

SERIES: THE OTHER SIX DAYS
SERMON: THE GIFT OF SURRENDER
3-10-22

OPENER:

Genesis 32:22-31 During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two servant wives, and his eleven sons and crossed the Jabbok River with them.

²³ After taking them to the other side, he sent over all his possessions.

²⁴ This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. ²⁵ When the man saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob's hip and wrenched it out of its socket. ²⁶ Then the man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!"

But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

²⁷ "What is your name?" the man asked.

He replied, "Jacob."

²⁸ "Your name will no longer be Jacob," the man told him. "From now on you will be called Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have won."

²⁹ "Please tell me your name," Jacob said.

"Why do you want to know my name?" the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there.

³⁰ Jacob named the place Peniel (which means "face of God"), for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared." ³¹ The sun was rising as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of the injury to his hip.

ILLUSTRATION:

My fight during grade school! How many have ever been in a fight?

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF JACOB WRESTLING WITH GOD?

To best answer this question, it helps to know first, that deep-seated family issues characterized Jacob's life. He was a very determined man; some would consider him to be ruthless. He was a con artist, a liar, and a manipulator. In fact, the name Jacob means "deceiver," but more literally it means "grabber."

To know Jacob's story is to know his life was one of never-ending struggles. Though God promised Jacob that through him would come not only a great nation, but a whole company of nations, he was full of fears and anxieties. At this pivotal point in his life, Jacob was about to meet his brother, Esau, who had vowed to kill him. All Jacob's struggles and fears were about to be realized.

Sick of his father-in-law's treatment, Jacob had fled Laban, only to encounter his bitter brother, Esau. Anxious for his very life, Jacob concocted a bribe and sent a caravan of gifts along with his wives and children across the River Jabbok in hopes of pacifying his brother. Now physically exhausted, alone in the desert wilderness, facing sure death, he was free of all his worldly

possessions and powerless to control his fate. He collapsed into a deep sleep on the banks of the Jabbok River.

**WITH HIS FATHER-IN LAW BEHIND HIM AND ESAU BEFORE HIM
HE WAS TOO TIRED AND WEARY TO STRUGGLE ANY LONGER, BUT ONLY THEN
DID HIS REAL STRUGGLE BEGIN.**

I. SOMETIMES OUR REAL STRUGGLE IS WITH GOD

Genesis 32:30³⁰ Jacob named the place Peniel (which means "face of God"), for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared."

That night on the river, a stranger visited Jacob. They wrestled throughout the night until daybreak, at which point the stranger crippled Jacob with a blow to his hip that disabled him with a limp for the rest of his life. It was then that Jacob realized what had happened..... That he was wrestling with God.

Jacob's fight was not with his brother Esau. His fight had not been with his father-in-law Laban. His fight had not even been his constant struggle to be noticed, to be first, to get his father to favor him. His real struggle was with with God!

**SOMETIMES WE THINK WE ARE FIGHTING OUR SPOUSE, THAT FAMILY
MEMBER, THAT SITUATION AT WORK,
OUR PAST, OUR FINANCES.
AND IT'S TRUE, LIFE CAN BRING SOME TRYING SITUATIONS, BUT SOMETIMES
OUR REAL STRUGGLE IS WITH GOD.**

**SOMETIMES OUR STRUGGLES HAPPEN BECAUSE LIKE JACOB WE ARE
REBELLING AGAINST GOD'S AGENDA FOR OUR LIVES AND WE ARE OPPOSING
HIS PLANS FOR US.**

**WE ARE IN A BATTLE OF THE WILLS.
GOD'S WILL OR OUR OWN.**

**JUST AS JACOB CAME TO THE REALIZATION THAT HIS STRUGGLE ALL HIS
LIFE HAD ACTUALLY
BEEN WITH GOD.**

**WE NEED TO REALIZE WHO WE ARE FIGHTING.
BECAUSE SOMETIMES OUR REAL STRUGGLE IS WITH GOD.**

(Last week as I opened this new Series I spoke about the Lordship of Christ, But before you can have Jesus as your Lord, you must surrender to Him.)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SURRENDER?

