

Series: Come Boldly To the Throne

# WHEN WE FINALLY GET ALONE WITH GOD GENESIS 32

Text: Genesis 32:24

## **Genesis 32:24**

<sup>24</sup> *And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.*

Introduction:

We all have a Jabbok in our future. Sooner or later each of us, like Jacob, will meet the Lord there, and we can be forever changed.

For some of us, our Jabbok may flow through a pleasant and peaceful setting, but for most it will flow through a place of questions, strife, and mingled with tears. Whatever the setting, there is a Jabbok in all of our futures.

Natural ability, when applied can carry an individual to certain heights.

Hard work attracts and impresses others.

People who are willing to settle down and do their job well have the opportunity to advance into a position of leadership and status.

But God through His grace ultimately brings us face to face with our inadequacies.

He is determined to deal with our spiritual emptiness whenever and wherever He finds it in our lives.

No matter how hard we try to hide it, the truth will come out.

Jacob's life is a perfect example and illustration of this truth.

By cleverness he obtained his brother's birthright.

In a deceptive partnership with his mother, he stole his brother's blessing from his father.

Then running for his life, he spent a night in Bethel and vowed to God that he would not forget Him.

He promised that one day he would return home and there erect an altar to God.

Remember what goes around comes around. What he did to his brother and father he received from his father-in-law.

Growing frustrated with how his father-in-law was treating him he decides to return home.

But instead of receiving a glorious welcome, he learned that his brother had gathered a small army and was seeking his life.

Again Jacob went to his box of tricks that had worked so often in the past.

He sent flocks and herds of animals to appease his materialistic brother.

He divided his extended family and their servants into two groups and sent them separate ways for their safety.

Then in a final act of desperation, he sent his remaining family members across the Jabbok.

Exhausted he drops to the ground with the realization that he had reached into the bag of his own human ability and had pulled out his last trick.

Now under the stars a most unusual event transpires.

Jacob wrestles with a man.

Through the night Jacob struggles, but with no success.

He cannot win over this adversary.

Who is this man?

The answer is a surprise.

As they wrestle the man brushes the hollow of Jacob's thigh with such strength that Jacob's hip socket becomes dislocated.

In awe of his opponent Jacob then understands the One against whom he has been wrestling all night is none other than the Lord Himself.

Jacob's life was never the same after that meeting with the Lord at Jabbok.

Admitting his need and inadequacy he prayed to God with desperation and persistence and God granted His request with abundance.

From that moment on Jacob began to realize the full significance of doing God's work God's way with God's power.

As I stated earlier, there is a Jabbok in each of our futures and at the heart of that experience is an honest, help me or I'll die prayer.

Note:

# 1. MEETING GOD – OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

There are many ways that God calls to meet with Him.

Some include:

## A. Desperation

Jacob knew he was facing issues too big for him to handle.

He recognized that he might lose everything – his family, his fortune, his future in the place he desired to spend the rest of his life.

He stood to lose all that made his life worthwhile.

God at times calls us to Himself through desperate circumstances.

God at times calls us unto Himself through desperation, and at other times He calls us unto Himself through:

## B. Destitution

Jacob wasn't without material resources at that moment, but he had exhausted his perseverance. He had money, but he was spiritually broke.

He had been great with men but not with God.

It is when we realize our destitution that God calls us unto Himself.

God at times calls us unto Himself through desperation, and destitution while at other times He calls us unto Himself through:

### C. Dread

Fear filled Jacob's heart.

His actions demonstrated panic.

He might never see his family again.

He may lose his entire fortune.

All he had worked so hard for could be gone in a moment the result of his own bad decisions and actions many years earlier.

He didn't want to think about his past but he dreaded even more his future.

Those today; who are partially or completely paralyzed by fear need to meet with the Lord at their Jabbok.

God at times calls us unto Himself through desperation and destitution and at times with dread while at other times He calls us unto Himself through:

## D. Decisions

Jacob was under pressure to decide what he should do.

The clock was ticking.

There was no time to tread water or run in place.

Danger was close and Jacob didn't have another night.

At deadline moments decisions must be made. Our failure to decide gives others the power to decide for us sometimes with disastrous results.

