

# God Wrestles Jacob

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**Bible Text:** Genesis 32:22-30  
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Let's open God's word together and turn to Genesis chapter 32. Genesis 32, the account of God wrestling with Jacob at Peniel. I preached this sermon this morning at Southwest as a baptism sermon. I thought it could work tonight too as an applicatory sermon. We'll see.

Genesis 32. In this history, Jacob is returning from Paddan Aram and heading back home to Canaan, and his brother Esau is in the area, and Jacob sends some messengers to Esau, and those messengers return, they return to Jacob, and they tell Jacob that Esau, hearing that you are coming, Jacob, has gathered 400 men and is coming toward you, and Jacob is afraid, and we pick it up at verse 13 and read Jacob's response.

13 And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; 14 Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, 15 Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. 16 And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. 17 And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? 18 Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us. 19 And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. 20 And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. 21 So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company.

Now begin the words of our text,

22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. 23 And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he

had. 24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. 25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. 26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. 29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. 30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. 31 And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. 32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

In addition to Genesis 32, I'd like to read a few verses from Hosea. Hosea chapter 12, verses 2 through the first part of verse 4. It's the end of 3 and the first part of 4 that is a commentary on the end of Genesis chapter 32, but let's pick it up at verse 2 Hosea 12, beginning at verse 2.

2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him. 3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: 4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him:

Beloved of God, as I said in Genesis 32, Jacob is returning back to the land of Canaan after having spent 20 years in Paddan Aram with his uncle Laban. He returned to the land of Canaan at the call of God himself. Back in chapter 31 in verse 3, we read this, "And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." So Jacob does. He returns, though in very different circumstances from those that were there when he left Canaan to go to his uncle Laban 20 years before. Jacob was, of course, single at that point, and now he returns home with wives and with tents full of children. He left with virtually nothing, and he returns with wealth untold. And he left a young man, quite brash, and he's returning as a more mature man with a changing outlook on his life as that often is the case when one leaves home and then returns.

God has been maturing Jacob spiritually. God has been chipping away at Jacob's own sense of self-dependence, his own trust and his own ingenuity and own ability, and some of God's most vital work in that particular area are still pieces of the puzzle that God is putting together in Jacob's life here as he returns now on this journey back to the land of Canaan. Molding the spiritual sculpture that is Jacob is an ongoing process and here God in our text is doing a very mighty work upon Jacob and doing it in the context of a

healthy dose of fear in Jacob because returning home, Jacob now must face his brother, Esau. You remember that Esau had sworn to kill Jacob when Jacob had gotten the birthright blessing. Now, Jacob must come back to where Esau is and Jacob is terribly afraid. And when he hears from these messengers that Esau has gathered 400 men and is marching towards Jacob, he is greatly distressed and afraid. Verse 7 says Jacob was greatly distressed and afraid, and in his fear, he does right, he prays in the first part of chapter 32, a part that we didn't read, a good prayer, a godly prayer, a very humble prayer that appeals to the promises of God for protection. But a prayer that's not quite deep enough in Jacob. Jacob is a schemer. Jacob tends to always think that he can figure things out with his own ingenuity and his own strength, can get himself out of any trouble. And even after he falls upon his knees and he makes this wonderfully humble prayer, crying out to Jehovah God, he gets back up off of his knees after praying and we read in the first part of what we read tonight, that he goes back to his schemings. "I've gotta get myself out of this." And more presents for Esau, and it's very particular, he has it all worked out. Three separate droves, and one after the other, "And here's what you need to say, and here's what you need to say," and every detail is worked out. "For he said," verse 20, "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me." And he sends the troop of his whole family across the brook of Jabbok and he stays behind alone for the night to protect himself, hoping that his presence and his family will play on Esau's emotions and before Esau gets to him, Esau will be pacified. And that night, all alone, God comes to Jacob in what is surely one of the strangest and most astounding events in all the Old Testament. God wrestles with him all through the night till the breaking of the day. What is going on here? What is this? What is the purpose of this wrestling God?

