Wrestling to Win — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 32:21–32 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, August 25, 2024 · *The Patriarchs*

> ⚠️ ***AUTO-GENERATED TRANSCRIPT — verify against the audio before quoting publicly.*** *Produced from a Descript transcription of the Broadview Church sermon recording and lightly cleaned (filler words removed, obvious mis-hears of names and Scripture references corrected). No timestamps. This is not a publication-ready manuscript and it is not Wes's exact words for print. Check any line against the recording before it goes on a graphic, in an email, or in a book.*

We're going to be in Genesis chapter 32 this morning. You can go ahead and be turning there. If you're new to Broadview, we typically preach through books of the Bible and we've been going through the book of Genesis and the latest series we've been in is a series called patriarchs, which I recognize is not super popular in our culture today with the whole toxic patriarchy thing going on. But I think if you're going to understand the story of America and understand the story of the west You've got to understand the philosophical and theological underpinnings of our culture, and it is a very Judeo-Christian worldview that it is established upon and the Judeo-Christian worldview is kind of founded upon A set of patriarchs.

In fact, the Lord is often referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob So if you don't know about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, m or how God deals in the lives of those three men, it's really kind of hard to understand a lot of the rest of the old testament for sure, but even some of the New Testament as well. So it's been really interesting and we've seen in each of those three guys certain climactic events. In fact today's text is the climactic event. In the life of Jacob, but we saw in the life of Abraham, with the birth of his child Isaac was a pretty big deal, but then having to offer that son up as a offering to the Lord.

That was his climactic event. For Isaac, it was the blessing of Jacob. Even though he wasn't trying to bless Jacob, he was trying to bless his favorite son Esau. The Lord kind of works his magic as he often does and gets his will done either way. And that was a climactic event for Isaac. But Jacob's climactic event is this event wherein he wrestles with God. Have you ever wrestled with God before? I asked that question in my small group and they looked at me like, what are you talking about? Who wrestles with God?

And when I say wrestle with God, Jacob wrestled with God, I mean he literally He wrestled with a man all night long, a physical man who had physical strength that broke his physical bones and gave him a physical limp. Whether that was kind of a angel of the Lord or some kind of Incarnation of God of some sort, that's for wiser heads than me, but he wrestled with

God because he comes away from the time he says, I saw God face to face and I didn't die. So he wrestled with God in some way.

Now most of us would say we haven't wrestled with God like that. None of us have a physical lamp or wrestled with a physical man. But some of us would be able to say, I have wrestled with God nonetheless. He was leading a certain direction that I didn't want to go. He was asking me to do something I didn't want to do. There was a conversation I was unwilling to have, and he just kept insisting and insisting. And then I came out of that event totally different. A lot of times when we wrestle with God, he brings us to the very end of our rope, he confronts us with the reality of our own brokenness, and then we come away from that.

With a description that on the surface feels contradictory, but it's almost the only thing that fits. It is a devastating glory to wrestle with God. There's a book written about people who have encounters with God in the Old Testament called those who dare to draw near. Because it is a dangerous thing to actually encounter the Lord. It's a beautiful thing, it's restoring, it's transformative, it's incredible, but at the same time it's devastating because you become undone, as Isaiah said in Isaiah 6 unraveled. You the Lord almost in a not a physical way but an emotional spiritual way undresses you and you're left bare before the Lord and it's very unsettling to wrestle with God.

But it's one of the most important things that can ever happen in your life. And I want us to look at this morning how to wrestle with God and win. How do you wrestle with God and win? And the big idea, I think, from Jacob's experience with the Lord is that we wrestle with God and win by wrestling to lose. And so if you're taking notes, those who wrestle with God and win find victory through losing. Now, as I said, it's in Genesis chapter 32, and it's the climax of Jacob's ex spiritual experience and it's really hard to understand Genesis 32 if you don't understand everything that has transpired up unto this moment.

