

Hour of Power Deutschland  
Steinerne Furt 78  
86167 Augsburg

Telefon: 08 21 / 420 96 96  
Telefax: 08 21 / 420 96 97

E-Mail: [info@hourofpower.de](mailto:info@hourofpower.de)  
[www.hourofpower.de](http://www.hourofpower.de)

Baden-Württembergische Bank  
BLZ: 600 501 01  
Konto: 28 94 829

BAN:  
2543600501010002894829

BIC:  
2543600501010002894829

Büro Schweiz:

Hour of Power Schweiz  
Poststr. 8  
3594 Güttingen  
Tel.: 071 690 07 81  
[info@hourofpower-schweiz.ch](mailto:info@hourofpower-schweiz.ch)  
[www.hourofpower-schweiz.ch](http://www.hourofpower-schweiz.ch)

Spendenkonto:

PostFinance AG, 3030 Bern  
Konto: 61-18359-6  
BAN:  
251609000000610183596

Hour of Power, 22.03.2020

### GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS)

This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Good morning. As you can see my lovely wife is missing this morning. She's in bed sick, please pray for Hannah. She's just not feeling great this morning, but we always miss her. And there's like a whole rhythm like even after I say good morning, I'm like oh there's nobody there, and so anyway.

Well welcome anyway to Shepherd's Grove. We're so glad you're here. Welcome to all of you watching on television. We consider you a part of our church. We're so glad wherever you are that you're joining us this morning. We want to encourage you to let you know that whatever you're going through, whatever you face, whatever you've done, we want you to know God is with you. He's on your side. You're His beloved sons and daughters, and today we want to encourage you that He's going to help you get where you need to be, He's going to help you do the next right thing, and we serve a God who loves us and cares for us, amen?

So let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much for all that you've done in our lives. Lord, so often we want to beat ourselves up, but not you, Lord. You are called the comforter. Lord, you've called us and saved us and rescued us, and we just want to say thank you. Thank you for your word. And for many of us who are struggling with you, or struggling with our faith, or struggling in our relationships with our husbands and wives, our children, our parents, we pray, Father that we wouldn't stop struggling, we would never walk away from you or walk away from our relationships. Lord, we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, all God's people said amen.

### SCRIPTURE – Genesis 32:22-31 – Tim McCalmont

As we prepare for God's word to us today, we turn to the 32nd chapter of Genesis. Listen for the word of the Lord.

That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 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."

Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

This is the word of the Lord.

### INTERVIEW – Melissa d'Arabian (MD) – Bobby Schuller (BS)

(VIDEO PLAYING: "The very next Food Network is Melissa!")

Melissa d'Arabian is a chef, author and TV host who won season five of Food Network star in 2009, and has gone on to host her show Ten Dollar Dinners on Food Network. She's also written a few cook books and appeared on several Food Network series. Her new book, Tasting Grace, looks at how we can use food to connect with God, others, and ourselves. Please welcome, Melissa d'Arabian.)

## Jacob Wrestles an Angel

BS: Melissa hi! Welcome!

MD: Thank you.

BS: So glad you're here. Well I'm excited to read this book. I'm so bummed Hannah's sick today because she's like oh I love her! I love her show! I know she would have loved to have met you. But your last book was called Ten Dollar Dinners, I know it was a huge success; people loved it. And this time, for your new book, you're writing actually about your faith and how it relates to food, of all things, Tasting Grace.

So anyway, welcome, and tell us a little bit about your book.

MD: Well thanks for having me. We are a society that is simultaneously obsessed with food, right? We've got celebrity chefs and we are reading cookbooks just for entertainment, not even to cook. And we're posting photos on Instagram that are perfect. And yet we are also very separated from our food. We are living in modern society, which means fewer of us are actually growing and making our food. And so in this disconnect, I thought what does God have to say about food? What does God want for us through food? And food is not an afterthought to God, so I spent a couple years in the Bible and in prayer reading about this and praying about this and marinating in this. And God has given us food for so much good and out of His generosity, and so my hope in Tasting Grace is to explore those invitations and the joy of receiving God's gifts.

