

If you aren't frustrated or upset with your bible from time to time, you aren't reading closely enough. It is the wrestling that brings the deeper joy and abiding. You can forfeit the match, but at what cost?

What happens as we wrestle
July 9, 2023

John 10:22-42

OUR WRESTLING HELPS US PRIORITIZE JESUS

John 10:22-30 - ²²At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. ²⁴So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, ²⁶but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. ²⁷My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one."

- Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah)
 - 2 months after Feast of Booths
 - Antiochus Epiphanes (Greek Empire) 165 BC profaned temple with unclean sacrifices
 - Judas Maccabeus led overthrow
 - One jar of oil remained, lasted 8 days, enough time to make more.
- Works bear witness that Jesus is Son of God, as they always have
- Those who believe are the sheep
Those who believe are given by the Father
- If a sheep, then...
 - Granted eternal life
 - Hear his voice
 - Known by Jesus
 - Follow Jesus
 - Secure in Jesus
- Julianna - Am I saved? The fact that you're asking...
 - How does the Father "give"? How are we "secure"?
 - I'm not here to bind conscience on this, because I'm still on a journey, and Christians have literally been arguing over this for thousands of years, and I have nothing to contribute to the conversation.
 - However, we do need banks of the river. We can't just believe what we want because it feels good to us.
 - I believe that God holds on tightly to those who are truly his.
 - I believe that he is kind, just, and very patient.
 - I also believe the Scriptures are clear that we don't earn our salvation, it is freely given as a gift.
 - HOWEVER, here in the West we are starving for good, enduring models of discipleship, and I believe that many have been deceived by experience and emotion.
 - We've wanted so badly to be "not weird or different" as Christians that we have lost the potency of desperation and holiness.
- These men wanted resolution abt Christ on their terms.
 - "You can be this... but not this. It doesn't fit."
 - You may want to tap out of the wrestling match... but where will you go? What will it cost you?
 - ENGAGE WHERE YOU CAN - Paradox of our faith:
 - We need to surrender, wholeheartedly to God, that which is not in our control. (Salvation order, etc.)
 - We need to fight, tooth and nail, with all that the power, strength, and energy the Spirit provides, for all that is within our control
 - Satan directly reverses this. We lose sleep and stress over the things that are outside of our control and we surrender what is in our control to chance, comfort, and convenience.
 - There are many who walk through dark night of soul...
 - But church, with all the love in my heart, as a pastor and a millennial born in 1989, I am just not convinced that this is the case for many, if not most of us.
 - Theology is hard

OUR WRESTLING HELPS US SEE MORE OF JESUS

John 10:31-39 - ³¹The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. ³²Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" ³³The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." ³⁴Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? ³⁵If he called them gods to whom the word of God came — and Scripture cannot be broken — ³⁶do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? ³⁷If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; ³⁸but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." ³⁹Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.

- Jesus equates himself with God, this predictably causes trouble.
- Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods?' References Psalm 82

So... what is going on here? - A FEW POSITIONS, HERE ARE TWO...

Position #1 (Traditional View)

- Divine council and sons of the Most High are Israelite rulers
- It is to these rulers that the Scriptures (word of God) has come. (Law given at Sinai)
- Jesus is saying: if you guys get to call yourselves gods based on Psalm 82, then why is it a big deal if I call myself equal with God? He consecrated me...

Position #2 (Ancient Israelite View)

- God actually has a divine council of other heavenly beings (deities) whom he calls sons. (Strange to us, normal for them). Jesus is still only "unique" son. Fully God, fully man
- The word of God here is the voice of God speaking to them in this Psalm
- Jesus is saying: if you guys believe there are other sons of God that God speaks to, why don't you believe me?
- My works prove who I am, and God himself set me apart for this work.
- Jesus is lord of the council.

Aside from having a deeper understanding of theology, what matters most here is the implication of what Jesus is trying to prove. ~ "Your argument is bad + is based on what you want"

He goes on to say: if I'm not doing the works, don't believe, but if I am and you don't believe my words, believe my works, that you may understand that the Father and I are intimately and uniquely connected.

Jesus is providing for them a deeper picture of who he really is. He is answering the question they had at first. If you want proof that I am the Christ, here it is.

The deeper you go into Jesus, the more your faith will be pushed, and if you stick through the wrestling the more your faith will be lifted and your heart stirred to worship.

But this won't happen if you have come, like the Pharisees, with your preconceived notions about who Jesus can and can't be.

Unless we let Jesus define himself, we will never see him as he truly is.

OUR WRESTLING HELPS US MAKE JESUS KNOWN

John 10:40-42 - ⁴⁰He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. ⁴¹And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." ⁴²And many believed in him there.

- Not everything in our faith needs to be a fight or a wrestling. It is good to wrestle. It is good to understand. It is good to grow deeper and wider in your faith.
- However, it is also good to just let the person of Jesus move you, and to let that be enough
- Jesus/Bible/Church is always under investigation and trial. Our season in history is not unique.
- And we should obey the Scripture but forth in **1 Peter 3:14-16**

Even as debates rage, God is still saving people.

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.