

## Wrestling with God Genesis 32 / John 12:20-29

In light of the events of today - I felt it appropriate to pause our study in the book of Acts

A)Address the subject of Wrestling with God -

B)Have you ever wrestled with God? I have many times

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.

Now as a guy who has had hip replacements one in both of my hips - I resonate with this story

A)But I resonate with it in a greater way because I know what it is like to wrestle with God.

B)Wrestling with God and his direction and will for our lives is a normal part of the Christian life

C)Tyler and I have both been doing that a bit these last two weeks - wrestling with God - Stay/Go

D)The Bacquet family has been wrestling with God and his calling and leading for their family

E)Our leadership team has been wrestling with God this past week - direction for our student ministries

In the pages of scripture we read of many men who wrestled with God

A)I want to briefly consider a few of them this morning -

B)And eventually get to John 12 where we see Jesus himself wrestling in his humanity with the will of His Father

C)Jesus gives us the best description of how to properly wrestle with God

But I want to start here today with Jacob

A)Jacob is the first person in the Bible who we actually witness - wrestling with God literally

B)Jacob is an interesting guy in the Bible - prior to this moment in Genesis 32

1)His Reputation was that of a con artist, Swindler

C)A guy who was really good at taking advantage of situations and people to his own profit

D)And when we find him in Genesis 32 he is on the run - he has burned every bridge in his life

1)Including the one with his brother Esau- whom he ripped off in a major fashion

E)His brother is coming after him with 400 men and they aren't coming to party.

This is where we find Jacob in Genesis 32 - One night unable to sleep -

A)Out for a mid-night walk he encounters this man -

B)Really God - Theophony or a Christophony - and appearance of Jesus in the OT - bodily form  
1)Wrestling match ensues

C)they are wrestling all night long - Jacob has no idea this is the Lord

1)In some ways this is Jacob's conversion moment

D)All of us have had a similar moment in coming to Jesus - after months / years of wrestling

1)Before we finally surrendered

**Jacob wrestling with the Lord is like me wrestling with my grandson.**

A) I will let Josiah think that he is winning just to keep him interested - also wear him out

B) Kid has so much energy - spends the night at our house - get him worn out for bed

1) Plus we have so much fun - he has the best laugh

C) God will let us wrestle with him - but he is taking us somewhere

1) You know where he wants us to get - TO THE END OF OURSELVES

**He does that with every single one of us - in bringing us to Jesus**

A) We wrestle with him by resisting him - sometimes it is in the form of running from him

B) But you can't run from God - you know that right - he is everywhere.

C) Go to Mexico - get to your Airbnb - open the door - God is there - SURPRISE

**The Psalmist David who definitely had his moments of wrestling with God - wrote these words Psalm 139**

Where can I go from Your Spirit?

Or where can I flee from Your presence?

8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there;

If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning,

And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

10 Even there Your hand shall lead me,

And Your right hand shall hold me.

A) David said where can I go - answer - no where

B) We wrestle with God or God's will by running from him

C) God will let us wrestle with him until we surrender or if we are really stubborn like Jacob

1) He will break us

**So Jacob has been wrestling all night - thinks at time he is gaining ground**

A) Great experience for him - he is literally getting out all of us frustration - Stress

B) Then God says let me show you how insignificant you are - little pinky touches Jacob's hip

1) Hip pops out of socket - painful

**C) I love this about Jacob - he is still holding on Not letting you go**

D) Now Jacob realizes this is not a man I have been wrestling with - this is God -

1) Not letting you go until you bless me

**Note: Throughout the Bible this is something we see - God always responds in a positive way to the desperate heart!**

A) God asked Jacob a question - what is your name?

B) Did God know Jacob's name? Of course

1) Did God know where Adam and Eve were hiding after the fall - of course

C) So why in the book of Genesis does God cry out Adam where are you?

1) Why does he here ask Jacob what his name is

D) God seeks confession from us - See before there can be forgiveness and restoration - healing

1) There has to be confession

**Adam had to confess his sin to God**

A) When God asked Jacob his name he was seeking for a confession

B) Jacob's name meant heel catcher - Jacob was a twin - he came out 2<sup>nd</sup>

1) His hand on his brother's foot like he wanted to pull him back - he could come out first

**C) His parents were like - that is so cute we will call him heel catcher - Jacob**

D) The name came to mean - supplanter - one who seeks to take things from others

1) That is the kind of man that Jacob became

**So that is why God is asking him his name - he is looking for confession.**

A) So Jacob says my name is Jacob - and then the Lord says

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.”

