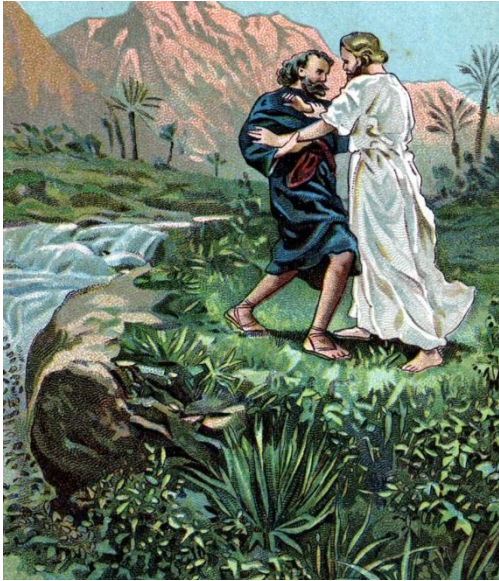


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 11



JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

Scripture Text: Genesis 32:24-31

Jacob wrestled with God to receive a blessing. God wrestled with Jacob to cause him to surrender. Jacob's thigh was out of joint to take away his dependence on self. He persevered to obtain God's blessing, as we must too. God blessed him, and God gives us the Holy Spirit. God gave Jacob a new name to suit his new nature. God gives us a new name written in Heaven.

After twenty years in Haran where he had acquired two wives (Leah and Rachel), two concubines, eleven sons and a daughter, Jacob was called by God (**Genesis 31:13**) to return to Canaan. On the way, the angels of God met him, indicating God's favor upon him. Fearing to meet his brother, Esau, he prayed for protection and sent gifts ahead of him.

MEMORY VERSE: *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

—*Matthew 7:7*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**Genesis 31:1-16** Jacob plans to leave Laban.

Tue.—**Genesis 31:17-35** Laban pursues Jacob.

Wed.—**Genesis 31:36-55** Laban and Jacob part in peace.

Thu.— **Genesis 32:1-23** Jacob prepares to meet Esau.

Fri.—**Romans 8:1-17** Living in the Spirit.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 62 The new Israel.

I Will Not Let Thee Go

Genesis 32:24-26 **And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.** Did you ever wrestle with God? Sometimes, the only way we can receive our blessing is to get alone with God and wrestle with Him. When **he prevailed not against him**—the stranger did not overcome Jacob—**he touched the hollow of his thigh** and it was **out of joint**. At first, the man used physical or human strength only. Jacob was able to withstand that. The touch of his thigh was supernatural, and it weakened Jacob. **He said, Let me go . . . he—Jacob—said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.** Now he recognized this as more than a human man, as One with power to bless. Sensing this, Jacob was determined to have his blessing.

This is a type of how one must be determined to obtain salvation, to enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, **the violent** —or the determined—**take it** (the kingdom) **by force** (**Matthew 11:12**). This world is a battleground between God and Satan, each contending for our souls. God has made the way whereby each one can escape from Satan to the safety of God's sheltering arms. But it cannot be done by fainthearted fearing to act. **The fearful** will end up in the lake of fire (**Revelation 21:8**). Jesus teaches us to importune without giving up (**Luke 11:5-10**). Read of the faith of the woman who came to Jesus determined to have a blessing for her daughter (**Matthew 15:22-28**).

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LESSON 11

A New Name

Genesis 32:27-28 What is thy name? . . . Jacob. *Jacob* means *supplanter*. In telling his name, Jacob was forced to lay bare the fact that he had taken the place belonging to another, had taken Esau's birthright and blessing. **Thy name shall be . . . no more Jacob, but Israel**—meaning *God's soldier, God's prince*. God gives names for the suitability of their meaning. **For as a prince**—as a victor, a successful contender—**hast thou power with God**—to obtain answers to prayer—**and with men**—to lead and influence or conquer them.

His name would no longer be called Jacob, but Israel. Jacob won a place for himself, a place of his own. He was now a conqueror, a victorious prince. Being a changed man, he was given a new name. This is a type of the Christian. When one is saved from sin, he is made **a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17)**. **To him that overcometh**—sin and Satan, Jesus will give **a white stone, and in the stone a new name written (Revelation 2:17)**.

Only as granted by God can anyone have power. One of the wonders of God is that He gives His power to work through righteous men and women. **The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16)**. The secret of power with God is abiding in Christ. He said, **If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7)**. God gives power with men, the right kind of power, power to influence to do right, to lead to the Lord. The more complete the dominion over our lives which we give to the Holy Spirit, the more He can use us as channels to influence others.

He Blessed Him There

Genesis 32:29-30 Jacob asked . . . Tell me . . . thy name. It would appear here that Jacob strongly suspected, yet wanted to be sure. **Wherefore . . . ? And he blessed him there.** In that blessing was Jacob's answer. Whatever of comfort, strength, joy, new vision, and of grace entered his soul in that blessing, whatever of the life of God entered into him then, it answered his question more fully than words could have done. He knew now, for sure, that this was God. **Called the name . . . Peniel: for I have seen God face to face.** It surprised him that after seeing God, **my life is preserved**, or spared. It is probable that God's glory was somewhat veiled from Jacob, that he had but a partial view of His face. Consider **Exodus 33:18-23**.

God has often answered a question by action rather than words. A demonstration is better than an explanation. See how God answered questions for Pharaoh (**Exodus 5:2; Exodus 12:29-31**); for Nebuchadnezzar (**Daniel 3:15, 28, and 29**), and for John (**Matthew 11:2-6**).

Jacob Was Lame

Genesis 32:31 As he passed over Penuel . . . he halted upon his thigh—Jacob was lame. He was to realize his weakness, to know that it was not his strength which had brought victory—the blessing. It was a gift from God. **See the Memory Verse.**

Jacob was crippled to show him his inability in his own power. The blessing was not wrought by Jacob's power or ability, but by God's. Jacob had been blessed at Bethel; here on his way back home, he was blessed again, and he would be blessed many more times in the days to follow. So we find it to be that way as saints. We need God's blessings continually along the way that we travel every day. This world is not our home; we are only strangers passing through but one time. We cannot expect help from citizens of this world.

JUST A THOUGHT

Times may change, but principles never do.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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