

A Straitened Place, Which Revealeth the Face of God

by Smith Wigglesworth

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being alone with God, being sincere and dependent on Him, and keeping vows and promises to Him in order to receive His blessing and favor.

Scripture: Genesis 32:24, Genesis 32:28, Isaiah 55:8

Topics: "Surrendering to God's Will", "Wrestling with God"

Description

Smith Wigglesworth emphasizes the transformative power of being alone with God, as exemplified by Jacob's wrestling match with the divine. He illustrates how Jacob's struggles and eventual surrender led to a profound revelation of God's presence and purpose in his life. The sermon highlights the necessity of letting go of our own plans to embrace God's higher ways, which often require us to confront our weaknesses and seek His blessing earnestly. Wigglesworth encourages believers to recognize that true victory and transformation come from a deep, sincere relationship with God, where we hold onto Him in faith and humility. Ultimately, he reminds us that God's plans for us are far greater than our own, leading to peace and reconciliation in our lives.

Transcript

Gen 32:24: "And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." As we look back over our spiritual career we shall always see there has been a good deal of our own day, and that the end of our day was the beginning of God's day. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," and we cannot enter into the deep things of God until we are free from our own ideas and ways.

Jacob! The name means supplanter, and when Jacob came to the end of his way God had a way. How slow we are to see that there is a better day. Beloved, the glory is never so wonderful as when God has His plan and we are helpless and throw down our sword and give up our authority to another. Jacob was a great worker, and he would go through any hardship if he could have his way. In many ways he had his way, and in ignorance how gloriously God preserved him from calamity. There is a good and there is a better, but God has a best, a higher standard for us than we have yet attained.

It is a better thing if it is God's plan and not ours. Jacob and his mother had a plan to secure the birthright and the blessing, and his father agreed to his going to Padan-aram, but God planned the ladder and the

angels. "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it." "I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." What a good thing for the lad, in the midst of the changes, God obtained the right place.

The planning for the birthright had not been a nice thing, but here at Bethel he found God was with him. Many things may happen in our lives, but when the veil is lifted and we see the glory of God, His tender compassion over us all the time, to be where God is, how wonderful it is. Bethel was the place where the ladder was set up twenty-one years before. Twenty-one years of wandering and fighting and struggling. Listen to his conversation with his wives: "Your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me."

To his father-in-law: "Except the God of my father had been with me, thou hadst sent me away empty. God hath seen my affliction and the labor of my hands." Jacob had been out in the bitter frost at night watching the flocks. He was a thrifty man, a worker, a planner, a supplanter. We see the whole thing around us in the world today--supplanters. There may be a measure of blessing, but God is not first in their lives. We are out judging them, but there is a better way, better than our best--God's way.

God first! "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." But there is a way that God establisheth, and I want us to keep that way before us this morning--the way that God establisheth. In our own natural planning and way we may have much blessing, of a kind; but oh, beloved, the trials the hardships, the barrenness, the things missed which God could not give us! I realize this morning by the Holy Ghost, I realize by the anointing of the Spirit that there is a freshness, a glow, a planning in God where you can know that God is with you all the time.

Can we know that God is with us all the time? Yes! Yes! Yes! I tell you there is a place to reach where all that God has for us can flow through us to a needy world all the time. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Verse 24: "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Oh, to be left alone! Alone with God! In the context we read that several things had gone on.

His wives had gone on, his children had gone on, all had gone on. His sheep and oxen had gone on, his camels and asses had gone on, all had gone on. He was alone. You will often find you are alone. Whether you like it or not, your wives will go on, your children will go on, your cattle will go on. Jacob was left alone. His wife could not make atonement for him, his children could not make atonement for him, his money was useless to help him. "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."

What made Jacob come to that place of loneliness, weakness, and knowledge of himself? The memory of the grace with which God had met him twenty-one years before, when he saw the ladder and the angels and heard the voice of God: "Behold I am with thee and will keep thee, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." He remembered God's mercy and grace. Here he was returning to meet Esau. His brother had become very rich, he was a chief, he had been blehsed abundantly in the things of this world, he had authority and power to bind all Jacob had and to take vengeance upon him.

Jacob knew this. He knew also that there was only one way of deliverance. What was it? The mind of God. "No one can deliver me but God." God had met him twenty-one years before, when he went out empty. He

had come back with wives and children and goods, but he was lean in soul and impoverished in spirit. Jacob said to himself, "If I do not get a blessing from God I can never meet Esau," and he made up his mind he would not go on until he knew that he had favor with God. Jacob was left alone, and unless we get alone with God, we shall surely perish.

