

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
www.hourofpower.de

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

BAN:
DE43600501010002894829

BIC:
SOLADEST600

Büro Schweiz:

Hour of Power Schweiz
Poststr. 11
8594 Güttingen
Tel.: 071 690 07 81
info@hourofpower-schweiz.ch
www.hourofpower-schweiz.ch

Spendenkonto:

PostFinance AG, 3030 Bern
Konto: 61-18359-6
BAN:
CH1609000000610183596

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GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Hannah Schuller (HS)

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

HS: Happy Sunday, visitors, and happy Sunday, church family. You know you're probably sick of hearing me say it, but your prayers matter; your prayers are powerful. Keep praying against the coronavirus, keep praying for God to turn hearts toward Him. The world is a different place because of your prayers. Thank you. Thank you.

BS: We really want you to know, too, that during this time when you're feeling kind of bored or lazy or feeling like when is this thing going to be over, you're feeling anxious or frustrated, maybe you're getting in arguments with your roommate or your kids or your spouse or whatever, we want you to know we're all there and we want you to know we're with you, we're thinking about you. We want you to be encouraged during this time, this will pass. And during this time, let's continue to look for the treasures and the deep ways that God can give us new life and new gifting's and help us to actually grow during this time. I know it can happen in your life.

And we also are excited to have Nita Whitaker today, who's here with her daughters, so she'll be singing and blessing us in worship this morning.

Wherever you are, we're just so glad that you're joining us and let's begin this morning with a word of prayer: Father, we thank you so much. We love you and we ask in Jesus' name for your encouraging spirit, Lord, to fall on us and to fill our hearts and our minds with your life and your goodness. Give us a fresh vision and a fresh wind. Help us to discover new things that we can do in our work, in our leisure, in our time together with our family and our meals. Lord, we know that we can discover new fun, exciting things during this time and Lord, we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen. Turn around to the person next to you in the living room, wherever you are, and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – Genesis 32:26-30 – Hannah Schuller

Thank you choir and orchestra. In preparation for the message, Genesis 32:26-30: 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."

Church family, struggling with God is not a bad thing. The struggle can make us stronger. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Wendi Lou Lee (WL) – Bobby Schuller (BS)

{VOICE OVER: Wendi Lou Lee is best known for her role as Baby Grace on the television show, "Little House on the Prairie." In 2015, she was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

While she recovered, she discovered who God truly created her to be, and used her trials to share God's goodness in her life. Her new book, "A Prairie Devotional," connects her life stories with the spiritual life lessons of "Little House on the Prairie." Please welcome, Wendi Lou Lee!}

BS: Wendi, welcome! We're so glad that you're joining us today. How are you?

WL: So good. Thank you for having me today, Bobby.

BS: What a strange time it is in this COVID-19 era. You're in the central coast of California. Normally we'd just have you down here. How are you guys surviving with your family and everything?

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WL: We are doing great, playing lots of backyard volleyball, and games, and ping pong on our kitchen table.

BS: Well it's so cool to finally meet you. You played, of course, we mentioned baby Grace in Little House on the Prairie. I loved that show when I was a kid. We'd watch it, especially when you say home sick from school and stuff on channel 5 and other places. But you spent a lot of time doing that. Do you have any like favorite memories? I'm sure it must be an amazing part of your life.

WL: Yes, we were small on the set we have some memories, but I have to say my best memories are now hanging out with the cast and going to events. We miss the people that are gone, obviously Michael Landon, but being part of the Little House family is just a gift from God, so it's just amazing.

BS: I remember when Michael Landon died in 1991. It really hit a lot of people pretty hard. He passed away of cancer; as I remember it was pretty quick. You were obviously just a kid when that happened, but what was that experience like for you? That must have been traumatic.

WL: I was in junior high, and we didn't have any contact with the cast, so we knew that it had happened, but it was kind of like a long lost uncle dying, which sounds terrible but we just weren't in contact with everyone, so that didn't happen until gosh, oh I don't know, 15 years later when I was an adult, that's when I got back into contact with the cast.

