

"Jacob Wrestles with God"

Genesis 32:24-32

Vs. 24 - Jacob had struggled to prevail with man all his life (Esau & Laban). Now, he is shown that it is really w/ God that he has struggled all these years. *(Not really with man or anything else.)*

1. My life struggles, in the end, are really with God, not my circumstances.

- A. People & Problems have merely been an outward reflection of an inward reality. *(Walk by faith, not sight.)*

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

- I. God has always been using my life circumstances to bring me to the end of myself.

Luke 9:23-24

If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

- B. Have I died to myself?

Gal 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- II. A Test for the Answer: *Dead people no longer struggle.*

- a). Jesus knew this when before the Sanhedrin, Pilate, and Herod.

Vs. 25 - God came to Jacob in the form of a man. In this way Jacob could wrestle with Him. Yet, we see that w/ just a touch God could disable him. *(Which He does.)*

2. God wants to "disable" me in order to enable Christ in me.

- A. So, He wrestles with me in such a way as not to destroy me.

- I. It's His Love that wrestles with me.

- a.) Parents often wrestle with their children in the same way.

Psalms 34:18

The LORD is near to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Ps. 51:17

The sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite spirit which are of great worth in His site.

Isa 57:15-16

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would grow faint before Me, and the breath of those whom I have made.

- B. This is the ultimate picture of the Cross of Christ.

- I. In dying to self there is victory over sin *(mine and others')* and death.

Psalms 32:8-9

I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you.

Vs. 26 - Jacob finally acknowledges his need for God's blessing to succeed. Therefore, he wouldn't let Him go until he got it.

3. I must come to a point in life where I know I cannot succeed w/out Christ.

- A. God likes when we pursue Him with an undying pursuit. (*When we're desperate for Him.*)

Psalm 63:8

My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me.

- B. How we wrestle with God:

- I. Our Intellect Wrestles.
- II. Our Reason Wrestles.
- III. Our Logic Wrestles.
- IV. Our Education (Knowledge) Wrestles.
- V. Our Pride Ultimately Wrestles. (*I need certain criteria met before I'll give in. I want to know, first.)*)

Vs. 27-28 - Now that Jacob is broken God gives him a new identity. No longer will he be Jacob (strives with man) but Israel (strives with God).

4. In Christ, God wants to give me a new identity; but I must be broken first. (*see John 3:1-8*)

- A. Every Christian is a new creation, a new person with a new Christ-Identity.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

- B. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Broken People made new in Christ.
- C. One day I will get a new name from Christ too. (*Revelation 2:17*)

Vs. 29-30 - It was a Personal Encounter with Jesus Christ that brought Jacob to his knees. (*That brought about a drastic change in him that would last the rest of his life.*)

5. That is what Christ wants for each of us - a Personal Encounter and Relationship with Him.

- A. This encounter must happen with the eyes of our hearts, not our heads.
 - I. If our faith-eyes can't acknowledge Him our regular eyes will never see.

Luke 16:30-31

"But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

- B. Once your faith-eyes see no one will be able to change your mind again.
 - I. You'll be a true "witness" to Christ.

Vs. 31 - A new day dawns in Jacob's life

6. A new day must dawn in my life too.

2 Peter 1:19

So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

- A. I remember this day in my own life. (*The morning after.*)

Vs. 32 - God wanted Israel to remember this whole sermon, this whole encounter between Jacob and God perpetually.

7. Do we remember still today? (The church I mean.)