

Jacob's Rebirth

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer's sermon on Jacob's rebirth emphasizes the transformative power of wrestling with God and the importance of surrendering to His will.

Duration: 49:54

Scripture: Genesis 32:24

Topics: "Jacob"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Jacob from the Bible and how it serves as a mirror for us to reflect on our own lives. The speaker emphasizes that God often works through unexpected means to bring about reconciliation and transformation. They share a personal anecdote about a man named Walter who was able to reconcile with his neighbor through God's intervention. The speaker encourages listeners to surrender to God and trust in His goodness, believing that He only desires what is best for us.

Transcript

In the book of Genesis, 32nd chapter, Genesis 32, I'll read from verse 24 to the end, a familiar story that I'll read again. 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.

That's when the man who was wrestling with Jacob perceived that he prevailed not against Jacob. He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and the hollow of his thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And Jacob said, let me go before the day breaks.

And he said, I will not let thee go. He said that, the wrestling man said, let me go. Jacob said, I will not let thee go.

And he said unto him, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, thy name shall be called no more, Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hath thou pow'ered God unto men and hath prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, tell me, I pray thee, thy name.

And he said, wherefore is it that thou hast asked after my name? And he blest him there. And Jacob called the place Hemio, the Nile, if you like. This version says Hemio.

For I have seen face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over, a new wall was set upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. And therefore the children of Israel knocked at the sinew, which

shrank, which is upon the halt of the thigh unto this day, because he touched on all those things which lie in the sinew, and it shrank.

Now, the thought, as you have guessed, about the man Jacob wrestling, and the wrestling God who wrestled with Jacob, is real. It's not absent. Now we have here, content, a story that is literally filled with meaning.

The Bible is a picture gallery, containing the portraits of the great saints, and also, I'm sorry to say, some who are not so great. The portraits are here, painted for us, not by the Spirit, but by the Holy Spirit himself. And this man Jacob, we stand before him, and as we gaze at his portrait, we suddenly see that it's not only a picture of a man, it's a mirrored, blurred picture.

And we see ourself in it. We see our own strength, and our own weakness here. And what I'm to say is not to reproduce upon a man who can't answer back, nor necessarily to praise a man who might be a messiah.

We see and learn from this man, long sleeping with the just, how we can be better Christians in an age that desperately needs good Christians. Now, Jacob was chosen of God. Jacob had our love, said God, before Jacob was born, and had done neither good nor evil.

Jacob had our love. God chose the man, Jacob, and loved him, and Jacob was under covenant. He wanted immediately to act in the way of God.

He wanted to make the covenant, and he was under covenant. And Jacob had had some experience with God, really had known God, he had seen that matter, he had heard the voice of God, and he had promised God that he would, and he had seen God standing above the ladder, and the angels descending, ascending and descending upon the ladder, and therefore he had had some spiritual experience, really. He'd had the initial hope, and yet after 20 years of flopping around, trying to outwit his old father-in-law, and he was a wasted example of Godliness.

He knew God, and Jacob had such an unholy nature, and he lacked so many things that he needed, and he had so many things that he ought to get. We have what we ought not to have, and we don't have what we ought to have. We have what we ought not to have.

And that's the man, Jacob. I have noticed in times, if you say, who will come? But if we say, who wants to come? Well, Christ was facing this man, Jacob, and at this point, he needed a spiritual overhaul. He was always just.

He wouldn't have wanted to trust, and Jacob hadn't bothered. He needed that. Then he needed to be worried of his, and he needed to be rid of that, I know.

But the father doesn't, because so God doesn't. And then Jacob was disturbed, and he needed a complete, he needed a complete breaking. People can be very stubborn over trivialities.

That's just, I'm just hearing a horn, and that helps the radio. Okay. I've had so many of these things play me dirt, because I'm suspicious of them.

I never know what they're going to do. Well, now, God willed this for Jacob. I said, and he needed a clean spirit, and he needed to have an infusion of water, and he needed a magic filling of the love of God.

