

The Next Generation, Part 10: Praying, Wrestling, Transforming (Gen 32)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on December 8, 2013

It's a joy for me each week to teach through the book of Genesis and today we'll be in Genesis 32. One of the reasons I enjoy this sort of study is that it shows us the truths taught in the NT in real lives of ordinary people like us. Paul says all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, training in righteousness, which makes us complete (and when he wrote that, the OT was the primary Scripture he was referring to in 2 Timothy 3:16). Paul then says "preach the Word" (4:2). Preach the OT, he says, because it's profitable and practical to see doctrine applied in the OT, and to see how the examples of their sins rebuke us and correct us and instruct us in our train to live rightly. I love to study Paul's letters, and the way he gives doctrines and duties to us, but the Paul I love to study also tells me to preach the OT so we can see the application in real lives of sinful people like us with the same Savior as us. I love to see the gospel in the OT long before the 4 NT gospels were written.

Before I read Genesis 32 let me remind you of the context. In chapter 25 Jacob took advantage of his twin brother Esau and took his birthright in the process. In chapter 27 Jacob tricked his blind father Isaac into giving him the blessing of the firstborn that would have gone to Esau. When Esau found out, he was telling people he planned to murder Jacob in revenge, so Jacob flees for his life with just a staff and goes over 400 miles north into the land of Haran in Mesopotamia outside the Promised Land. Rebekah tells Jacob when Esau's anger calms down she'll send for him. 20 years later, Jacob hasn't heard back from mom, and doesn't know of Esau's attitude, but God tells Jacob to go back to his father's house in chapter 31, and he obeys.

Genesis 32:1 *Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him.* ² *Jacob said when he saw them, "This is God's camp." So he named that place Mahanaim [name means "2 camps / 2 companies"]* ³ *Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.* ⁴ *He also commanded them saying, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob, "I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; ⁵ I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight." ' "* ⁶ *The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."* ⁷ *Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies; ⁸ for he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape."*

⁹ *Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,' ¹⁰ I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, 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, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children. ¹² "For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered.' " ¹³ So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau: ¹⁴ two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, ¹⁵ thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. ¹⁶ He delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on before me, and put a space between droves." ¹⁷*

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*He commanded the one in front, saying, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?'"¹⁸ then you shall say, 'These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau. And behold, he also is behind us.' "*¹⁹ *Then he commanded also the second and the third, and all those who followed the droves, saying, "After this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him;²⁰ and you shall say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.' "* *For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me."²¹ So the present passed on before him, while he himself spent that night in the camp.²² Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.²³ He took them and sent them across the stream. And he sent across whatever he had.²⁴ Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.²⁵ When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him.²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."²⁷ So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."²⁸ He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."²⁹ Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there.³⁰ So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved."³¹ Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel [an alternate spelling], and he was limping on his thigh.³² Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.*

At the end of Genesis 31 Jacob had some unfinished business with Laban he had to face and deal with, and he did. As he comes back home, he has more unfinished business with Esau and with God he has to face and deal with. In Laban's case, Jacob could stand up to him and speak boldly to him because of his proven honesty and clean conscience despite Laban's mistreatment. But with Esau, Jacob's understandably afraid because of a guilty conscience plagued by his past dishonesty and mistreatment of his brother. But before Jacob dramatically meets Esau in Gen 33, God dramatically meets Jacob. I want us to walk through this real-life drama in Gen 32 in 4 parts (outline):

1. God's presence; 2. Man's prayer; 3. Christ's power

First, notice God's Presence (v. 1-5)

¹ *Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him.*

There's only 2 times in the OT where this phrase is used "the angels of God" (plural) and both of them are in the life of Jacob. When he left the Promised Land in Gen 28, "the angels of God" met him, and now on his way back, he's again met by "the angels of God." God in a very special way is reminding Jacob of His presence that has always been with him and that still would be.

² *Jacob said when he saw them, "This is God's camp." [Word used of army of Assyria in Isa 37:36, camp of 185,000 soldiers that God's angel defeated]*

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One angel of God defeated their whole camp or army. Ex 14:19 *"The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel"*

Same word "camp" in Gen 32 in a place he names Mahanaim (2 camps) and in the later Exodus of Israel back to the promised land, there's an angel of God between two camps; Israel and the camp of Egypt, the army of Egypt. That angel made a hedge of protection and he was going before them on the journey and also went behind them for Israel's protection. That's one angel of God, but this man when he's renamed Israel sees *a whole army of angels of God* showing God has gone before him and has his back and is with him.

