Study of Jacob - Part 6

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[0:00] The Lord's blessing will turn to Genesis chapter 32 and verse 24.

And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.
Now, having served Laban for 14 years, Jacob strongly desires to return home, home to the land of Canaan, to the land of promise.
And he's especially encouraged in that desire because of his youngest son at that time, Joseph. He recognizes in Joseph an unusual child in much the same way as Moses' parents recognized him to be an unusual child.
And he discerned that the blessing of the Lord was upon Joseph. And he didn't want him to remain too long in the household of Laban, but he wanted to take him home to the promised land of Canaan. For all Jacob knew, Joseph perhaps himself might be the promised seed or the great Messiah who would admit them back into the paradise of God.
[1:45] And so he goes back to Laban and asks leave from Laban to return home. Now, Laban pleads with him to stay. He has learned by experience that it is profitable for him to have Jacob there.

Now, that expression, I'm not sure if I mentioned that last week, learned by experience. It is literally, I have learned by divination. And that again takes you back to the terathom which Laban had.
He also, of course, learned by experience that it was good for him to have Jacob with him. Because his flocks grew in size, the cattle, the goats, the sheep. They all multiplied as soon as Jacob began to work for him.
So he pled with him to stay and he said to Jacob, you fix the wages. For 14 years you have served for the two wives. Now fix your wages. And Jacob agrees to this.
After all, he has nothing for himself at that point. He owns nothing at all. And so he makes an arrangement with Laban like this. That Jacob would select the spotted or the streaked cattle and the goats and the black sheep amongst the sheep.
[2:59] He would select them and in the breeding, all those that had those characteristics, spotted or speckled or whatever, would belong to himself. And the other sheep would belong to Laban.

So Laban agreed with that plan to separate them in that kind of way. But Laban then did a very devious thing. What he did was on that day itself, before he put the flocks back into the hands of Jacob, he took out of the flocks all that were spotted or speckled.
And he gave them to his own sons and he put a three-day distance between his sons and Jacob. So that Jacob was left essentially with the white animals.
And obviously the number born to them which would be speckled or spotted in any way would be greatly reduced. And there again you see Laban's deviousness. Right from the beginning, immediately after the arrangement is made, he takes out the animals that would be most profitable to Jacob and he throws the rest at him.
So Jacob is left again with the prospect of being tricked, as it were, at the beginning of the last seven-day period. But remarkably, God overrules this.
[4:14] And Jacob is able, by selective breeding, and I'll come on to that in a moment, he's able to greatly increase the amount of spotted, speckled and dark animals in his own flock.

So that by the time the seven-year period is over, we're told that he was an exceedingly wealthy man. The man increased exceedingly and he had much cattle and maidservants and menservants and camels and asses.
And then the time comes for him to leave. Because he recognizes that Laban's countenance is not the same as it used to be. We're told that he detected that Laban was becoming angry with him and

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that Laban's sons were becoming angry with him.
They were angry at the way the breeding was materializing. And Jacob recognized that there was hostility coming from Laban and the family. And so Jacob went to prayer and the Lord told him to go and to return to the land of Canaan.
And so he does. He gets up and he goes and he does so stealthily, quietly, without telling Laban what he is doing. He takes his wives, his children, and all his substance and he flees from the home.
[5:24] Now when Laban discovers what happens, he goes and follows him. And he has one intent and that is to be severe with his son-in-law. But God meets him in a dream and tells him to keep his hands off Jacob.

And so when Laban meets Jacob, they make a mutual arrangement or a pact or a covenant. And they pile up a heap of stones called Galid or the heap of witness.
And they part amicably or reasonably amicably. And Jacob then makes his way into the land of Canaan. But as he begins to make his way, a shadow, as it were, falls across his path.
Another fear comes into his way. And that is the fear of his brother Esau. For more than 20 years, he hasn't seen his brother.
But he has heard that his brother is now living with the Ishmaelites, from whom he took two wives. And he has himself become a powerful chief. And he's become the head of the people known as the Edomites.
[6:27] And they were named after Esau himself. And Jacob realizes that Esau is probably much stronger than himself. And if Esau still wants to kill him, and if for over 20 years he's been nursing his wrath, determined to destroy his brother Jacob, now is his opportunity to do it.

