

Thriving: Grace, Necessity, and Discipline

Luke 11: 1-12

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Let’s build on the idea of wrestling with God from last week. We used the OT encounter of **Jacob** in Genesis 32 and learned that when Jacob encounters God it is a time of:

**Wrestling**



Seeking

Naming

Blessing

Limping

Today we’ll build on the reality **that if we want to THRIVE** in our life with Christ, we need to be willing to **wrestle with God.**



Read Luke 11: 1-12, on screen

This passage concludes with Jesus teaching that God the Father **longs** **to give his Spirit** to his children.

* The Spirit of God was/is given to **every believer** since Pentecost
* The **presence** of the Spirit is wonderful, but to THRIVE we need to tap into the **power** of the Spirit.
* **Jesus is teaching here what it means to follow him in the power of the Spirit**

In this passage, the disciples have a desire **to be like** the one they admire so much…

* [Laying my clothes out…just like my dad used to do.]
* I wanted to be like him in every way I could, and I studied him so I could imitate him.

Is there someone in your life you have admired to the point of trying to be like that person?

* I think this is what is going on in the lives of these disciples.

In the context of living life with Jesus, the disciples **observe** everything about Jesus.

* They recognize **prayer’s** importance in Jesus’ life.
* They seem to understand that if they are going to be like Jesus, they are going to need to do the things Jesus did, so they ask him to teach them to pray
* Jesus knows what is going on…

So, Jesus teaches them prayer, but also a couple of other things essential to the operation of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We need to learn what they learned.



**Bottom Line:**

In order for us to THRIVE as believers; in order for us to have long term **growth** and **life** in Christ, we need the **power** of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

* This power isn’t given casually, this is **serious** business to Jesus, and it should be to us.
* [Sometimes when we have guests over, we close certain doors. We don’t want them to see the rooms that are messy and unkempt.]
* God’s Spirit doesn’t want to be treated like a **guest** in your life with certain places off limits.
* God’s Spirit needs to move in; to take up residence; to have the run of the house.

**This passage teaches us that if we really want to thrive, there are three kinds of wrestling with God.**

I think they happen in **sequence**.

**Where are you along these lines?**



1. There is a *Grace* of Wrestling with God. God picks a fight with us to get our attention



* Jacob
* Saul/Paul
* Sometimes, the misery of our messed-up lives is the means of grace that God uses to get our attention.
* These disciples had their own kind of wrestling.
  + Initially they had to decide to leave everything behind and follow Jesus.
  + Many times, along the way, they were faced with this decision again. (John 6: 6-7) “…are you also going to leave me?”
* The 12 were grapplers with God, but now Jesus is taking them even deeper than just the decision to follow.
  + They want to imitate him but aren’t sure how.
* There is more, so much more, than the “get out of hell free card” we receive in repentance. Jesus is inviting his followers to life in step with his Spirit and he invites us today as well.
* There is a grace in wrestling with God, but also…



1. There is a *Necessity* of Wrestling with God. God requires us to be **persistent** to clarify our goals in asking.



* As Jesus models and teaches what it means to follow him, he teaches on **persistence** in seeking.
* **The Persistent Neighbor (5-8)**
* Notice that **we are the neighbor** in Jesus’ story.
* **We are the ones** who must be shamelessly persistent
* **[Food Court]** God isn’t like the food court where if the line is too long at Chipotle, we just settle for Sbarro.
  + God has the most **essential** and **satisfying** gift of all, his cleansing, empowering, and abiding presence and until we wait for it, we will never be truly satisfied.
* Jesus is teaching his disciples to be **persistent**
* **We cannot THRIVE without the power of the Spirit of God in us.**

The **persistence** **refines** us, **shapes** us, **prepares** us for the power of God in us.

* **Maybe you lack God’s power because you aren’t ready for it?**
  + [race car drivers start out in go carts…]
* **Maybe you’ve settled for go cart power in a Nascar/Formula One world?**
* In God’s own time, however, God is a good Father and gives us his best gift— the gift of his Spirit.



1. There is a *Discipline* of Wrestling with God.



* Jesus teaches us to **ask, seek, and knock…and keep on doing all of these** (9-10).
* These verbs meant **present and continuing action** to the original hearers.
* It’s a summary.
* Jesus is teaching his people to **pray** and keep on praying, , to **ask** and keep on asking, to **seek** and keep on seeking, to **knock**, and keep on knocking.

**We read this and focus on “receiving,” and “finding,” and “open doors.” Jesus focused on the first part.**

* Jesus’ emphasis isn’t so much on the **results** as it is on the **process.**
* **It is in this rhythm of continually asking, seeking, and knocking that God’s people stay surrendered to God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.**
* Jesus knows the disciples want to be like him.
* The Discipline of Wrestling with God is how they will do it
* This is how we THRIVE and keep on THRIVING
* This is a picture of a life empowered by the Holy Spirit
* If you want to embody the Fruit of the Spirit, this is how.



1. It is grace that calls us to be filled with the Spirit.

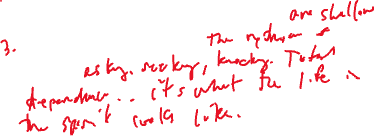


* Jesus concludes this teaching by reminding his disciples that God is a good Father, eager to give the Holy Spirit to his children.
* This is God’s grace.
* God goes first.
* You and I don’t deserve this kind of treatment, but we get it in Christ Jesus.

**\*\*NICK COMES UP HERE:**



**[The Prodigal Son**] Luke 15



* There are Prodigal sons and daughters; you’ve wasted God’s goodness on sin and ruin
* There are also Prodigal Christians, I think. We’ve asked and God has given, but we have squandered God’s gifts to us.



* We need to come back, to start again.

**Three Invitations Today:**

* 1. Prodigal Sons and Daughters, come to the Father. The wrestling, the misery of your life is God getting your attention.
  2. Prodigal Christians, come to the Father. You’ve given up too easily. God is asking you to be persistent to refine you, to shape you, to prepare you for the power of His Spirit.
  3. Powerless Christians, come to the Father. You asked once, you sought once, you knocked once, but you’ve forgotten to keep at it. The process of asking and seeking and knocking is what it looks like to live in the power of the Spirit.

**Song: “Run to the Father”**

**Prayer** (Maybe open the altar as God leads)

**Benediction**: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. -Amen.