Jacob is doing what God had bid him to do. He's returning to the land of Canaan, as God had said. Jacob is willing to depart with a portion of his wealth, at least to make things right with Esau. A beloved God is after more than Jacob's things. God wants the man. He wants him broken. He wants him humbled and dependent on God alone for blessing and not on his own self or his own arm of strength. That's what he wants with you, child of God, and that's what he wants with me. This passage applies to us in the New Testament times as well. In the New Testament itself, we're told that this new name that was given to Jacob, the name Israel, is a name that also applies to God's people in the New Testament, Galatians 6, verse 16, where we are called the Israel of God, collectively, as the church, and every individual child of God a part of that. God comes to wrestle with us Israels as he did with that Israel in one way or another.

The focus of the text, beloved, is very much on the individual's relationship with God. Jacob is all alone when God comes to wrestle him. Nobody at the time of it happening knows that it's happening. And perhaps few, or even none, of God's wrestlings with us are known. And yet he does it, doesn't he? All of us, and always he's after the same thing he was after with Jacob, a broken, humbled child dependent upon him for blessing. The theme tonight is "God Wrestles Jacob," and notice first the match, second the victory, and third the blessing. The match, the victory, and the blessing.

Some have argued that there was no actual wrestling match in our text, that Jacob was dreaming this or that the account of this is merely a metaphor for a kind of spiritual wrestling with God in the soul, but beloved, there was a real physical wrestling match that took place on the edge of the Jabbok River that night. To be sure, a spiritual wrestling of the soul is going on here as well, and in fact, the physical wrestling of these two is a means to the end of that spiritual wrestling of the soul but that spiritual wrestling of the soul happens in the context of a very real, actual match between two men. This was no figment of Jacob's imagination. He was not having a dream. This did not occur in a vision. Two men rolled around in the dust that night, one seeking to gain the mastery over the other. All night long. The proof of that is in the fact that there are very real physical effects from this wrestling match in Jacob. Not only were there spiritual remnants of this night, but there was a physical remnant of this night. Verse 31, "And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh." Everyone could see for themselves that this was a real wrestling match that took place as Jacob limped, the effect of the angel touching him.

The one who gave him those physical effects of that wrestling match, was God himself, with whom Jacob was wrestling. Jacob was wrestling with God. Jacob testifies, in verse 30, and that in this, "I have seen God face to face." And then he names the place Peniel, which means the face of God. And then the man who is God tells Jacob, "Your name is Israel for you have had power with God." This is God who wrestled with Jacob. He appeared in the form of a man, but it was God. Hosea 12, verse 4 that we read, calls Jacob's opponent the angel, the angel, "Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed." And so it was, this was the angel of Jehovah, the pre-incarnate Christ in the Old Testament who sometimes appears and then disappears in the Old Testament. The second person of the Trinity who will later take on human flesh permanently in the womb of the virgin Mary, but who in the Old Testament at times appeared in a human form to the people of God. That's who it is, the pre-incarnate Christ. God himself appearing in the form of a man and wrestling with Jacob through the night.

Now what you may miss in this astounding passage is that it's God himself in the form of a man who initiated this wrestling match with Jacob. Verse 24, "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." God, as it were, came after Jacob, attacked Jacob. How did that go? Did he appear out of nowhere right next to Jacob and just start wrestling him? Did he appear somewhere a ways away and then run up to Jacob and tackle him? Was he hiding behind a bush or a tree and then ambushed Jacob when he came around the tree? We don't know. We're not told, but it was dark. It was the night. So whatever the case, Jacob likely didn't see him until he was close.

