

Hungry for God

by Zac Poonen

To receive God's full blessing, we must be in dead earnest for His best and thirst for His fulness, even in the midst of weakness and vulnerability.

Scripture: Genesis 32:26, 2 Kings 2:9, Hosea 12:4, Luke 24:15-31, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Topics: "Desperation for God", "Strength in Weakness"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the transformative power of being hungry for God, as exemplified by Jacob's earnest plea for blessing at Peniel. After years of pursuing worldly gains, Jacob finally let go of his earthly desires and sought God with all his heart, demonstrating true earnestness. God tested Jacob's resolve, revealing that true blessing comes when one is desperate for God's presence and power, especially in moments of weakness. Poonen highlights that it is in our brokenness that we find strength in God, echoing the Apostle Paul's teaching that weakness can lead to divine power. Ultimately, the sermon calls believers to thirst for a deeper relationship with God, recognizing that true fulfillment lies in His blessings.

Transcript

Jacob was blessed in the place where he was earnest and hungry for God. "I will not leave you," he cries out, "until you bless me" (Gen32:26). God had waited for twenty long years to hear those words from Jacob. He, who had spent his life grabbing the birthright, women, money and property, now lets go of them all and grabs hold of God. This was the point towards which God had been working in Jacob's life all along. It must have delighted God's heart when Jacob at last lost sight of the temporal things of earth and longed and thirsted for God Himself and for His blessing. We are told in Hosea 12:4, that Jacob wept and pleaded for a blessing that night at Peniel. What a different man he was that night compared with his earlier years when he desired only the things of this world. God's dealings with him at last bore fruit!

Before God blessed Jacob fully, He tested Jacob's earnestness. He said to Jacob, "Let me go," testing whether Jacob would be satisfied with what he had got or whether he would yearn for more. It was just as Elijah tested Elisha in later years. Elijah said, "Let me go," again and again, but Elisha refused to be shaken off - and so got a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2 Kings 2). Jesus, likewise, tested the two disciples walking to Emmaus (Luke 24:15-31). When they reached their house, Jesus made as though He would go further. But the two disciples would not let Him go - and they got a blessing as a result.

God tests us too. He can never bless a man fully until the man is in dead earnest for God's best. We need to thirst like Jacob, saying, "Lord, there is more to the Christian life than I've experienced thus far. I'm not

satisfied. I want all Thy fulness at any cost." When we come to that point, it is but a short step to the fulness of God's blessing.

Notice in the incident at Peniel, that it was when Jacob was in a state of weakness (after his thigh had been dislocated), that he said, "I will not let you go, God." God could easily have left him and gone, but He didn't. For it is when a man is most weak in himself that he has greatest power with God. As the Apostle Paul said, "I am glad to boast about how weak I am; I am glad to be a living demonstration of Christ's power, instead of showing off my own power and abilities...for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9,10-LB). God's power is most effectively demonstrated in human weakness. And so with Jacob, it is when he is defeated, broken and utterly weak, that God tells him, "You have now prevailed." One would think that God should have said, "You have at last been defeated." But no. The word is, "You have prevailed. You shall henceforth have power with God and with men" (v. 28). We prevail, when God has shattered us of our own strength and self-sufficiency. As the hymn says, "Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free." This is the glorious paradox of the Christian life.

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