

Wrestling With God

Sunday, April 30, 2017

When I first came to California, it was because God called me to. I knew that God moved me, but I wrestled with the heartache of not being with my family, friends and leaving my home state. Three times I tried to move back to Florida. Each time I tried God made sure I ended up back in California. I wrestled with this until I realized God was telling me, if you're going to follow Me this is where I want you to be. You must let go of all you know and love for Me. Once I came to terms with God's direction in my life and surrendered all that was most important to me, my life was never the same and my relationship grew deeper and richer with God.

Now, God does not necessarily lead everyone to make the same adjustments that I needed to make in my life, but God may challenge you or call you to make a decision or come to an understanding of God's will for you. Like me, you may wrestle with God over the decisions you must make to follow Him. If you seek His will, you will find a blessing.

Last week we read about the bad deal Esau made with his twin brother Jacob. This bad deal of trading his birthright for a bowl of stew and then another story you can read about in Genesis Chapter 27 about Jacob cheating Esau out of his Father Isaac's blessing led to Jacob fleeing from Esau's plan to kill Jacob in revenge. This morning I want us to join Jacob later years later in his life after he had married and had children. He had grown prosperous while working for his father-in-law, Laban. Laban as a result was jealous of Jacob and soon did not look favorably on him any more. So the Lord told Jacob in **(Genesis 31:3)**:

..."Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."

So now we will pick up with Jacob's story in Genesis 32 at look at a Biblical example of wrestling with God and the benefit of its blessing.

(Genesis 32: 22 – 32)

22 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok.

23 He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.

24 Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.

25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.

26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

27 So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob."

28 And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

29 Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

31 Just as he crossed over Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip.

32 Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.

Have you ever been woken up by God during the night? Maybe to pray for someone or to discuss something with you? Maybe He woke you up to reveal an insight or give you comfort through a difficult time in your life? God woke up Jacob. God or Jesus the Son of God initiated a wrestling match with Jacob during the night. How would we react to God engaging with us that way? Wow!

Jacob wanted a blessing from “this man” only to find out that the man was God and God blessed Him. What was the blessing about? I’m going to give you some clues to see if you’ll discover the significance of the blessing.

1. **(Genesis 28:13)**

And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.

Did you see the clue? Ok, look at the next clue.

2. **(Genesis 31: 42a)**

Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed.

Is the clue becoming clear?

3. **(Genesis 32:9)**

Then Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you’:

Did this clue help you answer the question?

4. **(Genesis 33:20)** (*Note: Remember Jacob is Israel*)

Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.

Did the clues reveal what the blessing is?

Did you notice the common thread in these verses?

Answer: The common thread was “The God of Abraham, Isaac...”

As a Christian you could fill your name in place of Abraham...

The God of _____ (*fill in your name*)

Or Jesus is the God of _____

What's missing? God is the God of Abraham (Jacob's grandfather). God is the God of Isaac (Jacob's father), but it does not say that God is the God of Israel or Jacob until after he wrestled with God!

It wasn't until Jacob experienced a divine wrestling with God, meaning a very personal struggle with God, that a relationship with God was cemented. In other words, when Jacob recognized God as his God.

Now in my opinion, a person can experience this cementing of personal faith in God in two different ways.

1. Acknowledging God personally and receiving them into their life.

(Revelation 3:20)

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him & dine with him, and he with Me.

I believe that Jacob personally put his faith in God during this wrestling match with God. Many wrestle with this decision. It was from this point on that God said, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!"

2. As, born again believers, our faith, that is our relationship is cemented with God through times of wrestling with Him.

Like I said in the introduction, after I came to terms with God's call for me to leave all I knew and loved, it was then that I began to experience more than ever, a deeper, richer relationship with God.

God will bring wrestling matches with Him into our lives.
Welcome them as blessings!

Look at the end result of Job's suffering experience in **(Job 42:5)**

"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.

When going through a divine wrestling match with God, wait for Him to reveal Himself, His power, and His love to you. In doing so, you like Jacob will be touched by God. Jacob was never the same physically or spiritually. We, too, will never be the same, when we receive the blessing of being touched by God!

Jacob praised and honored God for what He had done in His life in

(Genesis 35:3)

Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone."

We, too, should acknowledge who God is and honor Him publicly.

We should also be a witness to others, and those we love of the goodness of God in our lives, like Jacob/Israel did with his children in:

(Genesis 48:15)

And he blessed Joseph, & said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham & Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day,

Finally, let me close with **(Psalm 34:8)**

Oh, taste & see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!