

# K-530 Jacob Wrestling

by Art Katz

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of meeting God alone and face to face, and being transformed by His blessing and power.*

**Duration:** 40:43

**Scripture:** Genesis 28:13-14, Genesis 32:28, Matthew 6:33, John 6:37, John 10:27, Acts 2:21, Romans 10:12

**Topics:** "Jacob"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the demanding nature of worshiping God. He criticizes the indifference and casualness with which people treat God, while they invest time and energy in other pursuits. The speaker shares his personal journey of seeking philosophical answers to his life predicament, realizing that he needed transformation that could not be achieved through words alone. He recommends reading a journal he kept during a 14-month trip, which deeply impacted his heart. The sermon also references the encounters Jacob had with God in the Bible, highlighting the importance of knowing and worshiping the God of Abraham and Isaac.

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## Transcript

I guess the only subject I can speak about tonight is wrestling. But praise God that there's a wrestling match that's described in the Bible that I think is fantastically significant. And I've always had a very deep respect for wrestling myself, not that I wrestled.

Too chicken, I guess, or not a physical type, but I remember as a high school teacher, I had kids in my class who were, I want to say zombies. There was nothing I could do to get a rise out of them. Can you hear me in the back? Okay.

I used to dance on my head and do pirouettes and leap across the desk and every dramatic stunt that I could think of. I was trying to persuade these kids that it just wasn't a history class, that this had to do with life and reality and death. And still they sat like zombies.

They never batted their eyelashes. And I remember one time in my desperate frustration, I said, if you'll not believe that what I'm trying to convey is real, that I'm going to take out this revolver from my desk drawer and blast my brains and my blood all over your mod clothes. And still they looked up and, uh-huh.

So I had an amazing revelation one day. Every Friday some of us old crocs used to go to the gymnasium and work out. And I saw some of the same kids who were zombies in my class come alive on the wrestling mat.

It was fantastic, the transformation. The same ones that didn't stir or blink an eyelash with my profundities in the classroom. On the wrestling mat, I saw these guys alive to the extremity and to the fingertips.

And I've always had a deep respect for wrestling and I think that the Greeks probably recognized that it was the supreme sport. Because I don't think that there's a sport that takes more of the totality of what a man is than a wrestling match. I mean it's not just your physical strength.

And it's not just your skill. It's not just your determination. But I mean it's every last iota of your being and all that you are, and as we Jews say, right out of her tiscus.

It's deep unto deep and eyeball to eyeball. And if there's anything that tests a man in the extremity of the totality of his life, it's wrestling. And I haven't planned to speak on wrestling tonight.

They say that they're answering the book for every situation. And there's a wrestling match that's described in this book that I think is fantastic. And it's something that's reminiscent of my life and I think for that reason I'm rather partial to it.

It's a wrestling match that a man had with a stranger one day by the name of Jacob. And you know there's something about Jacob that has its counterpart in the modern world. There's a certain Jacob spirit in the world.

Jacob is a well-meaning guy. He's even a guy who appreciates spiritual things. But he's a bit of a wheeler and a dealer.

He's a guy who lives always in the last analysis by his own resources, his own wits and his own determination. And isn't that really the epitome of what modern life is? And for a wheeler, do you know what that means? He's a God unto himself. And guys, I wish we had a lot of time tonight, but we don't.

And I'm going to have to be very brief. I'm going to ask you to be students as you've never been it. And ask you to extend yourself and read between the lines of the things that I'm trying to suggest.

And here's what I'm trying to suggest. That this is an age in crisis. This is an age of extremity.

And I don't know if that's as pointed and as understandable in North Carolina as it is where I'm living in Denmark or some of the places that I've been in the world in great cities and seen a growing tide of filth and obscenity and perversion, Satanism, witchcraft, rebellion, and death. If you don't know these facts now, I can assure you that these are going to be the essential facts of your generation. And it's everything that the scriptures have been telling us if we have ever disposed ourselves to read them, that in the last days, perilous times would come and men would be lovers of self and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

It doesn't say that the world would be devoid of religion in these last days. Quite the contrary. There even is going to be a kind of a renaissance of religion.

But praise God, I'm not speaking to you tonight about religion. You see, it's very easy for Jacob to be religious. It's very easy for a man who's a God unto himself and living for the pursuit of his own pleasure

and his own gratification to throw God a bone on Sunday or the Shabbos or the high holidays or Christmas and Easter.

