Small Group Notes 30 July 2017. Theme: "Wrestling with God-"
Key Words: Blessing, Deceit, Grace

Welcome

- Research shows that two people getting acquainted lie an average of three times in ten minutes[1]. Most people tell 11 lies per day! What do you make of that?

Worship

LORD, you have probed me, you know me:
you know when I sit and stand.
you understand my thoughts from afar.
You sift through my travels and my rest;
with all my ways you are familiar.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
LORD, you know it all.
Behind and before you encircle me
and rest your hand upon me (Ps. 139:1-5, New American Bible (Revised Edition))

Become still in God's presence. An exercise like this may be helpful: "*Imagine that you are walking down a staircase that begins in your mind and winds slowly down to your heart. Take a few moments to imagine walking this staircase, leaving all the many worries and thoughts behind, slowly descending into a secret room or chapel within your heart, where God waits to meet with you"*[2]

After a few moments open in prayer, acknowledging that nothing is hidden from God and that God is able to untangle us from deceit and guide us in the way of truth.

Word

Read Gen 29:15-33

1. What emotions were evoked in you as you listened to the story?
2. Esau said of Jacob: "*Not for nothing was he named Jacob, the Heel. Twice now he's tricked me: first he took my birthright and now he's taken my blessing* (Gen 27:36, The Message). In Hebrew the root word for Jacob is heel. Grabbing the heel was an idiom for deceiving someone – hence Esau's complaint. Review Jacob's life and name all the incidents of deception up until this point.
3. The family we are reading about were chosen to bless the world (Gen. 12) – why does God want us to know about the deceit, scandal and sorrow of this dysfunctional family?
4. Before Jacob arrived at his uncle, Laban's home, God had promised to be with him always (Gen. 28:15). From the story does it look like God is with him? Why?
5. Try and put yourself in Leah's shoes – how do you think she felt as the story unfolded?
6. What does God see? What is God saying to you through this story?

Works

- Allow your discussion to guide your prayers for one another.
- Pray for our nation – that God would rescue us from lies and deception.
- Invite a friend to church

[1] http://www.theliarinyourlife.com/conversation.php; https://www.forbes.com/sites/daviddisalvo/2014/08/10/how-telling-the-truth-could-

[2] From "Are you ready" by Peter Maidment