

2024 Southern California Spanish-speaking Conference Stories—Intermediate Level

Friday Session—Story 1 The Birth of Isaac—the Time of Life

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who wait on God’s timing.

Reference Reading: Genesis 17:15-27; 18:10-19

Memory Verse: Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. (Genesis 18:14)

Story Sample

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, his name was still Abram. One day God appeared to Abram and said that He would make a covenant with him. Who knows what a covenant is? That’s right; it is a kind of agreement, with a promise. God promised Abram that he would become the father of many people—of a multitude! The name Abram means “exalted father,” but God was promising to make Abram more than just a father—He was promising to make him the father of many, many people. So God changed his name to *Abraham*, which means “the father of a multitude.”

But how could Abraham be the father of a multitude? He and Sarah did not even have one son. Abraham tried to think of a way he could work this out himself. But God is so amazing. He did not need Abraham to work it out. If God wants to do something, He can do it, no matter how hard it seems. God told Abraham that he would have a son named Isaac. This was so mysterious to Abraham! He was ninety-nine years old, and God was promising him a son! Abraham couldn’t believe it! Would you have believed it? We might have thought it was too late for Abraham to have a son. Shouldn’t God have given him a son earlier? But God always does things in His perfect time.

Not long after this happened, God and Abraham were talking again—remember, they were friends! God asked Abraham where Sarah was, and Abraham said that she was in the tent. God wanted to tell them something. He reminded them of His promise. He said, “I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son.”

Sarah heard this, and she could not believe it. She was almost one hundred years old! How could she have a baby? Have you ever seen such an old woman have a baby? We might think that’s pretty funny! Sarah too, thought that was funny. She laughed when she heard this. But God was not being funny. He meant what He said. He asked her, “Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah?” God can do anything! Nothing is impossible for Him, and nothing is too hard. He told Abraham and Sarah, “At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” God did exactly what He said. At the right time, Sarah had a son and they named him Isaac.

God does everything in His own perfect timing. Sometimes that timing seems impossible to us or we may not understand it, but we can be like Abraham who learned to wait on God’s timing.

[Storyteller, insert your own story about waiting on the Lord’s timing and seeing His promise being fulfilled.] If the Lord promises something, He will always fulfill that promise. He will do it in the best way, in the perfect timing. We can trust in Him for that.

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Saturday Night Session—Story 2 Jacob—Wanting to Be First

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who trust in God’s arrangement and God’s timing.

Reference Reading: Genesis 25:20-34

Memory Verse: Blessed is he who trusts in Jehovah. (Proverbs 16:20)

Story Sample

Now we come to another important person in the Bible: Jacob. The name *Jacob* means two things: “heel holder” and “supplanter.” Isaac had twin sons, and Jacob was the younger. He was named *heel-holder* because he was holding onto his older brother Esau’s heel when they were born. Why was he holding Esau’s heel? He held Esau’s heel because he was a supplanter. A supplanter is someone who tries to take another’s place or tries to gain something through sneaky ways. Jacob wanted to be born first, so he held onto Esau’s heel to try to get ahead—to supplant him!

Jacob wanted to supplant Esau for the birthright. A birthright was an inheritance given to the oldest son. Now, God had actually chosen Jacob to be the one to receive the birthright, but Jacob could not wait for God to work it out. Instead, he just did things his own way. Even before he was born, he started trying to be first. Jacob and Esau were fighting for the birthright even when they were still in Rebekah’s womb. But God arranged that Esau would be stronger. Although Jacob fought for the birthright and held onto Esau’s heel, he was physically weaker. Esau was born first and gained the birthright. All that struggling was for nothing.

But Jacob did not give up. As he and Esau grew older, he waited until the right time to try to supplant his brother again. One day, Esau came back from the fields weak and tired. Jacob had made some stew, and Esau saw it and wanted some. Esau felt that he was going to die of hunger if he did not get the stew, and he asked Jacob to give him some. Jacob was so sneaky! He wouldn’t just give Esau the stew, but he offered Esau a trade: a bowl of stew in exchange for the birthright.