And I would say that about nine out of ten people in this room fit that category. And you come out of families which I have perfectly described. You're Sunday Christians or Easter or Christmas Christians, so-called.

And if someone asks you, are you a Christian? You say, well, yes. What else? I'm not a Moslem. Jacob was a superficially religious man.

And it's interesting that he had two encounters with God before he came to a very real showdown. And although our speech might have a lot of approximate terms and many vagaries and we say, yes, but, maybe, I'll tell you something about the word of God. It's very sharp.

It's very lean. It's very sparse. There's not an extra syllable or a piece of superfluous utterance or a comma or punctuation that's out of place.

I really commend it to you. Read it and see how that thing goes right through your heart like a knife. And the two encounters that Jacob had with God, and I'm talking about the God of Abraham, Isaac, the God of Israel, there's no other gods, that when God introduced himself to Jacob when he had a vision, a dream at night with his head on a rock in the wilderness and he saw a ladder with angels ascending and descending and the Lord was at the top of it and spoke to him.

He said, I am the God of your father Abraham and the God of your father Isaac and the land whereupon thou liest, to thee will I give it. You know, sometimes we have to read the word of God not only for what God says, but for what God leaves out. I'm the God of your father Abraham and the God of your father Isaac.

And he stopped right there. He didn't say, I'm Jacob's God, because he was not. And that's the point, guys.

He's nobody's God automatically. He's nobody's God by virtue of birth, by virtue of being Jewish or circumcised or bar mitzvahed or unnecessarily baptized or sprinkled or confirmed or any of the thousands of religious things which we do as part and parcel of our religious or cultural tradition. What it takes to make a Jacob, to make the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac the God of Jacob, was a wrestling match.

No holds barred. Gut to gut and eyeball to eyeball. And it's interesting how God patiently brought Jacob to just such a place as that.

And my prayer for every one of you precious young people tonight is that you won't have to wait too long for that encounter. As a matter of fact, it's available tonight right where you sit and where you stand. And I pray that you won't have to wait as this Jacob waited and as long as my God waited for me to come to the end of my conceit and my arrogance and my self-assurance and my Jacob life until in my 35th year I wrestled with exactly that same person that my forefather Jacob wrestled with with the exact same result.

I want to describe that wrestling match. It came at the extremity of Jacob's life. What does it take, guys? Do you have any idea of how eminently superficial we are? Do you have any idea of how phony we are? How shallow, how casual, how indifferent? The thing that brought me to the end of myself in my 34th year,

and fantastically it came at a time when I finally arrived when I was finally a success.

I had been a high school dropout at the age of 16 and a wandering Jew and a bum and a merchant seaman and a drifter and a guy who tried his hand at every vocation and relationship and girl and cause and ideology was finally a high school teacher. And my mother was throwing out her chest with pride in Brooklyn speaking about my son, the professor. I tell you, she had every bit of exaggeration coming because I had given that poor woman so many gray hairs and she had made so many trips up to the principal's office what her son had done this time.

And now she could say, my son, the professor. And I was being applauded by my students and by my colleagues and isn't it fantastic in the very year of my success when I finally attained that in which I had been striving all my life I realized what a failure I was. We Americans say that there's nothing that succeeds like success and I want to tell you that that's completely wrong.

There's nothing that fails like success because once you've arrived, you realize just how hollow you are. Your victory is ashes in your mouth. And which are the nations today that are dying? Who are the ones that are cheating on each other's wives? Attempting orgies, drugs and every kind of harebrained and erotic and stupid kind of contrivance to fill the hollowness of our lives but we who are affluent and successful.

And God had to wait for Jacob to come to the end of himself and he had to wait for me and he's waiting for you. He's waiting for the modern world to come to the end of its games playing the end of its shallow religiosity the end of talking about religion whether you call it Judaism or Christianity or whatever, but still effectually being lords unto yourself. And Jacob came to that place that I came and I came because I thought that you guys were my hope.

Oh I believed that young people were uncorrupted and unsainted and somehow in a classroom that we could develop a pattern of life which we could all offer to the world of true brotherhood and compassion and blah blah blah and that's what I thought. But you know what I learned? You guys are not one with difference different than anybody in the world. You're just a bit younger but you exhibit the self-same nature the self-same Jacob nature that's pitting nation against nation and class against class and race against race.

