

Living By Faith

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[0:00] And it's always a great privilege to have the representation of the camp here. And, you know, as planes, we've been woven into the fabric there at the camp some.

And it's been a privilege to get to know Brother Josh and Brother Jeremy and his family. They serve faithfully down there at the camp and make things possible for things to happen.

You know, the Lord uses them to get those things in place and prepared for what's to come. It's been a privilege to know Brother Josh and to get to know his heart for the ministry and what God has laid upon his heart for those children and those kids that come through.

You know, it's a great impact. And it makes a difference. And we want to continue to do that. And so we want to promote that. But we ask Brother Josh to come and preach for us this morning and share God's word with us.

And so, Brother, why don't you come and share with us. God has a word. Thank you so much, brother. All right. Well, good morning. As always, it's a pleasure to be back. I consider planes like my second home church.

[1:08] I really do. And you took the words right out of my mouth. I was thinking about how our relationship is just now woven. It's intricately woven. When you started to attend our ministry about six years ago, I want to say, and now your church supports us.

Your pastor, who I consider a great confidant to me, and Brother Lou is also on my board. Both these men served with me to help accomplish the mission of the camp. And so you're committed. So, you know, you have fallen prey to my evil plans. You can't get rid of me. So I hope that's a blessing to you. Let's get into the Bible. I'll give a report during the Sunday school lesson about what we're doing this coming year for the camp ministry, what our goals are, what we believe God's going to accomplish there at Amazing Grace, which is not too far, only three hours south.

If you've never been there, I want to encourage you to take a trip and come see the ministry that you are investing in. This last year, we had 50 decisions for salvation, many more decisions for spiritual growth.

And so we could not be more excited about what God's doing at your camp. And so you've got to come and experience it. We're thankful for David and Kira for serving as missionaries. And we're praying for them as they have a baby.

[2:29] They're planning to have a baby like the week we start camp. So that I cannot believe. Last year, they got married the week that we started camp. And I said, well, you know, it's kind of tough.

I think you'll be okay. Then they said, we're going to have a baby just the week before. Like, you're not making it easy for yourself. But I think they're going to do just fine. And we're really encouraged that they serve with us.

If you would, turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter number 32. This will actually segue this morning's message into kind of a report that I'll give for the camp. For the Sunday school hour, I'll give a little bit of a testimony about what God did in my life this last year in 24.

I'm going to state at the very beginning that the goal of this morning's message is to encourage you to live by your faith. Now, that could be a Christianized cliché.

It's easy to say, yes, you need to live by your faith, by God's grace. But what do we really mean when we say, hey, let's be living by faith? Well, first of all, it implies that you must be a person of faith.

[3:36] A person of faith is a Christian. They're born again. They have received the Holy Spirit. Which is a little bit different than what we're talking about when we're emphasizing living by faith.

See, when you get saved, you receive God's Spirit. And now that you have received His Spirit, you are also to be filled with the Spirit. Which means you are to be yielded to God where He has control over your life.

This is the enabling power of God. So you cannot live by faith until, first of all, you are a person of faith. Now, you may be a person of faith, but that does not mean today that you are walking by faith. So we're not only wanting to be a person of faith, but we also want to move into this situation in 2025 where we are empowered by the Spirit of God to walk by faith.

Now, to see this illustrated, we're going to look at the life of a man who's considered a patriarch of faith, the man Jacob. And specifically at a time when he was wrestling God.

[4:38] So let's read our text. It starts in verse number 24 of chapter number 32. Now, let me give you a little context before we begin reading because this chapter is very, very special.

You see, Jacob had been living up in the Syrian region with his uncle who also became his father-in-law. And God called him to go back home down south into the land of Canaan.

And so Jacob gathered his family. He packed up his bags. And after a contentious goodbye with his father-in-law, he's now about to cross over into the territory of Canaan.

Now, God wants Jacob to know that he's pleased with his obedience. So in the beginning of the chapter, he sends two angels to escort Jacob back into the land.

And I interpret that to be God's affirmation for Jacob for choosing to follow God and doing what's right. And I'm happy to tell you that God wants to give you affirmation when you obey and when you follow him.

