

The struggle within: If it be so, why am I thus?

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Bible Text: Genesis 25:22

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Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, how excellent is thy name. Oh Lord, how great thou art, how wonderful thou art, how glorious thou art, oh Lord. Lord, we stand in awe that thou dost more than we could ever imagine, that thou is such a shepherd to thy sheep that you provide it all. Even in our unbelief, even in our distrust, Lord, thou remaineth faithful. Lord, we call upon thy faithfulness now in this hour and in the hour to come that thou would be pleased to draw us to thyself, that thou would put down all of our thoughts of self and, Lord, you would lay us at thy feet now, that thy Spirit would come and truly instruct us of who thou art to the glory of thee. Bless this hour, Lord, with thy presence to thy glory and for thy name's sake. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

I tell you. I have such a joy that fills my soul this morning. As I look back on the week and I look about where we were last week and the thoughts we had of sorrow and seeing one to go away to have surgery and didn't know when she would return to us. But the Lord never ceases to amaze his people. He never ceases to provide more than we can ever imagine. Super abounding grace to be able to sit here and look out today and see here, I know, is quite a work of the Lord. But why is it we don't trust him? Why is it we can point to these Scriptures and see that our salvation is in the Lord Jesus Christ, but yet we still fear? We still tremble. Why is it this way? Why is it that as he proves over and over his faithfulness that as the hours come in these trials and as the hours come and they go each week and each day and they go on and on, those doubts come in our minds and we start to think the worst. What is the worst that couple happen?

And then our minds run away with those thoughts. We don't trust him. We don't trust him even though we are told to trust him. We don't claim the promises even though we know that he is a promise keeper. We can't. There is so much sin that lies within and there is a struggle. And it is a daily struggle.

And I looked out this week and I saw my brethren and I saw myself as this week unfolded in many different ways. Many things were brought into this week, not just the surgery, but there were many different little workings of God's providence that kept showing me over and over this struggle.

I had car problems this week and as I was on my way to the mechanic I was worried. I was fearful. And I kept thinking as I was trying, why is it I don't trust the Lord? These are the times to trust the Lord, but I was so scared. I kept looking at the gauge. I kept looking for it to get overheated. I kept thinking my motor was going to fall out. I kept thinking the worst. And then when the Lord delivered me there to the place I said, "Oh, the Lord is faithful again." Why? Why does that seem to be the same thing over and over? Why is it we are so fearful creatures? Why is it that the sheep tremble so much?

Well, the Lord revealed his answer to me in all the books in the book of Genesis. If you will, turn with me to Genesis 25 this morning. You know, the Lord's Word, it is not a historical book. When Christ comes in all its pages it is experimental. It is experienced in the child of God's life. And that is the difference, dear ones. If you haven't experienced Christ, it is the difference between possession and profession. It is the difference if Christ be in you or if Christ be not in you. It is the lot that we have on this earth. And the Lord clearly lays it out here in Genesis 25 in verse 22 which is our main verse this morning. And we stand with Rebekah this morning and ask this question. In verse 22 we read:

"And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus?"¹

Is that your question? That has been my question many times this week. Lord, if you be Lord—and I know you are. If I know, Lord, that I am safe and secure in you, why is it so with me? Why am I thus? Why do I have these feelings of unbelief? Why do I not trust you in the hour of need? Why do I have these thoughts that come into my mind and they just bring my soul to so much fear and trembling? Why, Lord? If it be so, Lord, if your salvation has saved me before the foundation of the world, if I am elected in Christ Jesus, why is it so?

Rebekah wanted to know that because she inquired of all the ladies that were around her, of those that had had twins before her and there was something different in her. There was something different about these two children that were in her womb. And in the ... as the children struggled within her, it is a picture of our struggle. It is a struggle of the old man and the new man. And as that struggle goes on, we cry out to the Lord. Lord, if it be so, if we be saved by grace, why do I have these thoughts of unbelief? Why do I have these thoughts that it is not going to work out? Why do I have these thoughts of death? Why do I have these thoughts that I am not your child? Why, Lord?

And as she is emptied of herself, as she cannot get an answer from those around her.

"And she went to enquire of the LORD."²

¹ Genesis 25:22.

² Ibid.

We are driven out of ourselves. We are driven from anything that we lay hold on. It doesn't matter even the very letter of the word that we read. We can't hold on to it. We can't cleave to it. We can't cleave to the graceful things that people say. We can't hear the preached Word and it have any effect without him, without the power of God.

And this struggle, it is a mighty struggle. And I don't know about you. That is what I said. It is the difference between possessing Christ or professing with your mouth. If you don't know anything about this struggle, you aren't going to understand a thing I say in the next 30, 45 minutes, because I want to talk to the child of God this morning that has this struggle. I want to speak to my brethren and my sisters in this room that go through this struggle, that go through this warfare and that cry out and that is brought to cry out to the Lord, "Lord, if it be so, why am I thus? Why am I so hardened? Why am I so bitter? Why am I so angry? Why am I so untrusting? Why am I so... Why can't I believe?"