And you say, but Art, no I'm not that way I'm really humanistic well that's what I thought I was. At the root guys were selfish. You know what I was made to say? Oh my kids could cry a tear for Biafra and for Vietnam and they could adopt my humanistic rhetoric and my slogans but I saw where they really lived and where they really trembled in the kishkas.

And if you don't learn anything else from me tonight you're going to learn what kishkas mean. It means in the gut in the deep center and the inner man that's where we live. Out of the heart God says proceed all the issues of life and not at the surface.

And many of us have not found God because he's not to be found at the surface. He's a deep calling unto deep waiting for us to come to the end of ourselves and mean business and engage him and not let him go except that he bless us. Although my kids could speak the same kind of humanistic vocabulary as I I saw where they really trembled and lived.

And I saw that it was a more paralyzing predicament for a girl to be flat chested than for millions to die in Biafra or Vietnam. Yes or no? I saw that for a guy to be stood up on a date or to be dejected or rejected and not to have the horsepower that he thinks his car should have was for him the real issue of his life. And it's fantastic.

Now no matter what we profess with our mouths and no matter what handsome rhetoric we can speak our real tremblings and the real fluctuations of our heart give us away. And if there are some adults with us tonight don't you think that you're any more superior. All you've done is graduate to other kinds of toys.

And I don't care whether it's missiles or getting to the moon It's the same stupid games playing. It's the same evasion. It's the same rude selfishness and self-gratification.

And I don't care what religion you garnish your life with you still are lords unto yourself and you do not know me. And so God waited for Jacob to come to the extremity of his life as I came in my 34th year as an atheist. I'd been an atheist from the age of 14.

I had done my religious thing. I had gratified my mother. I went to Hebrew school.

I was bar mitzvahed and all that jazz. And I never darkened a synagogue doorstep again because I was not looking for religion I was looking for life and for reality and for truth and it was not to be found there in any Gentile equivalent to my Jewish religion. When I came to the end of myself I was led by God in a step-by-step encounter which this book describes that was held up tonight.

A journal which I kept eight years ago in a 14-month trip, 30,000 miles with a pack on my back over Western Europe, North Africa the Middle East, Egypt and the Holy Land looking for philosophical answers to the predicament of my life knowing that I was a man at the end of himself and at the extremity and that although I had been a Marxist and pragmatist and existentialist that those things were just vain vocabularies that could not transform the world because I needed transforming and it wasn't to be obtained by mere words alone. I knew I needed to be a new creature. I needed to be something genuinely compassionate and loving and I couldn't rev that up by any exertion of my own flesh.

I needed a transcendent answer but where was that to be found in a world without a God? No real God had ever been displayed to me. And we read that in that same crisis to which Jacob came in the 32nd chapter of the book of Genesis that in that crisis Jacob sent over all that he had his two wives, his children his possessions all that he had striven for all of his life he knew now that none of these things could save him. He had to face his brother Esau who had had 14 years to nurse a spirit of resentment and Esau was coming with an army of 400 and to do him in and his wits this time and his cunning and his well-meaning intentions were not going to save him.

And we read in 24th verse and Jacob was left alone. That's the only way to meet guys meet God guys, is alone. Wrestling match is between two personalities two persons you and a stranger who's been waiting for you it's not you with your rabbi or you with your priest or you with your minister or your mother your father or anyone else either you're going to meet him alone face to face on this side of eternity or you're going to meet him in exactly the same way on the other side and I tell you if I could take my heart out of my body and wring it out before you I would plead with you and beg you and induce you any way that I can to please meet him now.

It says Jacob was left all alone and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day and when he saw that he prevailed not against him this man, this stranger he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him and he said to Jacob let me go for the day breaketh and Jacob said I'll not let thee go except that thou bless me you know whatever we can say about a Jacob he's a guy who appreciates the opportunity when he's got it he's making the most of it and whoever this stranger is whoever this man is he recognizes that this man has some unusual capacity some endowment some power some authority to confer blessing and he said let me go for the day breaketh and Jacob said I'll not let thee go except that thou bless me and

the stranger said to him what is thy name and he said Jacob you know there's something wonderful about God he always asks Socratic questions he always draws us out of ourselves either when he said in the form of Jesus who do men say that I am or when he came into the garden of Adam and Eve and he said Adam where are you of course he knew where he was what is your name as if he didn't know and Jacob said Jacob that name means deceiver supplanter, conniver strewed article and guys don't misconstrue anything I'm saying to suggest that this is any kind of anti-semitic message or that I'm laying bare the anatomy of a Jewish personality not at all I'm laying bare the anatomy of the modern world the Jacob spirit of the modern world and it's just as much the possession of Gentiles as it is of