BS: It's such a great place to come from, too, because your show is not a religious show, right? I mean you're an outspoken Christian, but you're just talking to everybody about food. And so to use the thing that people associate with your food and show how big a part of it is for God's grace in our life, I think is really brilliant.

MD: Well and it's also who we are when we get our identity in God and in Christ, and so those books Ten Dollar Dinners, Supermarket Healthy, they're secular books, but they're books rooted in stewardship. They're books written with the Bible's open up on my desk. So the Bible's were still opened up on my desk, it's just that what came out was a bit different.

BS: It is strange what you said about how food is sort of changing in our experience of it. It really seems like originally it was meant as a blessing, a grace, hospitality. I remember I had a friend who was visiting, Joop, from Holland, he was an older guy. And I wanted to take him to In n Out and we were eating in our car, and he said 'I've never eaten in a car before. This is weird' like he did not like it at all. He had a guard and he wanted to like sit down and talk and do all this types of thing, and it's weird, as Americans, very often, food becomes more and more about energy and less about bonding with other people and experiencing God's grace.

MD: And it's about speeding up and getting through it. And if God had wanted to make a food system that was not tasty and that did not slow us down, that did not require patience to grow tomatoes, He could have done that. He could have made a food system that didn't include juicy peaches and sweet tomatoes, and He did not do that. So why did God make the world so delicious? Why did He make it so that we have to slow down a bit to partake? Why did He make a system that requires us to work and tend into the garden like Adam did? So these are the invitations, and they're not admonitions. It's not oh we're doing it wrong. It's an invitation into loving food even more, and connecting, beyond just around the table. As Christians, we talk about around the table, and that's great, but the connection to God and to each other and to soil and to earth is so much deeper. So that's my celebration in Tasting Grace.

BS: Do you think God wants us to slow down?

MD: Oh I'm pretty sure He does. When I think about when I pray for patience what He does for me and how He responds, He's telling me yes, He wants us to slow down.

BS: And sometimes I think food cooked by a friend or by someone that loves you, is an invitation to say not only slow down, but I just want to be with you, just hang out with you and Jesus does that, too. It's interesting a lot of times when we take communion and other things, I'll talk about how Jesus had an eating ministry because He would sit down and eat with people you're not supposed to eat with you. Isn't that amazing how much of a gift that was and how impactful that was. So food's always had this way of communicating just love to people, hasn't it?

MD: And Jesus, what a great model for how we're going to look at food. Jesus didn't just feed people, and He did in big and wonderful, beautiful ways. But He also ate with them, right?

So who we sit with around our table and the tables that we go to to sit; it's not just about inviting people in. If I am always the host of my table, then I'm missing out on the joy of being at other people's tables, and that's really the joy that I'm celebrating.

## Jacob Wrestles an Angel

BS: It is such a good book. And we're just so grateful that you're here with us today. One thing we want to give you as a thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to bless our church and our viewers on Hour of Power, the holidays are coming, believe it or not, and so we have this angel ornament for your tree that we give to all of our supporters. We'd love for you to have it to remember your trip with us.

MD: Thank you. Oh, this is beautiful.

BS: So thank you so much and..

MD: Thank you.

BS: ..we just appreciate you. So the book is called Tasting Grace by Melissa d'Arabian, you can get it anywhere books are sold. You're going to love it. And I want to recommend wherever you are now, get it, check it out, it will make all the difference. And thank you so much, Melissa..

MD: Thank you for having me.

BS: ..we appreciate you. God bless you.

MD: Thank you, you too.

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Friends, would you hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. Let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. It's who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with the world.

Thanks, you can be seated.

### MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Jacob Wrestles an Angel"

Well today we are beginning a new series on angels, which is something I've actually never preached on as a series, and I probably should have. You actually find in the Bible that angels are mentioned hundreds of times. And from a Bible translating standpoint, it's hard to figure out because sometimes the word "angel" simply means "a messenger" when you see it in Greek or Hebrew. But a lot of the time, probably most of the time it actually means an angel from heaven.

So I want to talk about in this next series four very famous angel stories, what we can learn from them, and how they can encourage us in our faith. There are a lot of contemporary angel stories, too. I've heard them growing up, I've met believers who have seen how God has intervened in their life in some miraculous way, that there was either a person or very often they believe an actual angel who worked in their lives. Maybe you have a story like that.

I have one that's kind of like that. When I was seven years old, I used to walk back and forth to Ambuehl Elementary School. I was in first grade high school, you know. Anyway, and it was weird, my parents just really, they were pretty free with us, and so it was a good two/three mile walk.

And one day coming home with a friend of mine, his name was Graham, I found this great walking stick, and the two of us were walking along and I'm all excited about my stick. And they had these kind of tributary type systems made of concrete, effectively sewers that would dump rainwater into the San Juan creek. And so sometimes we would walk to those tunnels and we would run around the tubes and stuff. And we followed one to the end that went down into this sort of water cistern. There was like a short concrete thing and it had some algae, some slime on it, and of course being boys, we were throwing things into the cistern that was full of this slimy green water, and poking at things, and I dropped this walking stick; it fell into the water.

And so of course we have to try and get it back, even though there's a slimy concrete thing between the water and me. So I hold my friend's hand and I begin to kind of go down like this and try and get the stick, and of course I slip, he lets go and I fall into this goo. It was like really horrible.

And I was a great swimmer when I was a kid. I mean I was. But I started to feel like I was being pulled down, my head went under the water, I had stuff on my face and in my hair, and I'm freaking out. And I look at my friend and I go 'Graham, Graham, help me.' And he looked, you know, little kids, he looks at me like this and he just runs away. He just takes off. And then I'm all alone. And I'm like (GULPING SOUNDS) and I'm thinking I'm going to die, and all this stuff. And then out of nowhere, these strong arms pull me out of the water, set me down, and I look up and all I see is a shadowy figure backlit by the sun, and this person just walks away. For years I used to say I think that was an angel. I think an angel saved me. And finally I told this story with my dad there, and he goes 'that wasn't an angel, it was a homeless lady. She followed you home and asked me for money!' That's a true story.

## Jacob Wrestles an Angel

But sometimes, you know it is hard not to believe, though, at least that God worked through that homeless lady. And I can see why she asked him for some money. I saved your kid, you can give me five bucks.

Anyway, so many of us, we have real angel stories where it wasn't just the random person, but it was an actual intervention from God in our lives. I think there are times, not just in the Bible, but in our lives and we don't always see it, where angels actually break the rules by changing something in our life that will dramatically change the arc of our story. And we're going to look at one today. This one has a major effect on the whole nation of Israel, and it's in fact how Israel as a nation gets its name. So today you're going to learn why Israel is called Israel. You probably already know if you've gone to church your whole life. But if you don't, today's the day.

The word Israel actually means "struggles with God," or "wrestles with God." Now think about that for a moment. If you were a nation state that were supposed to be the chosen people of God, and your whole purpose is to be in covenant with God, and bring God's Torah and word and Messiah to the whole world, why would you call yourself "struggles with God." Shouldn't it be struggles with evil? Or shouldn't it be fights alongside God, or fights for God like so many religions have? No, Israel calls itself we are the ones who wrestle with God. Why is that? And I'll just give you a cheat sheet.