[5:34] Now, maybe he sends an angel and it's unawares, or most likely what we know is that the affirmation of God is the presence of his Holy Spirit as he guides, as he directs, as he prods, as he convicts you.

I think also an affirmation is our fellow believers, those that also have the Spirit of God living within them, and they can observe in your life when you're doing what's right or when they need to confront you when you're doing what's wrong.

I think that's affirmation of the Lord. And so God is honored with Jacob's decision. He wants Jacob to know it to motivate him to continue forward. So Jacob is escorted by these two angels, and then immediately he's confronted with a big challenge.

He sends his messenger to go tell his brother Esau, which they have never been on good terms, right? He says, tell my brother Esau I'm coming back to announce that he can meet me or whatever he wants to do.

And so the servant does. The servant comes back with a report, and he says, hey, we saw your brother Esau, and the good news is he's coming to meet you. The bad news is that he's bringing 400 men.

[6:39] And Jacob goes, oh, that sounds like an army. I think he's going to take me out. And then Jacob does what Jacob always does. He begins to revert into his old man tendencies, where he has to figure out his own problem.

You see, Jacob was always a person of faith, but Jacob has to solve his own problems apart from God. He's strong in the flesh, and this is something that needs to change with him. So that gets us to our text in verse number 24.

It says, and Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of day. Now, this was no ordinary man, because we're going to see that this is God, a pre-incarnate appearance before Jacob.

And when he saw, that's the man, that's God, when he saw that he prevailed not against him, that's Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled him.

And he, the man, said, let me go for the day breaketh. And he, Jacob, says, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, what is thy name?

[7:43] And he said, Jacob. And he said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel. Now, watch this, watch this, because this is what we receive when we choose to live by faith.

When we're empowered by the Spirit of God, then it will be with us that thou hast power with God in men and hast prevailed. You know what the word prevail means?

It means you win. It means that you're an overcomer. And I don't know about you, but I'm ready to put 2024 in the past. And I'm ready to look forward to 2025 as a winner, as a conqueror, as an overcomer, because I'm empowered by my faith.

Now, if we're going to get to this place where we're living strong by faith, then we must address this one particular issue. What do you do when God wrestles you?

You see, you can't be strong in faith until you resolve the matter of wrestling God. So let's talk about that this morning and put some principles into application. Lord Jesus, thank you so much for this time where we can gather together and worship you.

[8:51] I pray that if there's anyone here wrestling with you, that they will just yield to you. Maybe someone needs to get saved today. They're wrestling with life. They're wrestling with their sin. And it's time to put that in the past and to be a child of God.

And I pray that they would get saved. But I would imagine many of us here that have come to worship you freely, that we need to be strong in faith, that we need to be yielded by your spirit. We cannot be an overcomer.

We cannot prevail until we let God have his way and where he's first in our life and all the decisions that we make. And I pray that this morning's worship time that you would get all the glory, we pray, in the name of Lord Jesus Christ, and God's people said.

Let me ask you a question. Is it a good thing for you to wrestle God? Should you, at times in your life, go toe-to-toe with God? Is that a good thing?

I mean, Jacob did. Should we? Well, let me make a case for you that wrestling God is not a good thing. And you should not find yourself, periodically, going toe-to-toe with God.

[9:54] Because God came to wrestle Jacob, to confront him, to change him, to move him off of his ordinary path into the path of God's will and God's purpose.

And Jacob needed to make some specific changes in his life. I want you to observe three things about God wrestling Jacob. And maybe observe this as if you feel that God is wrestling you.

Why did God wrestle Jacob? Well, number one, I want you to notice that God had to confront Jacob. He confronted him through wrestling, and specifically, he was confronting him about the area of self-reliance.

See, Jacob, though, being a person of faith, had become pretty dependent upon himself to solve his own problems. Now, to get some background information and some context, we've got to go all the way back to the beginning of when Jacob was born.

You see, Jacob was born the second of twins, Jacob and Esau. And he came out of the womb clinging to the heel of his brother. His family was amazed at what they saw, and they said, you know what?

