

Struggling with God

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[0 : 0 0] I was zooming in on the services last week as Lucille and I were on holiday, and it was good to hear Paul preaching. It was good to hear Richard preaching as well, and it was especially good to hear others reading the Scriptures. I meant to actually get somebody to read this evening. It was good when one of our number read the Scriptures last week. So, watch this space. I'll maybe pounce on you in the next coming weeks, but I don't want to pounce on you tonight. So, we're in Genesis 32, studying the life of Jacob. He's already been blessed by God. God has protected him from Uncle Laban. That's where we left him. They've departed from one another in peace. Big chapter of his life closed. Now, a new chapter is opening up. So, let's read from the last verse of Genesis 31, and we'll read Genesis 32. We read, "Early the next morning, Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home." Then we read, "Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. Then when Jacob saw them, he said, "This is the camp of God." So, he named that place Mahanaim.

Jacob sent messengers ahead of him—remember, he's about to meet his brother—he sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. He instructed them, "This is what you are to say to my lord Esau. Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now. I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, male and female servants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes." When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, "We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you." And four hundred men are with him. In great fear and distress, Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well. He thought, "If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left, may escape." Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham,

God of my father Isaac, Lord, you have said to me, go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper. I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two camps.

Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid that he will come and attack me and also the mothers with their children. But you have said, I will surely make you prosper, and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted." He spent the night there, and from what he had with him, he selected a gift for his brother Esau, 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams, 30 male camels with their young, 40 cows and 10 bulls, and 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. That's quite some gift, isn't it?

He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants, go ahead of me and keep some pace between the herds. He instructed the one in the lead, when my brother meets you and asks, who do you belong to and where are you going and who owns all these animals in front of you? Then you are to say, they belong to your servant Jacob.

[3 : 49] They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is coming behind us. He also instructed the second, the third, and all the others who followed the herds. You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him, and be sure to say, your servant Jacob is coming behind us. For he thought, I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead. Later when I see him, perhaps he will receive me.

So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp. That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip, so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, Let me go, for it is daybreak. But Jacob replied, I will not let you go unless you bless me. The man asked him, What is your name? Jacob, he answered.

Then the man said, Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome. Jacob said, Please tell me your name. But he replied, Why do you ask my name? Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared. The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. Therefore, to this day, the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon. We'll end our reading at the end of chapter 32 of this very familiar portion of God's Word. We're going to stand, and we're going to sing, I've chosen, I love this song. This was a song that I've chosen, one and all. Let's just ask for the Lord's help as we try and make sense of this passage before us. Not easy. A loving Father, with your Word open before us, we pray that the, for the ministry of the Holy Spirit to teach us, to be our teacher. Lord, if anything that is said is of man, Lord, may that fall to the ground and perish.

But that which is true, that which is spiritual, that which is truly your Word, Lord, may it find good soil this evening, and may it produce a harvest of righteousness in each one of us who hear. So, Father, bless us as we study your Word together. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

If the passage this morning was a difficult passage to preach on, talking about the tongue, this is a difficult passage to preach on because it's difficult to understand what's actually happening here, God wrestling with a man. What's all that about? Why did it happen?

[7 : 04] And so forth. And that's what we're going to look at. I want to begin in this way. Here is a program that I quite like to watch, Only Connect. Does anybody watch this program? Some of you are smiling.

If you watch this program, it's bonkers. It really is. I like University Challenge, and if I can answer a few of them, I'm doing not too bad. If you can answer any of these questions, they're not easy.

It's called Only Connect, and if you've never seen the program, there is a connection between each of the things that come up. There's the first one, and they'll say, ninth run. And you can never guess because it's only one thing. But some folk usually get it, and the first one, second one, tenth, hello, okay, new teeth, that's weird. What is the connection? So, if you guess it after the second one, you get three points. If you need the third clue or the fourth clue, you get one point, and people buzz in, and they guess what that is. Does anybody know the connection between them?

That's actually one of the easier ones, although I don't particularly like this program. Do you know it, Daniel? Very good, very good. Doctor Who first lines. I don't watch Doctor Who, but whenever there's a new doctor, these were the opening lines. The ninth one, that was his first words, and the tenth doctor, that was his first words as well. There is a connection between them.