Keep in mind Jacob is about to hear Esau is coming with 400 men. That's the size of a small army. It's bigger than Grandfather Abraham's army of 318 men that went to war in Gen 14:14. Jacob needed assurance that God would protect him from Esau's camp/army and he sees a bigger camp/army of God

This word "camp" was also used for the Aramean army in 2 Kings 6:8 when it surrounded Elisha and his servant in Israel. It says this Aramean camp *"sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "... my master! What shall we do?" So [Elisha] answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*" (2 Kings 6:14-17, i.e., angel's armies)

If we could only have eyes opened to see angelic hosts of heaven encamped around us, that would do wonders for our fears! Paul prays in Ephesians 1 *"that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened that you may know ... what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe"* (1:18-19).

One of God's titles in the OT is "the Lord of hosts" (which can be translated as "armies"). He is the Lord of heavenly armies. God's heavenly hosts form a stronghold. Ps 46:7 *"The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our stronghold."* The same hosts or armies Jacob saw are with us if Jacob's God is our God. Greater is he who's with us than he who's in the world (1 Jn 4:4)

Application for point #1: Trusting God's presence is the cure for our fears. What do you fear most? Whom do you fear? What keeps you up at night? What gives you anxiety? Something happening to your children? Losing a dream or something you worked so hard to build? Does fear paralyze you? It did for Jacob thinking of Esau, but trusting God's presence was the cure.

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Kent Hughes wrote: ‘Jacob’s sighting of angels was visual confirmation of a deeper reality – namely, that Jacob had been and would continue to be the object of God’s relentless grace – that an intrusive, tenacious, contending, renovating grace was at work in his life to make him to be the man that God intended him to be. This grace could not be shut out, would not let him go, and fought with him and for him at every turn.’¹ This grace can be ours, too.

Jacob's descendant David wrote in Ps 27: "*Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread? ...*"³ *Though a **host encamp** against me, My heart will not fear; Though war arise against me ...*" Ps 34:7 uses the same root word: *The angel of the LORD **encamps** around those who fear Him, And rescues them* [v. 14 says seek peace and pursue it]

If you apply trusting God’s presence that will also help you pursue peace.

Jacob sees a whole host of God's angels and is empowered to seek peace and to pursue peace in v. 3 of our passage: ³ *Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.*

Jacob goes out of his way geographically to make peace with Esau. ⁴ *He also commanded them saying, “Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: ‘Thus says your servant Jacob, “I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; ⁵ I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight*

...

The word "angels" in v. 2 can be translated "messengers" and it's the same word in v. 3 used for Jacob's human "messengers." God's messengers are seen by Jacob and strengthen him so he sends human messengers of peace to Esau hoping Esau's favor might rest on him. This Christmas season we're reminded of another time a company with flocks saw heaven opened again with a message "Do not fear." Luke 2:13: *Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,* ¹⁴ *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”*

But Jacob's not sure of peace from Esau or if the man’s favor rests on him?

Which takes us from #1. God's Presence, to #2. Man's Prayer (v. 6-12)

⁶ *The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”* ⁷ *Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies; ⁸ for he said, “If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape.”* [so he prays in v. 9]

Some say "when all else fails, pray..." -- better "*before* all else fails, pray."

James Boice comments on Jacob’s dividing forces: ‘When we look away from God, we see ourselves to be weak and weaken ourselves further’ ... but ‘When we look to God, we are strengthened and draw our forces together.’ⁱⁱ

I see four aspects of prayer in this text. Notice first the Attributes of God

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In the end of v. 9 Jacob addressed God as the one who promised to do good to him. The goodness of God is an attribute of God we need to remember in prayer. In v. 10 he mentions 2 more attributes: God's "faithfulness" and His "loving-kindness," also translated "steadfast love," "kindness" or "mercies." God's covenant love and faithfulness should move us to love and adore Him more. Starting with God's attributes should lead to loving and adoring God.

2nd aspect of prayer: Confession¹⁰ *I am unworthy of all the loving-kindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies.*

An old hymn says "Beneath the Cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand, The shadow of a mighty rock within this weary land; A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way" - that's what Jacob experienced in his first journey through this land with just a staff, resting on the way by the rock. The next line clearly talks about Jacob's ladder in his dream there at Bethel:

"As to the holy patriarch that wondrous dream was given,
So seems my Savior's cross to me, a ladder up to heaven ...
And from my stricken heart with tears two wonders I confess;
The wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness."ⁱⁱⁱ

If you don't confess the wonders of redeeming love and your unworthiness, you need to stand beneath the cross, look to the cross, preach it to yourself till humbled at its foot. Humbly confess your sinfulness and worthlessness.