I'm not going to give you all the juicy details, but just to give you a basic sketch so that you're informed as you get to Genesis 32 Jacob was the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham, who was God's chosen to kind of hit the reset button and advance his redemptive plan in the world. When Isaac has Jacob, it's not just Jacob who's born, but he has a twin brother named Esau And Jacob and Esau, even from the very early days, were always at each other. Even in the womb they were tussling and fighting to the point that Jacob's mom, Rebecca, goes to God in prayer and says, what's going on?

Why are these two babies Constantly fighting, and the Lord basically gives her an explanation and a prophecy. The explanation is these two children are two nations. They're going to become two totally different tribes, two distinct peoples that are going to have some enmity. But the other thing about these two children is you need to know that the older is going to serve the younger and that the younger is going to rule over the older. And so the two babies are born. The firstborn is Esau, big hairy man, man's man, dad's favorite.

Second born was Jacob. And he's named Jacob because he was grasping the heel of his brother Esau. So they called him Jacob, which means supplanter or heel grabber or trickster, something you would want to name your you know your child, something terrible, something like that. For any of you guys who are named Jacob, it came to be redeemed, so no worries there on your name Jacob. But at the first, it wasn't all that great. They grow up hostile against one another. Jacob's mom's favorite, kind of effeminate, homemaking classes, that kind of guy.

Esau, man's man, loved to hunt, dad's favorite. Jacob one day tricks his brother Esau for his birthright. Birthright's a big deal. That's where you get all the financial prosperity of your dad's wealth. Back in the day it wasn't fifty-fifty or twenty-five-twenty-five-twenty-five. It was one kid gets most of the wealth and the other kid gets a little bit of the wealth because somebody had to carry on the family name. So Jacob tricks Esau for the family name. And then a little bit later in life, not only does he take the physical blessing financial, but he takes a spiritual blessing from his brother Esau, who Isaac, his favorite being Esau, wanted to bless Esau, but what Jacob does, according to his mom's idea.

Dresses up like Esau, puts a bunch of hairy goat hair all over his arms, puts some nice old spice on his underarmpits so he smelled like a like a like a hairy man and goes into his dad's room and dad says who are you and he says I'm Esau. And dad smells the garments, the smell of my son Esau, but your voice, it's so high, it's not manly like my son Esau. And he says, no, dad, I really am. I'm your son Esau, and the Lord has blessed me. Tricks his dad into giving him the spiritual blessing.

And when Esau, the brother, finds out about it, he is torqued. So mad in fact that he swears as soon as my dad dies, I'm going to kill my brother. Well, Jacob's mom gets word of the murder plot of her son to her other son and says, you've got to go. You got to leave for a time until your brother's anger cools off. So Isaac and Rebekah send Jacob away to Haran. And that is a defining moment for Jacob. If you're taking notes, early on I would say Jacob was marked by cunning deceit and self-reliance.

Self-reliance in the fact that he was a his description in Genesis 25 is that he was a gentle person. But it doesn't just mean that he was quiet and gentle. It means someone that was very polished, put together. He projected himself to be a certain way. And in fact, when he deceived his dad, he actually argues with his mom and says, Mom, I don't want to do this because they may think I look a certain way. They may think of me as a deceiver. The problem wasn't being the deceiver, it was being seen in a certain way.

He was always manipulating his image so that it was a certain kind of presentation. But at the end of the day, it doesn't work out for him, and he has to go to Haran. It's about 30 days away, 500 or so miles, and there the Lord begins to work on him. He meets a girl named Rachel. Falls in love. Love at first sight, in fact, she was a shepherdess. He and Rachel fall in

love. He wants to marry Rachel, goes to Laban, Uncle Laban. That was the thing back in the day, marrying your cousin big deal.

He's like, I'd rather marry her to you than some other man. You don't hear that anymore, you know, in Abilene. Maybe in Arkansas, but not much in not much in Texas. They say, I will marry you, I will marry my daughter to you, but you've got to work for me for seven years. And so Jacob does. He works for seven years. But Laban was crossing his fingers when he said, I'm going to give you my daughter. And what he really meant was, I'm going to give you my older daughter, Leah.