[10:55] We'll call him Jacob, which means to supplant. It means to get an edge on somebody else. It looks like he wanted to take out his brother. So they couldn't believe him. They gave him this name, Jacob. Now, God had a special plan for these two boys.

In fact, the plan was that the older would serve the younger, and that we should interpret as Jacob would be the one to receive the birthright. Now, in Bible days, the firstborn son is the one that would receive the birthright, which is a greater portion of the inheritance.

It also means that they would be the patriarchal leader of the family. And God says, it's not going to go to Esau. I want it to go to Jacob. And the reason why is God was teaching a lesson to all of us that it's not by our pedigree, it's not by our privileges that earn favor with God.

No, we get favor with God because he chooses to give it to us. So Jacob is a picture of God's grace. And let me tell you, that's good news for all of us here today.

Because in the New Testament, Paul reemphasizes this important truth by using the example of Jacob and Esau. You see, folks, Jacob didn't deserve God's grace. He didn't earn God's grace.

[12:02] Yet because God wants to be gracious in whom he wants to be gracious to, then that means for each and every one of us, we too can receive the grace of God. You don't have to earn it. You didn't have to grow up in church.

God's grace is free for all people, especially for the Gentiles, as much as it is for the firstborn son, the Jews. Oh, isn't that a wonderful truth? So Jacob is now a picture of God's purpose for all people. He's a person of faith. Now, we don't know what happened, but somewhere along the way, the family decided that they would ignore God's plans. And Isaac, the father, was going to give that birthright to Esau, his firstborn.

Now, Jacob begins to panic and he gets with his mom and they come up with a plan to deceive his ailing blind father to receive that birthright. Of course, that makes a lot of drama in the family. Esau wants to kill Jacob and so Jacob has to flee for his life. And this is the pattern. This is the disposition. So why does God confront us when he has to wrestle us? Well, for Jacob and possibly you, God has to confront the area of self-reliance.

[13:09] And why? It's because it's a weakness for all of us. It's so easy to live and depend upon ourselves and our flesh. God says you've got to be yielded to the Spirit of God.

You want love, joy, peace, long-suffering? You want that fruit to come out of your life? Then you have to be filled with the Spirit of God. If you're not, then you're full of the flesh and the outcome is completely different.

Boy, it's murder, anger, theft, adultery, all kinds of sins that will pour out of your life if you're filled with the flesh. So God says, Jacob, you have to be a Spirit-filled man.

You need to be broken of this weakness in your life. And so he decides to come and wrestle him. It was his weakness. Now watch this. Hold your finger here. I want you to see how Jacob's faith was a little shallow.

Okay? Go to chapter 28, just a few pages back. When Jacob fled from Canaan to go to Syria, God came to meet him in a place of Peniel.

[14:07] And look at verse number 20. This is Jacob's vow. God appears to Jacob. He repeats the covenant to him. And Jacob says, in verse number 20, and Jacob vowed a vow, saying, now watch this, if God will be with me and will keep me in the way that I should go and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on so that I come back to my father's house in peace.

Then, do you see that? It's if and then. You know, some Bible commentators will say, well, the word could be since. You know, God's given me this promise and since that's the case. But if we are to take this at face value, it seems that his faith is conditional.

You know, a little quid pro quo with God. Hey God, you give me something, I'll give you something in return. And let me just tell you something. A lot of people are living their Christianity this way. You know, there's some reciprocal benefit for me if I follow God.

Let me tell you, we follow God because we love God. That's why we follow him. So Jacob's got this shallow faith and now he's always one foot in with the faith and one foot in with the flesh.

And this dichotomy of his life is just stressing him out. It's creating a lot of drama. You know what? This is a real weakness in his life. Hey, this could be a real weakness with you. You know, you come to church, you're happy to be here, you're ready to worship God, you sing the songs, you say amen and then on Monday it's like, man, my life is a mess.

[15:26] I gotta figure this out. I can do this apart from God. Let me tell you, that's a real weakness. And God says, it's time to change. Now look in this chapter. Watch this. In verse number nine, chapter 32, we're back here, Jacob is confronted with the news that his brother's coming.

