

The Mark of God On Your Life

by Malachi O'Brien

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God, drawing parallels between Jacob's wrestling with God in Genesis and Jesus' struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane. It challenges men to prioritize seeking God's presence above all else, highlighting the need for deep prayer, sacrifice, and a life marked by God. The message encourages extreme actions like all-night prayer, physical challenges, and deep gratitude for life's struggles, leading to a life of surrender and faith.

Scripture: Genesis 32:24, Matthew 26:36, Psalms 24:6, Psalms 24:6

Topics: "Surrender", "Seeking God's Presence"

Description

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Transcript

Genesis 32. I'm going to take you into really, this really perplexing story that's actually a foreshadowing of a greater wrestling match that would take place in a garden with our savior. This story that we're given just limited detail, so we have to kind of try to piece some things together, but it really is just this odd story of Jacob wrestling with God.

I want to talk to you about the mark of God on your life, because we have a desperate need to be men marked by the presence of God. I'll tell you this right now, the number one thing we need is not a new book, it's not a new sermon, it's not to grow a podcast, it's not to grow a YouTube channel, and I'm for all of those things. Our greatest need is Jesus Christ.

He is our greatest need. You will forget this message. You'll forget me.

There'll be a lot of better, more dynamic preachers after me, but I do not want you to ever forget this fact that your greatest need is the manifest presence of God on your life, and the only way that will come is if you end up having the same kind of wrestling match that Jacob had with God. There are no shortcuts to being used by God. If you want to be used by Jesus Christ, you have to experience the same thing Jesus Christ experienced.

He experienced betrayal. He experienced being lied about. He experienced even one of his own turning on him.

We want there to be this easy path to greatness, but there is no greatness apart from Jesus Christ, and we are only great the more that we are like our Savior. We are like Satan when we operate in pride and division and attack. One of the reasons I'm so passionate about unity, and let me just, this is a sidebar note, I don't want to spend too much time on this because I only have so much time, because Joseph Z is coming, and then David Harrison is coming, so I'll get out of their way, all right? But here's my thought on unity, Pastor Greg.

Jesus prayed for oneness. Unity and oneness are a little different. Unity presupposes we got to find something we can agree on, then hold pinkies and hope that the other person doesn't major on that thing that we don't really like about them, you know? For Baptists, it was normally, okay, we'll work with those Charismatics, but they better not, better not pray in tongues at this citywide gathering we're doing.

Can you imagine Charismatics going, hey Baptists, we're going to unite with you, but you better not open that Bible, you know? I mean, and so we, and so unity has this, it's this man-made idea of like linking pinkies and just hoping, hoping that we can somehow have a photo op of unity, but oneness that Jesus prayed for starts from a different point. It starts from the idea that we're not separate, we're already one, and the thing that we come together around is the person who made us one, and so we need oneness around Jesus Christ, and when you find people on fire for Jesus, I would be their friend, I'd be their best friend if I was you, because that's what we need. People that fight against oneness are people that want to be Jesus, not let him be Jesus, okay? That's what we need.

So fight, and to have this, you have to believe the best in other people as far as they're pushing after Jesus Christ. So in this story of Jacob wrestling with God, if you know anything about the life of Jacob, his entire life was this wrestling match. I mean, it started in the womb.

I mean, Esau and Jacob were twins, although they came out, they didn't look like twins, okay? Esau came out looking like the Rock, and Jacob came out looking like Dwight from the office, okay? And they were two totally different people, all right? And even in the womb, Jacob, he grabbed the heel of his brother, that's why his name literally means the supplanter, the trickster, the one who is gonna kind of, you know, sneak around and get the best of you, and then names have meaning in the Bible. And so his entire life's a wrestling match, and then you find early on that he ends up tricking, it was tricky, he tricks his brother, Joseph, is it good to see you, my brother? I love you, I love you, I love you. I'm gonna give this guy like a high five, because I love this guy, amen, amen.

Let me tell you guys this. So Jacob, again, he tricks his brother into getting the birthright. I mean, he could have just, I'm presupposing you know the story, but he could have just given his brother the stew and not taken the birthright.

But that's not how Jacob rolls. Jacob's like, ah, he's hungry, he's weak, I'm gonna get what I want. Because Jacob didn't care about his brother, he didn't care about his parents, he just wanted it all for himself.

Now the lesson about Esau is this, don't sell your birthright for a stew of convenience. The enemy will try to steal your birthright by getting you to compromise in little things that make you feel good in the moment. Don't do that.

So then you move on later in his life, and then his mom gets involved, and his father is going to give the blessing. Now all of this is in the providence of God. Okay, so I look at this and go, this is a weird story, and this would be a weird marriage situation.

