

Reactionary? No. Resolutionary? No. Revolutionary? YES!
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Hebrew Reading:	Genesis 28:10-22 (The Message)
Christian Reading:	Matthew 28:16 – 20 (The Message, adapted with Inclusive Language)
Contemporary Reading:	“What Would Jesus DE-construct? By John Caputo (Baker Academic, 2007:88)

Ah, Jacob. Is he a scoundrel or a survivor?

Is he a thief who stole his brother’s blessing? Or is he a fighter who found a way to buck the system that made him second class?

Oh yes, Jacob got his brother’s blessing (birthright, too), but look what it cost him—he lost family and community—on the road & on the run.

Like so many queers who seek blessing in a family and church system—tired of living a second-class life—often end up leaving living on the road & on the run.

The Jacob story always leads me to meditative musings—so many churches and denominations responding with **reactionary** furor toward GLBT folk (and our hetero allies) kicking them out of churches, passing propositions, leaving them without family or community.

Then we have those churches and denominations that fight over position papers and polity **resolutions**, such as Amendment This verses Amendment That—as if church polity trumps authentic relationship as being healthy, loving, and what Jesus would want.

We don’t need reaction or resolution. We need **reVolution**.

Shall we pray? [Extemporaneous]

Jacob left Beersheba with his brother, Esau seething with anger wanting to kill him—their father Isaac only had one blessing—and you know that is what I find ridiculous, I think we forget that it is humans who have limited grace; and not God. We created supply and demand economics regarding goods, grace, and God.

We teach God's grace & love as conditional. An ancient myth passed down from generation to generation—total depravity, predestination, we created these dogmas, which are lies to justify why we humans are always ranking people as worthy or unworthy—going to heaven or going to hell.

If Isaac were before me, I would ask, “how come only one child gets a blessing when God blessed you with two!” But that is the mom in me talking...however

Jesus did come to teach another way...and yet, here we are today limiting grace with all kinds of conditions...not just toward queer folk you know. We're conditional with other folks, too.

Can you name those other conditions in which we classify folks as second class? Age, race, ethnicity, and ability to name a few...who do you treat with conditions ~ would you deny anyone a blessing?

Isaac only had one blessing, but two sons? So not fair! So Jacob took it; and was on the run. Ever ponder what it was like for Jacob...

I tend to believe that he probably felt guilty for his scoundrel ways. I mean, at first, he may have felt angry and justified to go after the birth right by whatever means necessary, but then caught up in feelings of entitlement (when in the deep place of his heart he merely longed for acceptance). Jacob snatched and grabbed the blessing, too.

He took all the titles, but lost his family, home, and community. It is kind of like “winning the church fight” even if the church is ripped apart in the process...to win by whatever means necessary...we all lose.

Jacob was on the run. Yea, his mother helped his get-a-way; and the excuse was to snag a wife, but if he had other options what would he have done?

While in seminary, a few moons ago, I began to hear the stories, that continue to this day, of those who didn't want to serve in silence and secrecy; and yet grieved leaving their denomination of upbringing heading to UU, UCC or MCC; and for some leaving the church all together.

If these folks had other options, what would they have done?

If Jacob had other options, what would he have done? We can label him scoundrel or survivor, but what do we label the cultural and church systems that put people between rocks and hard places?

I call it hell.

Jacob entered into Haran; and scripture says he camped for the night with rock as his pillow and the stars his blanket he lay down to sleep; and perhaps, perchance to dream.

Who here hasn't lay down to sleep, maybe unable, hoping for forty winks, wishing for dreams to come true, visions, and hopes dancing in heart and head afraid of risking it all for fear of failure/rejection.

Who here hasn't dreamed—are you still dreaming?

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for; and the conviction of things dreamed. Jacob dreamed! ...of angels & a heavenly home—having left his earthly one behind—at least while in waking reality.

Jacob dreamed; and God was before him.

Claimed him as his own—Jacob, I am with you as I was with your grandparents and parents, my son, you are not alone.

Jacob dreamed; and God was proclaiming: you shall have a home once more—you are forgiven, o scoundrel, you are loved, o survivor, and you have purpose to go with that passion of yours, young one!

Jacob dreamed; and God was providing compassion to him, saying I shall go with you; and I shall protect you. I give you comfort, birthright and blessing; my child, I give this as my promise.

Jacob awakened from that sleep—changed and transformed!

Now I realize that the common and acceptable reading of the text is that when Jacob awoke and proclaimed “God is in this place” that it is the ground—Mother Earth—soil and dirt, location to which we believe he referenced: “God is in this place.”

