



DISCOVERING MY IDENTITY (Final)

1. *My Self Image*
2. *My Values*
3. *My Strength*
4. ***My Past***

Recapitulation

1. *Our Self-Image: We are defined by God's character, not merely by His attributes.*
2. *Our Values: God tests us through what He has entrusted to us.*
3. *Our Strength: Our true strength comes from our relationship and intimacy with God.*
4. **Our Past:** Like Jacob, your past does not define you. The struggles, mistakes, and wrestling of your life cannot determine your worth - your true identity is anchored in God's character, who blesses and transforms you.

Genesis 32:24–25 (NIV): - So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.

Anxieties and doubts over the consequences of his past

Jacob was about to meet his brother Esau, from whom he had fled years earlier after taking the birthright and blessing. He was anxious, fearful of Esau's anger, and unsure of the outcome. **The wrestling through the night portrays his struggle to confront guilt, shame, and past fears.** Jacob's wrestling is a symbol of a deep desire for God's favor and blessing - not just a physical struggle, but a spiritual one. He refuses to let go until he receives God's affirmation.

- **Confront your past, don't run from it:** Like Jacob facing Esau, we are called to confront past mistakes, regrets, and fears
- **Persistence in seeking God brings transformation:** Jacob's refusal to let go until he received God's blessing shows that spiritual breakthroughs require perseverance. **Verse 28: "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.**

Confronting Past Fears

Jacob wrestled with his guilt, shame, and fear from his past, but God transformed him. Similarly, in Christ, our mistakes, failures, and past experiences don't determine our worth or identity. Our true identity is rooted in being children of God, loved and accepted through Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

Transformation of identity

Through the struggle, Jacob's character and identity were transformed. He went in as "Jacob" (meaning supplanter), but after the encounter, God renamed him "Israel" (meaning he struggles with God or God prevails). The wrestling represents the painful but necessary confrontation with his past, fears, and weaknesses to receive a new identity and purpose.

1. **We are overcomers through Christ** - We rise above past failures, fears, and mistakes through God's strength. **Revelation 2:7** - "To the one who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life..."
2. **We are children of promise** - We inherit God's blessing and purpose despite our past. **Romans 9:8** - "It is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants."
3. **We are empowered servant** - God transforms our struggles into strength to fulfill His calling. **2 Corinthians 12:9** - "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

As we partake of this Holy Communion today, let us reflect on how God transforms us through our struggles. Just as Jacob wrestled with God and came out with a new name and purpose, so too, in Christ, we are given a new identity that is not defined by our past, but by God's love, grace, and calling.

On the cross, Jesus experienced ultimate suffering, rejection, and apparent defeat (Matthew 27:46–50). To human eyes, it looked like loss. Yet in His death, He accomplished redemption and victory over sin and death. **1 Corinthians 15:54-57** - "Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ."

When Jesus sat with His disciples in the Upper Room, He knew the weight of what was about to happen - the cross, the suffering, the betrayal, and the apparent defeat that awaited Him. Yet, as He took the bread and the cup, He transformed the moment into a declaration of victory, not defeat.

- **Bread:** His body, soon to be broken, symbolized the ultimate surrender to God's plan. Though it would appear as suffering and loss, it would bring eternal life.
- **Cup:** His blood, soon to be poured out, sealed forgiveness and triumph over sin and death. The cross, though a moment of extreme vulnerability, was the very place where victory was established.