"WHEN LIFE BECOMES A WRESTLING MATCH"

Have you ever noticed how quickly life can change?

Are there things in your life you have tried to put behind you but they keep coming back into your life?

Are you dealing with things you never expected to face?

1. YOU CAN'T KEEP RUNNING FROM WHAT YOU NEED TO FACE

Genesis 32:24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak.

Who did Jacob understand his encounter was with? Who was he wrestling?

What do you avoid that you need to confront?

What do you ignore that you need to address?

What habit do you leave in your life that you need to change?

What do you put off that you need to give your attention to?

Sometimes the first step toward spiritual growth is simply being willing to face the truth.

Do you need to acknowledge a mistake you have made?

Do you need to forgive someone?

Do you need to apologize to someone?

Do you need to let go of a fear or bondage in your life?

Jacob couldn't change what he had done twenty years earlier. But he could decide how he would respond to what was in front of him. **And the same is true for us.**

2. **SOMETIMES THE STRUGGLE EXPOSES WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DEPENDING ON**

Genesis 32:25 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.

Jacob found himself in a situation where his own strength was insufficient.

What do you depend on? Money? Your job? Approval from others? Relationships? Problem solving?

What are you going to do when you are in a situation where that no longer is sufficient?

Will you develop a deeper dependence on God?

2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Paul wanted relief…God promised sufficient grace.

Faith isn't a guarantee that every hardship will disappear.

Faith is confidence that God remains trustworthy even when our circumstances are difficult.

Maybe you need to stop asking "God, how quickly can You get me out of this?"

And start asking "Lord, what do I need to learn about trusting You while I'm going through this?"

3. THE GREATEST VICTORY MAY BE BECOMING A DIFFERENT PERSON

Genesis 32:26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

Why would God ask Jacob his name? Wouldn't God already know his name?

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."

Jacob receives a new name. Israel.

The man who had spent so much of his life trying to gain the advantage is now **marked by an encounter in which he had to cling to God.**

Do you want to be marked by an encounter where you were clinging to God?

What if the greatest outcome of your current struggle isn't simply getting the result you want?

- **What if it is becoming more patient?**
- **More humble?**
- **More compassionate?**
- **More willing to depend on God?**

When has life taught you to life taught you to listen more carefully and pray more sincerely?

Sometimes growth is more valuable than the outcome we originally wanted.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH OUR STRUGGLES?

1. **Be honest with God about what you are facing.**
2. **Take responsibility for the next step you can take.**
3. **Allow other believers to walk alongside you.**

Galatians 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

What specific struggle are you facing right now that you need to bring before God?

Will you bring it honestly before the Lord, asking Him for wisdom and strength?

Will you then be willing to follow Him in whatever step of obedience He places before you?

Jacob couldn't go back and change his past.
But after his encounter with God…
he could move into his future differently.

And by God's grace, so can you.

What stood out to you the most in this weeks lesson?