You just don't really find the best pictures of marriage in the book of Genesis exactly. I mean, there's a lot of things I don't understand, you know, two wives. I mean, I mean, my first wife and I are doing great, okay, and I don't intend on having a second wife.

I used to call her my former girlfriend, but that's really, it's true, but it makes for an awkward conversation in the car on the ride home, okay. And so there you are, the father's going to give the blessing, so as his son, Esau, goes out in the field to go bring some meat for his dad, the mom gets in and says, hey, we're going to play a trick on your dad. Not good.

And so she gets him to dress up like the brother, and he can't talk like the brother, but he dresses like the brother, goes in and steals the inheritance, the blessing of the firstborn. All of his life, he was wrestling to get what he wanted all about him, and then he escapes. He goes away, and then he works for his father-in-law, Laban.

I'm just going to fast forward the story, but even that season of his life was a season of wrestling, a season of tricking and being tricked, okay. Jacob was cunning. He was shrewd.

He was a trickster, but those were not the greatest wrestling matches that would ever take place in his life. There was one that was coming that would forever change his life and his destiny in God, and this is the wrestling match that if you want to be used by God, you yourself are going to have to enter into. You're going to have to enter into that ring.

So we come to this story in Genesis chapter number 32, and I want to just fast forward the story here, but Jacob has left his father-in-law. He's going out to meet his brother Esau, and he's terrified because Esau said, if you ever show back up here, I'll kill you. I'll kill you, and so Jacob, even though all these things have happened, he is deathly afraid, and so he's making his way back home, and he gets a report that his brother's coming with 400 men.

He's like, this is not good. I'm sure he pictured like the movie 300, and these Spartans coming for him. He's like, this isn't going to end well, and so Jacob's like, okay, what do I do? What do I do? Because he could always trick his way out of something.

He could always make a plan, and he kind of tries that here. He's like, okay, here's what we do. We're going to divide.

We're into two camps, and I'll send the first camp ahead, and if you get wiped out, the rest can escape. How would you have liked to have been like, the guy says, all right, you're in the first camp, and you're in the second camp. Go, but wait, wait a second.

I thought you said the first camp you killed, you know. I mean, he's trying to make this plan, and so then he prays, but he prays a prayer that we pray oftentimes before we end up having our wrestling match with God, and again, I'm trying to provoke you into something here, the mark of God. This is what he says here in verse 9. Then Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord has said to me, return to your country and to your family, and I will deal with you.

He goes, I'm not worthy of the least of your mercies and the truth you've shown your servant, for I crossed over this door with my staff, and now I have two companions. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, for Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. He says, for you said, I will treat you well and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for the multitude.

Now, this was what he prayed after he devised his plan to go first, because oftentimes we pray, but we have another plan in mind in case the prayer doesn't go through to heaven. God needs to deliver us from our plans and our strategies. He's like, okay, God, you said this, but I got this other thing going on over here.

God will always bring you to the end of yourself and your plans and your strength and your wisdom and your connections and your platforms and everything so he can bring you to him. If you want to be used by God, and I believe every single man in this room wants to be used by God. I believe every man in this room wants their sons and daughters to be used by God and their grandsons and their granddaughters to be used by God.

Hear me out, young people. There's no other way than going face to face in the ring with God himself. And so here we go.

Now, fast forward down to verse 22. He sends his wife, his wives. I don't recommend two wives for what it's worth.

One. Verse 22. This again, we only get bits and pieces of this, but it says, and he arose that night and took his two wives, his female servants, his 11 sons, and crossed over the river of Jebok.

He took them and sent them over the brook. And here's very clear. He sent over what he had.

Then Jacob was left alone. Here it is. Jacob has come to a point.

He is afraid. I mean, he is distressed. He cannot sleep.

I mean, he is terrified. I mean, the description of him being distressed is like it's consuming him. It's crushing him.

But he got to a point where he said, okay, I don't have anything. He sends everybody ahead. At this point, having all the livestock, all the money, all the goat, all the cattle, that wasn't going to work for him here.

Having 11 awesome kids wasn't going to work for him there. He realized that what I have will not get me to where I need to go. But there is one who can get me where I need to go.

There is something that your bank account or someone your bank account cannot get you to. And that your status cannot get you to. And what your answered prayers of a month ago cannot get you to.

That only God himself can get you to. So Jacob is now, and the Bible is very clear, he is all alone. Your greatest encounters with God himself will come when you are all alone.

All alone. You have nothing else. You have no other plans.

You have no other strategies. Everything else is gone. There is plan A, because there is no plan B. The boats have been burned.

And that's where he is right now. He is all alone. He's terrified.

And we're just giving snapshots of this story, but I just picture Jacob there. It's nighttime. Thinking about his brother.

Yeah, I shouldn't have stole the birth right. Bad move. I shouldn't have stole the blessing from dad.