BS: Yes, sure. So what was your life like, I mean, after you were on Little House and you have part of this amazing show, big show, did you keep acting, and what did you do sort of after that?

WL: Well we did one commercial, and when we went through the day of shooting and after the day was over, my mom was like no, we are not doing this.

BS: That was it!

WL: Yes, we graduated from acting, and pursued kindergarten, so that was where our acting career ended and besides church musicals and singing in the choir that was pretty much all we did.

BS: Yes, I guess you were young enough, too, did you care? I mean you probably didn't even really care at that age, or did you, I don't know.

WL: It was like your mom saying we're not going to the park today. Okay. We were so young.

BS: Well as you grew into adulthood, I know you have a very strong faith and you love the Lord and it's been an important part of your life and your family, and I'm sure that was an important part when in 2015 you were diagnosed with a brain tumor. Tell us about what that was like and going through that difficult time.

WL: It started off with just really terrible headaches and dizziness and confusion and then I finally six weeks later got an MRI showing the tumor, and I just remember the day that I found out saying God, I don't know what you're going to do with this, but you're going to do something and I just hope that you'll give me the chance to be alive to share the story. And by the grace of God, He has given me the chance to just share with people and engage with Little House fans, mostly, but other people, too, and just explain how good God is and how His grace is just overwhelming. So yes, it's been an amazing journey.

BS: I mean how do you experience God's grace when I'm sure you must have been full of worry and at least anxiety and you're thinking about your kids and your life and your dreams that are unfulfilled: will I ever get to do this or that? How do you get God to do what He did in your life? How do you find that peace? How do you navigate through times like that?

WL: I think that those six weeks that were super hard for me, I was just on my knees and I was just begging God to just be with me. And so then when I found out the news, I honestly was not scared. I was so relieved and so thankful that there was something that could be done, and it was really just clinging to God and saying okay Lord, whatever happens, no matter what you bring out of this surgery, you're with me. And I had so much peace, like the peace that passes understanding like I can't explain it any other way. That was really what got me through. And yes it was hard for my kids; they were eight and eleven at the time and those are hard conversations to have, but they knew that I was strong in my faith and that I believed that God was going to do whatever His will was.

BS: Do you give any advice, I mean, we're going to talk about your devotional here in a second, but do you give any advice to, I mean, somebody that right now has to face some kind of bad surgery, or some kind of scary thing, and they know the Lord, they love the Lord, but what advice would you give to someone like that?

WL: I guess I would say that God works best in our most uncomfortable moments, and this is one of those moments. We have to just focus on that God has a plan, and He is bringing people to Himself. And when we go through hard moments like in my brain surgery, that was what was happening. I was drawn near to God and He was using that story to bring others closer to Him.

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And that's what's happening now. I'm just praying for revival in our hearts, in our churches, and for revival to sweep across this nation and this world because people need Jesus more than anything else.

BS: A lot of people like to have devotional times in the morning, I know I do, reading my Bible, but sometimes you kind of wish you had something along with that, and that's why devotionals, I think, are so important and useful because you can read it alongside with your Bible and it can be these encouraging times, just a great way to reframe the day. And I love the devotional, The Prairie Devotional that you just released. I'd love for you to just share with our viewers, especially those who liked Little House on the Prairie, but really it's great for anybody, why you put this together and what you hope they get from your Prairie Devotional.

WL: Well my devotional is really a collection of stories from my life and from the episodes of Little House, and it's really just about the ups and downs that we all face, and how God just walks with us through every joy and every sorrow. Little House on the Prairie has so many Biblical truths just hidden inside, and every single devotional is focused on a quote from the show, and then it relates to a story from my life and tries to just encourage you and inspire you to live with hope and peace and joy, knowing that God is in control.