1. TO SURRENDER IS TO CEASE FIGHTING

Surrender is a battle term which means to yield; to give in; to declare that you are weaker than your opponent and have been beaten and submit to a higher, stronger authority.

TO SURRENDER MEANS TO CEASE FIGHTING.

ILLUSTRATION:

The sign of surrender during battle began in eastern war many years ago. It is the symbol of a white flag. When an opposing army would decide to cease fighting they would lower their colors and raise a white flag to let the opposing forces know they had had enough, that they would fight no more, that they were yielding to the opposition.

TO TRULY SURRENDER TO GOD WE NEED TO FIRST CEASE OUR FIGHTING WITH HIM.

AND WE NEED TO RAISE THE WHITE FLAG AND SAY, I GIVE UP, I GIVE IN, I YIELD TO YOU, I DON'T WANT TO STRIVE WITH YOU ANY LONGER.

ILLUSTRATION:

The white flag had no color. It had no symbol on it. It was blank, there was nothing written on it. No power or country promoted, no national colors, no agenda, no stipulations written. Surrender is not like peace talks. You don't bargain with God. You don't ask certain things to be done if you put your life in his hands. You can't say, "OK God I'll give up and put my life in your hands if you promise to do this or that. You don't say, God I will do this so you can do this for me. To surrender you don't question, "What are you going to do with me? What are your plans for me?"

Surrender has nothing to say except, "Here I am! I stop striving for what I want. I stop fighting for what I think I have the rights to, or what I think I am entitled to. I put my life in your hands God."

WHATEVER GOD CHOOSES TO DO WITH YOU.

WHATEVER PLANS HE HAS FOR YOUR LIFE YOU AGREE TO SUBMIT TO WITHOUT A FIGHT, WITHOUT PROTEST, WITHOUT RESISTANCE AND WITHOUT QUESTION.

ILLUSTRATION:

The white flag was also a sign of death in the middle East in its origin.

Matthew 10:39 If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.

WHEN WE SURRENDER WE ARE SAYING I DIE TO MYSELF AND I CHOOSE TO LET CHRIST'S PLANS, PURPOSE AND HIS DESIRES TO LIVE THROUGH ME.

2. IT IS OFTEN PAIN THAT LEADS US TO SURRENDER

Jacob surrendered to God only when God touched his hip.

It is only then that Jacob stopped fighting. He became too weak to struggle any longer. He came to the end of himself.

We must recognize this truth. That sometimes God allows the hardships in our life to lead us to surrender to his will.

It's not always the devil. It's not always others. Sometimes it is God's discipline, God's love and goodness to save us from ourselves.

GOD CRIPPLES OUR AGENDA AND OUR SELFISH DESIRES.

HE PUTS A WRENCH IN OUR PLANS AND SOMETIMES THINGS DON'T GO THE WAY THAT WE WANT - TO GET US TO SUBMIT TO HIS PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR OUR LIVES.

Hebrews 12:5-11 My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you.

⁶ For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child." ⁷ As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? ⁸ If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. ⁹ Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?

¹⁰ For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

GOD DISCIPLINES US TO SAVE US AND TO TEACH US THAT HIS WAY IS RIGHT AND GOOD.

IN REALITY GOD IS TRYING TO CRIPPLE OUR REBELIOUS HEART BEFORE WE DESTROY OUR OWN LIVES.

THE TRUTH IS THAT IT IS MOST OFTEN THROUGH HARDSHIP THAT WE LEARN TO FULLY TRUST AND SURRENDER TO THE LORD.

HOW DO YOU SURRENDER?

1. BE HONEST

God asked Jacob his name. He said my name is Jacob. When Jacob confessed His name. He was identifying himself saying, "I'm a deceiver. I'm a lyer. I'm a manipulator. I'm the guy that can get people to believe what I want. I put on appearances. I am so good at deception, I even deceived my own father.

In the end, Jacob does what we all must do. He confronts his failures, his weaknesses, his sins, all the things that are hurting him . . . and faces God. Jacob takes ownership of his consequences and of who he is and what he has done.