Jacob is a relatively weak man compared to Esau. So he sends messengers at the beginning of chapter 32. In verse 3, we're told that Jacob sent messengers to Esau his brother to the land of Seir, to the country of Edom.
And the messengers were commanded to speak like this. Now notice the kind of tone that the messengers use. Thy servant Jacob saith thus, But after a few days the messengers come back. And all they have to tell Jacob is this. We came to your brother, and he's coming to meet you. And he has 400 men with him. Now that immediately paralyzes Jacob.
And he's caught, we're told, in great fear and distress in verse 7. And so he immediately begins to plan a way to see if he can possibly take away Esau's wrath, or appease him, and somehow take away the heat of his anger.
[8:02] And he begins to plan in this way. The first thing he does, he divides his own company into two bands. Two great bands of people and of animals. And the thinking there is obviously this, that if Esau meets one group, at least the other group will escape three.

The next thing he does is this. He prepares a vast amount of presents to give Esau his brother. And if you look at verses 14 and 15, you'll see just what a vast sum that was.
And you think of this wealth in verse 14. 200 she-goats, 20 he-goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milk camels with their coats, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 she-asses and 10 foals.
So he prepares a vast present, as he calls it, to give to Esau his brother. And then he does something which is even more clever. What he does is he divides that present up into particular groups or droves.
And he sends each drove out with one servant. So, for example, when the first servant with that vast amount of animals meets Esau, and Esau says, who are you and where are you coming from?
[9:18] And the servant will say, I belong to your servant Jacob, and here is a present from him for your hand. And suppose Jacob or Esau went a few miles further.

Here's the second servant with another group or another drove of animals. And it's the same thing. It's another great present into Esau's hand. Esau would go on further, the third servant, and so on.
And this is Jacob's plan, as we're told, to appease his brother Esau, to win his countenance, so that by the time he actually meets Jacob and his own family, all his anger has gone, and his heart has softened, and he has no more desire, as it were, to punish Jacob.
And that is Jacob's plan. And towards nighttime, they come to the ford or the brook Jabbok. Now, that is just one of the tributary streams that runs into the Jordan.
It is fairly substantial itself. It's wide enough, but it's just a tributary stream flowing into the main river Jordan. And all day, the droves or the presents are being put over the brook.

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[10:24] And at nighttime, there's only himself, his wife, and family left. And he then sees them safely across the brook. And he's left on his own at nighttime.

And I have no doubt that at that particular point, he begins to pray. We've already seen him praying in the chapter. And I'm sure that he again prays when he's left on his own that night, by the side of the brook Jabbok.
But if Jacob thought that all was well, and that if he prayed about all that, that all would be well, then he was wrong.
Because Esau is not his only enemy. He has another enemy. And he's an enemy that he didn't realize he had. Because the Lord has a controversy with Jacob.
And before the Lord will allow Jacob to re-enter Canaan, God himself will meet with him and wrestle with him. And he will wrestle with him to the break of day until he puts the socket of his hip out of joint.
[11:29] And only when he has wrestled with him, and when he has crushed him, only then will he allow Jacob to enter into Canaan. Because, as I said, the Lord has a controversy, or he has a cause to be settled with Jacob.