But in any event, God, appearing in the form of a man, jumped Jacob, attacked him, and began wrestling with him. And Jacob wrestled back. The fact that the match lasted all night long indicates that once initiated, Jacob wrestled back the rest of the night until the breaking of the day. They rolled around in the dirt, God in human form, and Jacob, God wrestling with Jacob like a father would wrestle with one of his younger boys, not using all of his strength so that he doesn't overcome him, and yet not just laying there playing

dead, but engaging and using enough of his strength to keep the match going. That's what's going on as Jacob continues to seek for the mastery over God in human flesh, appearing in human flesh, all night long.

Given the shift that occurs once God touches Jacob's thigh, and I'm going to come back to this in just a moment, I'm convinced that it's not until that moment when God touches Jacob's thigh that Jacob knows that the one whom he's wrestling with is God himself. Before that, he doesn't know who this person is. He's just someone who has attacked him and he's wrestling him. But this is what God wants. God is drawing out Jacob's nature, who he is. Of course, Jacob engages. Of course, he wrestles back. That's who Jacob is. That's what's in his blood. That's what's in his nature. Jacob is the supplanter. That's why he was named Jacob. This is in his character. Whenever a challenge confronts him, Jacob's first impulse is to win, to overcome, to gain the mastery over. "By strength or by ingenuity or by wit, whatever it is, I will find a way to prevail. I will get the birthright blessing from Esau." It's no coincidence, beloved, that Jacob just happened to be making Esau's favorite meal when Esau came back from the hunt. And though his mother was involved the second time, and he learned some of this from his mother, when he deceived his father Isaac, that in no way discounts that this is in him. He's Jacob, the supplanter. And so in scheming, Uncle Laban seeks to take advantage of him with his schemes. Jacob does not relent, neither does he just stand back, but he's going to out-scheme the scheming Uncle Laban. And now here, if it's physical strength that is at issue, if that's where he's challenged, then there he will overcome and he will not relent. Yes, Jacob wrestles back. All the night long he wrestles back the God who jumped him.

Has this God ever jumped you, beloved? In his providence in your life, the sudden shifting of circumstances, where before it was like this, and now it is like this? It feels as though he ambushes you in his providence. Some sickness that was not there before and now it's there? A loss of a job? Consequences of sin that you convinced yourself would never come upon you because, of course, you are the exception, but then they came upon you and now here they are so suddenly? A relationship, perhaps, that takes a sharp turn that you weren't expecting, and now it's this way? Some difficulty in your life, has he ever jumped you, beloved? Has he ever done that here in church? Under the proclamation of his word, where you come to church like you do every Lord's Day, unsuspecting, and in the proclamation of that word, it's as though he jumps you, he launches himself at you in the preaching of the word and convicts you of your sin as though you're the only one in the audience and he's speaking directly to you and points out your sin, the sin that you did not want to admit, not to yourself, much less to anyone else. Has he ever jumped you?

And have you ever wrestled back? Beloved, wrestled against him and his will for your life, striving for the mastery over him? "No, God, no! This is not how I wanted to go. I don't want to have this affliction. I don't want this to be the way that it is. I don't want you to gain the mastery in this." And it becomes his will against my will. You ever wrestled back in church, beloved? When he launches himself at you in the conviction of sin under the proclamation of his word, "No, God, no, that's not me! I'm not going to admit it. I know it might seem like it's me, but it's not. Look, I have all these reasons for it. Maybe other people don't have their reasons for this, but I do. Here's my reasons. Don't come at

me with this. And besides, it's not my fault, it's his fault, it's her fault, it's their fault, God. Why are you launching yourself at me here?" And it's my will against his will as I wrestle back.