But the Lord doesn't leave Rebekah here. And the Lord's answer comes this way and he said:

"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."³

Dear ones, may the Lord speak that to your soul this morning that there is a side of you that is stronger than the other and that is the side of grace. That is the new man. You may think that there is no water of life in you soul at times. You may think that you are the most deadened person there is, but there is always, always something there. There is always something there for the child of God. We are going to have that revealed for us here in just a moment. What is that something?

As that struggle goes on, the Lord promises that the one people shall be stronger than the other people and the elder shall serve the younger. This is a picture of our struggle. This is the Lord's revelation to his child. I am telling you why you have this problem. I am telling you why you have this unbelief. Think it not that you are crazy. Think it not that you are outside of grace, because you have these thoughts. See, that is the difference. And when she inquired of those around her, they didn't have an answer for why she was different. And the world will never have an answer for that. They will never have an answer for why the child of God goes through this struggle. And they won't be able to explain it.

But that is what makes us different. That is what makes the child of God different than the professors in this world that live high above sin, that live high above a struggle, that tell you just have faith and live that way. There is a problem there. There is no tribulation of soul there. There is no working of Christ in the soul there to purge the leaven. This is the work of the Lord and it is a great work. But we are not left here. We have to back up to 21 to see the preciousness of the promise. And the promise lies in verse 21.

³ Genesis 25:23.

“And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife.”⁴

Isaac is our type of Christ. Isaac is a type of Christ in many ways, but I say a type because there is many ways that he is not. Later on you will read that Isaac loved Esau. We hate Esau. We hate our old nature. But in many ways Isaac was a type of Christ. He was the son of promise as Isaac was, as Christ was, the promised Messiah. Isaac also was the one who opened up the wells that were shut by the Philistines. He was the deliverer that way. That is the way our Lord is. He opens the wells in our soul. Only he can do it. So Christ is pictured for us in Isaac. And as he is entreating the Lord for his wife, he is an intercessor for the bride. He is an intercessor for the Church. He is our intercessor. And as he entreats the Lord because she was barren, that is our emptiness. That is our dead in trespasses and sins.

When the new birth comes, we are birthed into the kingdom of God and when the Lord shows us the revelation of himself, dear ones, that is not it. We still have a struggle here on earth, because it is earth And we must be entreated for by the Lord over and over again. It is the washing and renewing of the Holy Ghost. It is the presence of the Lord that we desire so much for him to be her with us. We desire as we are going into the trial just to see him, to know his presence. And when his presence is felt, all is good. All is at rest.

“And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him.”⁵

The Father will never turn away the Son and his mediatory office as a priest and his intercessory office as a priest. And he makes intercession.

“...and Rebekah his wife conceived.”⁶

That is what makes us to differ. There is a seed. There is a seed of Christ. It is the seed of grace. It is the seed of the new man. It is the life that we have in Christ Jesus. And it is because he entreated for us, it is because he gave us of himself to dwell in us. It is the difference. It is the hope of glory. It is the hope of him in our soul. It is Christ dwelling. It is the living water. It is the well of life springing up in our soul and it is what makes the sheep different. It is what makes the child of God different than the professors in this world.

There is a struggle. But the struggle is because of this seed. The world doesn't have this struggle. They don't have the seed. They don't have this planted within them. They don't have it. That is why they can live above sin. They believe they can. That is why they can go off and there is no problem. That is why when they can give the idea just, oh, just trust him. Just have faith. Just do it. Almost like a Nike commercial. That is what

⁴ Genesis 25:21.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

life is to the worldling. But there is a struggle for the child of God here. But the struggle as we are shown in 22 the struggle is won by the seed.

John says of this in 1 John 3:9:

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.”⁷

Have you ever been struck? Have you ever found problem with that verse? But I commence it. But what is born of God is seed in you does not commit sin. The new man does not commit sin.

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him.”⁸

There is the seed. It remains in him.

“...and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”⁹

And as we go through this struggle, I have watched some of my dear ones that I love dearly in this room struggle this week. But do you know what has been the difference? The seed, the hope of glory, the seed. It is just a little faith. It is enough to move a mountain. It is enough to say to the sycamore tree, “Up and be thrown into the ocean.” It is enough to counter the mountain of fear, the mountain of unbelief, the mountain of not trusting the Lord. That is the seed. That is Christ in us.

If you turn with me, hold you finger here, because we are coming back, but look over in John one. We will stay with John, because he said it best. In John one, if you look at verse 12:

“But as many as received him...”¹⁰

There is the seed of grace.