The Bible is very much like that. The Bible is not a series of stories with no connection between them, and the life of Jacob is especially like this. It's not just about his life, although it is about his life. An ordinary man, chosen by God, along with his father and his grandfather, to be the ancestors of a nation that will eventually come. They're all connected, and all the stories are connected, leading up to the New Testament and into the New Testament. Here is a quote by Saint Augustine, very well known. You can get it in two forms. The New, talking about the New Testament, is in the old, concealed. In other words, the old is in the new. The new is in the old, concealed. The old is in the new, revealed. Or, you want to put it this way, the new is in the old, contained. The old is in the new, or by the new, explained. Does that make sense? You've got that. It's a well-known quote, and you get it sometimes in those two, concealed, revealed, contained, explained. In other words, the New Testament is in the old, and the Old Testament is explained by the new. And therefore, to really understand what God is doing, you need to understand the Old Testament and the New Testament.

[9 : 48] The two of them must be taken together. They are connected, but so are all the stories within. They're not just historical facts. They relate to salvation. They relate to God's plan of salvation, how he works in the lives of his people then, how—same principles—how he works in his people today. And it's the same when Jesus came. Why didn't Jesus just come when God said to Abraham, I will make of you a great nation, and then Jesus comes? Jesus has to come into a context, so that, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That means something. It's to do with the sacrificial system, which is explained in the Old Testament. So, when you go through the whole history of the Old Testament, you come to Malachi, the world is crying out for a Savior, and he comes. And he fulfills all the prophecies, but not just the prophecies. He fulfills all the types. The sacrificial system points to Jesus. The land of Israel speaks of heaven and glory, where God dwells with his people forever. There is a picture all the way through. And in many ways, when you look at this account of God wrestling with Jacob, you see a connection between the Old and the New Testament. And that's really what I want us to look at tonight. I want to try and preach fairly quickly on this. This is a difficult passage. It's difficult to know even where to begin in this. So, I want us to look at this and see connection with heaven, glory, with Jesus, and so forth. So, we left this last time with, if you look at this map, this is where

Jacob was coming to travel 350 miles from here, and it's 500 miles back to his house, 350 miles. He gets there. Uncle Laban catches up with him. If you zoom in to the next one, Phil, he gets to the hill country of Gilead, and you remember they make peace. God intervenes. God protects him, and the two of them part company. A close of a big chapter of his life, 20 years a slave, basically in the north. And now he comes down, and he's at Peniel, and he's about to meet his brother.

But before he meets his brother, God is going to wrestle with him. God has to wrestle with him. He's not in the place, really, where God wants him to be. And that's what we're looking at just now.

He's about to enter into the promised land, the land that God promised him, promised to Abraham, takes Abraham there. But because of the way things have worked out between him and Esau, he has to leave. But now God said he would always bring him back. So, he says, return to your own land, to return to your own family. And that's what he does. Easier said than done. Uncle Laban chases him, catches him, but God protects him. God was always going to protect him. And then you would think, when Uncle Laban goes away, you think, now I'm going to meet Esau. God will surely protect me.

He protected me against Laban. He's blessed me. God will protect me against Esau. Not a bit of it. He's a normal guy. He's just a normal Joe. Sometimes we, you think, well, the patriarchs, and even the 12 disciples, the apostles, they should get a stained glass window. They're ordinary fishermen, saved by the grace of God. If they get a stained glass window, I should get a stained glass window. There's something for you. Maybe a stained glass window. Pastor, interim Pastor John, up there for folk coming in. Maybe a stained glass window for you, and we can rotate them every year.

[13 : 48] They're ordinary people. You're an ordinary person, as I am an ordinary person as well, saved by the grace of God. And really, that's all Jacob is. He's a rough diamond, and God comes to him.

He would never have known any of these things if God hadn't chosen his father, his grandfather, and chosen him as part of this as well. So, Jacob, we read in verse 7 of this passage that we read, Laban is gone. He's about to meet his brother. Chickens are about to come home to roost. We'll look at this next week. But he, look at verse 7, in great fear and distress. I like the word distress.