**B)God in this moment changes his name from Jacob to Israel**

**C)Israel means a man governed by God.**

1)That is where God is seeking to get everyone of us

**D)Move from being self-governed to being God governed - Self on the throne to God on the throne**

**If you are Wrestling with God today - that is the battle - battle is your kingdom or his Kingdom**

**A)Jacob finally becomes a man governed by God yielded to God**

**B)Everything changes - relationships are restored**

1)He is blessed on so many fronts in his life

**C)Someone asked me on Thursday what I was teaching on today - Wrestling with God**

1)That is a good one - this is what I have learned - I never win

**D)Actually that is not true- when we wrestle with God to the point where we either surrender**

1)Or are broken - and have to surrender - WE TOTALLY WIN

**God gets all of us - we get all of Him**

**A)That is when Jacob's become Israel's that is when blessings begin to happen**

**The Bible is littered with examples of men who wrestled with God**

**A)Elijah ran from God wrestling with His calling - wrestling with fear - Queen Jezebel**

**B)Actually asked God to just Kill me God - I can't take this anymore.**

**C)God patiently wrestled with his prophet - to get him back on track**

**D)Jonah wrestled with God's direction as well -**

1)God pursued him? Big fish swallowed him

**E)God will go to great lengths to get you where he wants you - NOT BECAUSE HE NEEDS YOU**

1)He wants to bless you - allow you be part of his story

**David wrestled with God many times - difficult years on the run from crazy king Saul**

**A)David's wrestling took the form of him asking questions like How come? - How long?**

**B)Why do the wicked seem to prosper - this is not fair**

**C)God patiently wrestled with David - in making him a man after his own heart**

**Have you been wrestling with God - running - asking questions - resisting**

**A)He wrestles with you rather than destroying you because he loves you**

**B)Can I encourage you - stop wrestling and surrender - stop being a Jacob**

**1)And Become an Israel/ a person GOVERNED by God**

1)Get in line with his plan for your life - good one

**C)You know there are a lot of people in the Bible who wrestled with God -**

**D)But there is one who shows us how to wrestle in the RIGHT way - AND that is Jesus**

**1)Jesus wrestled with God too - John 12 - turn there**

**This is the middle of the Passover week - days before Jesus would go to the Cross**

<sup>20</sup>Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to **worship at the feast.** <sup>21</sup>Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

**A)Worship is about seeing Jesus - a worship leader is doing a great Job - pointing you upwards - Jesus**

**B)Help us - Seethe Lord - His greatness - majesty**

**C)Worship should not be about us - but about the one who is greater than us**

**D)So these Greek guys who came to worship at the feast come to Philip we want to see Jesus**

<sup>22</sup> Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

E) Now the response that Jesus gives to them is sort of weird - it almost seems like he doesn't hear them

1) But we know he does V.23

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

A) Now this is significant / bc this is the first time in the ministry of Jesus he has ever said this -

B) Now is the time for the Son of man - Messiah to be glorified

C) There were many times in his earthly ministry where crowds wanted to glorify him - make him king

D) This is not the time or the hour for the Son of man to be glorified

**But this time it is different - NOW IS THE TIME - He gives a very interesting analogy**

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

A) Now He uses an illustration from nature - Seed being planted - and in order for that seed to produce

1) It needs to die - Death is being planted in the dirt

B) He is talking about His death - He is talking about His Sacrifice.

C) That is where His glory is going to be revealed is in the cross.