That was bad. I'm dead. But he prayed a prayer.

You might forget some of the prayers that you have prayed in the past, but I promise you God has not. And there comes moments that those seeds take root, and they begin to flourish. And God's like, all right.

All right, boy. You prayed. Now, I'm going to answer.

And I can just picture Jacob there that night, sitting by the river, and all of a sudden, he sees this person approaching him. And I wonder if he's thinking, I wonder if that's Esau. No, Esau, he was the rock.

He was much bigger. Okay, it's not Esau. Who is this? And I can picture as this person gets closer, he can see something in this person's eyes.

The Bible just tells us this person's called The Man. Like, that's a wrestling name. The Man.

But if you look in your Bibles, it's a capital M. And later on the Old Testament, it'll tell us that Jacob wrestled with God himself. So here comes The Man coming towards Jacob. Something's happening.

And all of a sudden, we don't get much context, but I guarantee you Jacob threw down his staff. This guy, I just picture my mind begins to run towards Jacob. And Jacob gets up, and adrenaline starts to rush, and they grapple with each other.

And the wrestling match that would forever change Jacob's life began. The wrestling match that would forever change the nation of Israel began. Can a nation be born in a day? Yes, it can be.

Because it was born that night. And the same thing that birthed the nation is the same thing that birthed the church. And that was a prayer meeting.

Nights alone with God. If you never have a night alone with God, where it's you and God, and God and you, and you have nothing else, you'll never be used by God. Here's the Bible says, and Jacob was left alone.

And a man, The Man, wrestled with him until the breaking of day. I mean, this Greco-Roman, I mean, the idea, there's only two times the word, this wrestling word is used in the Old Testament. I mean, this is a odd illustration to make a point that there's, there's a level of prayer that goes beyond, you know, our routine prayers.

Our, oh God, thank you for this day, we thank you for this food. Amen. You know, pass the teeth through the stomach, watch, you watch out, pass the teeth through the gums, watch out stomach.

Here, you guys know that. I don't know if you ever grew up in a church where they'd invite certain people to pray. And you're like, I know exactly what they're going to pray.

Because every time they pray, they pray the same exact thing. When God brings you to an end of yourself, your prayer will be beyond your devotional prayer. It'll be warfare prayer.

Warfare prayer. War that realizes there's a battle that can only be won in this moment. Because you're not wrestling against Satan, you're wrestling against God.

He's wrestling. Now, I kind of picture, I don't know how this went. I just know that they wrestled, and I'll, you guys know the story, and I'll unpack it.

I don't know if it, I don't know if Jacob got up and, you know, yelled out to the man and said, watch out, here comes the people's elbow. I don't know if that happened. I don't know if he got on the turnbuckle and did some macho man Randy Savage thing.

I don't know if he did the diamond cutter. I don't know what he did. Probably none of those things.

But I know that he wrestled with God all night long in solitude by himself. Verse 25 says this, now when he 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. Every person who wants to be used by God will wrestle with God, and if you prevail, you'll forever be marked by God.

The crushing that God wants to put you through will have a permanent mark on your life. You will leave different. You won't be the same.

So Jacob's wrestling here with God by himself. I mean, I just picture 1 a.m. passing, they're wrestling, and 2 a.m. wrestling, but Jacob's not letting go because something is happening to Jacob on the inside. He began that night with his greatest fear being Esau, and he would end that night as a man who trusted God with everything.

We've come to a point where the little boys in the room need to sit down. The little boy preachers need to sit down. The little boy puppets need to sit down, and the men of God need to arise.

Forever the same. Forever different. Forever the same.

I'm inviting you into a journey to a life of prayer. History is shaped by the intercessors. The nations are changed by those who will pray all night long, who will wrestle with God and not let God go until God fulfills what God promised to do.

He was marked. I picture as he's wrestling there. Pastor Gray likes to bike.

I like to run. I'll get to that in a second, but I picture God. That's who he was wrestling with.

He touches Jacob's hip. Now, that's a sneaky move. I mean, it's God.

Now, again, God could have touched him, and I mean, he could have obliterated ashes. I mean, he could have lit on fire. I don't know what could have happened to him, but his hip's out of joint, and I'm sure in that moment he screams in pain.

I mean, I'm sure he crumbles to the ground, but he won't let God go. God wants to get you to a point that no matter how bad it hurts, no matter how hard it is, no matter how alone you are, there's a lion on the inside of you that says, I won't let God go. I won't let God go.

I won't let him go. I won't let him go. I won't let him go until my kids come back to Jesus.

I won't let him go until America comes back to Jesus. I won't let him go until God revives the church. I won't let him go, and I don't care how long it takes.

One night, two nights, three nights, one year, two years, ten years. I won't let the God of heaven go. Something began to happen when Jacob began to wrestle with the man.