And so what does he do? Well, as a person of faith, he's gonna do what a person of faith does. Well, we'll pray about it. And so verses nine through verses 12, he starts to pray and it's pretty good. He says, God, you called me to do this.

I'm not worthy to receive your mercies. I need deliverance. In verse number 11, verse number 12, let me remind you, you promised to do me good. So God, I really need you to show up.

And let me tell you, that's a really good prayer. That's a great prayer for a Christian when you're backed up against the wall. But in verse number 13, we see Jacob deciding to solve his own

problem.

He came up with his own plan. He had his own scheme. And so what did he do? Well, he took his family, which was quite large, with his livestock. He decides to break them up into three different caravans.

[16:30] And they would go across the river and as Esau would begin to meet each visiting group, they would say, hey, we're from Jacob's family and here's a gift. And then he would go to the next family.

He said, here's a gift from Jacob. Jacob's right behind us. And then the third caravan. And then he would eventually meet Jacob. So this plan is he's hoping to pacify Esau. In fact, look at verse number 20.

He says, in the middle of the verse, he says, for he said, this is Jacob, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me. And afterward, I would see his face.

Peradventure, he will what? Accept me. So he's so concerned about the rejection from a man, from his brother.

He wants to be accepted. I just want him to like me. I just want to avoid the problems. I want to be accepted. You know what we call that? We call that the fear of man. The Bible says the fear of man brings a snare.

[17:26] It puts you in a mental, social, spiritual, psychological trap. But who shall put his trust in the Lord shall be safe is the promise. And you know what? A lot of times we make decisions whether it's to do right or do wrong, all because we're afraid of what somebody else might think of me as opposed to what God thinks.

And here he says, you know, I'm going to please him. I'm going to appease him. People pleasing.

Let me tell you, if you are at the whims of another person, you're going to stress yourself out.

You're going to have a lot of drama in your life. And let me tell you, it's a weakness. Watch this.

Self-reliance is also a weariness. You're going to just get worn out. You're going to get fatigued.

Look at verse number seven. When Jacob heard the news that Esau was coming, it says that

Jacob was greatly afraid. All right, now there's fear. Okay, I'm afraid.

I'm a little scared. And then there's greatly afraid. This means he's collapsing. He is panicking. He is stressed out of his mind. It says he's greatly afraid and distressed.

[18:33] Hey, listen, when you have to solve your own problems and the world revolves about you and you're selfish, I'm going to tell you, you're going to wear yourself out. You know why?

Because you're not God. Only God is self-efficient. Only God exists outside of time. You are a creation of God.

You are limited. You are frail. You have a beginning and you have an end. Only God supersedes all of that being omnipresent, omnipotent, all-knowing God.

So why are you trying to fill his shoes? It'll never happen. So why don't you stop getting worn out on your own self-reliance and get God-dependent?

That's what he needed to be confronted in. So God came to wrestle him, to confront him in the area of self-reliance. Watch this. He wrestled him to challenge him in his sincerity of his faith.

[19:34] The real sincerity. You say you believe in God? Then why don't you demonstrate it with your life? Why don't you prove that you really believe and rely on God?

So God used a physical demonstration. It starts to wrestle him. And by the way, this is an incredible story. I mean, this has never happened to anybody else as far as we know, where God wrestles him.

And I see three areas of the challenge, right? To prove and to test him in his sincerity. First of all, he tested him in his hands. All right? And that's going toe-to-toe with wrestling.

I mean, they're just grappling. Now, wrestling is pushing and pulling against one another. So that's why we know this is not a good thing for Jacob because God is resisting him.

He's pushing him back. He's trying to stop him. So he's wrestling him with his hands, which we should interpret as this is his raw flesh. Hey, you say you got it, Jacob? Okay, well, let's go.