He is, he's freaking out. Really, he's struggling to cope with what's about to await him. He doesn't know what's going to happen. Often, the fear of something happening is greater than the thing itself. When the thing comes, you just deal with it. But the fear of it happening. I'm waiting on a dental appointment for root canal. When it actually happens, it might not be bad, but just the thought of it. I keep getting these emergency appointments saying, hi, we've got a spare. Can you take me?

No, you're fine. You're fine. I'm putting it off as long as I can. I've only had root canal once. The drill comes out your toe. It's that deep dread in that. And he is dreading this. He's dreading meeting Esau. He's fearful, in great fear and distress. He plans. He divides them up into groups.

But he also prays, verse 11, save me, I pray from the hand of my brother, for I am afraid. This is, he's in great fear this time in his life. And we have this account of angels and a man wrestling with him. What are we to make of this? It's a bizarre story. It raises loads of questions.

[15 : 43] Why does God choose to attack him? Why does God, why doesn't he just instantly prevail that the battle is not an even fight? This is an angel of the Lord, the Lord himself, wrestling with him.

I'm not really into wrestling. I'm looking forward to the Olympics. Wrestling are just big daddy and giant haystacks. I remember that and the pantomime of wrestling. It just doesn't do it for me. But I know moves like the, what was it, half Nelson and a pile driver. I've never heard of a move called the touch. He touched me and dislocated. The battle is so unbalanced. The Lord just needs to touch him and he wins the battle. And here it's just so un-but why would God, almighty God, enter into a battle with this scheming and planning guy? What does it mean to strike him on the hip? What does it mean to change his name to Israel? Why doesn't God tell Jacob his own name? Questions, questions. How do we make sense of this? So, let's look at this passage. I've only got two points this evening that I want to look at in his struggle with God. This is, he's struggled with the Lord. He's struggled with his family, struggled with blessings, struggled with trying to get crops and flocks and so forth.

But this is a big one. This is not struggling with Uncle Laban. He's struggling now with God. And this is really a big thing. So, first of all then, two points. Struggling with pride. Struggling with pride.

Jacob's about to enter into the promised land, the land that God had promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and now to Jacob. It's not just any land. It's a land that God promised to bless his people, promised to bless him and his descendants, where God would be with him in a specific way. One of the commentators comments in verse 1 of chapter 32 about the angels that met him immediately after Laban goes, and as he's about to start to enter into the promised land, we are told he went on his way, and the angels of God met him. One of the commentators likens this encounter a bit like entering into the Garden of Eden. When man was excluded from the Garden of Eden, angels were placed there. If we had to try and enter the Garden of Eden, there would be angels with flaming swords, and the way was closed.

And one of the angels likens this. He's about to enter into the promised land, and these angels are there. He meets these angels. And instead of Jacob being encouraged or afraid of the angels, he's still more afraid of his brother. All he can think of is his brother. He doesn't offer up sacrifices to these angels and so forth. He's more taken up with his brother. And he's about to enter into—this is one of the things about talking about connections between the old and the new, and between principles that God has throughout the Bible—to enter into the promised land, to enter into God's land, to enter into God's favor, it cannot be done by our own efforts. We cannot earn this. And Jacob, in many ways, doesn't deserve to be blessed by God. And yet God has blessed him in so many ways. And this land that he's about to enter later on, when they end up in Egypt and then come out of Egypt and wander for 40 years, and then the land is such a big thing. And in they're about to enter into again, you'll read the principles of living in this land as Deuteronomy 11 verse 10. The land you're entering to take over is not like the land of

[19 : 39] Egypt from where you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by food as in a vegetable garden. In other words, where you did everything yourself, and you achieved things yourself, and you blessed yourself. But the land that you're going in to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys. It drinks rain from heaven. It is a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are continually on it from beginning to the end. So if you obey the commands I am giving you today to love the Lord and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, they would be blessed in the land. In other words, entry into this land and remaining in this land depends on trusting God, depends on Him. And really, at this point, Jacob is not ready spiritually to enter into the promises and the blessings of God. He's still planning and scheming. He's not really resting in God. And he's still afraid of Esau. Although he's praying, he's still planning. And God has to meet this scheming person, the self-sufficient guy, and has to basically allow him to enter into the promised land. And here you see that God comes to him in human form, a man. Most of the commentators would say that this is the