It interesting, Jabbok meeting with the Lord often occur in the more mature stages of our spiritual pilgrimage – when the stakes are often the highest, there is more to lose, the pressure is the greatest.

It's then that the rippling waters of Jabbok are heard most clearly.

But it's at Jabbok that God hears the prayers of those in such straits.

Notice not only "Our Circumstances" but also:

## 2. MEETING GOD – OUR CONDUCT

There are three characteristics that stand out at Jabbok.

Note:

### A. Resistance

#### **Genesis 32:24**

*<sup>24</sup> And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.*

Jacob resisted the control of his opponent, doing all he could to ensure that the man with whom he wrestled would not be victorious.

If only Jacob had known the true identity of the One he considered his adversary.

Our meeting with the Lord generally begins with the same resistance.

In our minds we know that God knows what is best but in our heart we rebel against His control wanting things our way, we are determined to prove that we are capable of managing our own lives.

God desires our willing surrender.



Resistance then leads to:

## B. Revelation

### **Genesis 32:25**

<sup>25</sup> *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.*

In this moment; the brush of power of the Lord Jacob suddenly understood whom he was resisting and at that point the struggle assumed a totally different nature.

Recognizing God, whom he had resisted all night, Jacob was changed and then had no desire to let go.

His life turned the corner because of this encounter.

The third characteristic is:

## C. Request

When Jacob understood that his fellow wrestler was the Lord he realized how foolish it was to resist.

He also refused to let the encounter to pass without making two specific requests.

- He sought the blessing of the Lord

### **Genesis 32:26**

<sup>26</sup> *And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

We sometime get discouraged and stop praying when God's answer does not come quickly enough.

However we should persist and hang on until God blesses us.

Jacob not only requested God's blessing but also:

- To Know The Name of His Opponent

### **Genesis 32:29**

<sup>29</sup> *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.*

Paul had a similar desire.

### **Philippians 3:10**

<sup>10</sup> *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

When we have our own Jabbok moment all other desires will seem insignificant in our desire to know Him.

Note not only “Our Circumstances” and “Our Conduct” but lastly:

### **3. MEETING GOD – THE CONSEQUENCES**

Someone once said, “A person can be religious and lost, but he cannot meet Christ without being changed.”

Note the Change Jacob experienced:

#### **A. A New Description**

Jacob was given a new name as a result of meeting the Lord.

#### **Genesis 32:28**

<sup>28</sup> 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.

His name was changed from the “Jacob the Surplanter” to “Israel the Prince.”

When an individual meets with God lives will be different.

Not only was Jacob’s description changed but also there was:

## B. A New Direction

Jacob now began to carry out God's will for his life in a new way.

He learned that things must be done God's way with God's power.

No greater lesson can be learned in our time at Jabbok than things must be done God's way with God's power.

Learning to lean on the Lord in complete dependence

Another change Jacob experienced was:

## C. A New Devotion

From that time on, Jacob viewed God differently.

Jacob named the place where he wrestled with the Lord Peniel.

### **Genesis 32:30**

<sup>30</sup> *And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.*

He now realized that the Lord held life and death.

The final change that Jacob experienced there at Jabbok was:

#### D. A New Distinction

From that time Jacob bore a physical reminder of his meeting with the Lord.

#### **Genesis 32:31**

<sup>31</sup> *And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.*

His limp became to him what Paul's thorn in the flesh was to him – A reminder of God's ownership, and God's grace.

Meeting the Lord and surrendering to Him makes a radical difference in a person's life.

Close:

Before he died, Jacob came face to face once again with his son Joseph, whom he thought had been killed.

This time the reunion took place in Egypt not in Canaan where Joseph had risen to power. There Jacob's entire are gathered.

Jacob now an old man limps over to a chair and no doubt tells the story of his wrestling match resulting in his limp.

No doubt he reminded them that that limp came about because he wrestled with the Lord.

Can you hear the waters of Jabbok off in the distance?

If so let me encourage you to run to your meeting with the Lord.

It will be a most incredible prayer experience in your life – and you will never be the same.

Are you facing any circumstance that causes anxiety?

Then Pray.

Are you resisting God in any area?

Then Surrender.

Have you experienced a Jabbok moment in the past that brought about a great change of direction, devotion, and distinction?

Then share it with others.