Now, what's wrong? Was 20 years in the wilderness not enough to sort this man out? Well, I'm sure it did its own good up till this point.
There's no doubt that it did. It taught him a lot. But there's something still wrong, clearly wrong, in the life of Jacob. And the old failing is keeping coming back.
It's cropping up, and it's appearing again in his life. And this time, the Lord will deal with it severely.
And that is the way the Lord works. I was speaking fairly recently in one of the prayer meetings about God coming as a moth and God coming as a lion.
He said to Israel, I will be like a moth. And then later he says, I will be to you like a lion. God sometimes chastises us like a moth. He eats away at us to bring us to our senses.
[12:39] He just picks away here and there in our providence and in our soul. And if that does not avail, then he will come like a roaring lion with a blow to tear us apart until we come to our senses and until we seek his face in repentance.

And that's exactly what you see happening here with Jacob. Now, I said that his old ways kept cropping back. Well, let's take first the breeding of the cattle.
Now, this is a thing that's rather difficult to understand. But what happened was this. Jacob saw that he was left with the white cattle.
So he took some branches of the trees, of the poplar tree and the almond tree, and he peeled the bark off them. And he peeled the bark so as to expose the white wood that was underneath.
And he did it in the form of a stripe that was going round and round the branch like that so that it looked like a striped branch. And he did that with several branches.
[13:42] And then he stuck the branches in the feeding troughs where the cattle and the goats and all the animals came. Now, there was a particular reason for that. And the reason was this.

When the animals would come at the mating season and when they would be seized with thirst, they would go to the watering troughs. And they would mate there.
And there they would conceive when they were confronted with these rods that were stuck into the watering troughs. Now, I'm sure you've all heard the old idea.
And it wasn't just amongst the Jews by any means. In fact, it was quite prevalent everywhere, really. The old idea that if a woman saw something vivid during the time of her pregnancy, that that would somehow imprint itself upon the child.
That was widely believed with respect to animals. And it was believed with respect to people as well. That a very vivid sight would somehow reflect on what was brought forth from the womb.
[14:49] Now, this passage doesn't endorse that. What it does do is this. It tells us that Jacob resorted to that method. And that God allowed that method to prosper.

In other words, God saw to it that what was born from the wombs of those cattle and goats and so on was indeed spotted and it was indeed speckled.
Maybe Jacob didn't know whether it would work or not. But the Lord caused it to work. And the Lord gave him many sheep and many goats and much cattle.
Now, you'll notice also that Jacob bred the strongest in a very careful way. He would take the strongest and he would put them to the rods.

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And so the strongest animals he would keep for himself and the weakest he would give to Laban. Now, you can understand that at one level. For 20 years, he has been tricked and deceived by Laban.
[15:50] And the whole scheme here, which Jacob meant well, he said it quite innocently, I'll take the spotted, you take the clear. Laban immediately twisted that thing and made it almost impossible for Jacob.

But what did Jacob do? Well, it's interesting really that it doesn't tell us that he, as it were, took the matter to the Lord and trusted that the Lord would, as it were, bring the thing to pass.
But he seemed to take the matter in his own hand. And he went to this ancient belief and custom. And he looked to that in order to bring the thing to pass. And God, as it were, winked at it or let it be or left it just now.
He, as it were, kept it in his own mind. But he let Jacob with that and he caused it to prosper. And indeed, the animals, speckled and spotted, were greatly multiplied under the hand of the Lord.
That's one thing. And now here's another. And this is even more relevant at this point. You'll notice in chapter 32 that Jacob is planning and praying.
[16:56] He's worked out splitting into two companies. He's arranged the droves. And all of this is forming a present in order to appease Esau. Now the question I want to ask you is this.

Do you think that that was a planning in faith? Or was it a planning in unbelief? Which was it? Was it faith or unbelief?
You've all heard the saying, trust God and keep your gunpowder dry. That means that even though you trust God, you do whatever means lies to your hand to bring a thing to pass. Is that how we should understand this?
That he's trusting God but he's keeping his gunpowder dry. He's doing what he can to appease Esau. Well no my friend, you shouldn't understand it like that. This is a planning of unbelief and not a planning in faith.
And it's quite easy to bring out how that is so. Look at verse 7. We're told that Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.
[17:56] And he divided the people that was with him and the flocks and the herds and the camels into two bands. Or into two camps.