Today I believe that in our relationships, both with friends and family, and with God, the struggle is an inseparable part of a deep relationship. You can't have a meaningful relationship without struggling sometimes, whether it's with God or with others. All of us who believe in God, struggle with Him. God, why would you let this happen? God, why are these things in place? Or God, you know, whatever. And you wrestle with God and you're trying to understand things and learn things and grow. And yet very often that can sometimes feel like a never ending struggle with things like doubt or sin or just unanswered questions about the world in existence, philosophical questions, relational questions.

And I just know that whatever struggle it is you're going through today, keep struggling and keep struggling until that struggle turns into an embrace. Do you know what that's like? Maybe in your marriage, if you've been married before. A struggle with your spouse turns into an embrace. Maybe with your kids. Struggle with your kid's turns into an embrace. Well sometimes that happens with God, too. Our struggles with God can turn into an embrace with God. So don't let go until He blesses you.

Today we're talking about the story of Jacob – Yaakov. Jacob's one of my favorite Torah characters. We talked about him and his brother Esau a few weeks ago, and you may remember that I put a giant picture of Gaston on this screen. But I compared Esau to like Gaston from Beauty and the Beast. Gaston is this hot headed hunter. He's buff and manly and he's a fighter and maybe a soldier, and he's always got his gun or bows and arrows over his shoulder, and he just killed an animal. He's a tough guy. And he's good looking and popular. And this is kind of how Esau is.

And his twin brother Jacob is kind of the opposite of that. I said he was kind of like Belle, but think of.. it says he loves to dwell in tents. Picture the guy that plays chess and reads a lot of books, plays video games. Picture your senior pastor. That's what Jacob's kind of like. He's a little bit dorky. And so they're twins but they're paternal twins.

And Esau, because he came out just a few seconds earlier, gets this amazing thing, this amazing blessing called the birthright. Jacob, his brother, ends up buying the birthright from Esau with a bowl of soup, which shows how kind of dumb Esau is. But then when Esau isn't good on it, Jacob then effectively steals what's rightfully his by pretending to be Esau with fake hairy arms, and the help of his mother, and ends up stealing the birthright from Isaac the father. And this is where the story begins.

Now how does a hot tempered warrior killer buff guy like Esau when he finds out basically almost all of his wealth has been stolen from him by his twin brother, what do you think his reaction is? He's dead, right? I am going to skewer that brother of mine. He is a dead man. So what does Jacob do? Jacob does what Jacob always does. He flees. He runs. He tricks.

And so he disappears. His mother Rebekah says your brother's going to kill you. I want you to go to the land of our fore fathers and find a wife there, so you don't have a wife that's a Canaanite. I want you to marry one of our people, and that's what I'll tell your father. But the truth is, you need to leave cause you're brother's going to kill you, and when he chills out, when he cools down, I will send word. Now it ends up that it takes twenty years, actually, for Esau to chill out. And this is what happens. Jacob leaves with nothing. So think about this, and think about this in your own life. After he receives the blessing, from God, through his father, everything gets worse!

## Jacob Wrestles an Angel

See, everything gets worse. And Jacob's experience, he has to leave his home, he has no food, he has no money, and he goes to the house of Laban, a long, long ways away, in Mesopotamia, and when he gets there, he sees this beautiful woman. Her name is Rachel. He's never seen anyone more beautiful in his whole life. He immediately goes to her father, Laban and says, Laban or Laban, he says I want to marry Rachel. And what's the deal he strikes? He says all right, I'll let you marry my daughter if you work for me for free for seven years. He says yes. Now that is true, true love. Ladies, what if your man worked for you for seven years for free just to be.. that would mean a lot to you, wouldn't it. Anyway. So he works for seven years for Laban for free to marry Rachel, and Rachel has an older sister named Leah who he doesn't particularly find attractive. The Bible says she has decent eyes, and this becomes like an insult in Judaism that like it's a nice way of saying a girl's not attractive. Anyway. He has this wedding and it's super dark, and Rachel is wearing this veil and he can't see anything. And then they go to their tent for the evening and he wakes up and who's next to him but his new wife Leah. And he got tricked. And she says good morning, you know, and she's just like.. hot man (EVIL LAUGHS) kind of thing. Think about how you'd feel, you'd worked seven years of your life and you get tricked, you're married, the marriage is consummated, there's no going back. And in the end, Jacob works another seven years to marry Rachel, so then he has two wives, which was common in those days. But think, like in Jacob's eyes, I mean just think how angry you'd feel, and now he's tricked. The trickster gets tricked. But in this time of struggle, you find that he has 13.. 12 sons and a daughter, God just begins to bless his life, even though he's being tricked. When he wants to leave, Laban says I can see that God has blessed my farm and my flock because of you. Please stay and I'll split it with you. But then Laban tries to trick him and steal things, and every time it happens, Jacob just gets wealthier and wealthier.

