

³ Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. ⁴ And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now.

⁵ I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.'""⁶ Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men *are* with him."

⁷ So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that *were* with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. ⁸ And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."

⁹ Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you':

¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies.

¹¹ Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me *and* the mother with the children.

¹² For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'""¹³ So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother:

¹⁴ two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, ¹⁵ thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals.

¹⁶ Then he delivered *them* to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves."

¹⁷ And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose *are* these in front of you?'

¹⁸ then you shall say, 'They *are* your servant Jacob's. It *is* a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also *is* behind us.'"

¹⁹ So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him;

²⁰ and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob *is* behind us.'"" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me."

²¹ So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.²² And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok.

²³ He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. ²⁴ Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.

²⁵ Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.

²⁶ And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"²⁷ So He said to him, "What *is* your name?" He said, "Jacob."

²⁸ And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

²⁹ Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell *me* Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why *is* it *that* you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

Back ground

In the book of Genesis you will find a guy named Isaac. He has two kids (Jacob and Esau) Isaac has one blessing to give to one of his kids.

The Blessing

- The nations will bow down to you!
- You are going to rule over your brother
- You will be prosperous

Isaac was going to bless Esau. But Jacob deceived his Dad and stole the blessing.

So naturally Esau hated Isaac. So much so that he said that when his Dad dies, he was going to kill his brother.

But his Mom overheard it. So his Mom said get out of here and go live with my brother for a time until your brother calms down.

So that's what happened, Jacob left and moved far away with his uncle. He lived there for twenty years.

In those twenty years Jacob became prosperous. He had two wives, so many children and so much live stock. !

But there is a problem, in order to get home he has to pass through the place where his brother lives.

32:3-5

He sends a messenger to say "please forgive me and don't hurt me".

Jacob was probably stressed waiting for the messenger to come back.

32:6

He is coming with 400 men.

When I was in junior high school 4 guys wanted to beat me up. I was scared. But Jacob has 400 guys coming after him.

He is probably thinking he is coming to slaughter not only him but his family. He is probably thinking that Esau is going to come kill everyone and then kill Jacob last.

There is no way out now. They are coming.

V7 -8 He was greatly afraid and distressed.

- not afraid, but GREATLY Afraid

One time I was face to face with a pit bull dog. Pit bull dogs are probably the most dangerous dog. They bite and then lock their jaw. Like Jacob, I was GREATLY afraid

So he starts making a plan.

- If Esau attacks one group, the other group should run.

So he begins to pray

V 9-11

Jacob says he fears that Esau will come and attack him, his wives and the children.

V13-21

Jacobs breaks the group into two and sends a big present.

Presents have a way of appeasing people.

Years ago I worked with a girl who was always angry. If anyone talked to her she would get angry. On her last day, I bought her a present as a way to appease her. It worked.

Jacob is hoping the present will appease Esau.

V22 – 23

So Jacobs sends everyone ahead of him and he stays by himself. He is left alone. Notice what happens.

V24

A man wrestled with Jacob. It doesn't say that Jacob wrestled with the Man. But the Man wrestled with Jacob. The man is the one that started it. They wrestled until the breaking of the day.

- When I was in high school, I was on the wrestling team. My brother also wrestled. From kids we loved fighting sports. We even loved pro wrestling. (Hulk Holgan). Most kids just punch each other once. But my brother and I would get angry at each other and wrestle all day. Our room would be destroyed.

One of my weak points in life is watching boxing or fighting sports. I wish I could have seen Jesus wrestle all night with Jacob. What kind of wrestling moves were they doing? Headlocks?

This wrestling match must of been a good one because notice what happens.

V25

Jacob was putting up a good fight. Jesus had to put his hip out of joint.

Having a hip out of joint must hurt.

In high school I tore my ligament in a wrestling match. As soon as my ligaments tore, I let go of my opponent. But Jacob does not let go. Notice what happens.

V26

I imagine he was holding Jesus by the ankle.

Jacob said, "I WILL NOT LET YOU GO UNLESS YOU BLESS ME!"

If you leave we all die.

He wanted Jesus' blessing!!!!

Remember his life and his family lives are in danger. Jacob was not giving up!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It was like Jacob was saying, "I want your protection, I need this and I am not giving up on you.

Even with my hip out of joint, I am not letting you go unless you bless me."

What a great desire

I read this and think about how weak my prayers are with God. Many times I give up in my prayers.

Notice verse 27-28

Jesus said, "You have wrestled with God and won! "

What does this mean? I believe God came to wrestle with Jacob to see how much Jacob wanted the blessing.

I am a teacher. And sometimes kids will want an extra sticker or something. And I say, you want it, then if you can answer all of the questions at the end of the class, or speak English only, then I will give the extra sticker to you. Most kids say, "I can't do it!" I think, they really don't want it.

But other kids will do all they can to get the extra sticker because they want it. When they get it they appreciate it.

Verse 29

God blessed Jacob.

Jacob got the blessing. His hip was out of joint, but he got the blessing.

When you read the next chapter you find out that everything went ok.

What does this mean for us?!

Is God going to come and physically wrestle us? I don't think so.

I think God wants to wrestle us in prayer.

What you do mean?

I have a list of things that I pray for.

1. Sometimes I pray a simple prayer and it gets answered.

2. Other times, I feel when I pray for something, God is tugging at me to continue praying. But sometimes I don't want to pray or continue praying. I want to eat a cookie or something. Or check my email or see what is happening on CNN. But God is saying to keep praying, battle in the prayer.

Sometimes I even fall asleep while I am praying.

How bad do you want it? I believe that for some of my prayers, God wants me to say, "I am not letting you go unless you bless me. I am not giving up."

Even though I am praying for something and it seems like it is not going to happen or that the situation is contrary, God wants us to say, "We are not going to let you go unless you bless us."

Recently, I let go of a prayer and put it in the unanswered section. I felt in my heart that God was saying, "Don't give up."

I will be honest with you. I have prayed for things and it seems like the situation got worse. For somethings it seemed like the more I prayed, God was doing the opposite.

A couple of month ago, I prayed for something and it seemed like the more I prayed the worse it got. I actually told my wife, I am not even going to pray for that anymore. Because it seems like my prayers are having a negative impact. So I gave up and stopped praying. For a few weeks I refused to pray for that. But God encouraged me to continue.

1984 the marathon runner almost collapsed during the last lap. But the crowd cheered and she struggled to make it past the finish line and succeeded.

Don't give up on your prayers. God challenged me last year to start recording my prayers by writing them down. I write them down on a spread sheet. I encourage you to do the same. I saw many of the prayers get answered and go off the list quickly. But some prayers, seem like they never get answered. I feel God saying, "Wrestle in prayer. Don't give up praying"

I believe God wants us to say, "I will not let You go unless you bless me!"