

READINGS

And Jacob arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when [the Man] saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And [the Man] said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But Jacob said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!” So He said to him, “What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.” And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.” Then Jacob asked, saying, “Tell me Your name, I pray.” And He said, “Why is it that you ask about My name?” And He blessed him there. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: “For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”

Genesis 32:22-30

“And a man wrestled with him” symbolizes a time when truth is tested. This can be seen from the symbolism of *wrestling* as a test or trial. Spiritual trial is nothing less than a struggle or fight, because it is an attack on truth by evil spirits and a defense by the angels with us. Our awareness of that struggle is the trial. We cannot undergo times of trial unless we have a love or desire for truth. If we do not love or desire truth as we know it, we do not care about it; but if we do love it, we are anxious that it not be harmed. The life of our intellect consists solely in what we believe to be true, and the life of our will, in what we have convinced ourselves is good. An attack on what we consider true is an attack on the life of our intellect, and an attack on what we are sure is good is an attack on the life of our will. When we are being tested, then, it is our life that is at stake.

Secrets of Heaven 4274

All trials target the love we feel. The severity of the trial matches the nobility of the love. If love is not the target, there is no trial.

Secrets of Heaven 1690

Struggling
January 28, 2024
Rev. Derek Elphick

Lord, it is Good 50
Lead Us and Guide Us, Lord 6
Becoming an Angel 153
(Children Light Candles)
Joy is Like the Rain 80
Welcome
Opening Prayer
The Blessing Song 71
Opening of the Word
Readings and Talk
Bind Us Together 103
Lord’s Prayer
Benediction
You are the Potter 81
Offertory
(Children put out the Candles)
Discussion
Closing of the Word
Please join us on Zoom
at 11:00am Sunday for a discussion.

Interested in helping out? We need you!
Helping roles include set up/clean up, ushering, greeting, refreshments, acting and lay reading.
Contact Nina at nina.deweese@brynathynchurch.org.

Please note: This service is livestreamed and recorded. You and your family may be on camera, and your comments will be part of the livestream and recording.
Musicians: Robin Bier, Shawn Rose, Scott Russell
Sound/Video: Levi McFall

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. God doesn’t want us to struggle so why does it happen?
2. What is the purpose of our struggles?
3. Was Jacob struggling *against* God or struggling *with* God? Is there a difference?
4. We’re all “hard-wired” to avoid pain so should we avoid pain at all costs?
5. Can pain ever be useful?
6. Why do we say, “lead us not into temptation?”
7. “All trials target the love we feel” (AC 1690). Is that a comforting or distressing idea to you?
8. Why does the Lord identify our private struggles as “blessings” (see Ten Blessings – Matthew 5)?