[20:32] You say you got it all figured out. You say you really don't need me. You got all these plans laid out. You know, this caravan and this

gift. Oh, you think it's going to do it? Why don't we wrestle about it? So in his raw, physical form, which Jacob was a strong guy. Remember, as a baby, he came out of the womb grabbing onto the heel of his brother. Now, I don't know much about baby strength, but I would assume it's nothing. They're just full of fat when they come out. And here, this dude is clinging onto the heel. I don't know if he's shadow boxing inside the womb, but the guy was strong. And by the way, he had some real stamina. Remember, they wrestled to the breaking of day. That's incredible to me. The guy was just unstoppable. And here, God says, stop it. Now, are you saying that God thought he was losing to Jacob? It says, look at it. It says, when he saw that he prevailed not. God felt like he was losing to Jacob?

[21:32] No, no, no, no, no. God was done playing games with Jacob. He couldn't teach this old dog new tricks. If you're going to be a stubborn mule, then I'm done.

You're not going to learn your lesson. You say, well, how do we know that? Because of what he did next. He touched the hollow of his thigh, and now Jacob is a cripple, and he can't even move. See, in your raw flesh, you're not good enough. You're not good enough. Neither was Jacob. So, he tested him in his hands.

He failed. He then tested him in his heart. You see, something emanated from Jacob from the inside. When Jacob was now crippled and he couldn't do anything else, Jacob realizes at this moment, this is no ordinary man.

This is something divine. I'm wrestling the angel of the Lord. And so, he realizes that what he needs is he needs the power of God. And so, now he's clinging not because of his flesh but because of his heart.

[22:38] He's recognizing that the one thing that he needs in his life is he needs God. Hey, listen, what does your heart tell you? What are the motives of your heart? What pushes you?

What drives you? Hey, listen, it ought to be God if you're a Christian. You want to be strong by faith? In your heart are the issues of life. And in your heart, God should be at the very center of all things.

Now, this is like two sides of the same coin because he tested him in his heart. He's beginning to pass the test. Now, he has to be tested in the area of his honesty. And that's when he asks the question.

He goes, well, if you want my power, you want to depend upon me, then let's get real. Let's get sincere. Who are you? What are you?

Now, Jacob has to admit who he is. He says, well, I'm Jacob. I'm just a man. I'm the deceiver. I'm the supplanter. I'm the one that needs you, God.

[23:34] I don't want to let go until you bless me. Hey, listen, the sincerity of your faith is what drives your heart. And the only way that you'll know that is if you get honest before him about who you are as you stand before him.

That is the sincerity of all of this. Jacob wasn't going to win this match. God had it all under control. Reminds me of a time when I was in college. I finally came to a point in my life where I realized that all the big sports had passed me by.

You know, eventually most of us come to that place, right? Now, in college, there was one sport, though, that I felt like I still had some credibility. And that was ping pong.

Oh, yeah. I mean, in fact, today, you give me a paddle, just give me a second to get that rhythm, and I'm telling you, I'll feel invincible. In college, we had this big, big dating parlor where couples would go and sit on couches.

And this was a Christian college. So you're not allowed to touch each other at a Christian college. You just get really as close as you can, smell each other's breath, look deep into their eyeballs, you see the back of their skulls, and it was a real mushy place.

[24:44] But the school put a row of 10 ping pong tables. So me and my buddies, we'd go up there and we'd play in the afternoon between classes, and boy, I got really good. Now, one day, there was a guy that came up with his girlfriend.

His name was Matt Miller. Now, Matt and I went to high school together, and Matt and I were in college at the same time. And Matt was the guy who was good at everything. I mean, he was handsome.

He was the best sports person. I mean, he was the salutatorian of a school of about 600 kids. I mean, the guy just had it together. In fact, today, he's still better than me at life.

He's a lawyer. He's making tons of money, and I'm running a camp, which is not a problem. But, I mean, comparatively, I mean, Matt's just like way up here. And I'd never beat him in any kind of sport.

One-on-one basketball, Matt wins. Any other type of sports, soccer, Matt wins. But ping pong, all right, we might have ourselves a match. So he comes up with his girlfriend. They're sitting on the couch and said, hey, Matt, you want to play me a round of ping pong?

[25:46] And Matt says, yeah, I'll do that. So we grabbed a couple rental paddles there in the dating parlor and we began to play. And sure enough, man, I was doing good. I mean, I had that rhythm and I had a score of 20 to 12.