I call her lazy-eyed Leah, because she was unattractive. It said that she had bad on the eyes, if you know what I mean. I don't know what she looked like, but she wasn't nearly as pretty as Rachel. Jacob is angered, outraged, how could you deceive me, Laban? He says, well it's just not our custom to marry the younger woman first, and so if you'll do the seven days of celebration and enjoy your wife Leah, I'll give you Rachel, but you've got to give me another seven years labor. So he does the seven days, gets Rachel.

His true love of his life, and then works another seven years. And during those seven years, their family life is marked by all kinds of brokenness and hostility. Leah has the one thing she doesn't have the one thing she truly wants, which is the love of her husband Jacob, but she has all these children. Rachel, on the other hand, has the love of her husband, but doesn't have the one thing she wants, which is children of her own. And so her and her sister have this competition of the affection of Jacob and they st they you know, Rachel or Leah has children and then she wants to have even more children, so she lets her servant sleep with Jacob and they have children and then.

When that happens, Rachel says, well, I can let my servant sleep with my husband too. And so they have this competition of whose servant can sleep with Jacob the most and then who can have the most children. And it's Jerry Springer on steroids, and it's absolutely devastatingly bad I can't believe it's in the Bible, much less the origin story of the people of God, but that's exactly what it was. And it was through that incredible suffering that the Lord begins to work on Jacob. Through trials and tribulations. God begins to transform Jacob into someone else, to something else.

And eventually after 20 years of doing that, working for Laban and building even his own wealth, Jacob decides it's time for me to go home. God explicitly tells him, Your time here is done. You got to go home. You got to face Esau. And so they leave. And they leave kind of secretly. Laban gets upset about it. He says, You didn't even let me say goodbye to my grandkids. So he tries to kill Jacob, chases him for seven days. They finally bury the hatchet. They have a treaty. Jacob says, I will never pass this rock ever again to come to you and you will never pass this rock to come to me.

And so literally Jacob has nowhere to go. He can't go east, he can't go west, he has no connections there, he can't go back because Laban is there and he swore he'd never go back to Laban He can only go forward. But he's feeling pretty good about it because God said it's time for you to go home and I'm going to be with you and it's going to be fine. So when he gets close to home, Jacob sends messengers ahead to Esau and says, Hey Esau, I'm coming home I want you to know I'm not here for your money.

I recognize I goofed. And he kind of admits his sin and assuages Esau's concern that maybe Jacob is here to take the inheritance. And Esau sends word back with Jacob's servant a message, and the message is your brother Esau is coming to see you with 400 armed men. And which was not what Jacob wanted to hear. So now Jacob is fearing for his life. He splits his camp into two camps so that if they do get overtaken by Esau, maybe at least somebody can survive and carry on the family name.

And then he begins to send his servants in camps ahead of him with gifts of everything that he owned, nearly everything that he owned, to assuage his brother's wrath, and he cries out to God and says, God, would you please deliver me. Would you please deliver me from my brother? Again, he's got nowhere else to go. He can't go back home. He can't go west. He can't go east. He can only go forward, and the person who's waiting on him has 400 armed men, and the last time they talked to each other, he wanted to kill him.

And that's where our text opens up today. Let's pick it up in Genesis 32, verse 21. It says, so the gift, the gift of these animals, was sent on ahead of Jacob while he remained in the camp that night. And during the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two slave women, which those were the servants of Leah and Rachel when they were living with Laban. But those were also his baby mamas. Okay, so it's basically his two wives, his two baby mamas, and eleven sons, and they crossed the ford of the Jabbok, which kind of sounds like Jacob in the original Hebrew.

And then he took them and sent them across the stream along with all of his possessions. Circle that word all. And then Jacob was left alone. Circle that word alone. And then a man wrestled with him until daybreak. He has literally nothing left. He has sent his wives, his children, and whatever you want to call those baby mama. Baby mama is not the right word. It's not a biblical word, but that's what they were. He has sent everything ahead. He's literally got nothing left. He's all alone. And that's when this man wrestles with him all night long.

