

Cling to Jesus
07-17-2016

Gen 32:22-31

The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. 24 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. 25 When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. 26 Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 28 Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." 29 Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. 30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." 31 The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

This was not a dream/vision but a physical fight with a physical injury with obvious spiritual lessons.

- This isn't an example of wrestling all night in prayer with God in order to gain something.
 - God initiated in order to gain something from Jacob. 32:11-26, 30, Hos 12:3-4

God answered Jacob's prayer for protection from Esau not by removing the "problem" but by wrestling with Jacob & crippling the base of his greatest strength.

- Purpose of Father/son struggle was to bring Jacob to the end of self-reliance.
 - Flesh dies hard....he wrestled all night!

When wounded Jacob realizes that can not control/win battle so instead of fighting, he begins scheming & trying to overthrow this divine being, he just holds on with all his might.

- Clinging tenaciously was in a sense God "overcome" by Jacob.
- Through struggles (job loss, crisis, illness) the Lord breaks our self-confidence & self-dependence so we repent & cling to Him in our weakness & brokenness. Gen 32:27-28,
 - Why did he ask his name? Didn't he already know? Name > expressed nature & identity.
 - The Lord wanted Jacob to confess his character.
 - 20 yrs earlier Jacob lied about his identity & stole the blessing.
 - NOW he is honest: I'm Jacob, the heel-grabber, cheater, and deceiver.
- God used this struggle/injury to show Jacob that the real enemy/problem was not others (Esau, Laban) but his fleshly, sinful, selfish nature that either resisted God's will or tried to accomplish it in his own strength/wisdom. Ps 51:17, Jam 4:6, Zech 4:6, Larry Richard, A.W. Tozer

When Jacob acknowledged this truth about himself God proclaimed him to be a new man.

- “Jacob” historical name but “Israel” prophetic name = “he who strives/prevails with God,” or “God strives/prevails”.
 - Jacob prevailed in the sense that he obtained his request of a blessing.
- The result of this spiritual lesson literally resulted in a change in his walk.
 - Every future limp remind Jacob of his dependence on divine grace.

Paradox: when we wrestle with God we always lose, but that defeat leads to victory!

Mark 8:35, Matt 20:16, 26, 27. 2 Cor 12:7-10, Gal 3:3

- You are saved because you realize you couldn't save yourself.
 - Same principle occurs in the Christian walk... we don't do it in own strength.
- This is not Jacob's conversion but a critical point of surrender & trust initiated by sovereign grace of God.
 - God made Jacob weak so He might be Jacob's strength.
 - Acknowledge your weakness & depend on Lord's strength!
 - Give up & hold on to Jesus!

God loves and helps us by breaking our self-dependence so we lean totally on Him.

- Recognize own inadequacy and sin, trust in His promises, submit to Lord, cling by faith to God alone & trust He do what He has promised.

