

I will not let you go

Genesis 32:22-31

Jacob is dreading meeting his estranged brother, Esau. He has all his belongings sent ahead of him so he can meet Esau in peace. At night, he wrestles with a mysterious figure, refusing to let go until he receives a blessing – a powerful encounter that leaves him permanently changed.

Read this week's passage:



Living Scripture

'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed.' Genesis 32:28

Have you ever been given a different name? A pet name from a loved one? A nickname from friends? An insult that stuck at school? Sometimes, the things that we get called stay with us and affect the way we see ourselves and the things that we can do. When we have something in our future that is unknown, we can let the names people have called us affect how we feel about what we are going to do.

Jacob's name meant 'he grasps the heel', describing both how he was born holding his twin's heel, but also how he was going to take Esau's inheritance. In this story, we once again see Jacob not letting go – he wrestles with God when most would be too afraid. The result is a profound encounter with God, a new identity and a wound to remind him of it!

Do we feel confident in our ability to hold on to God? What might that look like in our lives, with our own worries and anxieties? What new identity might God give us?

First impressions

- How are these opponents holding each other?
- What do you think about Jacob's persistence in asking for a blessing?
- How can wrestling with God through prayer change us and shape us?



Pray



Jacob wrestles with God through the night. Look into the 24/7 prayer movement at www.24-7prayer.com. See if there's a room nearby or if you could organise a 24/7 prayer event at your church.

Discuss

Around the dinner table, invite family or friends to share times where they've had to 'wrestle' for something – whether that be a spiritual struggle, or a situation in their personal lives where they've really had to struggle with something.

Write

Draw around your hand and write a name on each finger shape. Pray for a family member or friend; someone who has guided you; a leader; someone in need, and yourself.

Pray



Father God,
you know all that we have been through,
the names we have been given and those
we have carried.
You know the struggles ahead of us and the worry
that we hold.
Please take our worry and our fear and bless us,
so that we can continue our journey towards you.
Amen.



Jacob and Esau needed reconciliation, but it's also easy to lose touch with one another for no reason except the passing of time. Take time this week to reconnect with someone you haven't spoken to in a long time.