And it's really instructive if you think about what it looks like to wrestle with God. One of the things you'll notice when God is ready to wrestle, He will strip you of everything. He will bring you to the end of your rope. You will have no one, nothing left. You will be stripped of your financial resources or any kind of resources that give you self-sufficiency or strength. You will think to yourself, God is punishing me, God must hate me. Why is this happening to

me? I've lost everything. And I'm not saying God does that necessarily to punish you or on purpose always.

Sometimes in the case of Jacob, it was just sometimes there's just the consequences of some of his own behavior and the consequence of living in a broken world. But the reality is God had allowed all of those things to take place in Jacob's life. To bring him to the end of his rope because it's not until Jacob was at the end of his rope that he was actually ready to wrestle with God and win. I think for a lot of people maybe they'd say, I want the blessing of God in my life.

I want to experience God's best for me, but what they don't often realize is that for God to do the work he needs to do. It's going to be costly. And a lot of people aren't willing to pay the price, or they're not willing to keep participating until they get to the place where God can actually do what he needs to do. If you want the blessing of God, you've got to pay the price of admission. And sometimes the pie the price is pretty high. It means coming to the end of your rope.

So Jacob is there at the end of his rope, and this man wrestles with him all night long. My question for you is what if the blessing of God required you to come to the end of your rope, for you to lose control, for you to have no recourse or resource left? He wrestles with this man, verse 24, all night long until daybreak. And when the man saw that he could not defeat him, in other words, when the wrestler saw that he couldn't defeat Jacob, He struck, some translations say he touched Jacob's hip socket as they wrestled, and he dislocated his hip.

I don't know if have you ever pulled your finger out of its socket? You know, playing pull my finger with your children and then they really pull your finger. It's really really painful, okay? But this is just a little little bone. The thigh bone is the biggest bone in the body, if I if I'm not mistaken. Is that right for you doctors in the house? It's the biggest bone in the body. To dislocate your thigh would have been extremely painful, and people don't just do that by touching it. That says struck in some translations, but this is no mere wrestler.

This is beyond WWE or WWF. This is this is this is something different. When he breaks the guy's leg, he says to Jacob, Let me go for it's daybreak. This is an interesting thing to say. But Jacob said, I will not let you go unless you bless me. Then the wrestler responds, what is your name? The man asked. And Jacob replied, my name is Jacob. Now that's kind of an interesting set of situations right he says let me go because it's daybreak. Who is he wrestling? Why does he have to be let go before daybreak?

Is this some kind of like vampire thing going on? Don't laugh. People have gone there. You got to watch what you read on watch what you watch on YouTube sometimes. I don't think it's a vampire, but he is he is insisting that you got to let me go before daybreak, Jacob is saying, I'm not going to let you go until you bless me. And the very next question before this

wrestler says I'm going to bless you is what is your name? Why does he ask Jacob what his name is it's kind of a curious question.

And if you look back, this is actually the only time. Now I'm sure Jacob referred to himself by his own name, Jacob. But this is the only time in the book of Genesis where Jacob refers to himself by name. And this is the only time up until this point. I don't think Jacob liked his name. In fact, Jacob was self-conscious about being the deceiver. In fact, when he's arguing with his mother about deceiving Isaac, he says, I don't want him to think of me as a deceiver. And then when his brother gets angry, he says, isn't he rightly named Jacob?

Deceiver. And when Laban tricks him, he's upset because he's deceived me. I think Jacob had a complex about being seen in a certain kind of way. He was a very put-together person. I think he was a very self-righteous person. And now this wrestler is saying, if you want me to bless you, I need you to confront the reality of the problem in your life. And the biggest problem in your life is not Esau, it's not Isaac. It's not Laban. The biggest problem in your life is the man in the mirror.

It is Jacob. Who are you? What is your name? And Jacob was forced to say, I'm a deceiver. I'm a supplanter. I'm the trickster. Now a lot of us are not named after our worst sin, right? Thank God. But one of the things you'll find when you want to wrestle with God and when God wants to wrestle with you, one of the things he's going to do is he's going to bring you to the end of your rope. And while you are there at the end of your rope, he is going to bring you face to face with your sin.