“...to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”¹¹

We didn't have that power. We didn't have that power to birth ourself. We didn't have that power to bring forth Christ and to receive him into our soul of ourselves. We can't do it, regardless of what the religious world says, regardless of what the Arminian says. You can't do it. You know. The child of God knows when he is in the recess of his mind and he is in the moment of ... with himself before God. He knows he won't choose the Lord. He knows that his depravity and that old man and that carnality will always do what is comfortable to the flesh.

⁷ 1 John 3:9.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ John 1:12.

¹¹ Ibid.

There is a seed and there is a power.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”¹²

The seed of faith, the seed of grace.

“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”¹³

There is what we are talking about in Genesis today. There is what we see. The reason this struggle is going on is because of the seed.

Dear ones, I want you to know today and I hope you understand that the struggle that you have is evidence that you are a child of God. It is evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ is in you. It is evidence regardless of what Satan says, regardless of what your old man says, regardless of what this world says.

Look at 16.

“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”¹⁴

Grace upon grace. That is what he does. He giveth more grace. Satan comes to the side of the old man, he giveth more grace. The world says, “I will join with Satan. I will join with the old man.” He giveth more grace.

See, that seed is stronger than the other one. It is stronger and it always will be. The bad news is we will always have this struggle here. We always will.

Let’s go back to our text.

“If it be so, why am I thus?”¹⁵

It is a question that we ask the Lord a lot. Lord, if it be so... and I know I have shared with you Newton’s little poem before. I will share it with you again today.

‘Tis a point I long to know.
Oft it causes anxious thought.
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his or am I not?

¹² John 1:12.

¹³ John 1:13.

¹⁴ John 1:16.

¹⁵ Genesis 25:22.

That, to me, when I read that, I identify with it, because as this struggle goes on there are times it seems like Esau gets the upper hand. There are times I feel graceless. There are times I feel like I am. Do I love the Lord or not? But the Lord comes to my soul to say, “It is this struggle that shows and reveals to you that you are my child.”

We have been so bombarded. And I thought about this this week as I was brought up in the Scriptures. But, you know, when you are brought up in an Arminian church and you are brought up according to the Scriptures the things that are embellished in the Word—and let’s talk about what Paul did. Let’s talk about how he received Christ on the day on the road to Damascus. And this brainwashing, so to speak, starts to happen to you and you start to believe that those instances in the Bible, every one of the children of God will have a Paul experience. He will have a Damascus Road experience. And when you don’t have that, you start to say, “I am not God’s child. I haven’t been knocked off. I haven’t seen Christ. I didn’t go blindly...”

Or did you? Has the Lord ever knocked you off your horse? Has he ever shown in your life, shined brightly in your life to show you even in that dead moment and he has lifted you up and shown you the hope of glory in himself? Yeah.

There is a lot of dead religion. And, you know, I apologize this morning if I am a little animated, but I feel it. I feel the Lord in my soul. I do. And, you know, I have been on the other end. I have been on the other end of being dead in profession, of being dead in doctrine. And there is a difference. And if you don’t feel the Lord in your soul, if you haven’t felt the Lord in your soul, I don’t mean right now, because he comes in the day of his power. He makes you willing in the day of his power. He comes in his sovereign time to every one of his children.

I have heard many testimonies this week of my Lord, how faithful he has been. And, like I said, I just stand back in amazement sometimes and say, “Why did I think he wouldn’t be? Why?”

Why is it that not one of us in this room went to our sister last week and said, “We will see you next week in this place”? Why? Why didn’t we trust God to say he can do it. Major surgery and you will be back here with us next week. Why?

We have a struggle. We struggle with death. we struggle with the doubts. We struggle with fear. We struggle with trusting him. But the Lord gives us the answer. He says there is two nations. There is a warfare going on. And he is the winner. And it seems like down here on this earth it seems like we get worse. We believe we get worse. We believe that our carnality gets worse.

Listen. The old man is always the old man. The old man will never get better. What the Lord is doing is opening our eyes to how wicked he is, how wicked Satan is. And this struggle the Lord reveals how holy the Lord is and how wicked everything else is, how wicked these enemies are.

“If it be so, why am I thus?”¹⁶

Why am I this way?

“Jacob have I loved.”¹⁷

I love the new man. I can stand before you today and I can say that. Oh, I love the new man and I hate Esau. I hate him. I hate him with a holy hatred. I hate the old man I hate the thoughts of the old man. but when the Lord brings his thought, when that new man shines through by the power of the Holy Ghost that seed that is magnified in the child of God that is all that sheep needs is to feed at that table just a moment and grace carries it. Grace carries him through the day.

