[Narrator]One of the great things about so many of the stories in the bible is that they are about people who God changes. We're going to hear one of them today. The story is about Jacob. When our story begins, Jacob is running away from home. He needs to run away because he's tricked his father into giving him the blessing that belongs to his older and stronger brother Esau. His father is upset, Esau is so angry that he might kill Jacob if he can find him. So, Yes, it's time for Jacob to run. But God is going to start changing Jacob, changing him so much that he ended up being an honored person in the bible. Let's see how God is at work beginning to change Jacob.

Our story takes place in a lonely desert place, far away from other people. Jacob is alone, afraid, He thinks that his only friend is his loyal Donkey and, well you'll see.

In our story are Jacob, his donkey, some Angels, and the voice of God.

[Scene] Jacob walks on pulling, leading, donkey. He has a backpack on, pack has a blanket sticking out Jacob stops, flops down, pats Donkey.

[Jacob] Well old Girl, At least you are my friend, probably my only friend right now. I think we're safe for the night and I can't go any further. Sorry that I haven't found any water for us, or food for us either but maybe we can hook up with a caravan tomorrow. If we can't, well I don't know what will happen to us. This sure didn't work out the way I planned it and I'm frightened and I'm out of ideas.

[Scene] Jacob takes out blanket and flips it out on the ground, looks around, finds stone and places it by blanket.

[Jacob] I'm too tired to even make a fire. Let's get some sleep alright old Girl.

[Scene] Jacob begins to unfold blanket and make bed.

[Jacob] I sure didn't think it would work out like this. I figured that when I tricked Dad into giving me the blessing that Mom and I would be able to run things like we had been doing all the time. Everybody knows that my brother Esau just wants to hunt and get in fights but wow, was he mad when he found out that I'd tricked Dad into giving me the blessing and not him. I'll probably never be able to go home again because he will never forgive me. I'm glad that he didn't catch me, who knows, he might have killed me. I hope he's given up on chasing me. Now our only hope is finding Mom's brother and he's a long, long way away. Well, good night old girl, time to go to sleep.

[Narrator] As Jacob slept, he had an incredible dream, a dream that started to change him.

[Scene] Angels come out and move around purposefully.

[Voice of God] Jacob, I am the God of your grandfather Abraham, the God of your father Isaac, the God of everything , including you. Jacob, I love you and I'm going to give you as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand on a beach and they will all have been blessed because of you. Even the people who aren't your descendants will bless you and remember you because your descendents will tell them about me.

[Narrator] After his dream Jacob awoke and looked around.

[Jacob] This must be a place where heaven and earth come together. I've just heard the voice of God and I'm scared stiff, but well, somehow I know that God is with me and that somehow everything will be alright. Yes old girl, I think we are going to be alright after all. Until now I've just been thinking about me and what I want, and how to get it. Now I understand that God has things for me to do and I know that God will take care of me. I don't know everything that God wants me to be, but I promise to try to change and learn.

[Scene] Takes small jar out of backpack. pours contents on the stone that has been his pillow.

[Jacob] I'm making this stone an altar to God who I heard last night. I'm going to come back here some day, and I'm going to tell everyone that I call this place Bethel because I heard God here and God changed me from being frightened to knowing that he loves me and has things for me to do. I'm going to leave this stone here and when I come back my descendants will worship here like I'm doing now. God, I promise that if you take care of me, and bring me back here again, I'll give you one tenth of everything that I earn.

[Scene] Picks up lead of Donkey.

[Jacob] Come on old girl. Let's go and see what God has in store for us and how God will change us.

[Narrator] Jacob was right. He had a lot more happen to him and it changed him. We'll tell you these stories another time. Jacob did come back to that lonely place after many years and many things had happened to him. He was able to get back together with his brother and father, it took a long time and a lot more changes, But it all started one night under the stars when God made promises to a lonely frightened man, and that man, Jacob, responded by starting to change. God was able to use someone who was selfish enough to trick his brother and father to get what he wanted, to change him into an important person in the old testament and God can change us and use us too.