

SONRISE

SMALLGROUPS

HEROES OF THE FAITH

SEPTEMBER 22, 2019

JACOB: PHYSICAL FAITH OR PREVAILING FAITH (GENESIS 32:22-32)

MAIN POINT

God challenges our deepest strengths and deepest satisfactions to display His grace through us.

INTRODUCTION

- How does our culture define strength? How does this differ from the Bible's definition of strength?
- When was a time you "wrestled with God"? What was the outcome?

God desires to make us into the image of His Son, but this cannot happen if we are intent on living by our own strength and pursuing our own satisfactions, as Jacob was. This week's Scripture passage from the life of Jacob is a vivid picture of the extent God will go to in order to teach us dependency on Him and the sufficiency of His grace.

DISCUSSION

> Read Genesis 32:22-32.

- Why did God engage Jacob in a wrestling match? What was the purpose of God injuring Jacob?
- Has God ever forced you to confront conflict after you have continually tried to avoid it? Describe the experience.
- Do you really think God could not overcome Jacob? Why, then, did God allow the wrestling to go on so long?
- What is so appealing about self-reliance? Why is it dishonoring to God?
- What aspects of a relationship with God do we miss out on when we are focused on our selves?
- God asked Jacob for his name. What might be significant about this question? What was God really asking Jacob?
- How does Jacob's new name reflect both who Jacob was and who he would be in the future?
- Explain the significance of Jacob's statement that he had seen God's face, yet his life was spared.
- When was a time you have seen God redeem a circumstance of pain or hardship? What did God teach you about His purposes through this experience?

APPLICATION

- What about Jacob's experience with God reminds us of the gospel? How can you reflect on that this week? How can you share it with others?
- How have you been wounded you, either literally or figuratively? How does today's study change your perspective on your brokenness?

COMMENTARY

Genesis 32:22-32

Finally, after twenty years Jacob returned to his homeland. On the way he learned that Esau was coming to meet him. Fearing that his own efforts to safeguard himself from Esau's revenge were inadequate, Jacob entreated the Lord to deliver him. The Lord again appeared to Jacob, this time as a human foe, and wrestled with the patriarch through the night. Impressed with his persistent struggle, the "man" blessed Jacob with a change of name (Jacob to Israel, prince of God). The deceiver (ya akob) had become a nobleman, one fit to rule through the authority of the sovereign God. The subsequent encounter with Esau proved to be peaceful. Indeed, Jacob saw in Esau's forgiveness a reflection of God's face.