"God interposes where strife is at an end; the way of revelation is plain, and the Holy Ghost's plan is so clear, that we have to say it was God after all." Jacob was left alone. He knelt alone. The picture is so real to me. Alone! Alone! Alone! He began to think. He thought about the ladder and the angels. I think as he began to pray his tongue would cleave to the roof of his mouth. Jacob had to get rid of a lot of things. It had all been Jacob! Jacob! Jacob! He got alone with God and he knew it.

If you get alone with God, what a place of revelation! Alone with God! Jacob was left alone, alone with God. We stay too long with our relations, our camels and our sheep. Jacob was left alone. It would be afternoon. Hour after hour passed. He began to feel the presence of God. But God was getting disappointed with Jacob. If ever God is disappointed with you when you tarry in his presence, it will be because you are not white-hot. If you do not get hotter, and hotter, and hotter, you disappoint God.

If God is with you and you know it, be in earnest. Pray! Pray! Pray! Lay hold! "Hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." If you do not, you disappoint God. Jacob was that way. God said: you are not real enough; you are not hot enough; you are too ordinary; you are no good to me unless you are filled with zeal--white hot! He said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh. Jacob knew if God went without blessing him, Esau could not be met. If you are left alone--alone with God--and you cannot get to a place of victory, it is a terrible time.

You must never let go, whatever you are seeking--fresh revelation, light on the path, some particular need--never let go. Victory is ours if we are in earnest enough. All must pass on, nothing less will please God. "Let me go, the day breaketh!" He was wrestling with equal strength. Nothing is obtained that way. You must always master that which you are wrestling with. If darkness covers you, if it is fresh revelation you need, or your mind to be relieved, always get the victory.

God says you are not in earnest enough. "Oh," you say, "the Word does not say that." But it was God's mind. In wrestling the strength is in the neck, chest, and thigh; the thigh is the strength of all. So God touched his thigh. That strength gone, defeat is sure. What did Jacob do? He hung on. "God means to have a people severed by the power of His power, so hold fast; He will never leave go. And if we do leave go we shall fall short." Jacob said, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

And God blessed him. Verse 28: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel." Now a new order is beginning, sons of God. How wonderful the change of Jacob to Israel! Israel! Victory all the time, God building all the time, God enough all the time. Power over Esau, power over the world, power over the cattle. The cattle are nothing to him now. All is in subjection as he comes out of the great night of trial. The sun rises upon him. Oh, that God may take us on, the sun rising, God supplanting all!

What after that? Read how God blessed and honored him. Esau meets him. No fighting now--what a blessed state of grace! They kissed each other. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him." "What about all these cattle, Jacob?" "Oh, it's a present." "Oh, I have plenty; I don't want your cattle. What a joy it is to see your face again!" What a wonderful change! Who wrought it? God. Verse 25: "When he saw that he prevailed not against Him."

Could he hold God? Can you hold God?--it is irreverent to say so--oh, yes, you can. Sincerity can hold Him, dependence can hold Him, weakness can hold Him. When you are weak, then are you strong. I'll tell you what cannot hold Him. Self-righteousness cannot hold Him, pride cannot hold Him, assumption cannot hold Him, high-mindedness cannot hold Him; thinking you are something when you are nothing, puffed up in your imagination. Nothing but sincerity! You can hold Him in the closet, in the prayer meeting, everywhere.

"If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Can you hold Him? There may be a thought, sometimes, that He has left you. Oh, no! He does not leave Jacob, Israel. What changed his name? The wrestling? What changed his name? The holding on, the clinging, the brokenness of spirit? If you do not help me I am no good, no good for the world's need. I am no longer salt. Jacob obtained the blessing on two lines: the favor of God, and a yieldedness of will.

God's Spirit was working in him to bring him to a place of helplessness; God co-working to bring him to Bethel, the place of victory. Jacob remembered Bethel, and through all the mischievous conditions he had kept his vow. When we make vows and keep them, how God helps us. We must call upon God and give Him account of the promise. Verse 30: "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." How did he know? Do you know when God blesseth you, when you have victory?

But twenty years afterwards the vision of the ladder and the angels! How did he know? We must have a perfect knowledge of what God has for us. He knew that he had the favor of God, and that no man could hurt him. Let us in all our seeking see we have the favor of God, walking day by day beneath an open heaven. Keeping His commandments, walking in the Spirit, tender in our hearts, lovable, appreciated by God; if so, we shall be appreciated by others and our ministry will be a blessing to those who hear. God bless you. God bless you--for Jesus' sake.

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