Jews what is that spirit it's the spirit of self-sufficiency and independence from God that's sin that's the very essence of sin that's the root of sin and it makes us gods unto ourselves no matter what vocabulary we employ no matter what our liturgy no matter if we can speak Hebrew no matter what religious notions we go through until we've come to God and met him face to face and had him touch us and bless us and change our nature and our name and our character and our walk we're still Jacobs and God is seeking for people that he might call Israel he wants to change our name 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 and Jacob asked him and said tell me I pray thee thy name and the stranger said

wherefore is it that God doth ask after my name and he blessed him there at this time in the revelation of God in the book of Genesis God couldn't say Jesus what would that mean God of course is always a God of progressive revelation but I want to suggest to you that that stranger who wrestled with me seven years ago in Jerusalem who picked me up off the side of the road in Switzerland and would not let me go the stranger who put a book in my hands aboard the deck of a tramp steamer which I had never before read and was contemptuous of as an atheist and a so-called intellectual was the same stranger and the stranger who put me on a bus at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and allowed me to get lost and I staggered out of that bus and walked into the first store that I could find and to

ask directions and to find out that I had walked into a bookstore that sold Bibles and New Testaments and Christian literature and I looked at that Jewish woman's face and I said what is this place oh she said we're a congregation of Jewish believers in the Messiah Jesus and this is our bookstore adjoining our chapel and something in my heart went click and I heard a still small voice guys you're going to have to believe that no joke very important that you believe this because God is at heart to be a witness to every creature if they receive you they receive me and if they receive me they receive him who sent me I tell you that I'm a man in my right mind I got a master's degree from Berkeley and I was a man who had been a lifelong atheist and who laughed and ridiculed and lampooned any

references to God heaven, hell, devil and all of those categories who has learned that the very things which I rejected and swore are really the ultimate and most awesome realities of our life though they're

invisible and I tell you that in that moment in that bookstore in Jerusalem seven years ago I heard a still small voice and it called me by name it said you are not to leave and I'll tell you the kind of Jew that I am when I hear that one voice alone, there's only one God guys there's only one voice there's only one still small voice still small voice that's ever been seeking us waiting for us to shut our Jacob Miles and our contention and our striving and our hot shot opinions and be still and know that I am God when I heard that still voice you know what I knew that's the one voice

alone that has the authority and the right to command this Jewish life I stayed four days and nights with those Jewish believers, notice I don't use the word Christian I think most of you can understand why because my Jewish mother said that she was pelted by stones on her way to school in London when she was a little girl that were thrown at her by Christians no ma not Christians, Gentiles my mother thinks that Billy Graham and the Pope and Adolf Hitler are all Christians never Gentile is a Christian the Spanish Inquisition was the work of Christians, the pogroms in Russian Poland the work of Christians, the Holocaust the work of Christians and I was on TV today what channel is that 24? 28? tune in tomorrow night at 6.45 and listen to that 15 minute interview because I began by picking

up your school newspaper today where it said our cast converted from a Jew to being a Christian are pox on that headline it's fucked up the truth is this guys our cast graduated from being a Jew by circumstances of birth to a Jew in spirit and truth to a Jew who knows the God of Israel and in whose life that God's spirit dwells who loves him with all his heart and soul and mind and strength and serves him, that's what it means to be Jewish and they got that thing all wrong God isn't asking any of you Jewish kids to convert to Christianity, heck no who needs that arrow bloodless arrow bloodless one dimensional egg rolling in Christmas tree grotesque culture I tell you that our Jewish culture is a lot more attractive and rich and deep and God isn't asking you in any way to sacrifice it he's