Whether or not, beloved, our personality is like Jacob's, it's in all of us, is it not? I want to overcome him. My will, not thine. And while, of course, it's not wrong to have a certain drive to accomplish something in life or even to overcome some great difficulty in life, there are times when in the process of that, it becomes clear what his will is and it becomes clear that we're wrestling with God himself and his sovereign will. It is the case sometimes that like Jacob, that we're not aware that it's him that we're wrestling with at first. We rightly battle against that sickness or that disease or that circumstance that has come upon us in our life, or dealing with the boss at work, or some other relationship, or dealing with this or with that, but then in the process of time and in the course of things, it becomes clear that this is not going to change, and now it's God whom I am wrestling with. It's him with whom I have to do, and my wrestling is my will versus his will. It's not merely the boss anymore at work that I'm battling here. It's not merely in church, the minister and his applications that I'm wrestling with here. It's God himself in his word. It's not merely my parents that I'm chafing under here. It is God himself that I am wrestling with. It's him. It's my rebellion against God's will that's the issue. Jacob had to see, beloved, that it was not merely his weak father with whom he had to do in his life, and it was not merely his scheming uncle that he had to deal with in his life or his angry brother, but it was in the end God with whom he had to do. And so we.

Understanding this, we are prepared to see what is in fact the most striking thing about this text. Amazingly, the most striking thing about this passage of scripture is not that God himself appeared in a human form, and it's not even that God himself wrestled with Jacob, and it's not even that he wrestled with him all night long. The most amazing thing about this text is that we read that Jacob won, that in this wrestling match, Jacob prevailed. The man who is God tells Jacob this after it's over in verse 28, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." And the prophet Hosea repeats the same thing in that verse we read, Hosea 12, verse 4, "Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed." The very name that the angel gives to Jacob now, changing his name from Jacob to Israel, enshrines Jacob's victory. Israel means strives with God. And the angel of Jehovah, God appearing in a man, explains that name by saying, "This is your name, Jacob, because you have striven with God and you have prevailed."

Jacob won the match. He got God to say, "Okay, let me go. You win." But be careful with that, beloved. Be careful. Don't jump too fast to a conclusion with that lest you conclude from the fact that Jacob had the victory in this wrestling match, that that necessarily means then that God does not have the victory in this wrestling match. That because Jacob prevailed, God was the loser. Admittedly, that would normally be the case in a wrestling match. Two go at it, and one is the victor and the other is the loser. But the only reason why that is the case is because in such a match, both have the same goal, the goal to physically overcome the other one, a goal that only one can possibly achieve, getting the other to relent. But in this case, the two opponents in this match do not share

the same goal. God's goal, beloved, is not to prevail over Jacob physically in a test of physical endurance. God's goal is Jacob's heart. It's the man. It is to get Jacob to engage in a wrestling with God that is far different from the physical wrestling that is going on, and for a far different reason, and with that, beloved, God gets his man.

Somewhere later in the process of the wrestling match, by the power just of his touch, he doesn't have to pull, he doesn't have to crank, just a touch and Jacob's femur comes out of socket. Can you imagine how painful that would be? His femur comes out of socket and astoundingly, we read that for a little while at least, Jacob kept wrestling in that state. Verse 25, "and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him." As he continued wrestling with him. But eventually, when Jacob couldn't do it anymore, and when he realized who this is that he's wrestling with, there's a switch that takes place. Who else can make the femur come out of joint simply by a touch? And Jacob knows this is no regular man.

And to add to that, the different way of wrestling with God that happens after that moment and you see, there's a switch that takes place in Jacob and Jacob's striving is different and it's indicative of a change, a difference in his own mind and heart and soul with what's going on. In verse 26, we read the angel of Jehovah said, "Let me go." And he said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Jacob is striving now, but not in such a way that he's trying to pin him but he's holding him. "Let me go." He's just holding him with every ounce of strength that he has left. He's bear-hugging him there on the ground, hung on to him as though for dear life. And Hosea, the prophet, informs us in that verse that we read that he starts weeping while he does it, "Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him." Jacob was holding onto him now, and he was weeping, he was crying, and he was supplicating him, "Bless me! Bless me! Bless me! And I'm not going to let go until you bless me!" No more gaining the mastery over him, but simply holding on, as it were, for dear life because you see, beloved, at the touch of the Lord God, Jacob cannot rely upon himself any longer. He's, as it were, been taken out of the match. He can't get his leg up over on this man because his leg has been taken out. And Jacob is, by this point, utterly exhausted, and he's deathly afraid. Esau is coming. And he knows who this is now and everything changes and he just wants him to be there.