Lord in human form. In Genesis, there are these epiphanies of God, where God walked with Adam and Eve in the garden. He dined with Abraham. He comes with a sword, and so forth. And God, in this narrative early on in the Old Testament, appears as a man. Most of the commentators say that this angel of the Lord is none other than Jesus in his pre-incarnate form. And one of the commentators says this, we are able, with Martin Luther, to say without the slightest contradiction, this man is not an angel, but our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eternal God and yet was to become a man. Jesus Christ appeared as a man upon earth to wrestle with men. And this is believed that this is the Lord himself before he's born in Bethlehem. And as Jacob prepares to enter into the promised land, he's already blessed.

He's already blessed. He has promises. He has people. He has possessions. He has protection. And yet, at this point, throughout his whole life, 20 years have been sustained by God. He's not fully trusting in the Lord. He's still planning, and he's still scheming. And he has this great elaborate plan, sending this one over and that one. If they get attacked, the rest can't escape. He's hoping to appease his brother. Verse 51, tell him I have cattle and donkeys. And, oh, sorry, verse 5, I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, main servants and man servants, and so forth. And he's expecting, when he sees them, Esau to send back news. Isn't that great? My brother's coming. Thanks for the donkeys. Jacob really appreciate them. But we read, we went our way to your brother, and now he's coming to meet you. And it wouldn't be so bad if it was just left there. But he's got 400 men with him. And this makes a situation worse. If he'd have just said he's coming to meet you, he just can't wait to see you. We're going to have a hug fest. He's coming with 400 men. And this just makes it worse for Jacob, in great fear and great distress. He starts to plan and scheme. He's back to doing this again. He prays to

God, but he's still trying to have pleased. And he's unable to sleep, no surprise there. He decides to cross the Jabbok River that night with his family, and then he is left alone. There is so much he could say about this passage, that he's left alone with God, and God decides to speak to him. It is great when members of our family who might, I've done so many funerals, not done any here yet, but I've done so many funerals, and people who don't believe in God, suddenly when they die, well, they're away at heaven, and it just happens, and we enter into the promised land. And it's simply not the case. It's not a given, you die, and you go to glory. It doesn't happen that way. And it's great when God deals with us as individuals.

I remember when I was, my anniversary, my birth, spiritual birth is coming up on May the 12th, and I always liked it in the month of May, because then I remember the day in which I was saved. My mother was a Christian, my brother and sister were Christians, and I just thought, yeah, we're all, we're all going to get there together. And God had to do a work in me. He had to wrestle with me.

[24 : 44] I thought I could weigh him up. My brother had one old level, and I says, well, I'm no surprise. He's easily led. I have an A level in physics and maths. I'll work all out. A plus B equals C. Yeah, I'll buy into it. Not realizing that God wrestled with me over 18 months and brought me to an end of myself before I could enter into the promised land. And it's the same pattern. It's the same pattern with everybody. Maybe God had to wrestle you and break you before you could enter into glory. And that is what's happening here. He's left alone. A man wrestles with him until daybreak, and he touches Jacob's hip socket. It's pulled out of joint. At this point, he's finished. And all he can do is cling to him.

Maybe you've seen fights like that, when you think, if I step back, I'm going to be, all I can do is just hang, as long as I can hang on to him, he's not going to get a good swing at me.

And that's all he can do. In this wrestling match, he's just holding on. If you ever watched, what do you call that, gladiators and the pudial sticks, they have to fight with each other. They're not allowed to just hang on and do whatever. They actually have to fight. Jacob has nothing left to fight with here. He's just hanging on. He's, God has used that great wrestling move, the touch, and it's brought him to an end of himself. And all he can do is hang on. In other words, God has put his finger on the issue with Jacob. He's caused to limp after this. Life will be different for him.