BS: Amen. Wendi Lou Lee, thank you so much for joining us. I know this is a bizarre way to do a television interview, but we have lots of people out there that are watching you. We loved watching you as Baby Grace in Little House on the Prairie, and want to encourage anybody who is looking for a great devotional to get A Prairie Devotional. Thank you so much. Stay safe out there. God bless you.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

For those of you that are home and are with us, if you want you can stand. We're going to say this creed together. 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.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "You Shall be Called Israel"

Well today we're talking about that struggle because we're talking about names. We're in a name series, and how God gives us certain names. There are lots and lots of names that God gives His people, but I'm going to talk over the next few weeks about the Biblical ones that I think are the most powerful. Last week we talked about Paul, how he chose the name Paul for himself to remind himself of his calling. Today we're going to talk about the name of God's people, which is Israel, and how one man named Jacob was given this name after a whole long life of struggle and trial.

Maybe you feel today like you're struggling. Maybe you're struggling with your faith. Maybe you're wondering why God isn't answering your prayer. Maybe you're struggling in your marriage. Maybe you're struggling with friendships. You're so busy with work it's so hard to keep even a couple good friends. Maybe you're struggling with parenting. Maybe you're struggling with grand-parenting.

The thing I want to tell you today is this: that God calls us the people who struggle. Israel means he or she, the one who struggles with God. That God wants us to be the kind of people who struggle because He knows when we struggle, we get stronger. When you struggle with God rather than always having the right answers and never asking any questions; when you struggle with God, your faith increases. When you struggle with your spouse in a godly way, your marriage gets better.

When you struggle with your kids over time, your relationship with your kids and your friends and your colleagues at work, those struggles that we go through, it's so tempting because they can be exhausting and tiring, to want to withdraw or to not deal with it or to just ignore it. But the truth is that when we struggle in our organizations, in our family units and in our faith, if we do it in a godly way, those struggles can actually make our relationship stronger, deeper, more meaningful and more joyful.

Our world is not one that likes to struggle much anymore. Technology has afforded us ways in which we can escape struggles, various struggles and how we can have total independence from other people. But as we do that, we find that something's missing in our life. And I think what's missing is the willingness to take the weeks, months and years it takes to go deep in our relationships, deep in our faith, deep in our business, deep in our organizations, that those struggles are important.

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They make us stronger. They make us stronger and they make us closer and they help us go deeper with one another. The struggle makes our relationships stronger.

I remember back in the day I had this wonderful neighbor, really nice good looking man, married, very happy, and he came over to my house because he knew I was a pastor and he was weeping: his wife had left him and he didn't understand why she left him. They never fought, he said. Everything was going fine, he said, and one day he woke up and she was gone and she wasn't coming back. You know what I heard when I listened to that is maybe they had some underlining things they hadn't discussed. Maybe he thought they were happy, but she wasn't happy and she was bottling it up. Maybe they didn't struggle enough. That's not a judgment, I felt very bad for the man and I feel bad for anybody that's going through this, but if I've learned anything about relationships is that those struggles, even though they can be uncomfortable, if we can do them in a godly, loving, empathetic way, they can be so life-giving, even though they can be exhausting and painful.

This is true in our businesses. Businesses that struggle are businesses that get stronger. Businesses that sit on their laurels and stop being motivated and stop working for things are businesses that go out of business. And in our faith, when we struggle in our faith, it's a good thing.

I remember when I went to Fuller Theological Seminary to train to be a minister, I went there and I knew everything. I mean I went kicking and screaming. The only reason I went to seminary was not to learn, it was to just get an ordination so I could pastor a church. I mean I remember flatly looking, I think it was at Glenn DeMaster, one of our pastors here, and said I've got the Bible! This is the only education I need. Which is in part true, I mean you know how much I love the Bible, but gosh I remember going to seminary and I would say something that I thought was a hundred percent true, and I had all these questions coming at me from my peers, respectfully, and I did not have answers to those questions.