Jacob prays 'I am nothing and had nothing and I don't deserve anything. I crossed this river the first time with nothing in my hand to bring but a staff, but I return with hands full of blessing only because of undeserved grace.' Jacob's big view of God caused him to see himself as small in comparison.

Jacob's grandfather Abraham also recognized his own nothingness in prayer asking for grace and similarly humbly confessing "*I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes...*" (18:27 NIV)

Of all the people who lived in the time of Genesis, God says there was none like Job, the greatest of all the men on earth, but even Job confessed to God "***I am unworthy*** – *how can I reply?*" (Job 40:4 NIV, other translations say '*completely unworthy*' or '*insignificant*' or '*nothing*' or '*of small account*'). This is the kind of faith that caught the notice of our Lord Jesus in Luke 7:

⁶ *Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; ⁷ for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You ... ⁹ Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."* [the Lord takes special note of faith and prayers like that]

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That's not just the faith of a Gentile, it was the faith of the great Hebrew of the Hebrews, Paul: "*I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle ... But by the grace of God I am what I am*" (1 Cor. 15:9-10 ESV).

Jesus commands all of us to see ourselves this way in Luke 17:10: "*So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'*"

A 3rd mark of Jacob's prayer is **Thanksgiving**

We spent a whole sermon on this 2 weeks ago so I won't spend much time here, but would encourage you to listen to that message if you weren't there. But for today, just notice in v. 10 Jacob's appreciation for God's grace in his life, which flows from his confession of his utter unworthiness of any of it

The 4th mark of Jacob's prayer is **Supplication** (petitions or requests)

¹¹ "*Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children.* [Then in v. 12 he grounds it in what God's Word already had said] If you struggle with prayer (as I confess I have and still do), let me suggest to others with minds prone to wander that reading or speaking Scripture to God can be a great help. It also grounds our requests in what God's revealed

Some of us pray mostly supplications or requests only, this helps round out:

- A** - Attributes of God (or "Adoration" - adore God for who He is)
- C** - Confession (we confess our sinfulness and unworthiness)
- T** - Thanksgiving (amazed praise for any blessing we've received)
- S** - Supplication (good to balance others, not just rush to our request)

Jacob's prayer in v. 9-12 is clearly a good model for us, but Jacob's plan in v. 13-21 is not as clearly a good model for us. Jacob is a mixture of prayer and planning, supplication and scheming, thinking if he can send to Esau a gift, hundreds of animals in waves, a tribute fit for a king, it will overwhelm Esau so maybe he won't want to kill him anymore. It's a mixture of fear and faith driving Jacob, like the prayer "I believe...help my unbelief" (Mk 9:24).

Jacob prays but still hasn't given up his old ways. He's trying to trust in the Lord with all his heart, but he's still leaning on his own understanding of the way to resolve conflict by buying off his brother, instead of acknowledging God in all his ways and trusting He'll direct his path.

James 1 says we must pray in faith for wisdom, not being double-minded. It seems Jacob's driven more by guilt than God here, and what he says reverses what God had said:

- God had said of Esau "the older will serve the younger" (25:23) but Jacob says instead he will "serve" Esau (same word in 32:18 and 20)
- Jacob was told prophetically "*be master of your brothers*" (27:29), but Jacob in v. 18 here calls his brother "my master/my lord Esau"
- flattery and groveling is different than asking forgiveness in faith

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Jacob tells them to tell Esau in v. 20: *'Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.'* " For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me."

Jacob is hoping he'll find acceptance by his offering, hoping to appease his brother's wrath. And here's where we need to look beyond Jacob to how this concept of appeasing is developed in Scripture. Literally Jacob is hoping for atonement - that's how this Hebrew word is translated in the Law dozens of times, a payment often in animals offered to turn away God's wrath on sin. But the book of Hebrews tells us bulls and goats never fully removed sin by themselves. Our need is our 3rd and final part of this drama: Christ's Power ²⁴ *Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.* ²⁵ *When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled ...* This is not just a man, He had the power to just touch Jacob's hip and the thigh was dislocated. I believe this is actually Christ's power at work here interrupting Jacob's life, intervening, immobilizing him in his hip, his center

