

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

April 9, 2010—The Jesus Way—Jacob

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts—Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<p>“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” —Jesus (John 14:6)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ways of Jesus <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Abraham—A faith life b) Jacob—A man who wrestled with God 2) Jacob Heads Home <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A decision point <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) The relationship between Jacob and his father-in-law are not good (Genesis 31:1-2) ii) God commands Jacob (31:3) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) “Return home” (2) Perhaps death at the hands of Esau awaits (3) Why does God insist that Jacob return home? iii) Jacob’s response (31:4-17) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Why is Jacob willing to obey God in the face of danger from Laban and Esau? (2) In what ways has Jacob become a changed man during his 20 years away? (for the dating, see 31:38, 41) <p>The whole of Jacob’s life since he left his home has been a long process of coming to terms with himself, and the replacement of his egocentricity by a larger, God-given personality. But this development process cannot be completed unless Jacob returns to the land of his earlier misdeeds and confronts Esau....His spiritual development cannot be complete until he is reconciled with Esau.</p> <p>But this is a dreadful task to have laid upon him. How much easier it would have been if God had been willing to settle for something less than a full accounting of his life, had allowed Jacob to spend his final years in peace and quiet. But God has no intention of leaving Jacob alone. Now Jacob is learning what it meant to have the birthright of his people. This direct, confronting, demanding relationship with God is the birthright that Jacob, unknowingly, secured for himself.¹</p>

¹ *The Man Who Wrestled with God.* 37, 38.

3) Jacob Prepares to Face Esau

- a) Who are these guys?—An odd meeting (32:1-2)
- b) Jacob's prayer (32:9-12)
 - i) Compare this prayer to his first prayer, a vow (28:20-22)

Jacob's [second] prayer is open and honest. He lets his emotions come out in his prayer; no pious platitudes here, but an honest baring of his soul, and an open dialogue with God. Too many prayers fail to reach their mark because people do not pray with emotional honesty. Jacob shows us how to pray.²

4) Jacob, Now Alone, Wrestles with God (32:24-32)

- a) Who is it exactly? (32:24)
 - i) Jacob doesn't know until later
- b) Why did Jacob continue to wrestle? (32:24)

Jacob refused to part with his experience until he knew its meaning, and *this marked him as a man of great spiritual greatness*. Everyone who wrestles with his spiritual and psychological experience, and, no matter how dark or frightening it is, refuses to let go until he discovers its meaning, is having something of a Jacob experience. Such a person can come through his dark struggle to the other side reborn, but one who retreats or runs from his encounter with spiritual reality cannot be transformed.³

- c) What was God up to?
 - i) Biblical "darkness" imagery
 - ii) Dislocates Jacob's hip (32:25)

The ease at which the Adversary wounded Jacob makes us suspect that He could have won the struggle at any time against His human antagonist. The meaning of the encounter lay in the struggle itself, and the purpose of the Adversary was to change and test Jacob, not to destroy him...A person who has an experience of this psychological depth is always wounded by it.

Such a spiritual wound is not to be confused with a neurosis or crippling injury. It is not a limiting wound, but a wound through which pours the life of God, a guarantee that after such an experience a person can never again live unaware of the spiritual reality.

It makes a person lonely to be marked by God in this way; one is forced to recognize one's difference from others who have not had the experience.⁴

- iii) Jacob gets a blessing (32:29)
- iv) But no answer to his question, "Who are you?" (32:29)

² Ibid. 39.

³ Ibid. 40. Emphasis added.

⁴ Ibid. 42.

⁵ Nouwen, Henri J.M. (1972). *The Wounded Healer*. Doubleday. 87, 88.

⁶ *The Man Who Wrestled with God*. 43, 44.