And what was on Jacob's side was that God, you know, man, if you can preach, you're always sure that God will. He willed it, because it's, well, you could say that any scenic, he could still. And so, when God makes a promise, faith does not write you a letter.

If God could, it wouldn't mean a thing. If you wanted to die, I could come through. But if you wanted a hundred thousand, you don't trust his promise.

Man writes me a letter and says, but if I know that he's a scholar, that his children should, but I don't think he always made you wonder. Well, I suppose it's because you have faith. I wouldn't know why else, because the verdict says that I'll make it.

Yes, you will make it. Now, the will of God is a settled, a gratification that God willed him to make. It's God's gratification never again.

And if we were to criticize, because and gratification never, and this is all the same. He willed it. He willed it, Jacob.

So, God willed that this man, Jacob, should be right. And so, he put Jacob in the corner. I said to somebody, maybe I said, that it would be a good thing if, to create our own crisis, you know, to get our, it wasn't until he was sinking down, it wasn't, it wasn't until Paul was struck by, and God was setting Jacob up, and it says here, Jacob was left alone.

Jacob had spent all, and the cattle, and he had a whole lot of folks. But God separated him from them. He sent him across, sent him, he's alone, God.

Then your friends said, you'll never be where he ought to be. Here you are alone, and Jacob was left alone. Then he began to wrestle with the man, Jacob, and Jacob resisted God's will, personal resistance, that all.

If you desire God, you don't desire him, you won't get anywhere. You must desire him enough. And the very thing for which you're praying sometimes, you're resisting.

That's a strange thing, but it's true nevertheless. And the problem of the Holy Spirit in his church, and among his children, all our history, it is to eliminate resistance in Jacob. Resistance caused by our sin, or pride, or ambition, or what? Then the resistance is gone.

And sometimes we resist when really it's almost comic. But in this particular area, they didn't believe in Jacob. And there was a young woman, a girl, they were sold to God.

So finally, and the evangelist, he said, take it, it's yours, Reverend, and he paid on my missionary pledge. So I took it down to the Jew, screwed that thing in his head, and here she was, many of that carried over from me. And I heard of a man who had gone down in a well.

There he was, hanging at the end of a rope. He felt, he knew that that was the end, all right, no more. He thought, well, as long as I can, he gave himself up, reached his hold on her.

And when you let go, and you're standing on this solid rock, there used to be a dear old lady out home. I called so many places home, I said, there used to be a dear old lady, when she'd see anybody praying at the altar, with a fist shut, she'd make an oath to that son of a bitch. She made an oath to my wife.

Jacob tried to give up. You can't go to Jericho's people. I tell you, it's easy for me to understand.

Jacob was going through a pretty tough thing here. And Esau, he knew Esau, but he didn't have much hope. Well, when God removed Jacob's resistance, there wasn't much else, and crippled him.

And when he broke Jacob's self-will, and Jacob accepted God's will, then he clung to God. Then God said, you're with Jacob. He said, he'd been right.

But he didn't need to hang on very long, and I tell you, that we could shorten down the length of our waiting very greatly, if we would surrender and dare to believe in the goodness of God. If you will dare to believe that God has not, he never intends that you should have anything taken away from you, finally, except he takes it away to get it out of your system, and then gives it back. He says, whosoever will give up friends, and in this life, he'll have a hundred to one.

He'll have and much as it used to tell about it. I don't know, I think he made this story up, but he said there was a father who had a nice coal chute, a very beautiful coal chute, and he wanted it, and one day the Lord said to him, and the man said, but listen, this is all of God. He said, I don't want to give up my coal chute, but he insisted, God insisted, and finally the man in the first took it, and that's always the way it is.

If you give God the coal chute, you turn the tail over to the Lord too much. And I noticed another thing here, that this man was transformed and renamed. He had a new name.

The old name Jacob meant supplanter, and the new name meant Prince with God. He got a new name, and his brother Esau out on the plain there was a conqueror. He, God conquered Jacob out of strength.

He conquered Esau by conquering Jacob. He walked to me and said, oh God, how could this be? He said, yeah, he insulted me. He said, I want you to go back, and he just hung himself.

