

Borah La-aw Bit Week 2: Facilitator Copy

Sacred Wounds and Sacred Scars

Lesson Preparation:

- Cut out shapes from different color paper for learning task 1.
- Provide a hand out in Khmer of **Gen 32: 22-32** in either version of the Bible.

I. Lesson Objectives:

- Men identify symptoms of male dysfunction in young and old men
- Men name and describe some of the own emotion pain.
- Men can relate the story of Jacob with own journey of pain and healing
- Men assess their own spiritual journey and where they how far along on the road to healing they are.

Facilitator Background info:

The purpose of this lesson is to acknowledge that most men are in a great deal of emotional pain. This emotional pain begins when they are young men for a few reasons: there is no male figure available to model masculinity to them, and when there life situation seems hopeless with no option to dream about a better life. The global culture is full of angry young men, and bitter old men. Just look around.

Men have emotional wounds that are have never been healed. When men acknowledge their emotional pain, feel it in its fullness without numbing through alcohol, drugs, or workaholism, and learn from it, it can be transformed. Those wounds can heal and become scars. We learn more from defeat, failure and suffering than we do from success. Emotional pain, wounds and suffering can become 'sacred' if we learn from them and resolve them. When healed, our sacred wounds become sacred scars. In the story of Jacob, we Jacob is exhausted from fleeing and running away from his life of being deceiver. He surrenders and heads back to his homeland, not sure why or what he is going to do. He feels the pain of having betrayed his father, his brother, and his uncle. He is now taking a risk by traveling through Esau's territory, his brother who promised to kill him...and Esau and his army is on the way. Jacob is now mid-life. He has been very successful up to now, but he feels empty and in pain. For reasons we do not know, he sends his wives, children, his body guards, and all his flocks and wealth across the Jabbok River. He is completely alone and has nothing to protect him, nothing to depend on. He is alone naked before the world and God, sitting in his pain and fear. Will he

die tomorrow when Esau comes? In nature, in solitude, in silence, in fear, in desperation, in helplessness, God shows up to wrestle with him and Jacob does not let him stop until Jacob has felt the pain and resolved it. Through this 'Jonah' experience (like in the Belly of the whale) Jacob knows God experientially, is healed, but he is wounded in the process, but with a sacred wound. He now walks with a limp. Every step he takes for the rest of his life will remind him of his fear and pain were healed with his experience with God. His sacred wound serves to remind him of the God who transforms pain into healing. Jacob gets a new name, a new beginning and becomes the true father of the nation of Israel.

I. Introduction: Facilitator opens and welcomes group, and reminds them of the group purpose:

Purpose Statement: This is a group that is about a man's spiritual journey, soul transformation. It is not about gaining more knowledge about a topic. It is about three things: 1. dialogue on the challenges and experience of being men, 2. Building deep relationships with other men, and sharing our lives together for ten weeks in order to experience real transformation.

II. BRIDGE: Because many modern cultures lack the presence of an adult male in the house, or the adult male is abusive, and emotionally absent, and/or young men are born into situations where there is little hope to achieve a better life, the world is now full of **angry young** men, and *also* full of bitter **old** men. The young men don't know what to do with their emotional pain, and the older men never resolved it. "If you don't let God transform the pain, you will transfer the pain." Many of our leaders are old bitter men who transfer pain onto young men. We have many walking wounded in our church, both young and old.

Learning Task 1: Each participant takes a minute or two to think about their emotional pain. What does it feel like? How does it become an obstacle for us? What can you do about it? Where did it come from?

Volunteers select a colored shape and use the shape to explain when they first noticed emotional pain and where it might have come from.

III. BODY: The Sacred Wound (10 mins)

LEARNING TASK 2:

Have each participant read the handout with the scripture text. As each participant reads the text have them circle any words that might relate to a physical, or emotional struggle, pain or transformation.

Gen 32:22-32

That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 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. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."

Jacob said, "Please tell me your name."

But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

LEARNING TASK 3:

Facilitator Questions for the **Big Group** Discussion:

1. Examine the words you just circled. The words are both literal and metaphorical. Take some of those words and think about how they relate to your life. Write it down.
2. What parts of Jacob's story resonate with your own male spiritual journey?
3. Tell us about one sacred wound you have or sacred scar (must be a wound you learned and grew from).
4. Consider Jacob' story of transforming his pain and fear; participants make a list of the combination of things that brought Jacob to the point where he was willing to surrender to God (desperation, fear, nature, solitude, loss of all support systems).

Facilitator Information: The people in your group are all at different stages of the male spiritual journey. It usually takes men until their mid-forties to have a full Jacob experience, of letting go of everything they depend on, and stand naked and alone before God. Yet many fall hard but do not learn from it and become bitter old men. Some become wise old men able to help young men.

In male spirituality, most men only become mature fathers or transformed when everything is stripped away: possessions, money, job, family, position, and they are forced to sit alone with the pain of who they are, and what disappointments and failures they met in life. They face their resentments and anger toward others and stay in that pain until they learn what God wants them to learn. The point is, either you make time to be alone and let go of status, wealth, comfort, and security nets to hear from God, or God will do it for you. You cannot be transformed without the wrestling or the struggle. There is no transformation without struggle. Jacob's hip was hurt in wrestling with God and because the struggle transformed him, his wound from God became a sacred wound. He walked with a limp the rest of his life to remind him of the day his soul was changed. He had a sacred wound and a sacred limp.

IV. My story (15-20 mins).

V. BEYOND: Facilitator leads discussion: What was familiar in this story and the story of Jacob? What stage is the story teller in? Is this person just letting go? Still wrestling with God? Or limping home?

VI. Close in prayer for the Story Teller.