And this is what I want you to hear. The struggle that Jacob faces and all of that trickery, and all of that deception that he experiences, and all that injustice only blesses him in the end, quite literally. It's in the place of being away from home, it's in the place of being afraid, it's in the place of struggle that the blessing he received becomes real! And eventually Jacob leaves a very wealthy man. Because he was struggling, because he stayed in that place of discomfort. Jacob's blessing is fulfilled under the unfair treatment of Laban. Think about that, guys. You may be treated unfairly, you may be getting cheated, but look, if you do the next right thing in your life, and you remain in the place that God has you, He can bring you blessing any way He needs to.

So finally after twenty years, Jacob decides.. well actually God tells him Jacob, go home. And so he gets his kids, he's got all these little kids, right? The oldest is going to be like 19, down to, I don't know how old the youngest was, but presumably a little guy or little gal. He's got his animals and his wealth and his servants and his wives. And he starts heading home, back to where his father's house is. And he gets word that after all this time, after twenty years, guess who's coming: Esau. Esau is on his way to meet Jacob and he's not alone. With him he has four hundred armed men. Why do you think Esau left the land of his father to find Jacob with four hundred armed men? Do you think it was to protect him? Jacob already knows, and yet God has told him to do this thing. God has told him to go back, knowing that this would happen, and so he begins to feel, obviously, very worried. So he has all this wealth now, right? So he's got all this wealth but no soldiers, and all these kids that he's got to protect and these wives that he has to save. And so he comes up with this idea – he splits up his wealth into five sections, and he tells each of them arrive a few hours apart. Go ahead of us to sort of catch Esau, and maybe we can pacify him by giving him gifts. It's a very Jacob way of doing things, right? So first he sends a bunch of goats and servants, and then they go and they see Esau and they're like Esau, hi, I'm Jacob's servant, and he just wants you to know here are some goats. Okay.

And then Esau says, all right, we'll take the goats. And he's like all right let's keep going, keep going, sharpening their spears. And then rams comes, and a guy with a bunch of rams. Esau, hi! Several hours later. Your brother Jacob is looking forward to seeing you and here's some rams. And this keeps happening five times. Camels, then cows, then donkeys, and all day as Esau is marching to murder his brother and his family and steal other stuff, he keeps getting all these gifts and these blessings from his brother. Finally, he hears that Esau is close. And they arrive at the Jabbok River, which is actually the Jordan. It's a tributary to the Jordan. This is kind of what it looks like. This is the actual Jabbok River. And think Jordan, though, because they want you to know the southern part of the Jordan River. Remember in the Bible a lot of really important things happen in the Jordan, particularly crossing the Jordan means something incredible is about to happen in the person's life, usually in their story.

## Jacob Wrestles an Angel

So he helps everyone across, all the kids, all the servants, all the rest of the cattle, and his wives and everybody gets across, and now it's getting really dark and its nighttime, and it says that he sends all of his stuff across, and he's standing on the side of the river and its nighttime, and the scripture says he has nothing and no one. They're all on the other side of the river.

