

THE POWER OF PREVAILING PRAYER - Gen. 32:24-31

Introduction: Jacob at the brook Jabbok.

I. His urgent need of prayer

A. His sinful past

B. His critical present situation.

1. Facing a turning point in his life.

2. To meet his brother Esau tomorrow.

Solomon: "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city."

✓ 3. Godless seaman in storm prayed, "O Lord, I have not asked you for anything for fifteen years, and if you deliver us out of this storm and bring us safe to land again, I promise that I will not bother you again for another 15 years!"

II. His unusual experience with the angel.

A. He was alone in meditation

B. Who was the angel?

C. Was the wrestling real?

1. Seems to be a real happening, not just a dream.

2. It does, however have a spiritual meaning.

3. Hosea ~~4~~12:4 refers especially to his prevailing in prayer, "He had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him."

D. What did this wrestling signify?

✓ 1. Prayer should be earnest, importunate, fervent.

2. Luther was so earnest in his prayers that it used to be said, "He will not be denied."

3. When Scotland was in danger from turning from the evangelical faith John Knox prayed mightily, "God give me Scotland, or I die."

4. We read of Christ when he was in Gethsemane, that "being in agony, he prayed the more fervently."

E. This assures the victory to today's Christian.

✓ 1. Wilberforce's story of the miner who would not go away without the blessing. ~~an~~ accident. ~~he~~ said, "I don't mind, for I've got it... It's mine!"

2. Charles G. Finney's story of a man with a stammering tongue who prayed for an afternoon, and a great revival followed.

3. Prayer is more than a healthy spiritual exercise for the one who prays, having a mere subjective value in teaching submission.

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS.

III. The results of his Remarkable Experience.

A. Changed Name and Character.

1. Jacob means supplanter, deceiver, trickster
2. He became Israel, a prince with God
3. He received the blessing he so much desired.
4. What a change God can make in the personality of his rebellious creatures who surrender to Him.
5. Receiving the angel's blessings was much better than learning His name. Spiritual blessings, which secure our happiness, are more desirable than fine notions which satisfy our curiosity. The tree of Life is better than the tree of Knowledge.
6. Here Jacob was knighted in the field.

B. He received the mark on the thigh.

1. This was a divine touch that wounded and healed at the same time.
2. Wrestling believers may obtain glorious victories and yet come off with broken bones. This may have been the reminder of his past failures, to keep him humble, as Paul's thorn in the flesh kept him from boasting and pride.
3. Sometimes God has to do something to us to destroy our resistance.
4. Yet it was a mark of his heroic victory
5. John Elias, the great Welsh orator, once addressed a meeting presided over by the Marquis of Anglesey. The Marquis was lame, having lost a leg in the battle of Waterloo. Referring to this, the speaker thrilled his audience by this striking remark:
"We have here a president, whose very step as he walks reminds you of his victorious experience!"
6. What have you suffered for Him? The Christian who dreamed he was in the Celestial City, and two martyrs told him who they were and asked him what he suffered for Jesus.

C. He was reconciled to his brother Esau.

1. His prayers were answered.
2. "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept."
3. "And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him!"
4. It is eternal sunrise with the soul that prevails as a prince with God.

D. What this Prayer teaches us

1. The basic relationship - Father - son
2. The reverent attitude - Hallowed be thy name
3. The ultimate concern - the Kingdom of God
4. The premissable petition - daily bread
5. The noblest petition - the two-sided coin of forgiveness: human and divine - *madame Chiang Kai-shek*
6. The plea for deliverance - (from temptation)

E. Prayer should always be based on this pattern, if not always in these same words.

III. BY PERSISTING IN PRAYER

- A. Importunity - persistence - vs 8 - *(hammer-lazy) told about seeing an ant carrying a grain of corn up a high wall. it fell 64 times, but he persevered & made it the 104th time.*
- B. Persistence counts for more than friendship sometimes.
- C. Don't be ashamed to persist in prayer -
"the very shamelessness of the request will make him get up and give him all he needs" - NEB

D. Persisting in ASKING

...and it will be given you.

this is a command, not just advice or a suggestion

E. Persisting in SEEKING

...and you will find

F. Persisting in KNOCKING

...and it will be opened to you.

IV. BY FAITH IN YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER'S GOODNESS, 11-15.

A. The story behind the passage

1. Son asks father for fish; father gives him a snake.

2. Son asks father for egg; father gives him a scorpion.

B. If an earthly father wouldn't do such a thing, how could one imagine that our Heavenly Father would?

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