Oh, where in sometimes the darkness we grope at the darkness. We grope like we are blind. We must be brought to where Job is brought. Job said in Job 42: 5-6:

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.¹⁸

That is what the Lord does. He brings us to see the horrible horrifcness of our old man. He brings us to see how wicked and wretched it is.

Hold your finger there and turn with me over to Song of Solomon chapter six for this short dialog between the Church and Christ. Begin with me, if you will, in verse 10.

“Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?”¹⁹

The question of the Lord and his Church. Where is she? Who is she?

I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded. Or ever I was aware, my soul [this is the Church speaking] made me like the chariots of Amminadib.²⁰

As the Lord comes to see and to look upon the soul of the child of God, the child of God’s soul is opened up and they say, “Well, what is it I see within?” And the Lord reveals it in 13.

¹⁶ Genesis 25:22.

¹⁷ Romans 9:13.

¹⁸ Job 42:5-6.

¹⁹ Song of Solomon 6:10.

²⁰ Song of Solomon 6:11-12.

“Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.”²¹

There is two armies at war in the Shulamite There is two armies at war in the Church. There is two armies at war in the warfare of the child of God. It is there. It is here. It is not in heaven. It is here. It is here on earth. This struggle is something. It is very wearisome. I find myself many times when the Lord shows me the wickedness of myself many times I ask the Lord how long. Why, Lord? Why is it this way with me? Why can't I be more loving? Why can't I be more trusting? He always tells me, “Without me, you can do nothing.”

I apologize for... I read... I cut out a little poem that I read in a sermon that I don't know where I got and I don't know who wrote the poem. So that is about all I can do for you. But listen to this.

How long, dear Lord, how long?
Deliverance must I seek?
And fight with foes so very strong?
My self so very weak.

I will bear the unequal strife.
And wage the war within,
Since death that puts an end to life,
Will put an end to sin.

When is the warfare over? When the Lord takes us home. Does he leave us here to despair? No. Does he leave us here without a Lord? No.

Turn with me to the very last chapter in the Bible, the very last stanza in the Bible, the very last thing Christ says in the Bible, Revelation 22:20.

All our minds when we come to this book the carnality of ourself always wants to turn to the future. Oh, what is in the future? Well, my Lord holds the future. He told me this day is sufficient for thee evil in it. I believe him. And in verse 20:

“He which testifieth these things saith...”²²

This is the whole word of God.

“Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.”²³

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.”²⁴

²¹ Song of Solomon 6:13.

²² Revelation 22:20.

²³ Psalm 40:7; Hebrews 10:7.

²⁴ Revelation 22:20.

In our trials, in our tribulation, that is what he says to us. In his appointed time, surely I come quickly. And how does he make his bride respond? Even with the warfare. What does he say to the new man? How does he speak to the spiritual side? And his faith comes through and his Spirit speaks. And it says.

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”²⁵

Oh, Lord, come to my soul. Come to my soul, Lord. I know that while I walk down here I know that while I live down here I will have these two armies at war. I know that I will have these two nations at war. I know that I will cry out, “If it be so, Lord, why am I thus?” Lord, what do you have for my soul? What do you say to the pilgrim and the stranger, that is wandering down here? That we know we are not to put our clutches in this world, but yet we do it anyway.

Lord, can you take us? Can you take us to a mountain high to see thee? And what things do you speak to our soul?

I wrote down four this morning that he said to mine.

“My grace is sufficient for thee.”²⁶

As you fight this warfare, the Lord says;

“My grace is sufficient for thee.”²⁷

“...as thy days, so shall thy strength be.”²⁸

As we live these days on this earth our strength in Christ shall be. He will go with us. He will be with us, as we have seen this week time and time again. And yet we doubt.

“...lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”²⁹

You know, that end of the world means a lot of things to me. It sure doesn't mean the future, although I know he is with me there. I have a world of tribulation every day in my life. I have a world of struggle in my soul every day as I struggle against this old man. But he is with me. It is the seed. It is the seed of him. He is with me to the end. He is the end of it. He is the victory.

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.”³⁰

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ 2 Corinthians 12:9.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Deuteronomy 33:25.

²⁹ Matthew 28:20.

³⁰ 1 John 5:4.

My prayer today for you is that the Lord ministers to your soul, that he reveals to you this struggle. And this may seem odd to you, but I hope he reveals that you have a struggle and that you do have a struggle and that you do struggle, because there is no other comfort. There is no other peace and there is no other life, but in this seed who is the way, the truth and the life for his dear people. May he be glorified.

Dear heavenly Father, come with power. Come with power, Lord, to our souls. Deliver us from self and give us eyes to see thee. Lord, go with us as we do struggle. Lord, be our strength. Be our all in all and, Lord, may you show us as you kill self, may you exalt to see that thyself in our life. May you increase and may we decrease to the glory and praise of your holy name. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.