Because he has to. For you to wrestle with God and win, you've got to confront the reality of your sin. And the reality of Jacob's sin is that he had kind of pointed the finger and deflected and distracted and it was always somebody else's fault. And it was always the he was always better than so on or somebody. He was always distracting and deflecting and pointing the finger and now this wrestler is saying those days are done, no more pointing the finger unless you're pointing in the mirror. What is your name?

And I wonder for us if the Lord was to ask us what is your name, what would you say? What which I wouldn't say well my name's Wes. My birth name is Wesley, but no one calls me that anymore. What he means is what is that thing in your life that you keep deflecting from? What is that thing? You point the finger at everybody else because you're afraid if they look too long or they look behind your finger, they'll see what you're really trying to hide. What is that thing you spent your whole life trying to cover up?

What is that secret unbelief in your heart, that besetting sin, that thing you hope nobody ever finds out about? That source of shame is what God needs to expose and what you need to confess if you're going to wrestle with God and win. He'll bring you to the end of your rope. He'll bring you face to face with your sin. And then he'll bless you. He says, I'm not

going to let you go until you bless me. And he says, what's your name? He replies, my name is Jacob. And then he replies in verse 28, Your name will no longer be Jacob, he said, it will be Israel.

Because you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed. And then Jacob asked him, well please tell me your name, which I think's funny. And he answered, why do you ask my name? And he blessed him there. People wonder why is Jacob asking this guy's name? Well somebody broke my hip and dislocated it. I'd want to know their name as well. I read some commentators said to know someone's name was kind of like a way to have a one-upsmanship on them or to have authority over them. I don't know if that's if that's all true, but basically if that is true, this is Jacob's way of trying to get something on this wrestler and this wrestler's saying, no, you're not going to get anything on me, but I've got something on you.

And he also changes Jacob's name. Which I wonder what Jacob thought about that. Jacob says, I'm not going to let you go until you bless me and the wrestler says, okay, I'm going to bless you. Your name's no longer Jacob, it's Israel. I wonder if what Jacob's blessing what he had in mind was, how about four hundred armed men on my side? How about deliverance? How about how about some friends over to the east side or the west side so that I can escape? But that's not what the Lord does.

And I do think this is him wrestling the Lord. You know, some people say it's an angel of the Lord. I actually think it's a Christophany, which is an appearance of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament before the gospels. I think he's wrestling with the Lord Jesus and the and the Lord is basically saying what you really need is not money or prosperity or deliverance. What you really need is a transformation of your identity and that I can give to you and that is my blessing for you. You're no longer Jacob, you're no longer trickster, you're no longer the supplanter, now you're Israel, which means you've prevailed against God and men and you've wrestled against God and men and won.

And if you ask, well, if that's if personal transformation is the blessing that I ultimately need, how did Jacob receive that blessing? In what way did he prevail against God? Because it obviously wasn't physically. Because he had his hip broken with just a finger. And it obviously wasn't intellectually or anything like that. So how did Jacob prevail against man and God? The way that Jacob prevailed is with persistence. Endurance. He refused to quit. You can see his persistence in the fact that he wrestles all night long. I don't know if you've ever wrestled anyone.

Back in the day, growing up in Roby, I was an amateur WWF NWO member and we would wrestle in this mesquite field and we had a we had a ring and everything. And I'm surprised I don't have any broken bones or didn't go to jail. I mean it was absolute madness. But if you've ever really wrestled with someone, it is exhausting. Much less to wrestle with

someone all night long, I can't even imagine Jacob did so. He was persistent. The other thing you see Jacob and the reason that he won is because of confession.

He had a spirit of humility and repentance. He acknowledged, my problem isn't them, my problem is me. And then the other thing you see Jacob do, which I think is the reason why he wins, is because of his faith. He had this persistent faith. He says, I'm not going to let you go until you bless me. This was not Jacob being obstinate or stubborn. This is Jacob calling God on his word. He's saying, You promised me you would bless me. Back in Genesis 27, before I even went to Haran, you said, I'm going to bless you, I'm going to be with you every step of the way.