And there he is, he's getting ready to cross, to meet Esau, and to be with his family, and as he's going, he sees a shadowy figure. And he says who's there? No response. He has no weapons, he has no money, he has nothing. Who are you! Leah is that you? No response. Rachel, is that you? Nothing. And then he thinks, Esau? Still nothing. Sir, who are you? No response. He says sir I must get to my family. My wife and my kids, they're on the other side of the river. I must pass you. No response.

Takes a step to the left, the figure takes a step to the left. Takes a step to the right, the figure takes a step to the right. Sir, I need to pass, I need to get to my family. Boom, no. Sir, move, I need to get to my family. No. Out of the way! And right then, they get into this fight. They begin to hold each other, grapple each other, and fight. And this person, whoever it is, will not let Jacob pass. He needs to get to his family, his family's going to be all alone, Esau is going to cut them to ribbons, going to kill them, he's afraid, he's angry. Move! I need to get across. And this angel, God, whatever it is, won't let him go. It says all night they wrestled like this, fighting. All night. I don't know if you've ever been a wrestler. My dad was actually a wrestler in high school, and I think he almost went to the Olympics. He was very good. And wrestling is supposed to be one of the most difficult physical athletic things to do. I think the only thing harder is supposed to be water polo.

So imagine Jacob is doing this punching, grabbing, moving, trying to pass this guy for hours and hours and hours, and something starts to change in the middle of the fight. All of a sudden the dark night, you start to see a little bit of a gleam on the horizon, it looks like the sun is about to come up, and all of a sudden this angel, who is prohibiting Jacob from crossing the river now wants to get away, because the sun is about to come up, and what does Jacob say? No! I won't let you go! So the one who is stopping him from crossing the river, now is trying to let Jacob go, and Jacob won't let him go. You might say that the struggle became an embrace. You might say that what was experienced originally as an obstacle became something that brought Jacob closer to whoever this person was.

They're wrestling and this guy is trying to get away, and so he takes his fingers and he touches Jacob's hip socket. Jacob won't let him go, and what happens, he shrieks pain. This horrible thing happens, still won't let him go. Finally for the first time, this angel or God Himself, we don't know, speaks and says let me go. The sun is coming up. And he says I won't let you go. Let me go. And what does Jacob say? I will not let you go until you bless me. Think about this: Jacob knows who he's wrestling with. All this stuff on his shoulders, all the stuff that he's facing, now he's been injured. He will not let go of God until He blesses him.

And what is His response? He says what is your name? He says my name is Jacob. He says you will no longer be Jacob. So Jacob, the name Jacob, by the way, means the one who grabs the heel. Someone who's always trying to catch everybody and catch up with everyone. Always trying to catch his brother Esau's heel, always trying to catch a blessing, always trying to get ahead and never can. In Hebrew it really means the deceiver, the trickster, the shrewd one. He said you're no longer going to be the trickster, the deceiver, the one who grabs or wrestles with the heel. You are going to be the one who wrestles with God, Israel. That's what Israel means – the one who wrestles or struggles with God, for you have struggled with God and with humans, and you have overcome.

That is the blessing. A new name, a new identity that Jacob himself has now become a new man, one who wrestles with God and with humans for the better. One who sees that the struggle becomes the embrace.

And this angel or God or whoever it is, disappears, and now this guy who used to be so athletic and so young, now looks like an old man. He's got this limp, he's exhausted, he crosses the river and he's still maybe more resolute and determined, and he walks past his herd, and his family, and his kids, and everybody, and he walks to the very front, and on the distance is Esau with all of his violent men. And Jacob just gets closer, and closer, and closer, and like the prodigal son, by the way, you want to hear this when you read the prodigal son: Esau sees him from afar off, runs to him, throws his arms around his brother, kisses him, and they begin weeping. Just like in the story with God, the struggle with his brother becomes an embrace. The struggle becomes an embrace.