- In v. 28 this being with supernatural power re-names Jacob "*Israel, for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.*"
- Jacob had striven with men and here he strives with God as well
- In v. 30 Jacob believes he has seen God and yet is allowed to live
- Hosea 12 explains Jacob wasn't just wrestling with and prevailing with an angel (Hosea 12:4), Jacob was wrestling with God, even as he had wrestled with his brother before he was born. It says "*In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God ...* [context clearly about Gen 32 and then it says] *he wept and sought his favor. He met God ...*" [this is Jacob's repentance, as he went from striving with God to weeping and seeking God's favor]

This is not so much a picture of prayer as it is a picture of a man who's been wrestling for blessings since before he was born and doing that a long time *his way*. He needs to be broken to be blessed by God, blessed in *God's way*. Jacob struggled with Uncle Laban 20 years, now Jacob says to God "uncle." He finally yields. Instead of scheming he's clinging, seeking Christ's face.

- No man can see the face of God the Father and live but people can and have seen the face of God *the Son in physical form* (John 1:18)
- The same word "man" was used earlier in Genesis 18 for someone Abraham met but later it's clear He was the LORD (Jesus said in Jn 8:56 "*Abraham rejoiced to see My day. He saw it and was glad*")

This is Jesus and may be His closest encounter with man in the whole OT. Why didn't He beat Jacob instantly? God humbled Himself to take the form of a man to meet Jacob on his own terms so that Jacob would be humbled to recognize his limitations on God's terms. God chose not to use His power to make a point and Jacob gets it and gets Who this is. He *prevails by praying for blessing*. It's a preview of Jesus taking on humanity and its limitations.

Boice: 'With men, Jacob had contended successfully...and lost. He cheated Esau of the blessing but lost Esau's good will. He outwitted his blind and ailing father but lost his good name ...

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However, in his battle with God, Jacob suffers a reversal of his fortunes, which is actually his victory. He loses his wrestling match with God...But in the divine logic...beyond our full comprehension, this loss is Jacob's victory. For at last Jacob surrenders himself. He wins by losing and is now able to go on in new strength as God's man. I love this picture of the limping Jacob...it describes us. We limp...as our own strength is concerned. In the world's eyes we are cripples. But God's strength is made perfect in our weakness, and it is when we appear weakest that we are strong.^{iv} Our disability needs Christ's ability

Skeptics say our faith is a crutch, and in a sense it is! We are weak; we need to be helped up, but not by faith itself, by the object of our faith, by Christ.

Why did Jesus let Jacob struggle so long before crippling Jacob's strength?

Arthur Pink writes: 'Long does He bear with our fleshly struggling, but in the end He accomplishes His purpose and grace triumphs. The delay only serves to provide opportunity for Him to display His infinite forbearance ... Jacob was now brought to the end of his own resources. One swift stroke from the Divine hand and he was rendered utterly powerless. And **this** is the purpose God has before Him in His dealings with us ... to bring us to the end of ourselves, to show us our own powerlessness, to teach us to have no confidence in the flesh, that His strength may be perfected in our conscious and realized weakness...No longer could Jacob wrestle; all he could do was **cling**. The mysterious Stranger brought Jacob to the point where he had to **lean his entire weight on Him!** ... [and Mr. Pink concludes] it is not until we fully realize our own helplessness and nothingness that we are brought to cling to God and really **seek** His blessing, for note, not only did Jacob say [in v. 26] "I will not let Thee go," but he added "except Thou **bless me.**"^v

A hymn says 'Other refuge have I none – *hangs* my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah, leave me not alone, still support and comfort me!^{vi}

That's the human side of this struggle. God's side is captured in another line 'O love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in Thee.^{vii} Jacob's weary after a long wrestling match, but his *wrestling with God* is transformed into *resting in God*. And his very name is transformed from Jacob (cheater, heel-grabber) to Israel (God prevails). Faith refuses to let go but ultimately its power is in Christ's love that will not let us go (read the end of Romans 8).

Jacob transforms from singing his solo "I surrender *some*." By prevailing grace a new man with a new name (Israel) has a new song "I surrender all."

Jacob had recognized back in v. 9 that he had come here with nothing in his hand to bring but a staff, but still needed to realize like another hymn says: 'Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling.'^{viii} The cross was still future, but the Christ who would die on it is here, and Jacob clings to Christ

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Martin Luther said ‘And so we have this noble chapter, in which you see the marvelous dealing of God with his saints for our comfort and example, so that we may daily ask ourselves if he is also at work in us...’^{ix}

Application for this final point: Cease striving and know that God is God

God is God and you are not. You've heard that application before and you're going to hear it again (and I need to hear it again and again). Psalm 46 says:

Cease striving and know that I am God...the God of Jacob is our stronghold

Wherever you're striving or fighting or not trusting, surrender all to Christ.