I'm going to bring you back home. I'm giving you the blessing of Abraham. This is Jacob saying, I haven't seen the blessing yet. I haven't got the blessing yet. I'm about to die because I'm about to face my brother Esau. If you don't bless me, I'm not letting you go. This is Jacob exercising faith in the Lord's word, in the Lord's promise to say, bless me. And if you want to see transformation in your life. It comes through those same things. You've got to keep enduring, persevering. There requires humility and confession of sin.

You'll never heal. If you're not willing to look at what's really the problem, and you've got to have faith that God's promises are true and that God will do what He promised to do in blessing you. And namely through the Lord Jesus Christ, which is how God blesses us today in this covenant. In the Abrahamic covenant, it was different for Jacob and Abraham for us today. Jacob is pointing us to Jesus and the transformation of our identity in him. And so he blesses Jacob with a change of his name. And then it says Jacob named the place Peniel, and he names it Peniel, which means face of God, because he says, I've seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared, which is an interesting thing to say if you win against God.

Okay, he didn't win in the sense of physical dominance. He said I won because I met God and I didn't die. I've seen God face to face and my life has been spared. And then the sun shone on him as he passed by Penuel, which is the same thing just pronounced differently. And he was limping because of his hip. And that is why still today the Israelites don't eat the thigh muscle that isn't the hip socket because he struck Jacob's hip socket at the thigh muscle. You see the contrast between the wrestling all night and the sun shining on him.

Jacob says, I've seen God face to face and I've lived. Moses says, nobody has ever seen God face to face and lived. This is why I think the angel says, it's almost daybreak, I've got to go, because if he didn't go, Jacob would have seen him and might not have lived because no one sees God face to face. And lives. What you see though is Jacob's utter transformation into a totally different person, and he limps across the threshold of this sacred site called Penuel. And that's the last thing that'll happen when you wrestle with God.

He'll bring you to the end of your rope. He'll bring you face to face with your sin. It results in a transformation of your identity, and then it will leave you with a lifelong limp. A lifelong limp that is so lifelong, even the Israelites today don't eat the muscle at the thigh bone because that's where Jacob, that's where God struck Jacob's hip. It's a it's a marker, it's an identifier that you have met with God when you walk with the lamp. I've heard I love this A. W. Tozer quote. He says, it's doubtful whether a man.

Can it's doubtful whether God can ever use a man greatly until he has wounded him deeply. Such a good quote. I remember hearing that quote as a young preacher going, that don't sound good. Because you want to be used by God, you want to be used by God in a great way, but then you realize all the great men and women of God who've been used greatly by God Almost all of them had a very high pain tolerance. In fact, I really believe that there is a relationship in your leadership between your pain tolerance and your successes in life.

Those who have been greatly used by God usually go through incredible valleys and seasons of suffering and pain because God uses those seasons of pain and suffering to transform and develop you into the man or woman that can be greatly used by God. It's doubtful whether God will use someone greatly until he wounds them deeply. And he wounds Jacob deeply so that he walks with a lifelong limp. Now, for us today who are not physically wrestling with God, what does a limp look like? It looks like someone who's actually seen God face to face and lives.

When you see God face to face, what you see is a holy God, a God who is infinitely beyond you, a God who is perfect and you are not. You are mortal. You are sinful. You are desperately more sinful than you could have even imagined because when you come into the presence of a holy God that glory actually exposes things about you maybe didn't even see before. And in that way, it is a crushing thing. It is a devastating thing. It destroys your confidence in yourself and in your self-reliance. But you also see when you look at the face of God, his amazing love for you.

Because if you look at the face of God and the face of Jesus Christ, you see God loved you so much, He sent His Son to pay the penalty for your sin, to die in your place. And so as Tim Keller likes to say, you're simultaneously far worse off than you could have ever imagined, yet simultaneously you're far more loved. Than you could have ever dared to hope. And what that does is it leaves you with a lamp. You are forever marked by humility, but at the same time by contentment.