We had supper, and he didn't like me, and the Lord said, the city of Morgenthau, and he was seeking the Lord down. He said, there's a neighbor of mine, and he said, that neighbor of mine, and he said, I promise, and he said, I'm going to do a good time today, so the next time we make a change from this, and he said, I don't know, it's foolish, rather strange thing, isn't it? We'd like to have you chase your enemy down the street, and have you stand back there. He gets after you, and then makes your friend come around to you, or at least he makes your friend.

Esau ran him through his arms, and they welcomed, kissed each other. They were friends. God did it by conquering Jacob on the bank.

But do you know something here? Now, right here, you dear friend, he carried the stigma the rest of his life. Before that, he'd been numb, but when the Lord got through it, the sinew of his thighs, God gave him a limp as a favor, to remember that what was that risk. Fifty men were walking along.

He's that kind of fella, you see, in the belief in the second coming of Christ, and getting the missions, and living holy, and he's lived all. He's a good Christian, and he carries a little stigma on, the stigma, all the time. One of the great evangelists of the past centuries came to Dr. A. B. Simpson and said, Albert, if you were to pray for this sick, you'd be one of the most popular evangelists.

He said to his friend, I'm going to keep on praying for the sick. He said, it's a stigma I'm going to keep on unmoving. We've always had that stigma.

People say, oh, those are wise people, they pray for the sick. Yeah, you've never heard me preach healing. I haven't preached divine healing that I know of ever in my life.

I've told once or twice illustrations about it, but if anybody wants to think that I'm a little bit out in the way for you, because I pray for a man when he's sick, you have a right to think it if you want to, but I'm still going to do it. And when a saint of the Lord comes and says, according to James, I want to be prayed for, I say, all right, according to James. And I've seen a lot of them get well.

I've seen them die. Not everybody I pray for lives, but I'll tell you, I went to see a woman one time. She was lying in her bed, a relatively young woman too.

It wasn't her time. And she said to me, now I want you to pray for me, Brother Tozer. I want you to pray and anoint me.

And I said, there's one thing I want to say. She said, I don't care whether I live or die. She said, I'm happy in God and perfectly ready to meet the Lord anytime.

And if he wants me to stay alive with my wife, I'm going to meet him anytime. So, either way it goes, it's all right with me. And I said to the devil, now, what am I going to do with her? If you kill her, she's still happy because she's going to be with the Lord.

She gets well. She's happy about that. As soon as the Lord brings you to a place where you don't care, and so I don't, I think we waste a lot of the Lord, but I still am happy.

I need healing by prayer, but I don't make a great deal out of it, and I don't believe in healing, I'll tell you that much now. And in fact, I believe that the pastor has a right to pray for the sick. Anyway, keep the stigma on.

Don't be ashamed to it. Don't be ashamed to have a little bit of a stigma. So, Jacob lived.

I quote, when he came out across the river that morning, he said, the sun shone on him. Notice that passage? Jacob had dimly shadowed most of his nightlife in those painting cattle. The sun rose upon Jacob when he walked out there.

But now the sun rose upon him, and when the children saw a figure coming along, from that time on, I like to think about the change in this man, Jacob, from the crooked supplanter and trickster to a dignified. Remember later on when they went down in, and this, the great old shevel, the king of all, he sent for Jacob to come in. The old herdsman walked in, and his eye as bright as ever, upright as he was now except for a little length, said he got to Jacob.

He wasn't ashamed or afraid to go into the presence of royalty. The young Pharaoh arose and said, bless me, my father, and the king of the greatest country in the world will know me. The old herdsman laid his hands on the head of the king, and blessed him.

I want to tell you this, and then I'll be true. We gave a hundred dollars to bring that man behind the stage, but it fell through for some technical reason I don't know about, and we never got it. Well, it turned the money over to mission.

But anyway, there is in South Africa, he's still living there, a man by the name of D. U. S. Dugan. He's a blackness here, a well-college student, a Seward. Had no education at all, and he got converted to the

Baptist down there, and he came on to a friend of mine, Dr. Cook, who is an Afrikaner, white man, and he said, Dr. Cook, he said, I'm called Preach.