And he holds him. "I'm not gonna let you go until you bless me. I can't do it. I can't achieve the blessing in my own strength anymore. I've been trying all my life, and I've been thinking by my own power, by my own strength, by my own wit." As God peels back every layer on this man to get to the heart of the heart of Jacob, it's right at this point that the question comes as Jacob is weeping and supplicating. "Who are you? What is your name? Tell me your name. All right, my name is Jacob. It's who I am, I admit it. I'm the heel holder, I'm the supplanter. By hook or by crook, I'll find a way to get myself out of any mess, but I can't do it anymore, God. Help me. Don't leave me. I need you." As the tears flow from this man, who has come to the end of himself, you see, and who realizes now that all along, all he's ever had is his God, he will not let go. Now not with the tenacity of the flesh, but with the tenacity of faith. As his greatest fear now, beloved, is not Esau, it's that God would leave him alone and depart from him. "Bless me, assure me

that you go with me and your blessing goes with me. If you must leave me in this manifestation of yourself, fine, but don't go yet until you tell me and assure me that you are with me and will not leave me, your blessing continues with me."

Remember that this is the man, 20 years ago, on his way out of Canaan. heading up to Uncle Laban, stopped at Bethel that first night. When God appeared to him, do you remember what he did and what he said? He came up with his list. "God, here's the things you have to do for me, and if you do these things for me, then I will let you be my God." The pride and the boldness. Now look what God has done with him. Look how far we've come now. God has him a broken and weeping, confessing child, knowing his own weakness and his own need.

Beloved, don't you see, this is how Jacob prevailed with God. It's a different kind of prevailing. Out of the neediness of his own weakness, faith held on to him, and held on to him for dear life, and called out for blessing from him, and God blessed him. That's his prevailing. It's the prevailing of faith. And don't you see, beloved, that this is how Jehovah prevailed with Jacob? That bear hug of needy, desperate, holding faith, that is exactly what God was after with Jacob, the tears of a broken man who always could find his way and now could find no way unless he's found in God. Jacob prevailed with God in Jacob's desperate, holding faith. And God prevailed with Jacob in Jacob's desperate, holding faith. And so with you, and so with me. This is the kind of striving with God that he's after in us, that he produces in us. This is his agenda in our lives, beloved, to turn us from Jacobs, who by nature depend upon ourselves, it's ingrained in us, and to turn us into Israels who hold on to him, not to overcome him, but hold on to him out of a desperate faith that needs him and knows we need him. He's after children who strive with him finally, not anymore trying to overcome him, but clinging to him, all that we have, and crying out to him, "Don't leave me! Don't forsake me! Bless me! I can't do this. I'm nothing. All I have is you."

Has he ever had you there, beloved? If he has not, he will, to one degree or another. Maybe not so dramatic as this, but he will. Has the whole thing ever played out in your prayer life with him so that at the beginning, your prayers are the wrestling of Jacob at the beginning of this match, trying to overcome him, "Not your will, but my will, God"? And then by the end of it, you're just holding on to him, "God help me! I need you!" He does this to one degree or another with every single one of his children because what he's after, beloved, in your life and in mine is you and me. He's not merely after your business going down. That's the means. He wants you, your heart. He's not merely after the feeling when you're in church and he jumps you under the conviction of sin and launches himself at you as it were, though you're the only one in the sanctuary. That's a means to the end that you cry out to him, "You're right God, this is who I am and this is what this sin is and it's in me, I see it! O God, I'm sorry! Forgive me in the blood of the Lamb! Don't leave me until you forgive me and until you bless me again!"

