

#Blessed

Genesis 32:24-28

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.

How many remember...the trend of #blessed...I'm sorry, I'm going to hit some of you right in the age...the #blessed trend was all the rage...in 2014...over a decade ago. If you don't remember it or your lying...this trend was comprised of people who were leaping to social media and engaging in a show of thankfulness...and these posts of just...everyday gratefulness took on a whole new meaning. Just in case you don't remember this trend...I want to remind you of a few.

"got accepted into graduate school. #blessed"

Ok...yeah, absolutely.

"(he) made it possible for this yoga instructor's Caribbean spa retreat. #Blessed to be teaching in paradise"

"(he) helped me get my baby a tiny designer frock. A year of patiently waiting and it finally fits! Feeling #blessed."

'Strawberries are half-priced at Trader Joe's. I feel so #blessed"

"Caught a piece of bacon falling out of my sandwich right before it hit the ground #blessed"

Do you get where I'm going? It got weird. It became a term of humble bragging and shameless self promotion...

Can I just say that it can be dangerous when things of God become more of a caption than Words to live by?

If I'm being honest...I think that it may be possible we misunderstood "blessing" long before 2014 came and went.

I'm not just speaking of the culture we live in...but could it be that even the broader church community has had a misunderstanding about what biblical blessing looks like?

I didn't think I did but...have you ever just reading your Bible and...hear or read something that makes you wonder if you've completely been missing something?

Just to set the context,...Jacob has been in the land of his uncle for years...he's burned bridges like it was his job. He'd deceived his father, cheated his brother, and skipped town at the advice of his mother.

You can almost picture him escaping under the cries of threats from his brother Esau?

Then he'd spent years working for his uncle. In that time, he'd managed to carve out a name for himself but...without obliging his uncle/father-in-law...(don't think about it too much)...without giving him the chance to say goodbye his daughters and grandchildren...he escapes into the night. As a son who has provided grandchildren, that's playing with your life.

After making peace with his father in law, he's confronted with another consequence of his early life. Somehow, he's supposed to sleep with the understand that his brothers army is coming to confront him.

²⁶ And he (the one Jacob wrestled with) said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

I've read this account of Genesis probably...20+ times. I mean, even if you only make it a few weeks into Bible ready for the year, you at least make it to Genesis 32...so I read this account probably 20+ times.

It wasn't until recently that it really hit me...that Jacob was rolling on the ground wrestling with Deity for a blessing...which at face value...that's what I'd do if I could get a hold of God.

If I had unrestricted access to God...I'm holding on to Him for some stuff...I don't know about y'all but I don't have it all figured out...I don't always feel so #blessed y'all.

But if you start to look at the context of the story...it stands out to you that you have Jacob on the ground wrestling for a blessing.

There's no earthly way a man of his status and wealth is rolling on the ground asking for a blessing...at least not in the way we understand blessing.

Because the context is that this is not the little runaway that just left home Jacob.

Jacob had been up to some stuff. Jacob had been working in his uncle's flocks and herds, and for the better part of 2 decades, Jacob had been building his name, wealth, and status. Jacob had been carving out a career. He was a proven man, a father a dozen times over...if anyone would be considered blessed, Jacob was blessed.

In fact, when we find this version of Jacob, he and all his stuff was too large to sneak by his brother, Esau. Jacob had so much that he literally couldn't hide his...blessing. Jacob had everything that could be considered wealth in that day...he had a large lineage to carry on the name. He had flocks, he had herds, he had donkeys, he had camels...he had servants and handmaidens, he had everything that could be considered wealth in the days and times that he lived in...he'd but here he is...rolling on dust of the ground, in the middle of the night...he's wealthy yet he wrestles. He's a made man yet he grapples with insecurity because he knows there's still something he's missing that no matter how hard he works, his hands cannot produce.

Yet...he's rolling on the ground...and he's asking for a blessing...I need you to catch this with me...this isn't a poor beggar man. This is a wealthy respected man, who has an abundance of every currency of the day and he's latched ahold of God...desperate for a blessing.

How do you bless a man that has everything?

That's when it hit me that there's something more to this blessing thing according to the word of God and I started trying to do a little bit of research to understand...but that didn't really show me what I was seeing in the word of God...because sometimes there's context outside the commentary...

I don't want to make anybody nervous with that...there's context outside the commentary. I'm thankful that there are tools to understand the word of God, I use them. However, there are times that God wants you to dig it out with the word and prayer.

I don't need another podcast to tell me what my opinion should be on the word of God, sometimes God wants you to wrestle it out with prayer and word.

I think if we were honest...we could admit that we don't always feel #blessed. Even in a time when we've got more stuff than any generation before us. We've got more options than any other generation to come before us. I mean, Amazon Prime alone would break the mind of a Victorian era child. They wouldn't know what to do with that...

This got my attention. I needed to understand what in the world Jacob was actually asking for because there are moments in the word of God where we need to stop and go deeper.

I asked God...was it just a name change or a change of identity that he was asking for?

God showed me another account that I believe bore a resemblance to what Jacob was experiencing.

EXODUS 33:1-3

And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, *and* go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it:

² And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:

³ Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou *art* a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.

Moses understood something that Jacob would soon come to know.

Exodus 33:15 (KJV) And he said unto him, If thy presence go not [with me], carry us not up hence.

Moses understood that there is no blessing in anything that God is not in. I want us to understand that God was offering the children of Israel the Promised Land. But because of their idolatry, He stated that the presence of God would not go up with them into the promised land. They'd still have the milk and honey, they'd still have the blessings of the land, He'd even send an angel before them to eliminate the enemies that would have been in front of them to fight. But His presence would not go with them.

Closing

-What if the best thing God can give you is subtraction...because before God could give, He first needed to take away.

When Joseph wrestled that night, he understood that he was pursuing something that could not come of the natural. He wasn't chasing a blessing that his hands could hold, the blessing that he was pursuing was a closeness to the heart of God.

Biblical blessing had so little to do with wealth, status, or reputation. Those closest to His heart understood that true blessing from God lasts long after I'm gone, it's not what I can build my name with, it's Him Who I've attached my name to!