It was 20 to 12, which is a sizable, comfortable margin. So I felt really good at this moment that I'm going to beat Matt Miller in front of all his friends and in front of his girlfriend. So I'm feeling so good. And you know, by the way, it's game point. So you can't lose on a serve, right? That's the real rules to ping pong in spite of what teenagers today say. So I take the ball and I toss it over on his side of the table and say, well, Matt, it's your serve and you can't lose on a serve.

He said, okay. He held the paddle in his hand and he flipped it to the other hand and he goes, you know, I think I'll play with my dominant hand now. And I went, oh no.

I am such a fool. Now, the moral of the story is more important than the ending of the story. And needless to say, Jacob was never going to win at a wrestling match with God and nor I against Matt Miller.

[26:55] He beat me. Jerk. All of this for God to Jacob is to break him of his flesh. Listen, he had to confront him in the area of self-reliance.

He came to challenge him with the sincerity of his faith. And then lastly, God wrestled him to conquer his shortcoming. His shortcoming is that it was easy for Jacob to lean into his own strength.

But what happens when you don't have that anymore? What do you do? God says, I'm sufficient. I am all that you need.

When it comes to your salvation, friends, God is all that you need. In fact, you cannot earn salvation apart from God. He is the way, the truth, and the life. No man come with the Father but by him.

It's not by works of righteousness which we have done. It's by the grace of God. It's by the blood of Jesus. It's by his power on the cross and his resurrection that we receive salvation.

[27:57] And when it comes to walking by faith, we need to be God dependent. I want to give you two applications on this thought of letting God conquer you.

Letting God win. Well, first of all, if you're going to be conquered by God, then number one, you've got to let God change you. You see, when he admitted who he was, God says, well, now I'm going to give you a new name.

You're now going to be called Israel. The word Israel means God prevails. And so what's going on is that even though God beat him at the wrestling match, he's telling Jacob, if I win, Jacob, you win. And that's the paradox of faith. When God wins, I win. That's the way it should be. So you need to allow God to change you. You need to relinquish control.

You need to let the Holy Spirit have his way in your life and with your circumstances and all your trials. Let God change you. Number two, you need to let God cripple you.

[28:54] Now that's not easy to say. In fact, that's easier said than done. To allow God to cripple me? You mean, I need to let God hurt me? Well, not necessarily.

We need to let God cripple us in the area that we are strong in but weak to faith. And that needs to be reversed because I need to be weak towards my flesh so that I can be strong in my faith.

And here, Jacob was so dependent upon his own strength, God taught him a lesson to be God-dependent by removing a lot of his strength. I love this verse in Psalms 147:10.

He delighteth not in the strength of the horse, in the powerful horse that runs. He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. God takes pleasure in faith.

And if you're a paralyzed individual, you can still be the best for God. Will you let God cripple you? And what would that mean if you do let him cripple you in the areas that you are strong in?

[29:55] You know, I had to learn this lesson this last year. In fact, I learned it in a very hard way. On April 17th of last year, I got a pressure washer out to clean some of our camp buildings.

And I love it when it comes springtime. I mean, we're all waiting, right, for winter to be removed and we're ready for some warm weather. Amen? In fact, I just saw that the groundhog just predicted six more, is it six weeks or six more months of winter?

Yeah. Unbelievable. They called him Phil. Like, be gone, Phil. I'm ready for some spring weather.

Boy, when that sun is out, that temperature is up, I just can't wait to go outside.

I tell Jeremy, let me do all the mowing and let me do some pressure washing because it feels good to be outside. So, first day of spring that felt good was April 17th. And so, I decided to clean up some of our buildings.

I pressure washed the outside of the front of the dining hall. I did the stone house. I did the front of the daisy building. And I was making really good time. And so, I thought, you know, I really need to clean my house.

[30:55] It's been a while. I haven't pressure washed this yet since we built it. So, let me just go up there and I think I can knock it out before we have dinner time. And then church was later that evening on Wednesday. And so, I got all my equipment.

