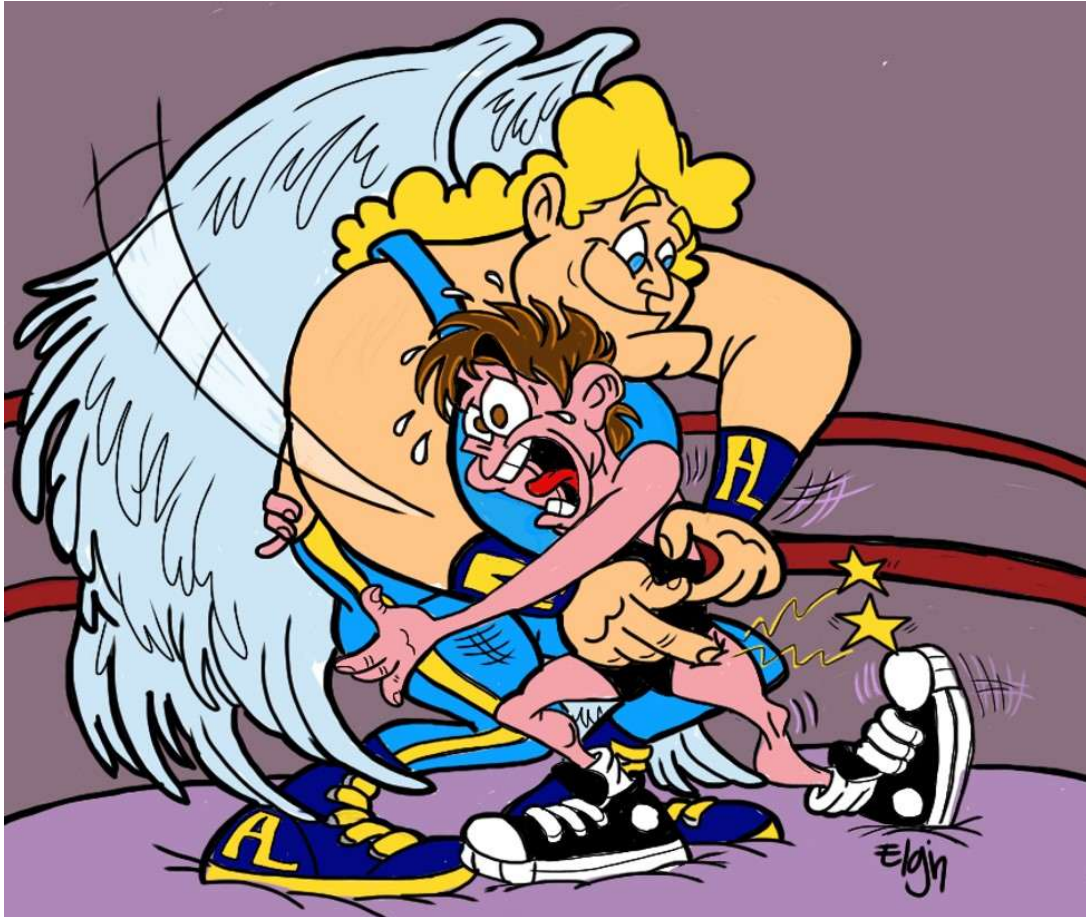


Bringing it Home For Sunday, August 2, 2026

By Allison de Kanel



In today's reading from the Old Testament, Jacob wrestled with a stranger in the middle of the night. This story wasn't about a dream. We know this because the stranger dislocated Jacob's hip, and afterwards Jacob limped.

The stranger gave Jacob a new name, Israel. Israel means "one who struggles with God." So Jacob realized that the stranger was actually God. Jacob, now called Israel, was astonished because he had seen God face-to-face and survived.

In Jacob's time, everyone knew that God was so holy and so powerful that looking at him would kill you. It would be like trying to look straight at the Sun during an eclipse. It's just too dangerous.

But something changed when Jesus was born. Jesus was God AND he was a real human being. It wasn't dangerous to look at him.

Jesus was just as holy and powerful as God always was. He did amazing things that only God could do. But he was also someone you could sit down with to share a meal. And you could talk to him like you'd talk to any friend.

Even after Jesus died and rose from death and ascended to heaven -- even after all that, Jesus is still someone we can sit down with, and share a meal with, and talk to like a friend.

Sometimes we have to wrestle with him, too, when we are worried or upset or angry about something. That's okay, because nothing we say or do can keep him from loving us.

Let's pray. Dear Jesus, thank you for being my best friend. Thank you for listening to my prayers. Help me to listen to you. Amen.

Today's Bible Reading: Genesis 32:22-31

The same night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip.

Illustration from ministry-to-children.com.