot be released—Mark 14:3.
   b. We should not be protective of ourselves, regarding the flask as more precious than the ointment; we should not consider our outer man more precious than our inner man—Matt. 26:7; 2 Cor. 4:16.
   c. If the outer part is not broken, the inner part will not be released; if this is our situation, we will have no way to go on, and the church also will have no way to go on—John 12:3.
6. God's work of building Himself in Christ into us requires the breaking of the outer man—Eph. 3:16-17a.
7. Breaking is a prerequisite for building—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:16:
   a. In order for the church to be built up, we need to experience the breaking of the outer man—2:21-22.
   b. If we would be coordinated with others in service, we need to be willing to be broken; without brokenness coordination is impossible.
8. Like Paul, we need to be broken under the vision of the Body and realize that the only way for us to be built up in the Body is to be broken—Acts 9:1-31; Eph. 4:16.