

Call to Obedience #315
 PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
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God assails us with one hand and upholds us with the other.

Do You Want To Be Blessed?

By Reimar Schultze

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. 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....And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."—Genesis 32:24-26

This is one of the most remarkable stories of the Bible. Jacob came looking for a blessing, for anointing, for a closer walk with God, to be used of God; but God made him a cripple. If this were not written in black and white in the Bible, most of us would not believe it. But those who truly know God understand this quite well, for they also have been made cripples in their passion to be more like God. Are you still with me? I'll tell you, my friend, if you want more of God, He may make you stutter, put you out of joint, or give you a thorn in the flesh. The Fall of Man is so deep and devastating that God cannot trust us with much until He can first break us, humiliate us and cause us to look like nobodies.

The world will bless you even if you do nothing: for a birthday, anniversary or Christmas. God's blessings, His life transforming blessings, come through the cross. If you're not a man of the cross, even though you may live in a million-dollar home, spiritually you are one of the poorest of the poor. You are one of the most destitute of the destitute.

The Bible tells that Jacob wrestled with God. When you wrestle with man, you can get what man can give. Wrestling with men by conniving, figuring and elbowing may get you position, fame and wealth, but the blessings of man have death and judgment on them. When we come to the end of our journey, we will lose them all and stand naked before our Maker. When I see a bumper sticker declaring, "My son belongs to an honor society," I wonder if that son is also seeking to belong to God's honor society. If our quest for earthly honor crowds out our desire for God's honor society, then we are headed for eternal remorse. Heaven is for all eternity but *"all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flowers thereof fall away"* (1 Pet. 1:24). Are you keeping this in mind? Amos 4:12 instructs us to *"prepare to meet thy God."* What are you preparing for? Are you preparing to become an engineer, a nurse, a teacher, or an electrician? Are you preparing for a trip to an island, or to see the wonders of the world? I know such preparations may be proper, but let no preparation receive more zeal and enthusiasm than this, *'Prepare to meet thy God.'* Consider placing these words where you will see them often. Place them over your study desk, on your refrigerator. Plaster them over your workbench and let other

workers see them. Keep your focus on the fact that you will meet God. How wonderful when we meet God here on earth! Like Jacob, to be transformed into princes before we meet God on the Last Day. Let God stamp eternity into your heart and foolishness, jesting and worldly entertainment will fly out the window.

Jacob was left alone. There is a time and need for you to get alone. God most often seeks us out when we are alone. People who refuse to be alone will miss the visitation of God. When Jacob was alone, he wrestled with God until the breaking of the day. (God here appeared in the form of a man, or as some believe, as an angel). Indeed, God saw that Jacob would not let go until he had the blessing, or approval of the Lord. So God gave it to him, but with it came the limp, the cross, the breaking, humiliation and utter dependence upon God. He also received a new name, became a new man, a prince. Oh, my friend, are not princes headed for a throne? Don't you want to become a prince? After the blessing, God 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"* (Gen. 32:28). The blessing came with hurting, the glory comes with a cross. Here a man seeks a blessing and returns limping for the rest of his life. A limp gets everyone's attention; they say to themselves, "I wonder what happened to him?" Couldn't God have blessed Jacob without making him limp? Does God have to hurt us to bless us?

Shortly after this, Jacob met Esau. Esau came with four hundred armed men to kill him. But when Esau saw Jacob his heart began to melt and when he came near *"Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept"* (Genesis 33:4). Esau saw the change in his brother and they were reconciled after many years of strife.

Someone said, "every true man of God has a limp." It may not be a physical limp, but it is a hindrance, a weakness, that he will struggle with all his life. Know this: if Jacob needed one, you need one, too. When you draw close enough to God He will give you one. But be encouraged for what you get in exchange is to join the camp of the princes of God.

Moses had a "limp." His limp was his slowness of speech. Some think that after Moses met God at the burning bush, he stuttered. This is possible since Stephen refers to Moses as mighty in word and deed while he was in Egypt (Acts 7:22). Moses, the brilliant saint of God, was so embarrassed about his speaking that he refused to speak to Pharaoh. Aaron went to speak for him. Jacob had a limp, Moses had one.

The apostle Paul had a "limp," a thorn in the flesh. Three times Paul asked God to remove it, but God said, *"My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12:9). Scholars believe that Paul's limp, or thorn, was in his eyes (Galatians 4:14, 15). Perhaps his eyes were injured when he was beaten up. Perhaps they looked repugnant, so people would rather look away than at him. Chrysostom, one of the early church fathers, said that Paul's stature "was low, his body crooked and his head bald." His overall appearance was surely no compliment to the

beauty of the gospel which he preached. 2 Corinthians 10:10 also says his speech was contemptible. To add this up: the greatest missionary in the history of the Church was hard to look at and difficult to listen to. God pours His strength into weakness. His strength can be perfected in us. God does not look for perfect specimens, He looks for tender hearts who want to be all for Him, using the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

Do you still want to be blessed? Do you still want to be a prince of God? Are you willing to pay the price? He will make you a prince if you hold on till the breaking of the day. Human nature has to be dealt with to get all the pride out of us, all of it.

Hannah Hurnard was a Scottish missionary to Israel. She stuttered. As a result she wanted her father to go with her wherever she went. Finally, when in Bible school she was asked to give a speech. In panic she packed her bags to leave but then the Lord asked her if she would be willing to become a fool for Him. She said, "Yes, I would." When she opened her mouth to give her speech, all her stuttering was gone. But, after she was done, she stuttered again. After that, every time she spoke for Jesus she would not stutter, but when she talked about other things she would stutter again. Someone asked her if she wanted prayer to be delivered from stuttering. She said, "If I would be delivered of it, I would stop depending upon God."

Oh, my friend, the flesh will never surrender to God. The self-life has to be dealt with and is only good for the cross. How great is this hymn: "Jesus, I my cross have taken, All to leave and follow Thee; Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou from hence my all shall be. Perish every fond ambition, All I've thought, or hoped, or known. Yet, how rich is my condition, God and heav'n are still my own." (Henry F. Lyte, 1824) If you want to follow Jesus, you have to die. Human nature is incurable. God never tries to reform it; it must be killed. Take up your cross and die and through Christ, you shall receive His Divine nature that makes you a prince of God. God assails us with one hand and He upholds us with the other. With one hand God put His Son on the cross, with the other He lifted Him to glory. If you mean business, my friend, God will do the same with you.

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