For protection. That word, two bands. Or those words, two bands. Takes you back a little earlier in the chapter to something else that appeared in two bands.
Go back to verse 1 of chapter 32. And notice what met Jacob as he was leaving Laban. Called the name of that place Mahanaim or two camps.
That's what the word means, Mahanaim. It means two camps. Now, that becomes interesting in this way.
Jacob, at the word of God, is leaving Laban. And he's setting his face to go back to Canaan. And there are many things to frighten him. But God gives him a vision right at the beginning of his journey.
[18:58] And it reminds you of the vision he got at Bethel when he was leaving Canaan. At Bethel, on his way out, he saw the stairway to heaven. And God said in that stairway to heaven, I will be with you and I will keep you wherever you go.

And now, when that is fulfilled after 20 years and he's going back to Canaan, again, Jacob sees a vision of angels. And he sees them as a camp.
As a mighty army of the Lord, armed and with chariots. In much the same way as Elijah was taken into heaven by chariots of fire. That is the way in which Jacob saw the angels of God.
And when he saw them, he was so overcome that he said, This is Mahanaim. Or this is two camps. Well then, why does he go to his own family and divide them into two camps?
Why does he go to the goats and to the cattle and divide them into two camps and say, Well, in case Ezo gets one group, then the other group will get free. What is that but unbelief? What is it but just flying against the very vision that God had given him?
[20:02] God had said, You are two camps, Jacob. You are not on your own. You have yourself, your family and your flocks. And up above you, you have a legion that no man can number. The hosts of heaven guarding you and keeping you.

And off Jacob goes. And he begins to look after himself. Ah, my friends, can you not recognize yourself there? How often has the Lord promised a thing to you?

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How often has he come to you in the Bible or come to you in prayer or even in fellowship and given you a word of promise, reminding you of his covenant love, of his mercy, of his keeping?
How often has he said to you, Go out and do this and I will be with you. Suppose even it's something like going to pray in a prayer meeting or going to speak somewhere or something of that kind. Go, do it and I will be with you.
And immediately go and take matters into your own hand. You start your own preparation of the flesh. You start doing things yourself rather than trusting in the power of God who said, Think not what to say.
[21:01] I will give you at that hour and in that time what to say. There is a thing that you could call a preparation of the flesh, which is not leaving room for the Spirit of God.

It is a distrust in the Spirit of God. It is a distrust in the promises of God. And that was what was characterizing Jacob's life at this very point.
He is weak in his faith. And how often you and I trust our own preparation instead of God's preparation. God's preparation for us in every single situation and we go ahead and we carve out our own.
So in that way, when you compare the two camps of Mahanaim with the two camps that he makes, I think if you take them together you'll see that it's nothing but a planning in unbelief. And how many plans we make and have unbelief written over them.
How many things we've said and done. How many things we've participated in that have unbelief written all over them. And it's in the face of the promising God.
[22:09] Who said, I will be with you and I will keep you. But Jacob goes his own way. And he's made the last of the preparations. And he sends them over the brook.

And we're told in verse 24 that Jacob was left alone. And as I said, he was probably praying. I don't want, of course, in any way to take from Jacob that he was a man of God.
One who was perplexed and distressed. But a man of God. And he prays. And he seeks the face of God. But when he gets the face of God, it's not the kind of face he expected.
He says later, I have seen God face to face. And I live. But it wasn't the face he thought he would get. If he thought he would get the face of blessing.
Or the face of a smile. It wasn't like that at all. He's probably on his knees beside the brook and it's night time. And someone perhaps touches him on his shoulder. Or someone moves him aggressively.
[23:09] And here is a stranger that he has never seen before in his life. And this stranger begins to wrestle violently with Jacob. And Jacob at this point has no idea at all who the stranger is.

