

Title: **“HE BLESSED HIM THERE”**
Text: Genesis 32:24-32
Subject: *The Source, Cause, and Place of True Blessing*
Date: Sunday Morning—January 23, 2005
Tape # Y-59a
Reading: *Deuteronomy 28:1-14*
Introduction:

(Genesis 32:24-32) And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. (25) And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. (26) And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. (27) And he said unto him, What *is* thy name? And he said, Jacob. (28) 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. (29) And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore *is* it *that* thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. (30) And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. (31) And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. (32) Therefore the children of Israel eat not *of* the sinew which shrank, which *is* upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

Alone, confused, and afraid Jacob sat by the brook Jabbok waiting for Esau and his 400 men, waiting to die by the hand of his only brother, his only living blood relative. “*And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.*” That man who wrestled with Jacob was himself God, Immanuel, the pre-incarnate God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that it was Christ who wrestled with Jacob because, when the morning sun arose, Jacob said, “*I have seen God face to face*” (v. 30).

The Man who wrestled with Jacob touched the hollow of his thigh, rendering him utterly helpless, but Jacob clung to Christ. When he could do nothing else, he clung to Christ. The Lord Jesus said, “*Let me go.*” Still Jacob held on and said, “*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!*”

- **Jacob’s mother had told him of God’s blessing upon him** (Genesis 25:23; Romans 9:11-13).

(Genesis 25:23) And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

(Romans 9:11-13) (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) (12) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. (13) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

- **God himself had promised to bless him** (Genesis 28:15).

(Genesis 28:15) And, behold, 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.

- **Indeed, the Lord had greatly blessed Jacob providentially.**

He was now a very wealthy man, with wives, children, servants, cattle, and riches in great abundance. **But these earthly blessings could not bring contentment and satisfaction to his heart.** Therefore he tugged hard upon his Lord. He must have something better than earthly riches. **Jacob wanted peace with God.** Therefore he cried, “*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!*” **He knew that if he had peace with God, that would bring peace with his brother and all other good things.** It was as though he had been instructed by the wisdom of Job, who said, “*Acquaint now thyself with him [God], and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.*” (Job 22:21). **He knew that if he could prevail with God he would be able to prevail with any man, even with Esau.** So he held onto the Son of God and said, “*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*”

At last, Jacob got what he desired. We read in verse 29: “*And he blessed him there!*” That is my text and my subject this morning — “**He Blessed Him There!**”

PROPOSITION: In the place where God met Jacob and conquered him, there he blessed him.

Is there anyone here today like Jacob? You have at last discovered the vanity of all things without Christ. You have found nothing in this world to satisfy your immortal soul. Does your heart long for peace, peace with God? If so, I bid you now to lay hold upon Christ by faith and say to him, “*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*” Perhaps today, it may be said of you in this place: “**He Blessed Him There!**”

DIVISIONS:

1. What was Jacob’s blessing in that place?
2. What was the place of Jacob’s blessing?
3. Are there any other such places of blessing?
4. Is this place of blessing?

JACOB’S BLESSING

- I. What was Jacob’s blessing in that place?

Our text says, “*He blessed him there;*” but how, what was the blessing which the Lord God bestowed upon Jacob as he sat by the brook Jabbok?

- A. **He was saved from great danger** (v. 11).

(Genesis 32:11) Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, *and* the mother with the children.

His brother, Esau, was coming with 400 men, and Jacob knew that...

- Esau had sworn to kill him;
- He fully deserved Esau’s wrath;
- Esau was able to destroy him; and
- His only hope was God’s intervention.

You who are here without Christ are in a place of great danger. The wrath of God is upon you.

- The Lord God has sworn that he will slay the wicked. (Ezekiel 18:20).
- You fully deserve God’s eternal wrath (Romans 6:23).
- And the God whom you have offended is able to destroy you (Nahum 1:2, 6).
- Your only hope is that God himself will intervene (Ephesians 2:4).

I urge you, like Jacob, to lay hold of Christ right now and cry, “*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*”

B. **Jacob was forgiven of his great and numerous crimes** (33:1, 4).

(Genesis 33:1) And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

(Genesis 33:4) And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

- Imagine Jacob’s relief and joy!
- Imagine Esau’s relief and joy!

Yet, I tell you that this moment of forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace was nothing compared to the experience of forgiveness in the heart of a sinner who comes to God and finds pardon through the blood of Christ!

Illustration: The Prodigal and His Father

The Handkerchief — “Welcome Home Son!”

C. **When Jacob obtained forgiveness, a great breach was healed.**

Jacob and Esau were reconciled. There was no cause for any quarrel between them. Because both were reconciled to God’s purpose and God’s providence, they were reconciled to each other. What a blessing this is, when brethren who are at odds are reconciled!

Illustration: Terry Anderson: “I forgive my captors.” When I heard those words, I thought to myself, “How that man who is but a mere papist puts me to shame,” — Ephesians 4:32.

D. **The Lord God gave Jacob a new name** (v. 28)

(Genesis 32:28) 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.

