

Wrestling With God

Scripture Reading — Genesis 32:22-32

"Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God ..." Genesis 32:28 —

On the eve of meeting Esau, Jacob has a restless night. In a night filled with anticipation for the next day, Jacob has to deal with his past.

The sneak who stole a father's blessing finds himself wrestling with God. When I was growing up, I remember wrestling with my father. (The game continues now with my own children.) My father would allow me to test my strength, but I knew he was holding back his full strength for my good.

In this dark night before dawn, God holds back. How deeply does Jacob want God in his future? Is Jacob willing to move from relying on his deception to relying on God? Jacob struggles all night long. And in the end, God provides a name change, a blessing, and a physical sign of this struggle.

God doesn't let go without changing Jacob. The name change is one way in which God marks this night as a reminder of blessing. And Jacob's limp will be a constant reminder that God has let Jacob survive and that God will be with Israel every step of the way.

All of us have struggled with God. The issue then becomes a matter of admitting that God has a hold on us. Are we willing to walk with God?

Walking with a limp is not a sign of defeat for Jacob. It becomes a mark of identity.

Prayer

Dear God, help us not to walk away from you but to seek you day by day. May our struggles be redeemed through your care, compassion, and constancy. In Jesus, Amen.

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