Here was a Seward, only converted a short while, without any education at all, and looked the world down upon, the apartheid you're talking about over there is strong and all, and so they looked down on this Seward, and Dr. Cook said to him, Duma, it's wonderful that you're saved, and I'm glad you are and all, but I think you're mistaken about God calling you to preach. He said, I'm just a little afraid you're mistaken about it. He said, I don't think you are, and I think you'd better give up the idea.

So, Duma disappeared, and he was gone three weeks. Where he was was this. He'd gone way outside the little city, and gone up into the hills there somewhere, and God even came, and without any Bible to read, for I think he couldn't read at that time, for three weeks he waited on the clock.

What happened to him there, I'll never know. You will never know. No man can write it, but it happened, and he came back and said to Dr. Cook, who's one of the big Baptists of South Africa, he said, his face now is a light.

You know how black faith can shine? He was happy, and he was shining like that. He said, Dr. Cook, God met me, and I know now that I'm called to preach. He said, if you've got any place I can preach? Yeah.

Yeah, they said, if you insist, we have a place where there's a church with six members. He said, would you like to take me? He said, sure, and he took that church with six members, and in a very few years had boomed it up until it was one of the largest churches in that area, and he rose from being a black Zulu that people looked down on, to being a man that everybody black and white respected in all the areas of the Union of South Africa, and they tell me that when the white people swallowed the black get sick or in trouble, send for doom, the tall black boy comes quietly in and kneels down and talks to the God he knows so well. God hears prayer and answers for the white people that don't know God quite so well.

So, you see, my dear people, it didn't who you are, or what stock you had, or how much education you had, and what the color is, and what the denomination is. It is whether you have or have not met God in living in God. It is whether you have or have not met God and had your will broken before him, and then the Lord touch you, put upon you the stigma of the cross, say, now you're going to be my messenger, my representative.

Don't be afraid of the shame that comes and the disgrace that there'll be when everybody will want you to pray for them. Who is it you send for? Who is it you send for when you're in trouble? Never for the compromising Christian that's afraid of the cross. It's always for the helpless and limp who has followed the Lord to the cross and made him lame.

Always send for that kind of man when you're in trouble. The world does, because even the sinful old world doesn't believe in a lukewarm Christian. Well, that's the story of Jacob, a little bit of it.

Thank God Jacob ever lived. I'm glad he ever lived. I'm glad he was the kind of man he was.

I'm glad God's the kind of God he is to make Jacob into the kind of man he is now. In order that you and I may take heart and become better men and women than we are thus far, Heavenly Father, we thank thee for all thy good things, all thy children of every color and every age. Jacob did well in his days and through months and later times.

Holy Ann, Sophie the scrub woman and Debbie Bray, Henry Sousa, John of the Cross, Francis Harada, oh God, we could name them, the whole telephone directory filled us full of them. We had time to listen to the ones who were shining like stars in the dark world. Some of them are gone, some are still among us, but they shine in the dark world.

You show forth the glory of him who called us out of darkness into his light. We thank thee for every one of them. Oh God, help us, it were as bad as Jacob, help us, we pray, to be humble and to be persistent and to hang on so long and to believe thoroughly and to be willing to take the stigma of a cross-carrying life.

Now with God bless this company of people, we thank thee for them and we pray that tonight as we gather that there may be some who will make specific decisions. Some young people will be here tonight, probably, and maybe some who will wander in that aren't Christians. We pray for them.

We pray that I'll prepare speakers and singers and those in charge of musicians and everybody that there will be unanimity within our spirits so that the Holy Ghost can without hindrance lay conviction upon those who need it and give faith to those who are just desperately in the shape. Bless us now we pray thee through Christ our Lord. In the book of Genesis, 32nd chapter, Genesis 32, I'll read from verse 24 to the end, a familiar story, but I'll read it again.

And Jacob was left alone, and there rustled 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. It's when the man who was wrestling with Jacob perceived that he prevailed not against Jacob.

He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and the hollow of his thigh was out of joints as he wrestled with him.

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