

*... May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing and of you, who are ROCK, REDEEMER, and COMFORTER of us all. Amen.*

Genesis 32: 9-11;22-24 ...Each week we are visiting with a familiar biblical story...which invites us to hear and respond with courage, trust & hope. Today the focus is with a well-known story...Jacob wrestling with God!

When you've done something underhanded, or deceived someone, or taken a precious treasure from someone, a day of reckoning comes. It is the anticipation of that day of reckoning and wondering when it will come that takes a toll on our psyche.

Jacob and his brother Esau were twins. Esau emerged first, with Jacob holding his heel. Esau was the firstborn and that meant he had the 'birthright'. In the custom of the day, as the oldest, Esau would receive a double portion of the inheritance and become head of the family after his father's death.

However, in chapter 25, Jacob steals the birthright, and in chapter 27, Jacob receives his father's blessing. Twice denied, Brother Esau is incredibly mad at losing the birthright and sets out to get his brother. Jacob is sent away for protection, goes into hiding in a foreign land and builds his family. And as he leaves his first night out he has an encounter, a dream, and a word from God. Jacob is transformed by God's promise and promises to keep God as his God.

Eventually, Jacob would have to return to the promised land of his birth and face his brother. That is what we heard today. We also hear the fear Jacob has of his brother... and not knowing how he would be received. He sent peace offerings, but nothing eased his worry. Now he's ready, it's the night before the faceoff.

Does he sleep? No, Jacob tosses and turns; he wrestles with the Lord.

Has this happened to you? The night before a surgery? The night before a big meeting, or a game/event? You pray to God...and still it's like you are wrestling?

Wrestling is good...especially with God...God will not let you go until you are ready to let go. Wrestling with yourself is a lot like Jacob wrestling with God...

because you will not be done wrestling until you are willing to let go... and trust God that has a blessing for you. Jacob has proven he is not the man he once was... and he is now seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with his brother.

What are you wrestling with?      What concerns are keeping your mind racing and running?

After the night of wrestling with God, Jacob awoke a different man, once more. To his surprise, Esau received him with grace and accepted his confession.

There is many a psalm that starts out in lament, crying out in despair, but by the end we can hear the confession of trust in God to bring goodness and mercy to us. As we wrestle, we have the opportunity for learning and being transformed by who we may become if we will permit God to work within us. As we wrestle we gain courage and determination that God is with us and will never leave us.

I can say this because this is one of my call stories... I identify with it as I wrestle with God, too.

Let's pray...

*Lord, I thank you for allowing me to wrestle with you when I am angry, confused, or afraid.*

*Help me to hold on to you to seek your blessing and not turn away from you.  
Help me to ask for forgiveness and to forgive.*

*Place on my heart those I need to be reconciled to, and guide me as I seek to make amends. Amen.*