

Sunday School Stories – Jacob Wrestles

Suzy Bates

May 5, 2024

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Genesis tells a story of Jacob wrestling all night

Read and discuss Genesis 32:22-31 (NIV)

22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 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. 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."

27 The man asked him, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

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." 29 Jacob said, "Please tell me your name."

But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." 31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

*Do you remember any thoughts or understandings you had of this story when you were a kid?

*What stands out to you as you read this story again? Tensions you can embrace?

Jacob is alone and at the end of himself

Something must happen for a paradigm shifting moment in his life.

*What do we know about Jacob's history? How does this event fit into that?

*What moments in your life are categorized as 'the before' and 'the after'?

God initiates a spiritual wrestling match

He chooses the grace of staying in it with Jacob for an extended time.

*Why do you think the wrestling went on so long? What can we see about God's character in this story? How have you experienced God in these ways?

*How have God's attempts to move in you been thwarted by your own inability to yield?

By daybreak, Jacob is clinging to God

In experiencing the grace of God, he doesn't want to let go.

*What is the significance of Jacob shifting from wrestling to clinging?

*How do you identify with Jacob in this story? When have you come face to face with God's grace?

This story is the epitome of the life journeying with God

In moments of intense struggle, we can catch a glimpse of His face, never letting go.

*Have you sometimes misunderstood that God's grace doesn't look like Him keeping hard things from happening?

*Are you wrestling with God over something right now? What do you sense about the work of this process in your life?