You see, the problem with us, beloved, is that we all too easily begin to think, we. Begin to think that his agenda in our life is merely to give us the fairest and easiest way to heaven possible. That's not his agenda. His agenda, though he mixes so many joys along

with the troubles in our life, great joys, he sets the one over against the other so that we are not despairing in our life, but his agenda in our life, beloved, is to take us to himself and it's to break that ingrained self-dependence. And sometimes he has to come and wrestle us, and sometimes he has to come and touch us, right where we think we are so strong, until we see there's nothing left in us, and all we have is him. And in that place, that position, we prevail with him with a desperate, clinging, holding faith, and he blesses us in that way. And at the same time, he prevails with us because that's his purpose. God gets his man.

Can't you imagine? I think there had to have been a kind of wry half-smile on the face of God in human appearance when Jacob cried out, holding on, hugging him, not letting him go, weeping, "Bless me! Bless me! I will not let you go until you bless me!" I think there had to have been a kind of half smile there. "All right, Jacob, all right, you win."

And he blessed him there. His blessing for Jacob, beloved, was the blessing of the covenant of grace. The blessing that had been repeated to Jacob throughout his life. The blessing that had been spoken to his parents concerning him when he was yet in the womb. The blessing that was spoken to him by his father Isaac. The blessing that was spoken to him at Bethel on his way to Paddan Aram. The blessing that was spoken to him when God called him out of Paddan Aram back to the land of Canaan. The blessing of God's friendship and fellowship and the realization of his promises to him in the line of generations. The blessings of all the promises of God in the covenant and the promise that God would be with Jacob in everything and make all things work for his good. But you see, beloved, that covenant with Jacob is one where God is friend-sovereign and Jacob is friend-servant, but Jacob, and we too, sometimes switch that around, don't we, and think of ourselves as the friend-sovereign and he as the friend-servant. And to right that ship, God does things in our lives. He wrestles us.

The point is, this is God keeping his promise to Jacob. This is God being faithful to Jacob. This is God working in Jacob's life. Be gone with the notion, beloved, that the unconditional covenant turns God's people into stalks and blocks. The unconditional covenant established, maintained, defended by God alone is what ensures that we will never be stalks and blocks spiritually. The relationship is utterly secure in the hands of this sovereign God, and it is secure as a relationship. He will engage us, and he will lead us to engage him with active, desperate, holding faith. He will even jump us sometimes to cause it to be, and he will give us a limp sometimes to make it so. So that we cleave to him. So that we fill out our part in the covenant of grace. That we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Cleave to him. "I will not let you go until you bless me."

Isn't there something of this in the process of the Lord's Supper, beloved? Not so dramatic, I know. But does he not, in a sense, jump us in the sermon for self-examination before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and point out our sin to us? Call us to account and to admit our sin? And does he not lead us through the week of self-examination to a point where we come to the Lord's Supper the next Sunday morning ready simply with faith that wants to cling to him and say, "Bless me, Father! In spite of my sin, here it is,

here's my sin, take it, see it, but bless me and I won't let you go until you bless me!" And we get up and we go serve him out of that faith even sometimes with a limp.

"And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh." So that the lesson lasts, so that we hold and hold and hold and hold and hold to God in Christ as we go forward. There was another, you know, beloved, who was jumped by his God in the darkness. There was another, you know, who wrestled with him in that darkness. And there was another when the light returned after that darkness, held on to him for dear life, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And though you have forsaken me, I'm not going to let go. You're my God, my God! I won't let you go until you bless them, my people, for whom I die." It's ultimately him that Jacob held on to as the day dawned, beloved, him in whom all blessing is to be found. Hold on to him, people of God. Hold on to him. The one who's holding you with a true and living faith, don't let go. Amen.

*Father in heaven, bless the proclamation of thy word to our hearts and lives. Forgive our sins. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.*