

JACOB'S WRESTLING MATCH

God protects, disciplines, and blesses his chosen ones.



THE STORY: GENESIS 31:22-55

MONDAY

God watched over Jacob in spite of his sin

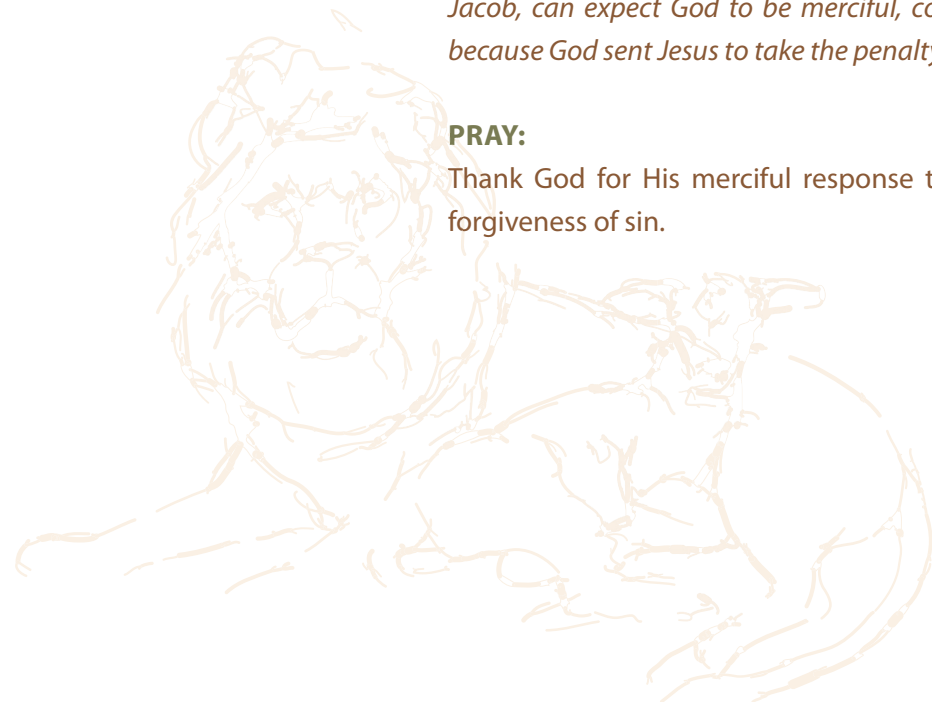
God watched over Jacob in spite of his sin - When Laban discovered that Jacob slipped away with all his family and flocks he became angry. He gathered his men to overtake Jacob. Even though Jacob's flocks were rightly his, Laban considered everything that Jacob had as his own (see vs 43). God intervened and warned Laban not to harm Jacob in a dream. One amazing part of this story is that God protected Jacob even though Rachel sinned by stealing her father's idols. God's plan to save sinners is bigger than Jacob's fear or even Rachel's theft. God delivered Jacob in keeping with His promise to Abraham. (Dads: Be aware of the reference to Rachel's menstrual cycle in verse 35. You may want to simply not read the second half of verse 35 to young children.)

TALK ABOUT IT:

What can we learn about God from the way He protected Jacob in spite of Jacob's fear (vs. 31) and Rachel's theft of her father's gods (vs. 32)? *(We learn that God is slow to anger and abounding in love [See Psalm 103:8-12]. God has a plan to redeem His people. Jacob, like his father and grandfather, were chosen by God's grace in spite of their sin. God's plan was to make them the fathers of a people to whom he would reveal Himself and redeem mankind. As we trust in the Lord and His redemptive plan, we, like Jacob, can expect God to be merciful, compassionate, and gracious. This is possible because God sent Jesus to take the penalty for our sin.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for His merciful response toward Jacob and ask Him for mercy and forgiveness of sin.