5) The Jesus Way

- a) Jesus' "wrestling" with God—three prayers (three times indicated in Matthew's and Mark's account)
 - i) Luke 22:39-46
 - ii) Jesus was in agony and was honest with God; however, He chose to walk the hard road—Jesus' decision points:
 - (1) John 18:11; Mark 14:61-63
- b) Our wrestling—how well do we struggle?
 - (1) Hebrews 12:1-4
 - (a) "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses..." referring to those in chapter 11
 - (b) Our struggle must be comparable with these "great" men and women of faith

6) Wounded Healers

[W]e see how loneliness [see quote above] is the minister's wound not only because he shares in the human condition, but also because of the unique predicament of his profession. It is this wound that he is called to bind with more care and attention than others usually do. For his deep understanding of his own pain makes it possible for him to convert his weakness into strength and to offer his own experience as a source of healing to those who are often lost in the darkness of their own misunderstood sufferings. This is a very hard call...But once the pain is accepted and understood, a denial is no longer necessary, and ministry can become a healing service.

Making one's own wounds a source of healing, therefore, does not call for a sharing of superficial personal pains but for a constant willingness to see one's own pain and suffering as rising from the depth of the human condition which all men share.

How does healing take place...hospitality. Hospitality is the virtue which allows us to break through the narrowness of our own fears and to open our houses to the stranger. What does the hospitality as a healing power require? It requires first of all that the host feel comfortable at home in his own house, and secondly that he create a free and fearless place for the unexpected visitor.⁵

7) The Rest of Jacob's Story

The spotlight of the biblical narrative now shifts from Jacob to his son Joseph. Jacob continues to appear now and again in the subsequent story...He is by no means a completely wise person all of the time. No one ever reaches a state of perfection, and Jacob as an old man makes mistakes. But his errors are no longer the egocentric faults of his youth, but are the failings of a man who loved deeply, though not always wisely.

For Jacob now knew what was the true birthright of his people: it was a direct relationship between a man and God...⁶

- a) Who are Jacob's "people"? (Genesis 26:24; 12:1-3)
- b) Who are these people today? (Galatians 3:6-9)
- c) What is their blessing? (John 17:3, Romans 8:38-39; and many more verses...)
- d) Do we "strive with God" (meaning of "Israel") in order to be transformed?

	<p>8) Two “Jesus Way” Opportunities for Us</p> <p>a) Praying with our wives</p> <p>i) Ephesians 5:22-27</p> <p>(1) This is not a suggestion...praying with our wives is a key way in which we might participate with Christ in presenting our wives as holy and blameless as Christ has done for His church.</p> <p>(2) Praying together draws us closer to that great mystery of two becoming one.</p> <p>(3) If you are embarrassed or afraid, think of Jacob being commanded to return and face Esau.</p> <p>b) Making disciples</p> <p>i) Matthew 28:18-20</p> <p>ii) Greg & Yolanda’s ministry</p>
7:00	Closing Prayer
7:00 – ??	If you would like prayer, please come up front and one or more of us will remain to pray with you.

Further reading:

- *The Bible*
- Au, Walkie and Noreen Cannon Au. (2006). *The Discerning Heart: Exploring the Christian Path*. Paulist Press.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. (1995). *The Cost of Discipleship*. Simon & Schuster.
- Ciardi, John & Williams, Miller. (1975). *How Does a Poem Mean?* Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Ginzberg, Louis. (2003). *Legends of the Jews*. V1 & 2. The Jewish Publication Society.
- Haase, Albert. (2008). *Coming Home to Your True Self: Leaving the Emptiness of False Attractions*. IVP Books.
- Martin, James. (2005). *Become Who You Are*. Hidden Spring.
- Nouwen, Henri. (1981). *The Way of the Heart: Connecting with God Through Prayer, Wisdom, and Silence*. Ballantine Books.
- Ortberg, John. (2010). *The Me I Want To Be*. Zondervan.
- Payne, Leanne. *Restoring the Christian Soul*. 1991. Baker Books.
- Peterson, Eugene H. (2007). *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways that Jesus is the Way*. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Rohr, Richard. (2004). *Adam’s Return: the Five Promises of Male Initiation*. The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- _____ . (2002). *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*. The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Sanford, John A. 1987). *The Man Who Wrestled With God*. Paulist Press.
- Shelley, Bruce L. (1995). *Church History in Plain Language*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- Tozer, A.W. (1986). *Men Who Met God*. Christian Publications.
- Yancey, Phillip. (2002). *Reaching for the Invisible God*. Zondervan.