And I look back at so many pastors and leaders who maybe have not been willing to allow some of their suppositions to be challenged, to think, to study, to work through difficult things within the faith, and I watch how many of them one day they just collapse. They just leave the faith because they have these doubts and these things; they just bury it and they don't ever ask. They feel like maybe they don't want to hear the answer like they'll lose their faith if they get the answer.

And gosh, I just got to tell you, I'm so grateful that my peers forced me to go through a four year struggle in a seminary. I went in knowing everything and I came out knowing a little and I think that that was a really good experience for me.

All this to say you don't want to be struggling right now, you don't want to be struggling in your work, you don't want to have all those emotions and those feelings and you don't know what to do, and I just want to say this: God calls you Israel – the one who struggles with God and man but will overcome. You will overcome! And when you overcome, you'll look back and say I'm glad I went through that. I know my husband better now. I know my kids better. I know my wife better. I know my colleagues better. I know my business better. I know my trade better. And I know my God better. And I'm glad, Lord, that you call me not the one who struggles with man, not the one who struggles with evil, you call me the one who struggles with God. And I want you to know that that struggle you have with God will become an embrace. We'll get to that.

You've probably guessed I'm going to preach about Jacob again. I love the story of Jacob. It goes over chapters and chapters and I'm going to try and mention some things maybe that I didn't in my sermon last fall, but Jacob is the man who becomes Israel.

He's born Jacob, but he dies people calling him Israel. That's his actual name and that's where the nation and the people of Israel get their name from because they're all his descendants.

It must have been interesting to witness if you were a midwife or a doctor to witness Jacob's birth. Jacob was a fraternal twin, and he was the second one to come out. Hannah's brothers are twins, and they joke about how one is several seconds or minutes older than the other. Which one came out first, by the way? Was it Michael or Gabriel? Michael came out first. That's why he's a little more buff. It's like Esau and Jacob.

So when Esau and Jacob are being born, Esau comes out first and the Bible says that he's red and hairy, which would already been kind of crazy to see a hairy baby. Now we don't know if that just means he had a hairy head. I like to think of him as a giant fur ball, but that's probably not true. But we'll just hope it is. So Esau comes out this red hairy baby and as they're pulling him out, and the feet start to come out, there is another hand coming out. Remember back then, they didn't know if you're going to have twins or not. Twins was always a surprise.

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So when they saw that second hand come out, literally grabbing the heel, the foot of Esau; Esau, by the way means hairy, that's literally what the word Esau means, they see this other baby come out, and they named him grabs the heel – that's what Jacob means – grabs the heel.

Now unfortunately for Jacob, grabs the heel is also a saying that means like you're a trickster or you're deceptive or you're going to fool people. And so he carries this name, it literally means grabs the heel, but it's a colloquialism for being a trickster. So every time they see his brother like hey hairy, hey trickster. And this kind of epitomizes a lot of Jacob's early life.

Jacob and Esau are twins but they are fraternal twins. It says that Esau is a man of the field. He loves to hunt. He's buff. I said before he reminds me of like picture Gaston from Beauty and the Beast. (SINGS: I eat five dozen eggs every morning to help me get large. But now that I'm grown I eat ten dozen eggs so I'm roughly the size of a barge.) There's nobody here to make this feel less awkward. Okay, we got three people over here clapping and I'm singing to my daughter, if you're wondering who I was looking at. That was what Gaston sings in Beauty and the Beast. He's a big buff oaf. He's an oaf.

So this is how Esau is. Esau's brother Jacob is the opposite of that. He's clearly strong, but he's kind of a nerd. It says he loves to dwell in tents and he loves to read books, and so picture the classic nerd jock combo. They love each other, but they're just very different. They see things differently, and they fight a lot. And there's this sibling rivalry. Remember they're the exact same age. They were conceived at the exact same time. They were born seconds apart, but because of that one thing: because one baby came out before the other, that blessing that was given to Abraham and to Isaac is going to go to Esau. It's going to be Abraham, Isaac and Esau, and Esau's people, his kids are going to be the one who are going to carry the promise. He's going to inherit his father's wealth. He's going to become like a tribal chieftain to this very large powerful family and this has to gnaw away at Jacob.