I suppose Jacob thinks at the beginning it's someone that Esau has sent. One of the spies has found out where he is. And he's begun to wrestle with him. But before the contest is finished, Jacob knows who it is.
And just by the way, if you look at verse 30 here, you'll have a proof that it is God. Because we're told in verse 30 that Jacob called the name of the place Peniel.
For I have seen God face to face. And my life is preserved. The Pen there means face. And El means God. Peniel, the face of God.
I have seen God face to face. And my life is preserved. Now I want to look with you at this wrestling between God and Jacob.
[24:13] And we'll see it as falling into three parts. First of all, the first period. Where he wrestles with Jacob until dawn.

Until the break of day. Secondly, I want to look at the turning point in the contest. Where God touches the socket of Jacob's hip and puts it out of joint.
And then thirdly, where Jacob triumphs. Because God himself says that he has had power with God and he has prevailed. The first part of the wrestling till dawn.
The turning point in the contest. And Jacob prevailed. Now let's take the first part. We're told at the end of verse 24 that there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.
Now wrestling until the breaking of the day tells you something significant right at the beginning. And that's this. That the contest appeared to be evenly matched.
[25:17] After all, if one person was decisively stronger than the other. There is no way in which this contest would have lasted until the breaking of the day. Now Jacob doesn't know his opponent.

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But he knows that his opponent can match him move for move and blow for blow. Now we know that the Lord was infinitely stronger than Jacob. But he didn't exercise that strength over Jacob. He could have crushed Jacob the worm into earth in a moment. But he did not. He allowed him to wrestle against him. And to wrestle against him to the break of day.
Now Jacob means supplanter. If you remember that. That's what the word Jacob means. It means supplant. Or to throw someone out of his place. And of course that came out when Jacob and Esau were born.
You'll remember that Esau came out first. But just when Esau's heel was emerging from the womb. Jacob's hand was attached to it. As a very vivid picture.
[26:17] As it were of his character. That he was always grabbing the heel. Now apparently a wrestler will look for the heel also. A wrestler looks to dislodge the heel.

Or to take away the foot. And so to weaken the opponent. And here is Jacob again looking for the heel. And he's looking for the heel of a man. As far as he thinks. But in reality he is looking for the heel of God.
Now friends as I understand that. That is a very vivid picture. Of the kind of life that Jacob himself has lived. He has sought all his life as it were.
To do what is good. And to do what is right. But when his way is hedged up. And when his way is closed. He takes the matter into his own hand. And he finds himself as it were.
Wrestling with God. Because is his lack of faith. Not in effect a wrestling with God. Is it not in effect a laying hold of God's heel. And supplanting him.
[27:19] What I mean by that is this. Paul tells us in Romans. That Abraham was strong in faith. Giving glory to God. Now do you hear that? The stronger your faith.

The more God is glorified. The stronger your faith. The more he is put on the throne. The more he is elevated. The stronger your faith. Correspondingly.
The weaker your faith. The more God is supplanted from his throne. The weaker your faith. The more place you are giving to yourself. Or you are giving to other agencies. Other things.
Rather than God. And that is supplanting him. And that is in a figure. What Jacob has been doing all his life. As it were going for the heel of God. Not consciously. But that is the effect of the very weakness of his faith.
And when God allows Jacob to wrestle with him till the break of day. What does that show? But the infinite grace, mercy and patience of God.
[28:20] You would think that when a person weak in faith. Was dishonoring God. That God would say away with you it is enough. But God wrestles with Jacob until the break of day.

He doesn't smite him. Or he prevents him from supplanting him. Because no man can supplant God. But still he wrestles with him. And he keeps him. And he matches him blow for blow.
As long as the day goes on. As long as the night goes on. Now this contest. For the first part. Would have lasted a long, long time. In the evening he sent over his wife and children.
And then the assailant appears. Jacob must have been exhausted. And it will exhaust any man or woman. To seek to live the Christian life in his own strength.
And in his own resources. There is nothing as weakening. Nothing as perplexing or depressing. As trying to live the Christian life in your own resources. Now I know as well as the next person.
[29:19] That the grace of God is required. For every single inch of the way in the Christian life. But there is such a thing as trying to do it in your own strength. There is such a thing as being weak in faith.