Instead of planning and getting it all sorted, you know yourself, if you ever have an injury or something that comes to you into your life, you think, Lord, help me with this. Your prayer life increases. Lord, I'm struggling. Everything was great until today. I've just been to the doctor.

The prognosis doesn't look good. Lord, help me. And that's basically what's happening to Jacob. God's wrestling with this all-sufficient guy, and he's putting his finger on him.

[26 : 49] And he asks someone an embarrassing question, the man. And the embarrassing question is this, what's your name? And he has to tell him, my name is Jacob. And you remember his name means deceiver. I think people are called Jacob. Nobody calls their kids Jezebel or folk like that or Judas.

But Jacob is quite a, but that's what it means. And somebody asks you your name, Jacob is just a name to us. But in those days, your name meant something. I'm named John after my dad.

That's the only reason. John's just an ordinary name. But Jacob, what is your name? He might as well have just said, I'm a deceiver. I've deceived my brother, and I'm deceiving myself to think that I can enter into the promised land by planning and scheming and doing it my way. And God wrestles with him and reminds him that that's who he is. Causes him to just say the words, I am a deceiver. And God often does this with us. And where we learn to struggle with God. Look at verse 32. His name has changed more on this in a minute to Israel. And he's wrestled with God. He's wrestled with others.

I wrestled with God. God was gracious enough to strive with us and to strive with you, to trust in him if we are to do this. And the New Testament concept of the promised land is the same.

We don't just walk into it. Don't just die and get there. God has to break us that we are no longer self-sufficient. We can't just stroll into the kingdom of God. God will put his finger on something in our life. It's your pride, John. It's this. It's that. You need to repent. Nobody enters the kingdom of God without repentings. Every one of us at some point start to mention that we have sinned against God. That is, unless we repent and believe the good news, we are not saved. Remember Paul's conversion. Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Why it is hard for you to kick against the goads.

[29 : 03] God has been poking him, prodding him. God has been working in his life, and he says, you can't escape me. God chose Paul, convicted him of sin, and brought him to a saving knowledge of himself. He who was proud, a proud Pharisee, would call himself the chief of sinners.

And that is the pattern, the connection between the old and the new. It's the same way we enter into the kingdom of God. Does that make sense? Jacob had to be broken in many ways to enter into the promised land. He's not trusting, and he's not taking these things seriously, and God wrestles with him. That's why Jesus said it is especially difficult for rich people to enter the kingdom of God, because they are self-sufficient. They don't need God. I was thinking of Dunbar the other day, and the days when I used to do door-to-door work there for a whole day. And I think I've maybe said to you've gone up to one door, and the guy has a Porsche, and said, I'm from the church. And he just knew God, Jesus. He's just expecting the gospel. And he says, why do I need God? And then points to his Porsche. And they said, I don't need God. I've got a Porsche. All the best for that then when you die.

Take your Porsche to glory. But that's just people's attitude. Why should I need a holiday? I have a good job. I've got a car. My wife, my health is okay. I don't need God. But what they do need is God to come and wrestle with them, and to put his finger on, might not be their hip physically, but something that causes them to limp, and to cause them to cling to him as the only way, to cling to Jesus as the only way of salvation. And that's what God does with Jacob. He does this. It's the same plan as bringing him into the promised land. He brings us into the promised land. And Jesus says this, doesn't he? He says, I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. This man, Jacob, has to become a child, limping, struggling to get by, clinging only to the Lord. And it's the same with you and I. He's given a new name from deceiver to Israel, one who has struggled with God and prevailed. Before Peniel, his entire life was characterized by determination to seize and to grasp opportunities, blessing for himself. Now his name is changed to Israel. Through him, the nation will be blessed. I want to look at the second point with this quickly. He struggled with God. It's one thing to enter the land. It's another thing to remain in the land, to keep walking with God. And he starts off, well, he builds an altar. Look at verse—he calls this God, the God of Israel, Elohe Israel, 33 verse 20. The God of his fathers is now his God. But it's a bigger God than Bethel. Bethel was all about him. I will bring you back, and it's me and you. But now he is the God of Israel, the God of this nation that will come bigger than him. And—but from then on, he will have to rely on God. One of the commentators says that by dislocating his hip, it was preventing him from escaping. I just like the practical nature of this. He was planning—he's standing there with the Nike trainers on as he's sending these folk in. And if it doesn't work, he's off. He's not going to run very fast with this limp now. He's going to go through life now, dependent upon God for everything. And God, if God has given you a limp, whatever form that is, that is where you—that is your thorn in the flesh, perhaps. You say, Lord, help me to serve you with us. Help me to do nothing but cling to you as well. But here we see a pattern as well. His name is changed to Israel. And one of the commentators says this,