You've heard this story before, but there are two parts where Jacob basically steals; he would say that he trades for it. So the first is Esau comes home from a long hunt and he's starving, and he sells his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew. Now this had to be an awesome thing for Jacob, but this is an important part of the story: do you think Jacob really felt like he got it then? I mean his brother sold him the birthright, so that means that now it's going to be Jacob and not Esau who receives that promise. But nobody's confirmed it, nobody's approved it. Did anybody witness it? Was it Jacob's word against Esau's?

And so the tale goes on that on his deathbed Isaac is blind and he can't see, and so when Esau is gone, Jacob dresses up in like furry skins and gets the blessing from Isaac. But even after he receives that and Isaac even affirms, the blessing goes to Jacob now and not Esau, do you think that Jacob really felt like he received the blessing? The Bible says that not only was Esau the first born, but Esau was actually the dad's favorite. How does that feel? To be Jacob and to know that your oaf dumb jock brother is going to lead this great nation, and that your father loves him more than he loves you; that your father is going to bless him and not you. And that the blessing he got, he only got because he tricked his father. How does that feel, I wonder, for Jacob?

Jacob gets two blessings. First the birthright, then the blessing but they're both blessings, and because of that, things start to get a little worse. And Esau finding out that he stole this blessing from his dad goes crazy and decides he's going to go after Jacob and kill him and string him up and take his blessing back.

And when Jacob finds out about this, he runs and he ends up in the middle of nowhere with nothing. With no one on his side, running for his life. Do you think he felt like he had God's blessing in that moment? Do you think he felt like he was going to enter into a birthright when he's running to Mesopotamia in the middle of nowhere, far away from home, running for his life? It's hard to believe in the blessing when you're down to nothing.

Maybe you're down to nothing. Maybe you received a word from God and God put this promise in your heart, but it feels like everything's going the opposite way of the way it should. Maybe right now you're struggling with God over that. I want you to know that's okay. Keep struggling.

The story goes like this that in the middle of nowhere on a road; not even on a road, it's the middle of some part of the desert, Jacob wants to go to bed and so he lays flat on the ground and what does he use for a pillow? A rock. Puts his head on a giant rock, falls asleep, and it says that in his dream, this vision of heaven appears to him. I always wonder what this would look like. There's this place in China in the Hunan province that I've always wanted to go to called a stairway to heaven. It looks like this. Its 999 steps into this natural portal.

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Maybe it looked like that, I don't know but it's this image of God sitting on the throne atop that stairway with angels going up and down the stairway. This is the vision that Jacob gets.

What do you think that meant to Jacob? I think it means that God is saying even though you can't see it, I'm doing stuff in the spirit realm; I'm doing stuff in the invisible part of the world; I'm doing things you don't see. I'm acting on your behalf. And even up to this point, Jacob got the blessing from his brother, he got the blessing from his dad, but he'd never had it confirmed and this is where God finally says in the stairway to heaven, from the top of the stairs, He says: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth. You will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and I will watch over you wherever you go. And I will bring you back to this land and I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Wow. Now it's affirmed in God that he will be the one that will carry on the blessing. Okay, I just want to pause here for a moment because this is so important. When we read any story, when you open up your favorite novel and you get to that point in the story where there's the fight or they're down to nothing, or they have nothing, we have this sort of reader's bias, especially with the Bible because we know how this story ends, most of us.

Jacob doesn't have that luxury. He's gotten three blessings, he's in the middle of the wilderness, he's running for his life, and you'd think that this vision he has from a stairway of heaven means things are going to start turning around, things are looking up. A wagon's going to come by with a bunch of food in it, or something's going to happen.