You're marked by a deep awareness of your sins, but at the same time, an absolute confidence in the love of God for your sinful self, not because of your sake, but for the sake of Jesus who died. For you. It leaves you with a lamp. And if you've ever truly wrestled with God, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about. Now why does God wound us in that way? I don't think the wounds are wounds of love. In fact, if you're here today and you're in the

middle of a struggle, one of the things I would encourage you with is that your greatest struggle may be actually preparation from God for you of his greatest blessing.

Your greatest your greatest pain may be the preparation stage for God's greatest blessing in your life. God took the worst day of human history, the crucifixion of Jesus, and brought it into a day of salvation and glory. If he can turn b ashes into beauty, heaviness for a garment of praise with the cross. Then he can do so in your life as well. And you know, whatever God's reasons are for allowing you pain and suffering, it isn't because he hates you. He proved that he didn't hate you, but that he indeed loves you.

Because of what he accomplished for you through Jesus Christ on the cross. So whatever his reasons are, it isn't because he's angry or indifferent or somehow detached from your suffering, his wounds are wounds of love. And sometimes the hostility of God is it's apparent, it's not actual. Just like when Jesus in the Gospels is in Mark chapter seven, there's this Syrophoenician woman who has a sick daughter. And she goes to Jesus and she says, Jesus, please heal my daughter. And Jesus says to her, no, it's not proper to give the children's bread to the dogs.

You didn't know that one was in there, did you? How could you be so how could you be so mean? How could you be so rude, Jesus? Well he wasn't being rude for the sake of rudeness. He was testing this woman's resolve. He was testing this woman's faith. And she says, well, even the dogs get the drippings from the table, something along those lines. And Jesus says, go home, your daughter's healed. And sometimes God will be apparently hostile to you. And you'll pray and feel like God is not there or God doesn't care.

And one of the things that God may be doing in those times is testing the your resolve and his goodness. Do you really believe? Do you really have faith? Faith enough to persist even when it's not immediate, even when it's not exactly when you want it, even though it's not exactly how you want it, will you continue to trust me? Will you continue to walk by faith? That's what it looks like to wrestle with God and win. So how do you win when you wrestle with God just like Jacob won?

You endure, you persist. You refuse to give up. You keep one foot in front of the other until God finishes what he's doing. You have a spirit of confession and humility. Jesus said it this way, blessed are the poor in spirit. So there's a weakness. He also says, blessed are those who mourn. So there needs to be a spirit of repentance, mourning over your sin, agreeing with God about the facts. And then finally there needs to be a spirit, Jesus said, blessed are the meek for they'll inherit the earth, so meekness is a spirit of surrender, a spirit of God, it's you your will, not my will, you take the reins and not me.

Blessed are the meek, for they'll inherit the earth, and then blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they will be satisfied. And so if you will demonstrate a

spirit of weakness and repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm not saying you're going to wrestle and win today, but if you will wrestle and persevere, you can wrestle with God and prevail. And it may be this morning that that's exactly what the Lord wants to do with you. As we get ready to take the Lord's Supper and we commemorate the body of Jesus broken for us and the blood of Jesus shed for us, it may be this morning that God is calling you to put your faith in Jesus for salvation.

I would say the vast majority of us here this morning are believers, and I think the word of the Lord for us this morning is to examine your own life and to ask the question, do I walk, do I still walk with the lamp? Because it is such a temptation for Christians after they've been walking with the Lord to lose their limp, to forget just how amazing God's grace truly is in Jesus. To forget just how sinful we truly are You get a couple sins overcome in your life and you think you're the best thing since sliced bread, where the reality is we're really not.

The heart is desperately sick. You can't even really understand it. And that's why Jesus came to die. And so is your life marked by that kind of humility, gentleness? Peace and contentment in the Lord. It may be this morning that the Lord wants to restore that spirit in you, but He has to wrestle with you first. And so however the Lord leads, the altar will be open. We're going to take just a few moments of introspection and prayer. I'll be happy to pray with you if you want to pray with me.

I'd be happy to talk with you after the service. But after we've had a few moments to respond, I'm going to ask our restors to come to the front and we'll take the Lord's Supper together.