D) But Jesus is not just giving an illustration - He is setting an example

25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

**Now this is something Jesus says in every gospel - Matthew 10:38-39**

38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his

life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

**This is a recurring theme - Calling - take up your cross**

A) This is a recurring theme - take up the cross -

B) Cross? - Mother in law - Job -

1) Cross was an instrument of death - in order for someone else to live

C) Lets go back to the analogy of the seed. - If it remains alone - no fruit

**How we are like SEEDS**

A) A Seed is small & insignificant - but there is life in it/

B) That seed has the potential of becoming a tree / BUSH that produces beautiful ROSE flowers

C) You & I are small & insignificant - but we have life in us - God's Life

**D) Now if the life that is in the seed is going to be manifested it has to be buried / planted -**

1) symbol of death and burial

**D) The same thing holds true for us - if the Life of the Lord is going to be manifested in our lives -**

1) We need to be Planted / buried /

E) There is a death that needs to take place - Death of self / My plan / My ambition / My desires /

1) and aligning myself w/ His Plan

**Now think about if that seed could talk - I don't like it down here It is Dark / Cold / Dirty / Worms bugs**

A) The Water is Cold - we do that too.

B) We Complain - Lord I don't like this buried thing

C) But in order for the life in the seed to come forth all of that is Necessary

**God has put His life into you - Holy Spirit / but in order for him to get his life out of You /**

A) You need to be buried - you need to die to self

**B)Note Jesus said – if the seed remains alone – no fruit**

1)That is our natural tendency – Stay alone – guarded isolated- that is safe

**C)But the example of Jesus is to LOVE – TO reach out -**

1)To not ISOLATE but to be vulnerable.

**Note the contrast: loneliness or fruitfulness, losing your life or keeping your life:**

A)serving self or serving Christ Pleasing self or receiving God's honor

**B)But this is the very thing that we WRESTLE with all the time isn't it -DEATH TO SELF**

1)Lord I don't want to be buried - I don't want to be unseen - I don't want to surrender my will / dreams

**C)I have a good PLAN FOR MY LIFE LORD - You just need to get on board with it**

**D)Now you have probably never said it that blatantly but have you thought it ? - I HAVE - many times**

**E)God always says the same thing - You might have a good plan for your life Rob/ but I have a better one**

1)Will you trust me?

**Then I have to say - Ok Lord YOU CAN BURY ME**

A)I will surrender my will / my dreams / my rights - I will be buried

B)Because I truly believe that you are a good/ good father.

C)That is what Jesus is showing us here - Jesus shows us how to wrestle in the right way V.27

27 "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify Your name."

A)What we have here is Jesus wrestling in his humanity – Not w/ Self like us – but in his soul

B)My soul – my spirit is troubled - Why is he wrestling in his soul?

C)He knew what he was about to go through

**D)Beaten – Bruised – battered – forsaken**

1) Most of all – He would feel separation from His father –

E)Fullness of Sin – upon Him – Full arm of God's wrath - **My God ..... forsaken me**

1) **Father watched in silent – Didn't respond**

**So Jesus is wrestling in his humanity – His soul**

A)What can we learn from Jesus ?

B)Notice what His aim was– His FOCUS-

1)Father I know this is my purpose - I want to fulfill my purpose

**C)V.28 Father Glorify your name**

**D)Jesus made a Choice TO Seek the Fathers glory & the Fathers will above his own Comfort**

1)Choice that every man has to make –

**E)Love myself, glorify myself or Love God & Glorify God { Can't have it both ways**

**Jesus chose God's glory over his own comfort!!!**

A)A couple of days later he is wrestling again with the same thing - the cross

B)Garden of Gethsemane - Let this cup pass from me not my will but your will be done 3X

C)I Love that about Jesus - It wasn't a one and done

1)This was his battle for his whole life

D)But he battles in the same way - Father let this cup pass - if there is another way... do it

1)But not my will but your will be done

**That is the Key to wrestling with God in the right way - saying - Your will - not my will**

A)Your way not my way

B)Your glory not my glory

1)Your plan not my plan

C)I Surrender to you and trust you

**Jesus chose God's glory over his own comfort**

A)Father Glory YOUR NAME

Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." 29 Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."

**B)The Bacquets are choosing the Glory of God over their desire - stay here - comfortable**

1)New is always hard

**C)Our leadership is choosing God's glory over our desire - we are releasing Tyler - sending his family**

1)we could have finagled a way to KEEP THEM

HERE

TEMPTING

**D)We could have tried to convince them - this isn't God's will**

1)But we know it is

**E)We need to release them and send them - so that God's glory in them will be further revealed**

1)God's Glory here will be further seen as well

**Can I encourage you to Be an Israel – a person governed by God**

A)Choose His glory over your preference -

B)Choose His glory over your plan -

C)Amen!