I can not help but wonder, from my social location of knowing those who dream of acceptance with family, church, and community to live as equal citizens under human law—I can not help but wonder if **more** is being said in the text than is obvious at first blush.

I mean...is it possible...can you accept the chance...that just maybe when Jacob awakened from fanciful hope that God was indeed with him, that when Jacob awoke & exclaimed:

God is in this place—truly; and I didn’t even know it!

Could it be that Jacob held his body tight; and accepted that blessing and birthright which God had always intended he receive? Could it be that more than just his body awoke, but his spirit, too?

God is in this place—truly; and I didn’t even know it!

God is in my body/my being—truly, God loves me created me in the imago dei; and I didn’t even know it! Jacob didn’t know it, until then—do you know it, that God loves you creating you in the imago dei?

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Jesus stood upon that mountain top, having lost one of his own, with only eleven counted before him. Jesus, the crucified and risen one, stood before them in the place he had set for their reunion.

Upon that rock he reminded them of who he was, and whose he was, and who they were and whose they were and how they were called to far greater things than even he had accomplished...*they were to start a revolution of sharing The Message of God's love for all creation!*

The moment they saw him, they worshipped him; but some held back, scriptures says, not sure about worship, about risking themselves totally. He had, after all, appeared to have left them behind.

He died. He rose. It was all so confusing.

The Jesus story can be so confusing—do we trust Jesus—is what those who held back were certainly asking themselves in the deep places of their heart...do we trust you, God?

Do you hold back?

Oh Jesus, You were here & then gone & now your back again getting ready to go again; oh, it is all so confusing! Some disciples held back.

Jacob, too, held back a little just like the disciples would do. How so? He made a vow—after recognizing the presence of God—Jacob made a vow, but it is conditional. Did you catch it...he began with “IF”.

When someone begins a statement with an “IF” a “Then” is sure to follow. **If** God stands by me—as if to say, “I do believe you God, and help my disbelief.” **If** God protects me—“I believe, help my disbelief.”

You are in this place, but are you really with me? Prove it!

If God keeps me in food and clothing bringing me back in one piece to my father's house—ah, here is the true ask of Jacob—the true test: God, I like your dream. I really do; and I never knew you lived within

me. I am a bit shy to ask, but will because you know my heart—I just want to go home and be accepted for being me.

I don't know if you can do this, God, and I have been hurt so many times and I know I'm not perfect either; and so I believe, but help my disbelief.

Jacob declared, If God does x y z and a b c, then I shall give in return.

This is the mark of man who wants to trust, but is afraid to trust. This is the mark of man who hopes, but is afraid to hope. This is the reality of every queer who has been unaccepted, but longs for acceptance.

This is the state of the broken, battered, and crucified body.
This is the state of the resurrected, healing body of Christ's Church.

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What does God say to all of this?

Jesus calls to those who follow in the ways of love; and he declares:

God authorized and commanded me to commission you—the broken and battered—to heal the body. Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life—to heal the body.

We, the one's who believe God is with us; and yet still live with disbelief because of whatever un-reconciled past or present injustice—we are the ones called and commissioned.

How queer is that—the broken called forth to be healers!
Now that is something to deconstruct!

The call that issues from the crucified body of Jesus solicits our response, for it is **we**, [the battered and broken] who have mountains to move by our faith and **we** [seeking healing and wholeness] who have enemies to move by our love. It is **we**

who have to make the weakness of God stronger than the power of the world.

This was true for Jacob in reconciling with his kin. This was true for disciples in reconciling with their community. This is true for those called to ministry to be reconcilers on behalf of Christ's Church.

This is why our call is not to be reactionaries or resolutionaries, **but revolutionaries!**

God is still speaking to us over and over again God says, *I am with you...* nothing can separate you from me. Herein lies the revolution! When we claim that truth and we tear down walls to build up hope!

We are to answer the call of Christ without conditions—no more if/then statements or holding back—but with wild grace and flamboyant faith we proclaim, without conditions God is still speaking:

God is in that place—truly, do you know it? (2x)

What a revolution it would be fully risking ourselves daring to move mountains, church movements, and yes, even polity by our faith proclaiming good news through tearing down walls, building up hope!

It would be revolutionary to go before our enemies with love saying God is with all of us—truly, do you know it Florida, Arizona, Arkansas, & California? God is with all of us Jamaica, Nigeria, & Zimbabwe? God is with all of us Church of God, Baptist, UCC and Lutheran churches—truly, do you know it? God is with all of us—truly, do you know it?

The unconditional grace of God has blessings for all of us called out to be blessings to others; for that is our birthright.

The revolution will come when we worship Jesus, without condition risking it all for the sake of the Message: God is truly with you—may you know it! Amen.