In the story of Israel, the man served as an acted parable of the life of the nation, in which here is presented its relationship with God almost prophetically. The patriarch portrays the real spirit of the nation to engage in the persistent struggle with God until it emerges strong in the blessing. The nation is consequently referred to as Jacob or Israel. In other words, in this one parable that this one prophetic thing that happens where he wrestles with Jacob and his name is changed to Israel, that is a pattern that will happen throughout Israel's history. Israel and Jake and God will always wrestle. To this day, 2024, God still wrestles with his people to bless them. And still they find it hard to trust, to trust that Jesus is the Messiah. They struggle. The whole of the Old Testament,

God says, I will bless you, and if you obey, you will be blessed in this land. If you disobey, you will be taken out of the land and to exile. And that is what's happened. Our whole relationship is one of wrestling. And this is what happens here. This is connected to the rest of the Old Testament.

[34 : 36] And even into the new. They fail to trust in God and wandered for 40 years. They fail to trust under the leadership of Joshua. They fail to trust throughout the whole history. Prophets are sent, and they're eventually sent into exile, and the blessings are withheld. But nevertheless, God is still on their side. God knows how to bless His people. John Calvin said this.

He says this. He says, he said, indeed, that the Lord works in such a way as he says this, he fights against us, but he also fights for us. He says, while he assails us with one hand, he defends us with the other. It says, yeah, and as much as he supplies us with more energy and strength to resist than he employs in opposing us, he fights against us with his left hand, and for us with his right hand. God bless—he will wrestle you today and tomorrow, but he will always desire to bless you. And as he wrestled with Jacob, so God wrestles with us. He tests us in our faith to develop our walk with him. And even if we walk with a limp, he knows how to bless us.

So what can we conclude in this? We need to depend on him to enter into the promised land. God will bring us to an end of ourself. He will put his finger on something that might dislocate something that will cause us to come and trust in him. And I pray that I have a sister, I have members of my family that still aren't saved. Until they come to an end of themselves, they will never cry out to God for salvation. We need to pray, Lord, wrestle with them. I've tried wrestling. I'm getting nowhere. Lord, will you not wrestle with them? They are so independent, so strong-willed. Lord, will you not wrestle them? And if it means dislocating something in their life to bring them to a knowledge of you where they cling to Jesus as their only way of salvation, do this.

And when they are saved and when we are saved, help us to walk humbly with you. Bless us, Lord. Help us not to stop fighting against you, but to trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus. Jacob wasn't trusting as he's meeting Esau. Now he's a changed man.

He will meet Esau, and the Lord will bless him. May the Lord help us with these principles. If we try and make sense of this passage together, let's stand and we'll sing our closing song.

[37 : 26] All the way my Savior leads me. Our loving Heavenly Father, we thank you for the words of that song. We thank you for the truth and the principles we have found in your Word. And we thank you for that reminder that no one can enter the promised land until you wrestle with us, until as you bring us to an end of ourself and cause us to trust in Jesus and Jesus alone as our only Savior. We pray, Father, for those members of our family who are still distant from you. Lord, wrestle with them, we pray. Bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself. And Father, we pray for ourself as we go into another week. We may be limping into another week, but we cling to you, Lord, in that condition.

And we pray that you will be to us all that we need. Help us to walk in faith. Help us to walk in joy and peace in believing. We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you, folks.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[39 : 36] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.