Richard, my father-in-law, he pulled it up there and I had a system ready to go. We'd get the ladder out and I would start from the north side, which is the front of the house, and then move east, south, and then I would wrap up on the west side of the house.

Now, my house is built into a hill. Okay, so you had to be strategic in how you place the ladders. So, the tall extension ladder for the top of the gables, I would be very careful to make sure it was rooted real good because I have a healthy fear of heights.

Amen? And I don't want to fall. So, I made sure that that ladder was just right. Then I had a four-foot step ladder for the middle part of the house. So, the top of the gable, I got with extension. The four-foot ladder, I'd climb up and do the middle part of the house and then on the ground I could just take care of the rest.

And boy, I was moving, I was doing pretty good. The north side, the east side, the south side, which really is probably the hardest because it's got the tallest part of the house. Now, I'm on the west side and it's getting close to dinner time so I gotta really push it here.

[32:02] So, I'm moving quickly, still very careful with the extension ladder but the four-foot ladder, man, I would just grab that set up and walk up, spray the house down, get down, move that extension ladder, grab the four-foot ladder, come to the top, spray it down and I wasn't careful and I set the four-foot step ladder on kind of an odd angle of the house and as I was coming down from the top, the ladder shot out from under my feet on the downward slope of the house.

Now, I got this pressure washer hose and I turn around and it was so fast and bam, I hit the ground. Now, I knew I did something wrong because it hurt and I'm wallowing on the ground.

My son McKinley was eating popcorn watching me on his room and then he says, oh, mom, dad fell off the ladder. She goes, what? And so, they come out and I'm just moaning and groaning and rolling on the ground.

I thought I broke my shin bone. Just the way I fell and it hurt so bad and I thought, oh no, if I see a bone sticking out of my skin, I'm going to throw up.

So, I touched without looking and everything seemed to be in place and I thought, oh good, I don't think I broke my bone and so I thought, all right, well maybe I'm just bruised up a bit and I limped over to the garage. I tried to calm down and I told Jacinda, I said, I think I'm okay.

[33:22] I said, let me go take a baking soda bath. I'll see if I can calm it down and that felt good but as soon as I got out of the bath, I'm telling you, my knee swelled up like a big melon and it hurt so bad.

I said, I better go to the ER. I'm on blood thinners so I got to be careful with injuries and so we go to the ER and what do you know, I broke my fibula on the back part of my leg.

The orthopedic thought, I also tore my ACL because the bone like chipped or something and it separated. Thankfully, that was not the case. I just broke my bone but it's April 17th.

Do you know when the most stressful time of the year for a camp director is? Let me tell you, it's on April 17th. You say, why is that? Well, listen, summer's not stressful to me because summer's just raw energy.

I'm ready to go by summer. I have some pretty good stamina. I don't mind late nights, early mornings. I can handle that. It's the springtime because I'm still trying to get all the uncertainties in order and let me tell you, that just stresses me out.

[34:27] I got to get the program together. I got to get workers. I got to figure out all this kind of stuff and let me tell you, I get very stressed in the spring. In fact, I'll tell you, a typical day for me around that time of year, I get up in the morning, I read my Bible and then I'll go spend some time in prayer and let me tell you, I really pour my heart out before God and last year, boy, I had a lot of things that were not in order so I would go into my prayer time with the Lord and I would say, God, I need you.

Here's a list of things that need to get accomplished before we start the summer season so if you'll just look at this list, I'll talk with you about it. I'm sure you already know because you're God but let's just talk I need you to show up here.

And so, then I would pray, I would say amen, I would feel pretty good and then I would go and I would try to accomplish everything on my list. I'd get on the phone, I would try to make things happen, I would try to get the program in order, I'd try to get these workers and you know what? The problem wasn't solved that day. So what happens? The next day, I go back to that prayer closet and I'm like, Lord, here's this list again. I don't know if we covered some of these details but let's talk about it again. And then I would leave and I would just try to will it all together and I'd go back to the next day and I'd be like, God, it's still not done, I really need you.

And so God decided to answer my prayer by making me sit down. Isn't that the paradox? I came home that first night from the ER and I tried to go to bed.

