

STRANDED - Jacob

September 17, 2023 Genesis 33:1-4

OPENING QUESTION

Tell the truth: Have you ever watched WWE Professional Wrestling? Did you know...it's not real?!?! What about Olympic wrestling? Did you ever wrestle with your brothers or sisters growing up?

JACOB & ESAU ISAACSON - Genesis 33:1-4

1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two female servants. 2 And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. 3 He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

EMBRACING OUR GOD

- In Genesis 32, when Jacob wrestles with God, we see a profound truth.
- It's not surprising that we wrestle God, it's surprising that God wrestles with us.
- We are embracing our God who, out of His infinite grace, wrestles with us!
- All of us, in certain seasons of life, do not recognize we are wrestling with God, but we are. We acknowledge, or soon will, that God is superior, He is in control of all things, and that all things come from Him.
- We wrestle with God because we are trying to control our lives - to be the commander of our ship. We even wrestle with God because we're trying to control Him.
- We truly believe us being in control of our lives is the best chance we have to get the good life we all desire.
- But why does God wrestle with us? He wrestles with us because of His grace.
- Jacob had been wrestling with God and his family all of his life.
- He's stranded. Wandering in the desert in a far away land. And God still blesses him, abundantly.
- We think we're wrestling with our unsatisfactory job, or our lack of wealth, or our lack of resources. But like Jacob, we're wrestling with God. It's no one else's fault we're stranded but ours.
- BUT God, in His grace wrestles us.
- *Stranded* - stressed, burnt out and anxious because we're in a wrestling match with God for control, and we cannot win the match.
- God then renames Jacob "Israel" —which means *struggle (or wrestle) with God*

Why do we keep wrestling with God for control of our lives when we know we can't win? How is the fact that He wrestles with us is an act of grace? What are some areas in which you wrestle with God?

EMBRACING OUR LIMP

- Jacob now has a dislocated hip. Along with it came a tremendous amount of pain and a serious limp, and now he has to face his brother alone, with a limp.
- He probably couldn't defeat him on his own before, since Esau was an outdoorsman and Jacob was more of an indoorsman, but now he really stands no chance.
- This is now a completely different Jacob. Jacob is exhibiting a mood of peaceful resignation, accepting whatever God has in store for him.
- Jacob now goes before his family, instead of after (see ch 32), and is much more humble (bowing, which had to hurt his hip).
- Jacob's life is in God's hands; he's finally relinquished control.
- The limp has broken him and humbled him. He has no choice but to trust God. He's completely out of control and doing things God's way - exactly where God wants him to be.
- V. 4: "But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept." What?!?! Jacob wawa very surprised.
- 5 verbs: Ran, embraced, fell, kissed, wept.
- Running to Jacob reminds us of the father running to the lost son (Luke 15).
- Outward emotions of embracing and kissing show a strong family unity and love.
- Grace is enough! It's enough to no longer make us feel stranded, but instead remind us of home: a family, a loving brother and a loving father.
- Jacob now had a limp the rest of his life. However, this limp was the grace of God, serving as a physical reminder to Jacob that God is in control. A reminder to not just believe that truth, but to also trust in it.

Do you have a limp, that is, something that reminds you of God's grace and sovereignty? Are there memorial stones around you (Joshua 4:1-7) that remind you of God's grace and ultimate protection in your life?



CLOSING QUESTIONS

Hear

What are some things that stood out to you in this week's sermon and Scriptures?

Obey

Where is the hope in Genesis 33:1-4? Is there hope in wrestling with God? What if He didn't wrestle with you, what would that look like? What are some verses that encourage you when you wrestle/argue/doubt God? Is it a privilege to walk with a God who will wrestle with you?

Pray

Pray for God to show you His heart, that He wants to walk with you, and give you hope every day. There's nothing wrong with wrestling with God if you know He's going to win and take care of you!