

Jacob, God Wrestler

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-6 Larry: Moms. Children's Min. FPU. Stir. Daily Breads.
- B. Slide7 Children at Risk: 3-5pm. Kristi Piatkowski presenting for *Rancho Damacitas*.
- C. Slide8,9 Men's Ministry: Greg interview.

II. Slide10 Intro: Jacob, God Wrestler

- A. Hosea is going to draw a lesson from history, specifically from the life of Jacob.
 1. Jacob had 2 meetings with God: 1 at Bethel, the other at the brook Jabbok.¹
 2. At Bethel he saw a ladder, at Jabbok he saw the Lord.
 3. At Bethel he became a believing man, at Jabbok a broken man.
 4. At Bethel he became a son of God, at Jabbok a saint of God.
 5. At Bethel he came away w/a spring in his step, at Jabbok he came away with a limp in his walk.
 6. At Bethel he died to his sin, at Jabbok he died to self.

III. JACOB, GOD WRESTLER (1-14)

- A. Slide11a GRAZING ON THE WIND (1)
- B. (1) Who has seen sheep ignore grass & start grazing on the wind?
 1. I just saw a flock of sheep off the 215 Thursday. Most all had their heads were down, grazing. And Yet that's how God's people were living, feeding on the wind.
 2. Slide11b We know wind has no nourishment yet are we knowingly feeding on anything that isn't spiritually beneficial?
 3. Often, God prompts us to put down the cotton candy & sit down at His banqueting table.
 4. Maybe this is a reminder for all of us to quit chasing the wind. [or attacking windmills]

¹ John Phillips, Exploring Genesis, pg.261.

C. Slide12a JACOB THE SCHEMER (2-6)

D. (2-6) Jacob (the builder of the 12 tribes) is an illustration of God's loving discipline to make us *cling to Him*.

1. Hosea then sites a few key events in Jacob's life.

a) Jacob tried to trip up Esau at birth. He also fought/wrestled w/God.

b) **But** he returned to Bethel (where he orig 1st met the Lord) & found God's blessing again.

E. The time had come for Israel to **return** to God & repent of their sins.

F. Slide12b FOOLED INTO FALSE SECURITY (7-14)

G. (7) Jacob/Israel still the schemer. [Duck-shaped standardized stone weights from Mesopotamia, 11th-8th cent bc]

H. (8) **What an empty boast** - It sounds like a *Laodicean boast*.

1. Rev.3:17 *Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing; & do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, & naked.*

2. **Trusting** in their wealth, the **proud** Israelites *disregarded God*.

I. (12b) Laban (Rachael & Leah's dad) required all the sheep at Jacob's hand. If torn by a beast, Jacob had to pay it back. If any of them died, Jacob had to pay it back.

1. *These 20 years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night.*

2. **Jesus'** toil for His church was the same...bringing every one safe to the hand of Him who had committed them to his charge.

3. Jn.6:39 *And this is the will of God, that I should **not lose even one of all those** He has given me, **but that I should raise them up at the last day.***

IV. Slide13a **WRESTLEMANIA** (Gen.32:22-32) **Read Story*

A. The story leads you to **believe** that Jacob is a strapping lad. That he had some awesome **wrestling moves**. That he actually gave God a good match.

1. Slide13b Remember, Jacob had a twin, Esau. Esau was **Harry** Jacob was **not**. Esau was a **Hunter**, Jacob a **homemaker**. Jacob always got what he wanted with manipulation, grabbing, or laying hold of.
2. He was as much a match for God as any of us...thinking we could *keep the law*, or our list of *do's and don'ts*.

B. Slide14a LEFT ALONE (24)

C. It is when we *get alone with God* that good things begin to happen.

1. Keep in mind that **Jacob** was **not** wrestling to *get a blessing* from God; **rather**, he was *defending himself, refusing to yield, refusing to surrender*.
2. The Lord wanted to **break Jacob** and bring him to the place where he would honestly say, *Not I, but Christ* (Gal. 2:20).

D. Paul in Philippians goes on & on, on *how sensational he is (I'm from the best tribe, I'm the smartest, I'm blameless)* but I'm not going to remember that...even though I just commemorated that in Scripture for ever :)

1. He was saying all my *wrestling*, all of my *achievements* have become **obstacles** if I don't let them go...*so I can embrace Jesus!*
2. Slide14b Phil.3:5-9 msg *You know my pedigree: a legitimate birth, circumcised on the eighth day; an Israelite from the elite tribe of Ben-jamin; a strict and devout adherent to God's law; a fiery defender of the purity of my religion, even to the point of persecuting the church; a meticulous observer of everything set down in God's law Book. The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash - along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant - dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ - God's righteousness.*

a) Free gift. **Can't be earned.** It can't be deserved. **Only accepted & received.**

E. **Slide15a GOD WRESTLER (24)**

F. **A Man** - an angel. The Angel of God. God. *A theophany*, a **visible** (& in this case) **tangible** manifestation of the God who is *intrinsically invisible*. [see **God** in 28 & 30]

1. And He accommodated His strength to Jacob's.

2. This is **no even match**. This isn't showing Jacob's strength & almost winning.

3. **Eg.** me wrestling with Harper, Owen & Jude Friday. [Steam-roller & wrestling]

a) We go for hours. **They almost win, then I take over.** [that's what *God's* doing here]

b) **God** is wrestling with **Jacob**, **more than Jacob** is wrestling with **God**.

G. **Slide15b Wrestling** is about *who's in charge* (God or Jacob? God or you?)

1. *In this corner*...the Undisputed...Undefeated...**Creator of the universe**.

a) **He doesn't lose.** His record, 10 billion to zero.

