

Title: The Prevailing Power
Text: Genesis 32: 24-32
Date: May 5, 2011
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

I. Genesis 32: 24: And Jacob was left alone;

Jacob had heard the message of God's free, distinguishing, electing grace.

Romans 9:11: (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) (12) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. (13) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

God had applied his word of grace to Jacob directly and Jacob believed God (At Bethel, the Ladder—type of Christ Jesus (Gen 28: 12-15.)) But we keep seeing unbelief in Jacob. We see it here in chapter 32: 6-7. Jacob feared his elder brother, Esau. Put yourself in Jacob's place in your relationship to God.

- Esau had sworn he would kill Jacob—the just God of heaven and earth has sworn he will slay the wicked--(Ezekiel 18:20).
- Jacob deserved Esau's wrath, he had sinned against his brother--every sinner who meets God trusting in the arm of his flesh shall get exactly what we deserve for we have sinned against God (Rom 6: 23)
- Jacob's only hope was that God would save him—is that your only hope?

Bear in mind that Jacob believed God—he had heard the good news of God's salvation in Christ Jesus. The Lord had made his covenant of grace in his heart. Listen to Jacob pray to God in Genesis 32: 9-12

But at the same time, Jacob sent a present to Esau with the heart-motive of trying to appease Esau with a gift (Genesis 32: 20-24.) The only offering with which God is pleased is the offering God has provided for himself—Christ his Son. Therefore, Jacob's double-mindedness had brought Jacob no rest because there is no rest in unbelief. But God got Jacob alone.

Application: Conversion from the vanity of our fleshly strength and our fleshly wisdom to Christ—who is the Power and Wisdom of God—begins by the grace of God alone. But it is not a one time thing, but a lifelong thing.

Some of you are experiencing this for the first time. When the Spirit of God begins a work of grace in our hearts, a struggle begins which, before, we knew nothing about.

- Between our fleshly strength and Christ who is our Strength
- Between our fleshly wisdom and Christ who is our Wisdom—Christ always wins!

Illustration: In your own words “Like a cycle”

Here is the question: What think ye of Christ? Do you behold in this struggle the vanity of your flesh? You can't even believe of yourself. Salvation is not in WHAT you know—some are ever-learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth—salvation is in WHO YOU BELIEVE! I have no doubts that when Christ is made unto you the Power and Wisdom of God, he shall subdue that old flesh through faith which lays hold of Christ. And this conversion from our strength and wisdom to Christ is not a one-time thing—it is a lifelong experience. See it here in Jacob! The struggle will continue, but the God of all grace shall continue to subdue the flesh.

Remember Peter—“when thou art converted.”

Peter believed on Christ. But he was kept by Christ—the Lord said, “I have prayed for thee—he ever liveth to make intercession to God for us.” So it is every believer, shall continue to be converted to Christ from our fleshly strength and wisdom, by the same grace of God, by the same power of the Holy Spirit, even as we began—UNTIL THE BREAKING OF DAY—till God bring us home to glory.

God does it by continually getting us alone. God will get us alone from:

- Multitude of our thoughts—vain imaginations
- Multitude of our good opinions of ourselves—false refuge
- Multitude of our men’s wrong opinions of God

In the midst of a world that hates God and loves every false way, a sinner will never stand alone with God, resting all hope in Christ in truth, until we have experienced the invincible power of God’s call, whereby Christ is made unto us the Power and Wisdom of God. And the only way we will continue is by the Lord subduing our flesh and causing us to lay hold on him alone.

Have you begun to find yourself alone? Are you like Jacob—you believe on the Lord—but yet again find yourself alone? It seems like a miserable place to be but if it is God’s grace at work, we shall find it is the most gracious place to be.

II. Genesis 32: 24:…and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

Who was this man? (v. 30). THE ANGEL—THE Son of God--the angel of the covenant. All blessings of God come to us through Christ. He appeared many times in various forms and manners before his incarnation.

Notice the wording: “there wrestled a man *with him*.”

Illustration: Wrestling with Emma and Will

The Lord could have pinned Jacob at any time, but before God will give Jacob the blessing, he will bring him to see the nothingness of his flesh. The Lord was wrestling Jacob to give Jacob the blessing. Not the other way around.

III. Genesis 32: 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.

Who was not prevailing? The Lord was prevailing, he always does. But Jacob was not prevailing as long as he was trying to wrestle with God by his own strength. His own wisdom and strength is why Jacob was so unsettled and so fearful as we just saw in this chapter.

James 1: 5: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6: But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 : For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8: A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

Application: I want you to know the true and living God: who God is--how he saves sinners—but never think you will have peace in WHAT you KNOW—peace and assurance will come through Christ IN

WHOM YOU BELIEVE! Christ is FIRST--made unto us Wisdom—when our wisdom is made nothing in the Light of Christ then we shall know the Truth.

John 6:29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent....7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,...8: 32: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

The same way, I want you to be strengthened—but not in your power and might—but Christ who is our Strength.

How is our fleshly strength subdued--**v25:...he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.** Every sinner who is saved—shall be made willing in the day of God's power. This is brought about in the Holy Spirit of God with a swift blow to our flesh

Isaiah 40:7: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD **bloweth upon it:** surely the people *is* grass.

IV. Genesis 32: 26: AND HE SAID, LET ME GO, FOR THE DAY BREAKETH. AND HE SAID, I WILL NOT LET THE GO, EXCEPT THOU BLESS ME

Now all Jacob can do is hold on to Christ and beg him for a blessing. That is exactly how Hosea says Jacob prevailed, "he wept, and made supplication unto him" (Hos 12: 4; Ps 34: 18; 51: 17). His leg is out of joint—he can't keep on wrestling. All he can do is hold on to Christ and beg him for all spiritual blessings

V. Ge 32:27 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.

Jacob was made to confess his name. The Lord knows all them that are his. He knows that we are but dust. But he will make us to acknowledge who we are!

- Are you the cheat and the deceiver?
- Have you tried to earn the birthright—all the blessings of God by your strength?
- Have you tried to appease God like Jacob tried to appease his brother—with your own gifts?
- Can you confess from the heart "I am Jacob, the sinner."

God gave him a new name - "Israel"--As a prince, Jacob had power with God and with men, and prevailed. Notice something in v29:

Genesis 32:29 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.

There was no point for Jacob to ask the Lord's name because the name the Lord gave to Jacob is the Lord's name. Turn to Is 49—this is Christ speaking:

Isaiah 49: 3: And said unto me, Thou *art* my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

Because Christ is the Prince of God—because Christ hast prevailed with God and men--so it is with all who trust in Christ by this power of his grace.

Jeremiah 23:6: In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS....33:16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

1 Corinthians 12:12: For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

VI. Genesis 32: 30: AND JACOB CALLED THE NAME OF THE PLACE PENIEL: FOR I HAVE SEEN GOD FACE TO FACE, AND MY LIFE IS PRESERVED

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

When daybreak came where was Jacob

Genesis 32: 31: AND AS HE PASSED OVER PENUEL THE SUN ROSE UPON HIM, AND HE HALTED UPON HIS THIGH

When Christ works this work of grace we stand in the SON of Righteousness—of God is Christ made unto us—Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. The flesh is not removed but it is subdued—WE HALT UPON OUR THIGH—LEAN UPON CHRIST--he will convert us from our flesh over and over. It is by this grace that children of Israel—the true children of Christ our Israel—do no longer feed upon the flesh. See that in the next verse.

Genesis 32:32 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.

We find a glorious picture of the reception that shall be between the Lord Jesus Christ and all the children of God our Father who put their trust in him:

Genesis 33: 4: And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

Amen!