Esau did a foolish thing. He did not see how valuable his birthright was. He only saw that he was hungry and that the stew looked good, so he agreed to Jacob’s trade. He gave up his entire inheritance for one bowl of stew! So foolish!

Actually, Jacob did something foolish, too. Even though Jacob saw how precious the birthright was, tricking Esau wasn’t the way to get it. Esau could not legally give it to him. Only their father could. So this trickery did not really give Jacob much—it just made Esau angry with him and caused Jacob to suffer a lot for many years. Jacob would have to use even more trickery later to get the birthright. In the end, he did receive the birthright, but he caused himself a lot of trouble by doing it his way. If he had just waited on God, God would have given him the birthright, and Jacob would have been saved a lot of suffering.

Maybe we can relate to Jacob—sometimes it is hard to wait. One time when I was little, I cut in line for lunch at the love feast. I wanted to eat RIGHT NOW! I got what I wanted, but I upset the other children! That was not right. If I had just waited, I would have still gotten food. I did not need to cut in line, but because I did, I hurt people’s feelings and caused myself trouble. Jacob was the same. He did not need to trick his brother, but because he did, he suffered a lot. [*Storyteller, insert your own story about struggling with waiting for something.*] It is hard to wait, but God always does what He says He will do. We are blessed if we will trust in Him!

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Lord's Day Session—Story 3 Jacob—Wrestling with God

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who learn to accept defeat and learn humility.

Reference Reading: Genesis 32

Memory Verse: God resists the proud but gives grace to the **humble**. (James 4:6)

Story Sample

After Jacob had tricked his twin brother Esau into giving up his birthright, Jacob most have felt like a winner. Although in the end he did receive the birthright, he caused himself a lot of trouble and had to flee to his uncle Laban's house. He spent many years with his uncle; he got married and had children there. While he was with his uncle, Jacob also tricked him in order to win many things for himself. Years later his relationship with his brother had not yet been restored, and his father Isaac was getting very old. It was time for him to go back home. Today we want to talk about something that happened to Jacob while he was returning to his home with the hope of restoring his relationship with his brother. God had promised that he would be with him as he went.

One night, as Jacob was returning home, something unusual happened. That night he was alone and God came as a man and wrestled with him! God was with him all night, but not in the way Jacob thought He would be! They wrestled all night long—for six hours! And early in the morning, when they were done wrestling, Jacob was different. God had dislocated his hip and Jacob became crippled. God had to wrestle with Jacob because Jacob was too strong. Jacob always wanted to trick others in order to be first and win, and he needed to learn a lesson.

What do you think the lesson Jacob had to learn was? Was it, "Don't ever fight with God?" Well, though this is true, I don't think it was all he had to learn. Jacob needed to learn to accept defeat. He had been so proud up to that time, but now he needed to learn to be humble. He always wanted to win, but now he needed to learn to accept defeat.

I'm sure you all prefer to win, right? Maybe you want to be the star of your soccer team, or be the best student, or your teacher's favorite or the favorite among your group of friends. But that is not always going to happen. One day someone will be a better player, or smarter than you, or even more popular than you. The question is, how will you respond? Will you be bitter and resentful, or will you be humble and realize that you are not the strongest, the smartest or the most likeable?

When I was in school, I was really proud because I was a pretty good student. I got all A's in elementary school and in high school; I was one of the top 10 in my class. I thought I was so smart. But then, I went to college. There were a lot more students there than in my little high school, and they were all REALLY smart. Do you think I blamed them that I wasn't as smart as they were, or said "That's not fair—the professor likes them more than he likes me?" No, I needed to learn a lesson, just like Jacob. I needed to learn to be more humble. *[Use a personal example of how you were good at something, but later learned the lesson of being humble.]*

Jacob learned a lesson that day, and he was changed in more than one way. Now he walked differently (with a limp), he learned to be humble, and even his name was changed! God changed Jacob's name to Israel. The name Israel means "wrestler with God". This may not seem like a positive thing, but Israel was now a person that God was working to change and was no longer called "supplanter/heel holder". Throughout the rest of his life, God changed the man Israel little by little.