

## SERMON STUDY GUIDE

# TUG-OF-WAR

**WEEK 1: FEB. 5-10, 2023**

God of our  
complicated lives,  
thank you for your  
presence with us  
when we struggle  
with our tugs of war.  
Help us  
to discern reactions  
that lead to healing.  
Amen

## THE TENSION: THIS COULD GET MESSY

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 32:6-11

6 When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, "We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."

7 In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups,[a] and the flocks and herds and camels as well. 8 He thought, "If Esau comes and attacks one group,[b] the group[c] that is left may escape."

9 Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, Lord, you who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' 10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two camps.11 Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children.

## GETTING STARTED

- Welcome each other.
- Inquire as to anyone who is missing. Is follow-up needed?
- What was your first reaction to the title of this sermon series--Tug-of-War?



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## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- A tug of war describes the natural and evidential pull of opposing forces that exist when individuals or groups are in relationship. It's the continual pulling of gives and takes. Where do you see examples of this in your personal life or in your community?
- How do you normally handle tension? What are some risks when we avoid tension-producing situations? Why do we often think of worst-case scenarios?
- What are some risks associated with attempts to build healthy relationships from places of brokenness?
- What impact(s) do you think Jacob's encounter with the angel had on him? How do you think that experience informed his connection with Esau?
- Esau had every reason to avoid meeting Jacob. Why do you suspect he decided to engage? What advice would you have given him and Jacob before they reunited?
- Of course, we have no control as to how other people respond to situations of give and take. We can only control our own reactions. Are there places in your life or in your community where God might be inviting you to humility and healing?
- What challenging issues might God be leading you to confront during this season?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

