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GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2020  
GOSPEL GLIMPSES: JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT  
WEEK 4 – FEBRUARY 2, 2020 - GENESIS 32:22-31

## GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- 1) 1) What does your name mean, or where did it come from?

## SETTING THE CONTEXT

This week we take a look at another story involving the life of Jacob. It has been twenty years since the dream. During this time Jacob has gone from having only a staff, when he crossed the Jordan River, to now traveling with two camps/caravans of people and animals (Genesis 32:10). Those two decades had been a time of struggle and blessing, and now he is on his way to the land that God had promised to him.

However, in doing so, he is going to have to deal with his brother Esau. In Genesis 32, he sends messengers ahead of his caravans to Esau, with the hope of finding some sort of favor with his brother. Jacob's servants return, and tell him that Esau is on his way with four hundred men. The expectation is that Esau is coming after Jacob.

On the night before he is to meet Esau, Jacob moves his family across the stream and is left alone. Jacob's struggle, however, is not just with Esau. For his whole life, he had also struggled with God. That night he wrestled with the man of God. It is interesting to note that in the Ancient Near East, legal cases could actually be settled by a wrestling match. This struggle is another major moment in the life of Jacob.

The one he is struggling with is the very Angel of the Lord – God appearing as a man. The angel of the Lord touches his hip and the match is over. Yet Jacob will not let go. He could not win with his own strength, but he could simply “hold on” in his weakness. He would try and win by just refusing to let go. Edmund Clowney writes that “faith wins when it knows that all is lost, and clings to God alone.”



What is interesting in this wrestling match is that the Lord suffers an apparent defeat, in order to gain the true victory. We see that God is willing to humble himself, in order that sinners might receive his blessing. This is what the cross is ultimately all about.

Jacob has wrestled with God and held on. He has a new name. He has been blessed. Yet, he walks away limping. This “victorious limp” would be his constant reminder that he had “struggled with God, and humans, and had overcome.”

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

### Read Genesis 32:22-31

*22 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. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 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. 26 Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” 27 The man asked him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he answered. 28 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.” 29 Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.” But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.” 31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, [h] and he was limping because of his hip.*

- 2) 2) In this story of Jacob, how do you picture this playing out? Who do you think started the wrestling? (The Bible really doesn’t say)
- 3) When do you think Jacob realized this was God?
- 4) When in your life have you felt you were wrestling with God?
- 5) Has a hardship in your life left you with a “limp”, either physically, emotionally, spiritually, or in another way? Has that helped or hurt your faith journey?
- 6) Share a time when you “wouldn’t let go”, or prayed persistently for something for a long time. Was the prayer finally answered, or did you change your prayer to match God’s will?
- 7) Jacob was risking his life to receive God’s blessing (seeing God’s face at daybreak would have presumably killed him). What is God’s blessing worth to you? And, what would you give to receive it?

## BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) 8) Pray for something every day for the next seven days. Persistently praying for the same thing, and report back to the group next week how it goes.