Luther's hymn on that psalm says: Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right Man on our side (Christ Jesus)^x

- Jesus was on Jacob's side and used his power to wound Jacob's side
- This Man Jacob wrestled later had His side wounded on the cross
- Jacob's bone was out of joint. A cross put Jesus's bones out of joint
- Jacob wrestled not just with flesh and blood, but God became flesh and blood to win spiritual warfare (that's what Christmas celebrates)
- Jacob glimpsed ‘the face of God,’ Mary did you know you kissed it?

At the start of this chapter before his confrontation, Jacob was comforted by heaven's armies of angels. When Jesus prepares for His final confrontation in Gethsemane, God comforts Him by angels. When Judas betrayed Him He could have called down from heaven 12 legions of angelic armies (72,000).

In the garden, Jesus wrestled an even greater match that He did with Jacob. His sweat was mixed with blood as He wrestles with God and then yields in submission: “Nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done” (Luke 22:42).

Jacob didn't want to face Esau's wrath, and Jesus in His humanity didn't want to face God's wrath in that moment, but He submitted to God's will.

Jacob in his struggle got to see God's face, but when Jesus took our sin on Himself on the cross, God ‘the Father turned His face away.’ Jacob couldn't pacify Esau's wrath in v. 20, but Christ's sacrifice does satisfy God's wrath.

Jacob gave up his heel-grasping nature. Here's what Jesus did, Philippians 2: ⁵ *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,* ⁶ *who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God **a thing to be grasped,*** ⁷ *but emptied Himself [i.e., surrendered independence], taking the form of a bond-servant [Gen 35:20], and being made in the likeness of men.* ⁸ *Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient ...* ⁹ *For this reason [the cross], God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name...*

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Christ wouldn't tell Jacob His name, and when He comes again in Rev. 19, it says there will still be a name on Christ's thigh no one knows (19:12). In Jacob's case, there was a new name given after His struggle. In the case of Jesus, after His struggle, He is now given a name that's above every name.

Jesus in a greater way than Jacob was promised the place of blessing among His brethren, the place of preeminence, but He took on the role of servant to share His blessings as firstborn with many brethren. Isn't grace amazing? I love seeing Jesus, and I hope it stirs you to love Him. His love won't let go.

Charles Wesley wrote a hymn called Jacob's Wrestling/Traveler Unknown:

Come, O thou Traveller unknown, Whom still I hold, but cannot see!
My company before is gone, And I am left alone with Thee;
With Thee all night I mean to stay, And wrestle till the break of day ...
'Tis all in vain to hold Thy tongue Or touch the hollow of my thigh;
Though every sinew be unstrung, Out of my arms Thou shalt not fly;
Wrestling I will not let Thee go Till I Thy name, Thy nature know ...
And when all of my strength shall fail, I shall with the God-man prevail.
Contented now upon my thigh, I halt, till life's short journey end;
All helplessness, all weakness I, On Thee alone for strength depend ...
My strength is gone, my nature dies, I sink beneath Thy weighty hand,
Faint to revive, and fall to rise; I fall, and yet by faith I stand ...
My prayer hath power with God; the grace Unspeakable I now receive;
Through faith I see Thee face to face, I see Thee face to face, and live!
In vain I have not wept and strove; Thy nature and Thy Name is Love.
I know Thee, Saviour, who Thou art. Jesus, the feeble sinner's friend;
Nor wilt Thou with the night depart. But stay and love me to the end"^{xi}

ⁱ Kent Hughes, *Genesis*, p. 398.

ⁱⁱ James M. Boice, *Genesis*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Elizabeth Clephane, "Beneath the Cross of Jesus," 1868. <http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/b/t/btcjesus.htm> (alternate wording "worthlessness" in some hymnals instead of "unworthiness")

^{iv} Boice, *Genesis*, 2:820.

^v Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis*, electronic ed. (Escondido, CA: The Ephesians Four Group, 2000), 291.

^{vi} Charles Wesley, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

^{vii} George Matheson, "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go."

^{viii} Augustus Toplady, "Rock of Ages."

^{ix} As cited by John Currid, *Genesis*, 2:139.

^x Martin Luther, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

^{xi} Charles Wesley, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Come,_O_Thou_Traveler_Unknown