And taking glory from God. Rather than being strong in faith. And giving glory to God. And it is exhausting. To seek the heal of God. Exhausting. And the Lord may allow it in his providence and mercy to go on.
Until he decides to turn the contest. Now my friend. Why waste your labor? And your strength. In trying to protect yourself.
Or in trying to seek your own will. Or your own way. Or trying to seek his will in your way. When if you would learn faith and patience. You would see the hand of God.
As Christ said to Martha. Did I not say to thee. If thou would believe. That you should see the glory of God. I don't know if there is any text. That we need to take more to heart than that one.
[30:16] If you would but believe. You would see the glory of God. Now here is the turning point. In verse 25. And it comes in very strangely.

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Because it says this. When he saw that he prevailed not against him. He touched the hollow of his thigh.
And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint. As he wrestled with him. Now. This is a strange expression.
When he saw that he prevailed not against him. And that refers to Jehovah. When Jehovah saw that he did not prevail against Jacob. And the reason that is an interesting expression.
Is simply because of this. That he could prevail against Jacob. In the twinkling of an eye. But what does it mean by saying. That when he saw that he could not prevail against him.
[31:14] Well what it means is this. It meant that Jacob was not giving up. In the ordinary contest. No matter how much the Lord taught him.

In the wrestling. No matter how much the Lord as it were strove. To make Jacob cease. Jacob was not stopping. In his stubbornness. And in his determination.
He would not yield the wrestling contest. He would keep on wrestling with God. To the point where God saw. That he could not prevail against him. Using ordinary methods.
And that brings me back to where I was a moment ago. About the chastisement. There are times when God's voice to us. Is not heard. Because of our stubbornness.
Our waywardness. And our disobedience. Ordinary methods. Are just not prevailing. When God usually speaks to a people.
[32:10] In providence. They hear. When he speaks in the preaching of the gospel. They hear. When he speaks in the word. They listen. But when the insensibility.

And the hardness of heart. And the stubbornness. And the backsliding. Come into the life of a people. They don't hear anymore. And God sees that he cannot prevail against them.
Or that he does not prevail against them. Using ordinary methods. It is as though God says. It is not enough for me anymore. To be a moth against you. It is not enough for me to as it were.
Nudge you. Or to move you here and there. And say to you. Look. You are not what you should be. It is not enough for me. To break into your providence. With a little affliction here. And a little affliction there.
It is no good. No good whatsoever. I must come in. And I must shake you. I must come in. And as it were. Cut your feet out from under you. I must paralyze you with a blow.
[33:10] Before you will turn. And seek my face. Now the passage I referred to a moment ago. And we're looking at. On Thursday evening. Was from Hosea. Chapters 5 and 6.

Where Ephraim. Or Israel. Is just not listening. To what God is saying. It is just not listening. And the Lord is saying. I will cease to be a moth.
And I will become a young lion. And I will roar at you. And I will tear you apart. Until you come and seek my face. And interestingly. Chapter 6 opens in Hosea.
With those words. Come and let us return to the Lord. He hath smitten. And he will heal us. It worked. The load.
Roaring noise. And the devouring of the lion. Worked. Where the moth. Didn't work at all. Is that true of yourself? How many times.
[34:10] Has God perhaps said to you recently. Your life is not right. How many times have you been moved. Perhaps in reading. Or in fellowship. Or in the preaching of the gospel.