And let me tell you, friend, after Jacob receives the blessing, things get worse! That's a common theme. He receives a blessing and everything gets worse. Everything seems to go in the opposite direction of what the blessing promises. This is a common theme in the Bible, by the way. When Abraham was given the promise, he was 75-years-old. When Abraham received the promise, he was 100-years-old! That's 25 years! When Joseph receives his dream, he's almost immediately sold into slavery by his brothers and goes to prison and has all this horrible stuff happen to him.

Maybe you're thinking of Jesus. What about Jesus? He just healed people immediately. But those people had been praying to God for a long time. The bleeding woman who received her miracle was praying for 12 years. The blind man had been blind his whole life praying that God would heal him. The man at the pool of Bethesda had been there for several years and had never been able to get in. Even Lazarus, when they asked Jesus to come, they wanted Him to pray for Lazarus because Lazarus was sick, and by the time Jesus got there, he'd been dead for enough days that they Bible says "he stinketh."

And this is my point: I believe that when we receive the word from God, sometimes things will get worse before they get better. I don't know why. My suspicion is is that Satan wants to destroy the seed before its really taken root so that it can't grow into this strong thing. And that's why if you're in the middle of a struggle right now, it's so important that you stay the course. That you keep fighting. That just because you're struggling with God doesn't mean that God hates you or God is cursing you or God is punishing you. The struggle with God is the very thing that makes your faith stronger.

The struggles with our spouse and our friends and our family and our business and our ministry and all of those things, those struggles that we face, we endure them so they can be stronger. We struggle with them so they can become a deeper embrace, a deeper thing.

And I want you to know whatever it is you're going through, I know you're going through a lot, God sees it, but He cares about you and He loves you, and He wants you to know you're going to get through this. It might be some time, but when you get through the struggle with victory, with overcoming and you look back, you'll know that God was with you the whole way. You'll know that like those angels going up and down the stairway, that God was doing things in invisible places behind the scenes with different people maybe you haven't even met yet in order that all of this would come to fruition for victory for you. That's what I believe. It's good to struggle with God. It's good to struggle.

Not all the time. We should rest and have joy in life, but there are moments in life when we struggle and that struggle has a meaning, it has a purpose, it has a reason, and we don't know always know, and we don't always know how long it will be. In Jacob's case, after he receives the blessing, it will be 20 years before the blessing is fulfilled. He's going to be tricked into a fake marriage. Can you imagine being tricked into a marriage? In those days, you can't get out of it.

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He did seven years of hard labor to marry this one girl, and then got tricked into marrying another girl, so then did another seven years of hard labor to marry the other girl.

And this is how it went on and on, and after 20 years passes, Jacob started to see that blessing come to pass. He's had several children, and now he has money and he has cattle and he's basically become a very wealthy man over the 20 years, but it just didn't start that way. It took 20 years of difficult trial.

Eventually God tells Isaac now probably around 40-years-old he can go home. And he's got all this stuff and all of this family and he's got his own tribe, and this will be the tribe of Israel; this will be Jesus' great, great, great, great, great, great grandparents. It's his family and now God says to Jacob you can come home. And Jacob comes home and he's about to cross the Jabbok, really the Jordan River into Israel and he sends everyone across and it must take forever to get all the supplies and the wagons and the kids and all these people and servants and stuff, to get them across to the other side.

And Jacob has sent everybody aside and it's starting to get dark, and finally they're all across and he's about to cross, it's dark now, nighttime, maybe it's moonlit, and he sees a shadowy figure and he doesn't know who it is. He wonders is it his brother Esau or maybe it's his father-in-law. Maybe it's Laban. Who is this guy? And he tries to get past and this stranger won't let him, and they clash, and they just begin to fight. Jacob, as he was in Bethel when he saw the stairway, has nothing and no one, nobody know he's struggling, they've already gone across, they've gone ahead of him, they're wondering where he is, and he's at the ford of the river fighting to get across, fighting to get to his family, fighting to get home and keeps wrestling with this man. It's a famous image.