only asking you to put at the center the God around whom we've originally developed the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the only way to do it is to make that God your God you've got to come to him the same way Abraham came to him by hearing a still small voice and obeying it you've got to come to him the same way Jacob came to him in a face to face encounter in which you will not let him go except that he blesses you and I tell you guys that when I wrestled with Jesus in that bookstore and aboard the deck of a ship or a tram steamer when I opened that New Testament and one utterance from the lips of Jesus penetrated my mind and my heart and went through me like a shockwave and left me a trembling group aboard that deck, I was an atheist the moment before and a moment later I knew that

the living God I'm reading his book and Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, but I didn't receive that revelation because it wasn't convenient in fact it was the most embarrassing and mortifying truth to which I had ever been exposed and my first cry was, what am I going to tell my mother? because I knew she was going to be pained, I knew the way she would interpret this and what was I going to tell my intellectual colleagues in California where I was the leading faculty radical, when they were laughing at scorn, coming back telling them that I believe that this book from Genesis to Revelation is the revealed will of God and that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel and all the world that I've been made of him and that his spirit is in me why they'll tell me that I've gone off the deep end they'll

tell me that I need a psychiatrist which is exactly what they told me they told me that my first night back when I was sitting in the perfect peace of God and these agitated, restless, broken adulterous, fornicating wives every one of them, every one of them seeing psychiatrists telling me who was enjoying the peace of God, that I've gone off the deep end yes guys intuitively they're right the only way to know God is to go off

the deep end he's not a God of convenience he's not a casual God he's not a God who shed his own blood and laid out his own life that we might have a Sunday culture he's a God who died who poured himself out, who suffered the abuse of men rejected and despised of men, a man of sorrows he had no homeliness that we should desire in him he gave his beard to the

pluckers and his back to the smiters that we might have life and that more from him he doesn't want us to be zombies he doesn't want us to be somnambulists sleepwalking through life and going through motions of career and marriage and society he wants us to be alive to the extremity and to the fingertips because we've met him, gut to gut and we would not let him go except that he bless us, and he alone who had the power to bless and to touch touched us as he touched Jacob and forever changed his nature and his name and I think it's most revealing it says in the 30th verse and Jacob called the name of that place Ken-i-el for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved who is the stranger the man with whom our father Jacob wrestled a lot of us are very clever in our theology and

say oh God, I can't believe in Jesus, God can never take on himself the form of a man oh really with whom did Jacob wrestle, gut to gut all through those night hours in the most existential encounter of his life who touched him and had the power to bless him and to change his name and his character and his nature, and Jacob says of him, I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved I think what Jacob really means is that a new life has been given, because the scripture says no man can see God's face and live and that's true, Jacob never survived that wrestling match, a Jacob died, praise God, it's the only place where Jacob but something was born in Israel that's what happens when we meet God face to face, and I don't know if you noticed but I'm lame and limp at home and just as

it says of Jacob and he passed over that river and the sun rose upon him and he limped upon his side you know how you can know that you've had this encounter with God you'll never walk the same way again I haven't been walking the same way these last seven years as I've walked the first 35 years of my life I'll tell you what happened instantly, seven years ago in Jerusalem, when I went to sleep that last night I stayed four days and nights with those Jewish believers, and I saw Jews pray with such power and with such authority that they suggested to me that they really knew God and this wasn't just some ritualistic thing out of a siddur or prayer book and I saw my Jewish people praising God and worshipping Him with their hands above their heads with joyous confidences and beaming faces

and weeping however stupid I was I know that you don't learn that and you can't fabricate that there's nothing famed about that it's an authentic expression of a people who have met God and know Him and love Him and can worship Him isn't it interesting that of all the things that Jesus said He said to a woman at the well that God the Father, how many gods are there? is seeking those who will worship Him in the spirit and in truth that's the whole issue guys our world is dying it's dying from secularism it's dying from the wealth of goods we're dying from the pollution of our air and our morality we're dying at every hand and I'll tell you why because God is effectively absent by His presence from our lives from our universities, from our communities from our cities and from our nation and

from our world lots of religion lots of shmaltz and lots of practices and empty ceremonies but where is the presence of the Holy One of Israel who when He comes into a person changes His speech His conduct His manner, His demeanor His posture, His relationships no man is ever the same who once meets God face to face and is touched by Him who walks with a limp and isn't it interesting that where He touched Jacob was in His thigh I remember when I was a student of history and someone described Teddy Roosevelt as a man who fought from his thighs masculine this is where the power is our bravado and our