2. Jacob wouldn't tap out. **Yield. Submit. Surrender.**

3. **So God put his hip out of socket w/a touch.** It's the biggest socket in the body, the **strongest muscle in the body.** **When the hip goes out of joint the fight is over.**

4. God has to break us down at the **strongest part** of our **self-life** **before** He can have His own way of **blessing** with us.

a) When God touched the **strongest sinew** of the wrestler, it **shrank**, and **with it** Jacobs **persistent self-confidence** also **shrank**.

b) **You let God touch the strongest part of your self-life** (the thing that is holding back His full blessing) **you too** will become a **prince** and a **power** with God.

5. **Slide15c There is victory in surrender when we are conquered by Christ.**

6. When God wrestles, He **is** going to win. Win with **you**.

a) **You're wrestling with God is over** because of **Jesus**. Our *wrestling* with God was a farce any ways, just as my grandchildren think that they were wrestling me.

H. **Slide16a TURNING POINT (26-31)**

I. This is the typical scene in **every transformed life**. In each of us we come to the **crisis hour**.

1. It's either when all our **resources fail**. Or when we are **facing ruin**. It's when we have to **let something go**. It's when we have to **surrender**. It's when we have to **cease** from **our own wisdom, strength, and righteousness**.

2. God knows how to lead us **up to this crisis** and He knows how to **lead us through** it. We all need to be **crippled by a supernatural blow**. [smackdown!]

J. Slide16b BLESS ME (26)

K. He recognizes that his **wrestle partner** is **not** an ordinary man, **nor** out to destroy him.

L. Slide16c CLING (26)

M. Jacob got the **victory** and the **blessing** not by **wrestling**, but by **clinging**.

1. **God** weakened **Jacob**, and the wrestler could only **cling**.

2. **Now** instead of **scheming** for a blessing or **bargaining** for a blessing, **he asked God** for the blessing - and he received it.

N. Slide16d WHAT IS YOUR NAME? JACOB (27)

O. We don't truly see **ourselves** until first we see **the Lord**.

1. **What is your name?** was the question that forced Jacob to **confess his true self** - I'm **Jacob**, the schemer! **I was born grabbing for something that wasn't mine**.

2. I'm **Jacob** the **heel-catcher** who got my **hip caught**. I'm **Jacob** the **supplanter** the one who **trips up** others, **now** is tripped up w/a limp.

3. I'm **Jacob** the **schemer & conniver**. I'm **Jacob** the **crafty, clever, calculating, & cunning**. I'm **Jacob** the cheat & liar. I'm **Jacob** the **supplanter, manipulator, selfish one**. [see in the OT your **name** was linked to your **character**]

a) He represents **every human** that is **trusting** in his own ways/devices.

b) **What is your name?** **You** have to admit/reveal **who you really are** at the **core** of your being. Honest about your **nature**, your **whole nature**.

4. Once he faced himself and confessed his sin, **Jacob** could be **changed**.

P. Slide16e NAME CHANGE - ISRAEL (28)

Q. He no longer is known for his **old habits** and **misdeeds**. **No longer Jacob**.

1. God gave him *a new name* - **Israel**, *prince with God* *or* *a God-governed man*.
 2. The way to have **power with God** *is* to be **broken by God**.
 3. God gave him **a new name**, **a new beginning** and **a new power** as he began *walking in the Spirit* and *not* in the flesh.
 4. He didn't **earn** his new name. *But behold all things are new*. [new name, new nature, new character]
 5. **Your** name change...*Follower of Christ, Christian* (one who lives in Christ).
- R. *Once saved we no longer wrestle with God*. You will hear that often, *but* it isn't true.
1. If you want to wrestle or strive for something, Heb.4:11 says, *strive to enter that rest*. In that finished work of Jesus.
- S. *Slide16f SO WHAT'S YOUR NAME (29) i.e. God's name*
- T. (29) *Ok, so what is Your name?* None of you business. *Why ask?* Maybe to honor him?
1. It was an ancient near Eastern **pagan** belief that *knowing a spiritual beings name* gave a person the ability to evoke the power of that being.
 2. *But here*, the divine name is *withheld*, showing that the Lord's revelation of His name is *a gracious act of divine initiative*, *NOT a response to human effort to invoke or control God*.
- U. *Slide16g WALKING WITH A LIMP (31)*
- V. Its a new walk of *Transparency*.
1. How dare we pray...*God, give me compassion for broken people. What???*
Don't ever forget, **you-are-broken**.
 2. *Are you ok? I'm good. I'm fine*. Oh, you look like your *limping*. *No no!*
 3. *Christians, we all have a limp*. Some of us limp so bad **He** has to *carry us!*
 4. *It's a walk of dependency* (think cane). Jesus gives us a new **walk**, a new **limp**
 5. He had been **broken** by God, *but* his limp was a mark of **power**, *not weakness*
 6. In the **old way** my limp *disqualified me* (think priesthood). In my **new way** my limp **qualifies** me.
- W.(31) Just as he crossed over Penuel *the sun rose on him*, and he *limped* on his hip.

1. Indicates *the dawning of a new day*, as the sun rose and Jacob limped out to meet Esau...but this time...*with God's help*. *Wiersbe*

X. **End:**

- Y. *I'm the God of Jacob*. I'm the God of *that part of you* you don't want *anyone to see*.
I'm the God of Jacob. I'm not only the God of your **success** but the God of your **struggle**.
I'm the God of Jacob. I'm not only the God of your **victories** but the God of your **defeats**.
1. **Oh turn to Jacob's God**. Cast yourself *helplessly* in His arms...and there **cling!**
Hold on. **Don't let go**. Now wait for the **blessing...Himself!**