Once he was made to see and acknowledge himself to be what he was, a supplanter, God made him a prince. **Spurgeon said**, “He was knighted on the spot, made a prince on the field.” From henceforth, though others called him Jacob and he called himself Jacob, God called him “*Israel!*”

1. Israel means “God commands!” Jacob was now a man whose life was commanded by God.
2. Israel also means “Prince with God.”
 - One who has God’s favor.
 - One who has power with God.
 - One who has power over men because he enjoys the favor of God and has power with God.

Jacob’s life would never be the same. He had seen God face to face, and the Lord God made him a prince. God does the same thing for sinners today. “*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are past away; behold, all things are become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). **In Christ we have....**

- A New Nature — Partakers of the Divine Nature!
- A New Relationship to God — Sons!
- A New Standing before God — Justified!
- A New Record at the Bar of God — Righteous!

E. **Jacob obtained a fresh anointing from the Lord.**

I do not doubt for a moment that Jacob knew the Lord before. He met God at Bethel. He saw Christ there as his only Mediator, pictured in the ladder which reached from earth to heaven. But here he meets the Lord again, receives a fuller revelation of his grace and a fresh anointing for his service. **He was from this day a better man because of God’s blessing.**

So great an impact did this event have upon Jacob that when he was dying he referred to it and said, “*The Angel of the Lord redeemed me from all evil,*” even “*the God which fed me all my life long unto this day.*” (Genesis 48:16, 15).

These are the blessings with which God blessed Jacob at Jabbok. He was....

- Saved from great danger.
- Forgiven of his many great crimes.
- Made to experience the healing of a great breach.
- Given a new name.
- Granted a fresh anointing.

THE PLACE

II. What was the place of Jacob’s blessing.

Our text declares not only that the Lord blessed him, but also that “*he blessed him there.*” The physical location was by the brook Jabbok, but the physical location had nothing to do with the blessing. This whole affair might just as well have happened right here in Danville, KY by Clark’s Run.

A. **God’s blessing came to Jacob in the place of great trial** (vv. 6-7).

(Genesis 32:6-7) And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. (7) Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that *was* with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands.

When Jacob was afraid and distressed, when all earthly comfort fled, when none of the good things of life provided any good for his heart and soul — “*God blessed him there!*”

*“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break*

*In blessing on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind the frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.
His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.”*

William Cowper

For God’s saints, every trial is a blessing in disguise. Every trial is the forerunner of blessing!]

B. **The place of Jacob’s blessing was the place of his brokenness, humility, and contrition before the Lord, the place of his repentance and confession.**

He said, “*I am Jacob ...I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant.*” (v. 10). — “*What is thy name? And he said, Jacob*” (v. 27).

The blessings of God’s grace come to men and women who have been broken under the conviction of sin, whose hearts he has made contrite, who confess their sins to him (Psalm 34:18; 51:16-17; Isaiah 66:2; 1 John 1:9).

(Psalms 34:18) The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

(Psalms 51:16-17) For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it*: thou delightest not in burnt offering. (17) The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

(Isaiah 66:2) For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

(1 John 1:9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1. **Brokenness** is the heartfelt awareness of my helpless, bankrupt, ruined condition before God.
2. **Contrition** is the grief of my heart over my sin, the mourning repentance of my sin.
3. **Humility** is the honest awareness of my sinfulness in the light of God’s holiness, my nothingness before his greatness, my emptiness before his fulness.

This brokenness, contrition, and humility come by the revelation of Christ (Zechariah 12:10).

(Zechariah 12:10) And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

These things always accompany faith in Christ. That brokenness which does not trust Christ is only a vain show. That contrition that does not trust Christ is mere hypocrisy. That humility that does not trust Christ is nothing but pride in its most obnoxious form.

C. **The place of Jacob’s blessing was the place of his fervent and earnest prayer** (vv.9-12).

(Genesis 32:9-12) And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: (10) I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. (11) Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, *and* the mother with the children. (12) And thou saidst, I will surely

do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea,
which cannot be numbered for multitude.

- He had acted upon God’s word. (v. 9).
- He acknowledged his unworthiness of God’s grace. (v. 10).
- He sought God’s deliverance. (v. 11).
- He put God in remembrance of his promise. (v. 12).
- “*And he blessed him there!*”

D. **This place of blessing was the place of Jacob’s communion with God.**

(Genesis 32:29-30) And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore *is* it *that* thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. (30) And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

In the place where he had seen God face to face, “*he blessed him there*” (v.30). Nothing brings God’s saints into the enjoyment of his blessings like communion with him.

How can I stress the importance of communion with God? The most profound depths of life are not men talking about God, but men talking to and walking with God.

Augustine wrote, “God finds pleasure with us when we find pleasure with him.”

- We can afford to lose anything and everything, except communion with God (Song. 5).
- Our enjoyment of God’s blessing does in great measure depend upon our personal communion and fellowship with our God and Savior.

E. **The place of Jacob’s blessing was the place of his conscious weakness.**

“*As he passed over Remuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh*” (v.31). Strong men do not need Christ to be their Strength and miss the blessing of his strength. Weak men need him; and those who need him

have him; and those who have him are blessed, blessed of God, forever blessed.