[35:53] Oh, it was so uncomfortable. I just could not get into a position where I could just let it ease and so finally, I went out in the living room and I sat down on my chair, propped up my legs and it's dark inside the house.

I got one little night light over by the stove in the kitchen and it's just quiet. It's just me and God. And I was like, God, what's going on?

I asked for help and now, I can't even move. This, this does not make sense to me at all. You know, the Lord taught me probably one of the greatest lessons of my life that when I need Him the most, He doesn't need me.

And if I would just let Him have His way, He could move mountains while I rest in faith.

See, that's what it's all about. Let me tell you, God moved in incredible ways last year. Ways that I never saw possible. In fact, He solved Jacob's problems too.

[37:05] You see, after God wrestled Jacob and Jacob finally yielded, the next day, Jacob gets himself ready to go as he's limping with a walking stick.

And so, the caravans are on their way south. Esau is headed up towards the north and they're now going to confront each other. So, Esau comes with his 400 men. He sees the first family group and he comes and he says, hey, I'm Esau.

And they say, oh, we're from Jacob. Your servant, Jacob. Oh, by the way, here's a gift for you with a note. He's just right behind us. So, Esau is like, whoa, I don't understand that.

Well, whatever. Put the livestock in the back, boys. Let's go. So, they're marching on to the second group. Same thing happens. Oh, here's a gift from your servant, Jacob. He's right behind us and Esau's scratching his head thinking, wow, you know, something's off here because it sounds like Jacob doesn't even want to fight.

Oh, well, boys, put the livestock aside. Let's go. And so, they go to the third group. Same thing. Same message. Jacob's right behind us and Esau is just flabbergasted.

[38:09] He doesn't know what's going on. He says, let's keep going. We got to find Jacob. And as he sees far in the distance, he sees one lonely individual limping along on a walking stick.

And as he sees this gap begin to close, Esau begins to think within himself, you know, not only does Jacob not want to fight, that old boy cannot even fight.

And as the distance encloses, God does something amazing because when they finally greet, they hug on each other. They're kissing on each other.

They're weeping. Don't you get it? God not only solved Jacob's problems, he apparently solved Esau's as well.

If you let God have his way, everything works out. You know what one of my themes is? It always works out. It always does. Have you ever had a moment in your life and it didn't work out?

[39:09] When you live by faith, it always works out. So what are you going to do, friends, if God's wrestling you? Can I challenge you today to let it go, no matter what the circumstance, no matter what you're facing?

Could you just release that today and let God have his way? It's only a baby step today. Say, Lord, I have this area of my life that I've been wrestling with, with you, and I just want you to have it.

And by the way, tomorrow you're going to have to pray the same thing because it's not all about crisis moments. It's one step at a time. But would you at least take that first step of faith and say, God, would you just take this burden from me?

Would you just have your way? I just need you and I can't do it all on my own. Would you be sincere with God today about that? Would you pray openly and admitting, God, I don't have all the answers, but I know that I have you and you have all the answers.

Would you be willing to be sincere about that? And then would you be willing to let him, no matter what the decision is, to conquer you and prevail and let him have his way with you.

[40:14] Let me tell you, that could be a hard thing to do if you're clinging on to something that's your own strength. You might need to let it go. But if you will, God will help you be a winner.

Would you bow your heads, close your eyes. Let me give you that chance right now to respond to the Lord. How's he speaking to you, friends? What are you facing? This is an opportunity for you to step in the right direction.

It could be in 2025. This is exactly what you need. You need God to have full control. Would you allow him to do that? I'm going to ask the piano to play. And as she plays, this is going to be a moment of quiet prayer.

I want to invite you to do business with the Lord. Maybe you need to come and kneel down at the altar. Maybe you just need to do business at your seat. But as she begins to play, would you pour your heart out to God? Would you yield in this matter of whatever it is that needs to change?

There's a strength in your life. God wants it to become a weakness. You know, Paul said, later in his life, he goes, most rather would I glory in mine infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

[41:22] He says, when I'm weak, weak in the flesh, then I'm strong, strong in faith, strong in the Spirit of God. Let him have his way with you today.

Amen.