They keep wrestling and wrestling and where first this man who's fighting Jacob seems stronger, it almost seems like Jacob is just the strong or stronger than the man he's fighting, to the point where this man touches his hip and Jacob writhes in pain, and still is clinging on to him. And this man says to him – let me go! And what does Jacob say? No! Not until you bless me! Jacob knows who he's fighting, it's God.

What an amazing story – wrestling with God or with an angel, all night. And something happens where it's like all of the pain, all of the trial, all of the struggle it comes to this point where Jacob finally gets to say you're going to bless me! I'm not going to struggle anymore. You're going to come through for me! First it's let me go across, now it's I'm not letting YOU go! And the man says the sun is coming up. I think what that means is if Jacob sees him, he'll die. The Bible says you can't see God and live. I don't know. It's just me guessing.

But he says let me go and Jacob says not until you bless me. And God says to him what's your name? Remember: God knows his name. He wants him to say it out loud. He says I'm Jacob! I'm a trickster! I'm a deceiver! I'm one who struggles with the heel. I grab the heel. And God looks at him, not anymore. God looks at him and He says not anymore. You're not that guy anymore. You're not him. Today I'm giving you a new name and your name is Israel, which means struggles with God. Your name is Israel because you have struggled with God and you have struggled with man, and you have overcome.

I want to encourage you today, maybe you're struggling with God or you're struggling with your neighbor, or you're struggling with this or that. You're Israel. You struggle with God, you struggle with man, but you will overcome in Jesus' name.

What does it mean to struggle with God and overcome? That doesn't seem theologically right. What's that about? I once heard a rabbi say that the most important thing we learn from this story, and there's a lot of important things, is one: that Jacob was struggling with God his whole life. Struggling with a sense of worth, struggling with a sense of value, but that the struggle became an embrace. That the struggle turned from fighting and arguing to holding one another, to blessing, to hugging, and that's what the struggle does in our life. That's what it does when we struggle with the people we love, whether it's God or a neighbor or our family or our friends.

When we struggle the way God calls us to struggle, those struggles become embraces. I know from personal experience with my family and my friends that if we can approach those struggles the right way, God uses those struggles to deepen our relationships. He uses those struggles to make us better leaders. He uses those struggles to make us better parents and better friends. And whatever you're going through, I know your struggle is difficult right now, stick with it and watch how God will turn your struggles into an embrace.

You Shall be Called Israel

There's no such thing as an easy relationship. You know that, right? The easiest relationship is the shallow relationship. The deeper relationship goes, the more difficult it becomes, but the more worth it becomes. That's a promise.

So I just want to say this: whether it's in your faith or in your business, or like I said, your faith, your struggles with God, or maybe it's in your family or your friends, keep struggling. Keep struggling. Don't give into the temptation to always withdraw. Be like Jacob where you continue to press, continue to move forward because friend, let me tell you this: you are Israel. You are Israel. You are Israel; the one who struggles with God and with man and the one who overcomes, amen.

Father, we thank you that you've given us such a name. Not that we struggle with evil, not that we struggle with hell, but that we struggle with you! Lord, we thank you that you will fight evil, that you will fight hell, that we are supposed to fight with you, to argue with you, to wrestle with you, and that that wrestling, Lord, will become an embrace; that the doubt will become faith, that the heartache will become healing, that the weeping will become joy, that the loss will become victory. Lord, I thank you and I just pray over everyone under the sound of my voice that you would heal, that you would encourage, that you would lift up, that you would affirm in us your blessing, that you would help us to understand that even though we're going through the valley, that the victory is coming, and Lord we love you and we thank you. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Just a reminder, please continue to support our church so we can hit the ground running when the doors open again. We need your support now more than ever, and we appreciate those of you who have already made gifts, we appreciate it so, so much.

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.