



## Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups

# "The Magnificent Defeat" | The Story of Us series

Preached by Pastor Jon Egan  
06 April 2025

"What's more, [God says] I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you."

G E N E S I S   2 8 : 1 5   N L T

### Summary

*Have someone from your group read the following summary aloud.*

his weekend, Pastor Jon delivered a powerful and deeply personal message from the life of Jacob—specifically, Jacob's unforgettable wrestling match with God at Peniel. It's a story that speaks to all of us who have ever found ourselves struggling—struggling with our identity, our past, our fears, or even with God himself.

Jacob's story is more than just ancient history; it's a mirror. Like Jacob, many of us have learned to rely on our own strength, strategy, and even manipulation to try to secure blessing, favor, or control. But when Jacob wrestled with God, everything changed. He was confronted not just by a divine being, but by his own need for transformation. That moment became a turning point—not only did God bless Jacob, but He also renamed him *Israel*, marking the beginning of a new identity rooted in trust rather than striving.

And perhaps most powerful of all, Jacob walked away from that night with a limp—a physical reminder of his encounter with the living God, a mark not of defeat, but of dependence. It was a symbol that he had been with God, and had been changed by him.

## **Opening Prayer**

*Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own.*

"Father, thank you for bringing us together—right here, right now. As we open your Word and reflect on Jacob's story, would you quiet our hearts and help us sense your nearness? We confess that, like Jacob, we often wrestle with you—grappling for control, holding tightly to fear, or trying to secure blessing in our own strength. But tonight, we choose to come with open hands.

"Teach us through Jacob's transformation. Help us see that even in our struggle, you are good—and you are close. Give us the courage to be honest, the grace to listen well, and the faith to believe you're still at work in our lives, even when we walk away with a limp. May this conversation draw us closer to you and to each other. We love you, and we trust you. In Jesus' name, Amen."

## **Getting Going**

Think of a time when you had to fight for something you really wanted. What lengths did you go to in achieving it? Would you do it all over again?

## **Discussion Questions**

*Answer as many of the following questions as time and interest permit.*

1. In our current context, what does it mean to "wrestle with God"?
2. How do you see yourself in Jacob's story of trying to control outcomes rather than trusting God?
3. What does it mean to you that Jacob walked away from his divine encounter with a limp?
4. How has God used difficult circumstances in your life to build trust in him?
5. Think about the areas of your life that you're still trying to manipulate or control rather than surrendering them to God. What makes surrender seem unattainable to you?
6. What might change in your character or your circumstances if you were to take steps of surrender in one of those areas today?

## **Making It Personal**

*Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life.*

Consider taking the steps that came to mind as you thought about question 6, above. Ask God for the courage to make progress in that area, and ask a friend to join you in that journey.

## **Key Takeaways**

*Commit to memory one point from the message before you dismiss.*

Which of these points will you carry with you this week?

- When we take matters into our own hands, it's a sign that we don't trust God.
- When you're in the fight with God, hold on until he transforms you.
- Embrace the limp in your life, knowing that our weaknesses can become gifts that draw us closer to God.
- True victory often comes through surrender to God.

## **Closing Prayer**

*Have someone from your group close your time in prayer.*

"Lord Jesus, thank you for meeting us in the middle of our struggles—right in the heart of our wrestling. You don't turn away from our questions, our striving, or our pain, instead meeting us there with love and truth.

"Help us trust you more fully, and teach us what it means to surrender—not as a sign of weakness, but as the first step toward real transformation. Give us the courage to release our grip on control, and the faith to believe that losing ourselves in you is where true life begins.

"And as we walk forward—limping, maybe, but forever changed—remind us that our wounds can become our witnesses. Our limp is not shameful; it's *sacred* because it tells the story of our encounter with you. We love you. In Jesus' name, Amen."

## **Key Passage | Genesis 32:24-28 NIV**

*These verses were highlighted during this week's sermon and appear here for your reference.*

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.

Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

The man asked him, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

### **Verses for Further Study**

- ▶ Mark 16:24-25
- ▶ 1 Peter 4:10
- ▶ Psalm 23:1

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