

"Wrestling with God"

Scripture Lesson:- Genesis 32:

Text:- Genesis 32: 24. "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled with him a man until the breaking of the day".

Introduction:- It was an hour of great crisis. Jacob was engaged in the fulfillment of the divine command to return to the country of his father and his kindred, when confronted with the crisis that had become the occasion of his night of prayer. Jacob was not delivered from danger because he was walking in the path which God commanded.

God has not promised to deliver any of his children from being confronted with trials and great dangers as they fulfill his commands. However he has promised to make available for his people vast resources and strength, when confronted with trials and great dangers.

The danger that confronted Jacob was an inevitable meeting with his brother Esau on the following day. Esau was approaching with a threat of vengeance, to square the account with Jacob, who had robbed him of his birthright.

In the face of the impending crisis, Jacob went alone with God. There is no experience so rewarding, as going alone with God in an hour of crisis. Jacob experienced a time of great soul struggle as he prayed throughout the night. "And Jacob was left alone; and there he wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day".

There was an outlay of physical strength on the part of Jacob as he prayed. Jacob invested his combined mental, physical, and spiritual resources in his prayer. His prayer was an expression of his whole personality, a mighty outreach toward God of the whole man.

I.

Jacob's night of prayer was not a night of con-

contemplation, but a night of desperate pleading with God, where the issues involved were life & death. There was delay and postponement in answer to his earnest pleadings. But Jacob did not surrender to this delay. Jacob prayed on. His faith was not baffled with delay. He had met God at other times in prayer and he knew that God was a prayer-answering God. While he might not understand or be able to explain the delay, he continued to pray.

II.

The earnestness and the spirit of his perseverance was expressed in the words, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." (Gen. 32:26) Jacob prayed for something more than a successful meeting with his brother Esau on the following day. He prayed for a fresh touch of God upon his soul. The fresh touch of God upon the soul in the hour of crisis, is far more important than any answer to prayer in connection to the crisis. Jacob reached an ultimate depth in his prayer toward the breaking of day that was far beyond his praying in the earlier part of the night. He reached a depth where his supreme cry was for a new touch of God upon his soul. Listen again to the words, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." With such a blessing from God, he would be prepared to live or die in his meeting with Esau.

God does not turn a deaf ear to such earnestness and perseverance in prayer. He does hear from heaven when his people pray. "And he blessed him there." Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." (Genesis 32: 29, 30)

The meeting on the morrow gave us the result to Jacob's prayer. He, as was expected, met Esau. Let us see what the meeting was like. "And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." (Gen. 33: 4.) It does make a difference when we pray.