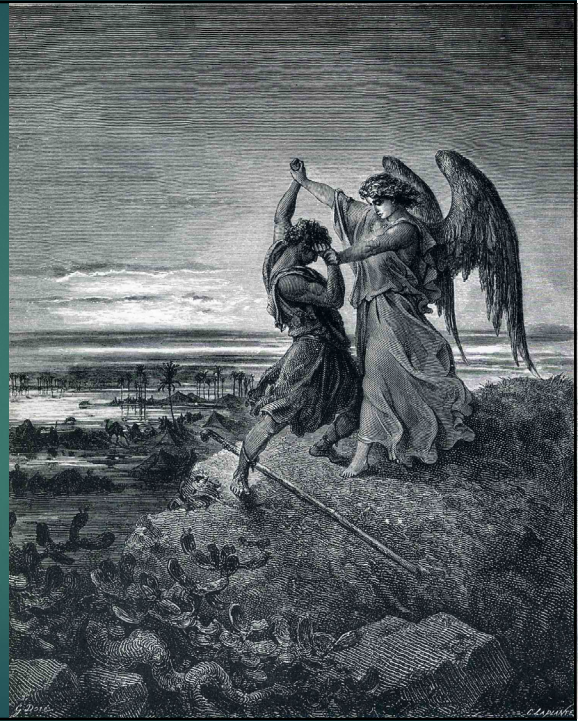


Week Three: The Wrestling Match



23

Why Do We Struggle With Prayer?

- ▶ The primary means the gospel spreads is through the preaching of God's word and prayer.
- ▶ Perhaps Satan and his minions seek to sidetrack us from what Scripture calls to do.
- ▶ Perhaps constant activity is strategy of Satan to sidetrack us?



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Wrestling with and the Lord

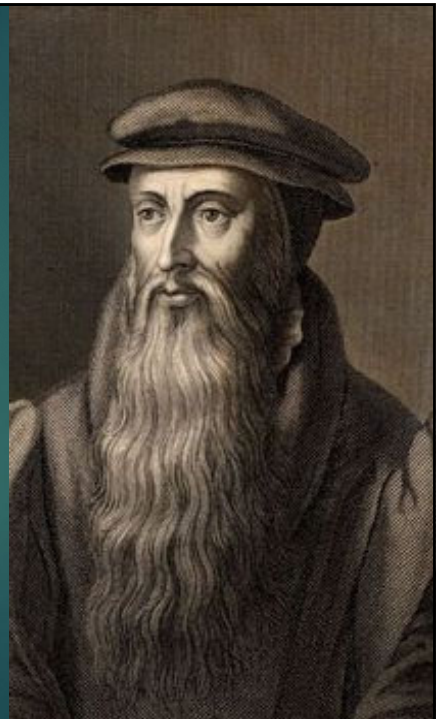
- ▶ Let's read Genesis 32:22-32
- ▶ Wrestling is hard, sweaty, and not fun! This is exactly why I did not wrestle in high school!
- ▶ Most – if not all – the seminars I was taught on prayer made it easy! That is not true!



25

John Knox and Prayer

- ▶ The prayer book of the Reformed was the Psalms.
- ▶ What is the main paradigm for prayer in the Psalms? Wrestling!
- ▶ Prayer is not easy. It's hard work. John Knox would not tell us prayer is easy. You get that impression from most preachers, I think.



26

John Knox and Matthew's Temptation

- ▶ John Knox does not take the view that we simply model Jesus. He thinks we literally do not have a prayer!
- ▶ It is only through our union with Christ that we overcome Satan.
- ▶ We need to hold fast to Christ through our trials, tribulations, and battles.



MATTHEW 4

JESUS TEMPTED

27

Matthew's Temptation

- ▶ Many modern readings of Matthew's temptation are semi-pelagian.
- ▶ We go from Christ defeating Satan to stories about how we can pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and quote Scripture and win.
- ▶ Satan and his minions are stronger than us. We need to realize this!



28

Union with Christ

- ▶ Historically, a book such as the Song of Solomon points to the mystical union between the Lord and his people.
- ▶ Bernard of Clairvaux was a devotional favorite of the Reformers. It’s key concept is union with Christ.
- ▶ When you read through Paul’s letters, notice how “in Christ” is short hand for this spirituality. It is through our union with Christ that we overcome sin, death, and the devil.



29

The Results

- ▶ We do not need to become crazy charismatics in order to incorporate these concepts into our Christian formation.
- ▶ There is mystery. We do not always know if plagues and sickness are the result of judgement, demonic activity, or simply natural disasters.
- ▶ What better way for Satan to distract us than to trick us into believe he doesn’t exist?



30