gusto and our presumption and our pride no man you think is ever going to come to God in that spirit but God says to us in the prophet Isaiah upon this man will I look he who is of a broken and

a contrite spirit will tremble at my word God wants to touch you in your thigh He wants to touch you in your arrogance and your conceit and your self assurance and your bravado and your bluster He wants to leave you meaningful meek, lowly taking on even the nature of Him who it is who wants to wrestle with you despised of men, loving merciful the very attributes for the warmth of which this world is dying I'll tell you the beautiful thing guys the same one who wrestles with Jacob and the same one who wrestles with Martez is right in this balcony tonight waiting to wrestle, to touch to bless and to change the life of any man or woman who will come to Him in the only way that He'll receive us stripped, naked bare our pretenses, our concealment our bluster and bravado gone sending over all

that we've had all alone willing to meet God face to face and not let Him go God has given I almost forgot to mention this that last night in Jerusalem I went to sleep on the front seat of a chapel agitated out of my skull I had tried by the power of my intellect to understand what God was trying to tell me I couldn't reconcile how the God of Israel was calling me to be a Christian and asking me to forsake my Jewishness although the scriptures had been opened to me and they showed me the man-made prophecies of a Messiah to come fulfilled by the Jesus of the New Testament and in my sleep that night independent of my brain God by His mercy and by His spirit put His truth in my heart and I woke up that next morning with the most wonderful peace and calm that I had ever enjoyed in 35 years I

came to a breakfast table and I said to this Jewish woman, Nina, I believe I understand and that woman rolled right off of her seat onto the floor and she was there on her knees with her hands above her head she is rolling down her face because her prayer that night was, Lord, we've done everything with this stubborn man, you make him feel this way God showed me that He had taken me by the hand as a child for 14 months and led me step by step in a wrestling match to this growing realization of who Jesus is who had spoken to me out of this book and out of the faces and the lives of those Gentile believers who had picked me up off the side of the road and now it was put up or shut up wrestle to the end or walk away and never be able to say that I'm a man of integrity who loves truth or let

alone that I'm a Jew however many unanswered questions there still were, there was one question about which there was no doubt Jesus is who He said He is that same woman at the well said well when the Messiah comes, she said, when the Messiah comes He'll teach us all things verily, verily, Jesus said unto her and said unto you, I who speak unto thee Jesus touched the eyes of a blind man and was made whole and He saw and they dragged Him into the synagogue and they interrogated Him who was this who gave you sight and He said, well if you're asking me I don't know too much, but this man named Jesus always a man, see and they cast Him out and discussed and Jesus found Him in the street and they had a chat and Jesus spoke to Him about the Lord and this Jewish man said who is he that I might

worship Him Jesus said, he who speaks unto thee and He, look guys let's get with it, are we students or aren't we students who value the written word or don't value it God has called us to a wrestling match tonight from which we cannot turn He's not called us to indifference nor to neutrality we're not going to be able to walk away from this match the man who speaks like this and allows Jews to fall at His feet and worship Him and worship Him and call Him, I don't know, a Lord and receives that as their tribute is a Jew to be reckoned on a Jew who forgives men their sins and blesses them and raises them dead is a Jew that's got to be reckoned on and I say tonight that for any kind of student and men and women of integrity, we've either got to conclude that this Jesus is one of the most

exceedingly blasphemous and megalomaniacs that will eclipse a Hitler or truly the son of God that morning seven years ago, I bowed my head and I chose to believe the latter thing and I called upon Him and something happened, it was the most awkward thing that had ever come out of my mouth and something immediately happened something went out of my life, bitterness resentment, lust, anger contention, strife, my whole Jacob nature went like air out of a tire and something came in which is also air, it's the Spirit it's the Ruach HaKodesh the Holy Spirit of God and you know what happened immediately, when God came in and touched me, my speech changed I walked with a limp I could not blaspheme from that moment on, although every sentence of my adult life had always been doused with heavy

sprinklings of Jew beans and other blasphemies and that Spirit is within me tonight and it's in the heart and life of every person in this room, Jew or Gentile who has wrestled with this stranger and not let him go and it's called on the name of the Lord and God, the same God the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the specific God who is always called upon meant specifically by a still small voice and He became the God of Abraham and He became the God of Isaac and He became the God of Jacob wants to become your God tonight if you let Him always by that still small voice have you heard it?