**TO SURRENDER TO GOD YOU MUST FIRST BE HONEST.
YOU MUST ADMIT DEFEAT AND YOUR OWN FAILURE
ADMIT YOUR FEARS, YOUR SIN, YOUR WEAKNESS.**

**TO SURRENDER TO GOD YOU MUST QUIT HIDING YOUR SIN AND SHOW WHO
YOUR REALLY ARE.**

2. LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS

When an army surrenders they give up their weapons showing the opposing army that they really mean what they say, they are done fighting.

Jacob had this arsenal of weapons that he had collected to guard and defend himself. He had become very skilled in using them.

> Lying

> Manipulating

> Deceiving (Putting on a false appearance). He was a good actor. (Remember he was the one who was so good at acting he deceived his own father.)

Some of us have carried weapons of self-defense with us and for so long that they have become a part of us. And without them we feel naked and exposed. We feel vulnerable, powerless, weak. But this is exactly where we need to be.

**TO SURRENDER TO GOD IS TO LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS.
TO LAY DOWN THOSE THING YOU HAVE PRACTICED TO DEFEND YOURSELF.
TO CHOOSE TO MAKE YOURSELF VULNERABLE.**

**BUT THAT IS WHAT FAITH IS - TO BE DEFENSELESS
BEFORE GOD.**

3. PUT YOUR TOTAL TRUST IN GOD

There are a lot of things that cause us to be distrustful of God, and it can be really hurtful when someone expects us to blindly trust Him. That's not to say that He isn't completely trustworthy — He is. But because of deep pain or dissapointment or confusion that we experience in our lives, it can feel impossible to place our faith in something/someone we can not see.

I encourage you to press into that discomfort and distrust. Be honest with God. Tell Him about your distrust. He has just as much compassion and patience as He does power.

CLOSING:

THE DEFEAT OF OUR SOULS BRINGS A NEW BEGINNING

Genesis 32:28-29 ²⁸ *“Your name will no longer be Jacob,” the man told him. “From now on you will be called Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have won.”*

²⁹ *“Please tell me your name,” Jacob said. “Why do you want to know my name?” the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there.*

It was only after Jacob came to grips with God and ceased his struggling, and instead of fighting he held on to God. That is when he received God’s blessing.

In the process, Jacob the deceiver received a new name, Israel. A new identity. He was changed and transformed.

**GOD CONQUERS US TO BLESS US.
IT IS WHEN WE ACCEPT DEFEAT THAT WE RECEIVE
GOD’S BLESSING.**

SIDE NOTE:

God told Jacob he had won? How do you win a wrestling match with God? You don’t. God’s too powerful, too strong. But it was in Jacob’s admittance that he had lost that he actually won.

You see God had not really used his strength against Jacob. He had set Jacob up to win. Much like a father does with a son. He holds back his full strength not to over power his own son. God came to Jacob in the night and knowing Jacob’s character, knew that Jacob would attack him and wrestle him. God endured the night with him only to wear him down, so he could admit defeat and admit his dependence on God. That is when Jacob won!

Jacob’s wrestling with God at the Jabbok that dark night reminds us of this truth: though we may fight God and His will for us, but in truth, God is so very good. His purpose for us is to bless us and sometimes our own pride and rebellion stand in the way of our blessing.

SECONG CLOSING:

ILLUSTRATION: White flag again.

SURRENDER IS A GIFT OF GOD.

Can we give up all for God?

Is the surrender of ourselves too much to ask?

Maybe it is first of all because our thoughts about God Himself are small and petty.

Maybe we have not really seen Him, we have hardly tested Him at all and learned how good He is.

In our blindness we approach Him with suspicious reserve.

We ask how much of our fun He intends to spoil, how much He will demand from us, how high is the price we must pay before He seats himself as Lord of our lives.

If we had even the least understanding of His loving-kindness and tender mercy, His fatherly care us, His generosity, His beautiful plans for us...

If we knew how patiently He waits for our turning to Him, how gently He means to lead us to green pastures and still waters, how carefully He is preparing a place for us, how ceaselessly He is ordering and ordaining and engineering His Master Plan for our good-if we had any inkling of all this, could we be reluctant to let go of our smashed dandelions or whatever we clutch so fiercely in our sweaty little hands?

If with courage and joy we pour ourselves out for Him and for others for His sake, it is not possible to lose, in any sense, anything worth keeping. We only lose our sinful selves and our selfishness. We will gain everything worth having.