How many times have you been moved. To say. I am not in prayer properly. Or I am not in attendance. In the house of God properly. I am not taking my Christian witness. And my Christian life.
In hand. As I ought to. How often has he said it. And are you still the same as you were then? Well don't think that he will continue to nudge in that way. Oh how often people have learned.
By the loss of a loved one. Or a breach in the family. Or by financial ruin and disaster. That it was an evil and bitter thing for them to have forsaken the Lord.
And to have hewn out for themselves broken cisterns that could hold no water. God sees that he cannot prevail against him. And what does he do? We are told that he touched the hollow of his thigh.
[35:12] He dislocated the hip socket. So that Jacob is crippled and useless. And if Jacob didn't know who he was wrestling against.

He knows it now. He knows it now. Because it doesn't even say that God hit the thing. It just says that he touched. Specifically he touched the hollow of his thigh.

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And his thigh was put out of joint. Jacob is suddenly transformed from a man who is a match for his antagonist. To a man who is a crippled wreck hanging on to him.
Because the man just touched his thigh. And Jacob hasn't got almost literally a leg to stand on. He cannot stand. He cannot wrestle. And he cannot fight. And now he knows that he is dealing with the Lord.
He now knows that it is God who has a controversy with him. And that it is God who is wrestling with him. He has never felt power like that in his life.
[36:12] And now he hears the voice of the one who is calling him. And I have no doubt as this wrestling match went on from this point onwards. From this very point when the hollow of his thigh was touched.

I have no doubt that Jacob knew what it was all designed to teach him. He has no doubt that he is. Every single part of it. And that's why he triumphs.
That's why he triumphs. Now it may seem strange to speak of a man triumphing. Who can't even stand. And he is wrestling against God.
But that's exactly how God himself speaks. God said that you have had power with God and with men. And you have prevailed. How did he prevail?
How did he have power? Well the answer lies in this. He carried on fighting. Or he carried on wrestling.
[37:12] But he carried on wrestling in a very different way. And in a very different spirit. Put it this way. In verse 26. You'll notice what God says to him.

Let me go. For the day is breaking. Now think about that. Let me go. For the day is breaking. Those are the words of the winner to the loser. In a sense. Let me go. As much as to say. The contest is over.
No. Stop. For I have won. The picture it presents you. Is of Jacob. Clinging on. To the wrestler. He's hanging on.
To somebody. Not because he's trying to defeat him. Not at all because he's trying to defeat him. That stopped. That stopped the moment his thigh was put out of joint. He's now holding on to him.
[38:14] So that the man won't go. He's holding on to the one who has broken him. Until the one who has broken him. Blesses him. Blesses him. And it's at that point.

That the Lord says to him. Let me go. He won't let God go himself. He cannot. He's come to see his own weakness.
And the strength of the Lord. And he will never let the Lord go. Until he knows that the Lord is on his side. And until he is sure that the Lord is on his side. And he won't leave the presence of God.
And he won't allow. I speak with reverence. He won't allow God to leave his own presence. Until the Lord has blessed him. And shown him the light of his countenance. As a friend. And a brother.
And not as an enemy. Do you know that feeling yourself? When you are loath to leave the presence of God. Without some sign from his word. Or some sign in your spirit. That he is reconciled to you.
[39:12] That you are the object of his love. That he is your father in heaven. That is how Jacob was. He has been crippled. And he is weak. But he knows that God is strong.

And he will not let go of God. Until God blesses him. And shows him to be his friend. And reconcile to him. And that is what a chastisement does anyway. When a chastisement is administered.
There is a frown on the face of your father. But when the chastisement does its work. You won't leave your father. Or you are not content. Until your father smiles at you again.
And when your father smiles. You know that all is well. And that is why God says let me go. It is not the voice of somebody. Who as it were wants to go.
It is the voice of somebody who is trying. He is testing Jacob. In the same way as Christ wrestled. With the Syrophoenician woman. And said to her. It is not right to take the children's bread.
[40:11] And to cast it to the dogs. He is wrestling with the woman. He is testing the woman. And trying her. And the woman says. Yea but even the dogs eat from the crumbs. Which fall from the master's table.