- **When the Lord God makes you to know your weakness, he will bless you with his strength** (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

Jacob was blessed of God...

- In the place of His Trial.
- In the place of His Humiliation.
- In the place of His Prayer.
- In the place of His Communion.
- In the place of His Weakness.

OTHER PLACES

III. Are there any other such places of blessing?

Indeed there are! Throughout the Scriptures God’s saints are spoken of as a people who are blessed of God — everywhere and in all things blessed (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

- A. **Before even the earth was made the Lord God blessed his elect in Christ with all the blessings of salvation and grace** (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:9; Matthew 25:34).

(Ephesians 1:3) Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ

(2 Timothy 1:9) Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began

(Matthew 25:34) Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world

Christ is the Place of blessing. Outside Christ there is nothing but cursing! It was promised to Abraham, “*In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*” (Genesis 22:18); and Christ is that Seed! We are blessed of God in Christ!

- **In His Life** — Righteousness!
- **In His Death** — Redemption!
- **In His Person** — Salvation!

All things are in Christ. (John 3:35). And all things are ours if we are in Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:21-23).

- All Grace! — All Love! — All Acceptance!
- All Righteousness! — All Forgiveness! — All Peace!
- All Promises! — All Providence! — All Glory!
- All Wisdom! — All Redemption! — All Sanctification!
- All Judgment! — All Life! — All Heaven!
- All Joy! — All Truth! — All the Godhead!

B. **The place of conversion in the history of the believer is the place of blessing.**

If this day you are turned to God, God declares, “*From this day will I bless thee*” (Haggai 2:19; Psalm 32:1-2).

(Psalms 32:1-2) *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. (2) Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

C. **The place of trial is for you who are God’s the place of blessing**
(James 1:12).

(James 1:12) *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

*“If today He deigns to bless us
With the sense of pardoned sin,
He tomorrow may distress us,
Make us feel the plague within,*

*All to make us sick of self,
And fond of Him.”*

D. **The place of blessing is the place of obedience** — (“*Them that honour me I will honour.*” 1 Sam. 2:30).

Jacob found himself at Jabbok, where he met God face to face, because he obeyed the Word of his God, who said, “*Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee.*” (Genesis 32:9). Obedience brought him to Jabbok, “*and God blessed him there!*” He honored God; and God honored him.

- Obedience often brings trials; but obedience always brings God’s blessing.
- God’s commands are true and righteous altogether, “*and in keeping of them there is great reward*” (Psalm 19:11).

E. **Every ordinance of Divine worship is to true worshippers the place of blessing.**

- The Assembly of God’s Saints (Matthew 18:20)
- The Preaching of the Gospel (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 4:11-16)
- Baptism (Acts 8:39)
- The Lord’s Table (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

The lot of God’s saints is the lot of those who are blessed, blessed of God, blessed in this world, and blessed in the world to come! I am not talking to you about some religious theory I have read in a book. I am telling you what I know in my soul by long, personal experience.

- One day, nearly 38 years ago, as a young man full of sin, guilt, and fear, I heard the Saviour say, “*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*” I obeyed his command, “*and he blessed [me] there!*”
- Soon after that I heard my Master say, “*Why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized.*” Again, I obeyed his voice, “*and he blessed [me] there!*”
- Well do I remember the first time I took the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper, hearing my Redeemer say, “*This do in remembrance of me,*” — “*and he blessed [me] there!*”

- Soon I was thrust into the field of his service, compelled to preach the gospel to others, “*and he blessed [me] there!*” — To my classmates! — In Clemmons! — In the Homes of Black Families! — At Lookout! — Here! — Around the World! — “*And he blessed [me] there!*”
- In time God gave me a wife full of love and blessed us with a daughter, and then with a son (son-in-law), and then with those grandchildren! — “*And he blessed [me] there!*”
- I have, over the years, met with a few sharp trials from different quarters; but I have never yet met a trial, faced an enemy, or endured a hardship but what I can truthfully say, “*He blessed [me] there!*”

This has been my experience, from the day that God called me up to this very hour, up hill and down, on the mountaintop and in the valley, walking in the peaceful sunshine and walking through the valley of the shadow of death, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, throughout my pilgrimage, at every stop along the way, “*He blessed [me] there!*”

THIS PLACE

IV. Is this a place of blessing to you today?

How I pray that it has been. How I pray that throughout the days of your life you can remember this hour and this place as Peniel, the place where you saw God face to face and had your life spared. **It will be that to you if you now come to Christ, my Savior, my God, my Lord, and my King.**

(Matthew 11:28-30) Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Come, O blessed Son of God, Blessed, mighty, saving Angel of the Lord to your chosen Jacobs. Wrestle us to the ground. Make us confess what we are. Speak to our hearts the sweet word of grace, forgiveness and life — *ISRAEL — Prince in favor with God!* Let us see the face of God in your face. Oh, that we might live before thee! Break all our strength. Cause us to halt upon our thigh, leaning upon you, blessed God and Savior, Lord Jesus! — Be unto us this day and forever God’s blessing, our Strength and our Salvation!

Amen.