Jesus said, my sheep will hear my voice and I'm going to conclude now the way I conclude at every one of these meetings whether it's Uppsala University in Sweden whether it's UCLA, my own alma mater at Berkeley, Harvard, Wesley and all the places which God has brought me and what a meeting we had at Harvard just a couple of weeks ago two to three hundred students who had come for sport and they were going to have a ball and feed this lamb to the lions and I tell you that within an hour two to three hundred of these students had their hands above their heads worshipping the God of Abraham the God of Isaac the Holy Spirit fell in that room and for the first time in my university speaking experience no man dared presume upon God and raise a Jacob voice and ask some kind of a rationality question to exhibit his cleverness every one of us subdued by the presence of a living God who was with us and the only question before us that night was to receive or to reject him who had spoken to us and I prayed a prayer which I'm going to pray right now and I said that God's word said, Jesus said, my sheep will hear my voice Jesus said that I'll in no wise cast out any man who comes unto me that the same Lord of Jew and Gentile there's only one hear O Israel for God's sake were you really here that the same Lord who is rich unto all will be rich unto all who call upon him for whosoever whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved I tell you just by the word that will come out of your mouth now, a word of faith out of your heart you'll meet this stranger he'll touch you right where you sit I've seen people tremble weep, jump from foot to foot or just sit in a stunned silence as something goes out of their life like Jacob's spirit and something comes in I'm so grateful to God that he's not given me a philosophy I'm grateful that he's given me the way of a living God Jesus said I am the way, the life, and the truth and God wants to prove it to you right now will you take him at his word I don't care what you call yourself Methodist, Presbyterian Baptist, Atheist Agnostic, Marxist Reformed Jew, Orthodox Do you know him?

Have you ever met him? There's one whom we Jews have been avoiding for 19 centuries a man, Christ Jesus who's waiting tonight to meet us if we'll come to him and not let him go except that he comes will you constrain him tonight in spirit and I'll end with this God is a God who wants us to constrain him he's not a horny, baloney, patsy God sitting on a cloud with a white beard looking down on an insipid scene sitting there for nights he's a God who tells it to us like it is and he told it to Jacob like it is I'm the God of your father Isaac I'm the God of your father Abraham, period but I'm not yet your God until you come to me in spirit and truth then he became the God of Abraham the God of Isaac and God of Jacob will you allow him

to become your God tonight?

I'm going to ask you to bow your heads with me now and wrestle with this God oh, meet him out of the depths of your life will you guys constrain him, don't let him patsy don't raise your foolish little arguments and your patsy little theologies his way is not our way nor his thoughts our thoughts but his word says I'll in no wise cast out any man who comes that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be free he's just asked you to open your heart and your mouth and call upon him specifically the name of the Lord that stranger waiting to wrestle with us even our Messiah Yeshua Hamashiach, Jesus I'm going to thank God and I'm going to begin a prayer with the words dear God and I invite as many of you Jacobs who will be made Israel's tomorrow men and women having power with God and with men to follow me aloud with the words dear God and see if God will not so precious God we thank you for this wrestling exhibition we've had tonight it was really an eye opener to see what a demanding sport this is truly the supreme and the ultimate sport that takes everything the totality of all that we are that requires a gut to gut encounter and Lord how dare we treat you indifferently and casually for willing to pour out strength and energy and time on books, on graves, seeking our careers and our promotions and completely indifferent to the God who gave us life Lord you're seeking those who will worship you in spirit and truth, you're seeking to bring a Jacob world to become Israel's who will meet you face to face who will walk away from that encounter and walk with you since that encounter lame and limp, alt but with a new name and a new character in nature and I ask you Lord right now to receive the prayer of every person who will follow me in these simple words according to your invitation and be made real unto them and touch them and bless them save them for the utmost in the name of the Messiah Jesus Christ hear us now as we pray will you pray aloud with me dear God dear God I ask your forgiveness I ask your forgiveness for my Jacob life for my Jacob life for my reeling and dealing for my indifference to you my casualness with you I want to know you in spirit and in truth I ask you to forgive me my every sin I receive the atonement which the Messiah provided Wash me by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus. And right now, I will not let you go, except that you'll bless me. Come now into my heart and life.

Be thou my Lord and my God. Make me a spiritual Israel. Help me to walk in the way of that crazy spirit.

I ask these things in Jesus' name, amen.

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