Woman great is thy faith. Jacob great is your faith. Why? Because he said. I will not let thee go. Until thou bless me. I will not let you go.
Until you bless me. Now you mark my words my friend. Every time. God comes to you like a lion. You will hear in the midst of your trial.

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A voice that says. Let me go. Let me go. But if you are a true believer. You will never let him go. Even in the midst of that trial.
Even when you know that the rod is held in his hand. You will never let him go. If he turns to you and says. Will thou also go away. You will never go away. If you are a true believer in God.
[41:06] You will never go. You will never stop. Until you find him again. And until you see love in his face. You will never stop. Until you are one with him again.

And that is the test put on Jacob. And Jacob passes the test. He clings on. And he clings on. Until he sees the Lord himself. You will notice in other words. That Jacob is coming more and more.
To see his need. And by the way. It is in that connection. That God asks him his name. You will notice. God says to him in verse 27. What is your name?
Now. Of course the Lord knew his name. But the Lord wants to hear it from his own lips. You know there are many things that the Lord knows. But he still wants to hear from our lips.
What is your name? He says. And I believe Jacob said it with shame. Jacob. Jacob he says. The supplanter. That is my name.
[42:03] And I suppose we can say. For the first time. I understand what it means. I am a supplanter. But notice how God tenderly binds up the weak.

God says. Your name he says. Shall no more be called Jacob. But Israel. Which means prince. For as a prince. You have power with God.
And with men. And you have prevailed. And Jacob says. Tell me your name. But he says. Why do you ask after my name? As much as to say.
You know who I am. And he blessed him there. And Jacob calls the name of the place Peniel. Because he saw God face to face. And his life was preserved.
My friend. And you will get a new name as well. When you empty yourself. And when you turn to the fullness of God. You will get a new name. You will get a new start.
[42:58] And you will get a new life. And your Christian life. That might have been dragging on for months. Maybe for years. On a very low power. Stumbling from one thing to the next.

Going as it were for the hill of God. That can be transformed. It can be transformed. And may you learn it while God is a moth. Before you have to learn it when God is a lion.
And you can become new. And you can become a prince with God. And have power with him. Jacob became Israel. And he was blessed. And is it not interesting to read that.
As he passed over Peniel. The sun rose upon him. And he halted upon his thigh. When he is passing the place. And he is going to join the groups.
The sun is just rising. And he is limp. Is there not something. Spiritually significant in that as well. It is as though it is a new day for Jacob.
[43:58] And Jacob has come up higher. He has been crushed and crippled. But he is a better man for it. He started the contest Jacob. But by the time the Lord was finished with him.

He was Israel. He was a worse pedestrian. But he was a better pilgrim. And God can make anyone a better man. And very often he has to cripple you to do it. And I am sure you have been crippled one way or another.
In order to get where you are today. But he has not finished crippling you. Or crippling me. He has more to do. There is a lot of work involved in turning Simon into Peter.
And I will close with this. In the epistle to the Hebrews. In chapter 11 and in verse 21. There is a very interesting text. Because it tells us there.
Just a few short words. That Jacob blessed his sons. Worshipping. And leaning upon the top of his staff.
[44:52] Now that's all we've got. About the life of Jacob. In that great chapter of faith. We're just told this. That he worshipped. And blessed his sons.

Leaning upon the top of his staff. What does that tell you? Well what it tells you is this. That he never forgot Peniel. Never forgot it. Probably every time he worshipped.
He remembered Peniel. And his thigh out of joint. It was a mark that stayed with him. For the rest of his life. Contests with God produce scars.
They produce scars. And when he blessed his sons. With the power of God. It was leaning on the top of that staff. He learned.
Not to trust his own thigh. But to trust in the power of God. May we learn the same. Let us pray. Our gracious God.

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[45:49] Teach us. To rely not upon ourselves. But upon thee. For when we are weak. Then we are strong. And when we are emptied of self.

Then are we filled. With the spirit of God. Teach and guide us. Forgiving your sins for Christ's sake. Amen.

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