

The Best Possible Blessing

Scripture Reading — Genesis 32:22-32

*Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."
Genesis 32:26 —*

One night Jacob fought alone with someone in the dark. This was new for Jacob. He had never entered a fight that he couldn't win. By daybreak, his opponent had wrenched Jacob's hip so severely that he walked with a limp for the rest of his life. Jacob knew that this opponent had special power. "I will not let you go unless you bless me," Jacob declared. If he couldn't win, at least he could wrench a blessing from this powerful opponent. So he did. The opponent gave Jacob a new name, Israel, which means, "He struggles with God." In that moment, Jacob learned that he had been struggling with a messenger of the Lord himself (see Hosea 12:4). The unseen wrestler said to Jacob, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." Hard as it seems, our greatest hardships, our most difficult challenges, our most horrible trials may be one of God's ways of bringing us his blessing. I don't know how that works. When our son died, I didn't feel blessed at all, and I still don't. My wife and I still "walk with a limp." We have four living children instead of five. But through it all God is with us. Maybe that's the best blessing one can receive.

Prayer

*Lord, we don't understand why some things happen, and sometimes we wrestle with you.
Jesus, thank you for being as close as my own heart. Stay close. Stay close. Amen.*

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