Jacob gives in to the fear of man

Jacob gives in to the fear of man - Genesis 32:1 informs us that on his journey Jacob met the angels of God. When Jacob saw them he declared, "This is God's camp." Certainly he would have been taught about his grandfather's encounter with the angels who were sent by God to destroy Sodom. But, in spite of the presence of angels, Jacob fears man more than God. He assumes Esau is about to attack him in spite of the way God protected him from Laban. When Jacob heard the report of his brother's approach with four hundred men, he was afraid. He thought that Esau was about to attack him in spite of the way God protected him from Laban. Rather than place his trust in the Lord, Jacob created a plan to calm his brother with gifts which he sent ahead. In the night, he moved his family and remaining possessions across the stream and then returned alone to wait through the night.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What is the "fear of man?" (*The fear of man is when we are more afraid of what other people think about us than about God and what He thinks about us. If our fear of man is greater than our fear of God, we will allow man to influence our behavior instead of God. The fear of man shows us who we are trusting. It reveals whether we really trust God and His promises or not.*)

Where is the fear of man most likely to show up in your life? (*Dads: You are going to need to help your children evaluate this sin in their lives. How can the influence of other children lead them to do things they shouldn't or wouldn't otherwise do?*)

PRAY:

Ask God to help you remember His promises, overcome the fear of man in your life, and believe and trust in His gospel plan through Jesus.



Where is Jesus?

Jacob received a new name, Israel. From this point God calls his people "the children of Israel." Jesus would be the one God chose out of Israel to lead and care for His people. In the end all those who are in Christ will be called "Israel." (Romans 9:25)

Christ is the one who appears as the Lord wrestling with Jacob. His appearance here, as the Angel of the Lord, anticipated the day when He would walk among us as a man.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Who are the children of the promise in this passage? *(All those who trust in Jesus are considered children of the promise. The promise God brought through Abraham's offspring was fulfilled in Jesus. All those who believe in Jesus inherit that blessing and are considered the spiritual children of Abraham.)*

How is the Lord wrestling Jacob like God coming to the earth as a man? *(Both demonstrate the amazing grace of God. Even though people rebelled against God, the Lord continues to reach out to people. The most significant appearance of God among men was when God took upon Himself human flesh, lived among us, and ultimately died and rose so that we could be reconciled to God.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for His amazing grace shown in the wrestling of Jacob and the incarnation of Jesus.



THE STORY: GENESIS 32: 22-32

THURSDAY

Jacob wrestled with God and learned the fear of the Lord

Jacob wrestled with God and learned the fear of the Lord – In the middle of the night the angel of the Lord began to wrestle with Jacob. This must have scared Jacob, who already feared his brother's revenge. Jacob might have wondered if it was a robber or one of Esau's men. He wrestled the entire night, but would not give in to this stranger. After the long struggle, the man reached for Jacob's hip and, with one touch, put it out of socket. Jacob reacted by grabbing the man. When the Angel of the Lord asked Jacob to release him, Jacob realized this was not a man, but God Himself. At that point Jacob demanded a blessing.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Was Jacob so strong that He was winning against God? *(No. At any moment God could have destroyed Jacob. The Angel of the Lord easily disabled him.)*

What did Jacob realize after one touch from God put his hip out of place? *(Jacob realized the power of the one who wrestled Him and knew it was God.)*

PRAY:

Take time to praise God for His power and control over all things. Have your children take turns asking God to help them serve Him.



On the road to Emmaus.

David understood that his salvation and his deliverance from difficulty came from the Lord. When we look at Psalm 7, we now know that the greatest salvation and the greatest deliverance God provides are from death and sin. This salvation is by the finished work of Christ on the cross.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does it mean to take refuge in the Lord? *(A refuge provides protection for us in difficult circumstances. We might take refuge from a sudden rain storm under the overhanging roof of a store. So, to take refuge in the Lord means that we can trust Him to protect us in the midst of a difficult time.)*

What is our biggest problem or greatest need? *(Our greatest need is for salvation from the punishment we deserve for our sin. Our greatest enemies are sin and death. We all deserve punishment for our sins and that punishment is death. Just as the angel of death passed over the homes where he saw the blood on the door frames [see Ex. 12;12-13], so will death pass by those who have trusted in the blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to deliver you from your greatest enemies - sin and death. Thank Him for Jesus' death on the cross which makes this deliverance possible.

