

**The Story of Jacob**  
*Heroes of Faith Series*  
Week 12: Jacob's Wrestling Match

## Scripture

Genesis 32:22-32

## Motivation

### ***Where are we in the story? (Genesis 29-30)***

- Jacob tricked his brother, Esau, out of the blessing and had to run for his life
- God met him at Bethel and promised to be with him
- Laban deceived Jacob into marrying Leah, instead of Rachel
- Jacob spent 20 years working, waiting, and trying to get ahead
- Family drama, rivalry, and manipulation were constant
- Jacob now wants to leave, but Laban wants him to stay.
- Jacob and Laban strike a deal, and God blesses Jacob's flocks through some strange breeding practices.
- Jacob is determined to reconnect with Esau with God's help and his own manipulation.

**Genesis 32: 20-21 (ESV)** "For he thought, "I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterward I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me." **21** So the present passed on ahead of him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp.

## Information

Jacob places his family between himself and Esau. He is alone.

### **Jacob's Solitude**

**Genesis 32:22-23 (ESV)** 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.

Alone with himself and his thoughts in the dark. In the silence. And yet not alone.

A hand of an unknown figure reaches out in the dark and begins to attack Jacob.

## Jacob Attacked

**Genesis 32:24 (ESV)** And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.

6 to 8 hours or more of intense fighting and attack. Jacob fought for his life.

**Genesis 32:25-26 (ESV)** **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."

Imagine the strength and force it takes to put a hip out of the socket. A hip out of the socket typically happens from a car accident or a significant fall. The individual that Jacob is fighting for his life against is no mere man.

## Jacob's Two Natures

**Genesis 32:27-28 (ESV)** 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."

Jacob here is not just stating his name. Jacob is fessing up to who he is. The heel-grabbing, deceiving, manipulating trickster. He, in this moment, is owning up to the battle he has waged against everyone, including God. And here Jacob is given a new name. A new name is not lightly given in the Bible. This is something that God does at times as he transforms people. Abram (high father) became Abraham (father of a multitude), Sarai (Princess) became Sarah (mother of nations). We find that when God changes a name like this, these people become destined for a new mission in life.

Jacob's name change from the "surplanter" to Israel, or striving with God, or having power with God. This name change is unique. Abraham and Sarah were never referred to again by their previous names. But Jacob/Israel, as we will see, has both names used almost equally. I think there is huge significance for us here in our understanding of our two natures.

Before we repent (turn from our sin) and embrace the hope that is the Work of Christ - His payment for our sin, we are what the Bible calls Old Natured, or our Old Self. This is who we are apart from the transforming work of Jesus. Prone to live for ourselves and sin. Enemies of God. Listen to Paul...

In Romans 7 Paul does a fantastic job displaying the conflict that goes on inside people.

**Romans 7:15 (ESV)** For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

**Romans 7:18-20 (ESV)** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. **19** For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. **20** Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

**Galatians 5:17 (ESV)** For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

To someone apart from Christ, this is insane nonsense. The concept of two natures.

**I Corinthians 1:18, 21-25 (ESV)** For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who

believe. **22** For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, **24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

God's plan was in place before creation. Jesus was the plan before the world was spoken into existence. The Bible is clear and calls people to respond

**Romans 6:12 (ESV)** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

**2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)** The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Jacob is an amazing picture of the dual nature that we wrestle with. My favorite statement from Martin Luther is Simul Justus et Peccator it means at the same time righteous and sinner.

### **Simul Justus et Peccator - by Martin Luther**

Let's close by looking at three memorials. One given by Jacob, one given by God, and one by Moses.

### **Three Jacob Memorials**

**Genesis 32:29-32 (ESV)** 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. **32** Therefore to this day

the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the thigh.

A Renamed Place - Place of transformative encounter

An Unmistakable Limp - Mark of a transformative encounter

A Continual Rememberance - Ritual reminder of transformative encounter

## **Application**

Have you been transformed by Christ?