The struggle becomes the embrace. The struggle makes you stronger. The struggle makes you stronger, makes your friends and family stronger, it makes your faith stronger.

## Jacob Wrestles an Angel

The struggle makes us stronger. We don't like to struggle. We like to know. We don't like to struggle. We want things to be well. But for Jacob, it's this limp and this experience of struggling that makes him the fulfillment of God's promise and makes his namesake the name of the people themselves – Israel.

By the way, just as an aside, this limp is important for leaders to have. It is the limp that makes you a leader. Imagine for a moment that you were a king or a president, and you are going to war, and you had to pick between two generals. And the military brought before you two guys, and you didn't know anything about them except for how they looked, okay? And you're looking at two guys, and one is in pristine shape, he looks clean and well cut, got a great haircut, beautiful winning smile, and he's like sir, I'm ready to lead the armies. And then there's a guy standing next to him and he's got no leg, he's just like on a thing. He's got a scar across his face, and maybe a hook for his hand. And he looks at you and he says sir, I'm ready to lead the army. Who do you pick? In all honesty, you pick that guy. It's the limp that makes you a leader. It's the scars. It's the lost limbs. It's the experience. It's the suffering that when people look at you, they take you seriously. It's the suffering that makes you qualified to be a difference maker. Nobody wants to suffer. I don't want to suffer. Right? But when we do, we find that it gives us.. there's a deeper gift within that thing and it's that limp, which by the way, Jacob, now Israel will have the rest of his life. He'll always have a pain in his hip, he'll always walk with a limp, but he'll remember where he got it, and he'll remember what it means: that he's qualified to lead.

Okay. All this to say in our relationship with God, as Christians, there are sometimes things that we find that are hard to deal with. We have people in our lives that say it's absolutely this way, and yet we're not sure. We have experiences in our life, we're like God I can't follow a God who. And so like in many of our relationships, instead of wrestling with God, we walk away. And yet the opposite is bad, too. If in your faith you know everything, you've got everything figured out, there's nothing else left to learn, you're in danger, friend. You're in danger of being like the Pharisees of having a type of faith that is rigid. See all of us want to be in one of those two places in our relationship with God. We either want to know everything, or something that we don't know or understand we just want to walk away. And this is what we can learn from our Jewish mothers and fathers is that they constantly live in the struggle with God. Every day! They're always asking questions, going deeper, and they're okay with being in a place of mystery with some things with God. You can be there, too. It might make that western European part of your.. if you're an educated person and you need the facts, and you need to know things, it might make you feel uncomfortable. It does for me, sometimes. But know that Israel, that our people are known as the ones who don't have all the answers about God. We are the ones who struggle with God.

And number two, the same goes for our relationships. Very often in our relationships, we don't like being in a place of struggle. We either yield and just do everything they say, or we walk away, or we enforce ourselves, or we just always want things to be well all the time. Humans don't want to struggle with humans, they just want everything to be well. But if I can teach you anything about friendship, or about marriage, or parenting, what little I do know is this: there is no such thing as an easy relationship. It doesn't exist. The deeper you go with people, the more you have to be willing to be in that place of struggle.

And if you stay in that struggle with your kids, your spouse, with your friends and the people you love, and you don't just walk away, and you don't demand that things have to be well all the time, but you continue to talk and struggle, I believe your struggle will turn into an embrace.

The same goes with God. Don't walk away from the Lord because you're struggling with something. God wants to turn that struggle into an embrace and just watch as you wrestle with Him, He'll bring you to something new and something special in your faith.

Lord, we love you and we thank you, and we ask in Jesus' name for your Holy Spirit. The spirit comforts. Lord, you don't often give us clarity on certain things, but you do give us comfort. And so we ask for that and we receive it. And we pray, Father, that in the struggle we would receive the blessing that you promised. Lord, remember your covenant with your people, I pray in Jesus' name, that they'd be above and not beneath, the head and not the tail, amen.

### BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you peace in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.