He realized who this man was and realized this is it. This is it. His entire existence was changed in a moment because he made a decision not to let God go.

You're one decision away of everything in your life forever changing, and that one decision I want to put before you is to be a man who says, I will not let God go. So good. People will misunderstand you.

People will judge you. They'll say things like, man, you're just, you're, you're, you're a little radical, you think? You're taking this a little too far. I hope so.

You're a little extreme, not extreme enough. Become that kind of man. Become the kind of person that says, my life is not about what I can accumulate, not about how many awards I can get on the wall, no matter how many people know my name or comment on my social media.

My life is about a different person's life. And that is the God of heaven. God, may God deliver us from ourselves and our thoughts that everything should be easy and, and painless, but there's no resurrection without a cross.

There's no resurrection power unless you are crucified and you die. And I'm looking for the men in this room that are like spiritual Navy SEALs. They'll say, I'm not ringing that bell.

I'm not ringing that bell. David Goggins, I'll carry the boats. I'll carry the logs.

I'll do it. God's looking for those kinds of men. And you know what? That's gotta be something birthed on the inside of you that says, I need God.

I need God. Now let's go into the story here. Cause I got, I got some unique points I want to make.

God wants to make, don't you love the Bible? Amen. Okay. That that's for three of you.

Wow. That's great. Don't you love the word of God? Amen.

Amen. That's good. And Jesus, and he says, and it says verse 26 and he said, let me go for the day breaks.

You broke my hip. I am not letting you go. Okay.

It was the breaking of day, but he said, I will not let you go until you bless me. When Jacob ran from his father's house, he had a prayer meeting, put a rock down heavens ladders to heaven opened up, but he made this agreement with God. If you do this, then I will do this.

But this is a different prayer meeting. He was a different stage of his journey of no longer. If you do this, I will do this.

Now it's, I'm not going to let you go till you bless me pretty much. This is it. And I want you guys to see this in the text.

He said, I want to let you bless me. I believe this is my opinion. I'm often wrong, but I'm seldom in doubt.

I do not think in this moment, he was simply thinking about surviving Esau. I think he had such a revelation with God in the encounter in the middle of the night, that now he saw his blessing was God on his life, his destiny, his name, the promises were all coming true. And I believe in that moment he saw, I mean, just, let me just go with this.

He, he saw what God was going to do. Descendants is the multitude of the sea, the nation of Israel, bringing forth the Messiah. Something within him in a moment saw his entire life and the life of his descendants go before his eyes.

And he realized my wrestling with God now is not just for me. It's for others. God may want you to wrestle in the place of prayer alone, not just for you, but for others.

And I'm asking God to raise up some of you to volunteer, to give your life to the secret place, to give your life, to not have to be known by men. The greatest men and women in history are not the ones you see on YouTube. They're the ones that are still in the prayer closets.

They're the ones that you'll never know their name and they've never written a book, but they're the ones that know how to move heaven and move God's heart. I want you to get a vision for your life, not to be on a platform. I mean, life is not better when you get four feet higher, like terrible life, great life, sad life, amazing life.

Like standing behind this and standing on this means nothing. What means everything is the crushing that comes from God when in the middle of the night, he crushes you and real oil that lights real fire will come through you for the nations, for the nations. And young people, if the men in this room won't do it, I'm praying that God would raise up some young men that you don't want to be famous.

You want to be a young man who has God on your life and that your greatest vision is not to be behind a platform, but to be in a prayer closet and learn to get ahold of God and have God upon you like nothing else ever before. Jacob wrestled all night long. And this is kind of old school, but there used to be a day that churches and preachers would grab the horns of the altar, they used to say, and they would press through the night.

When's the last time you did something for the first time and you prayed through the night? You see the significance you seek in your life comes through the struggle, the struggle, the hardship. I promise you you're capable of so much more. And the blessing, you think your greatest need is 5,000 more dollars in your bank account.

That's not your greatest need. Your greatest need is not for, you know, whatever you put that to be. Your blessing is God himself.

Jesus is your reward. He is your inheritance. The blessing is not that you get out to your truck when this service is over and you go to that McDonald's bag, you're like, man, I hope there's five more fries in the bottom of this bag.

God, you love me. I've been faithful. Give me five more.

You'll never get that with Chick-fil-A. Don't judge me. We've all done it.

And then you leave hoping God supernaturally made three more fries up here. And I don't know why it is, but McDonald's fries always taste good. Sonic fries will never taste good.

That's not the blessing. The blessing is more of God. So then it says here, and he said to him, let me go for the daybreak.

He says, I will not let you go unless you bless me. So he said to him, what is your name? In the wrestling, God's going to bring you to a realization of your weakness. Because I think as soon as Jacob said what he said, the match was over.

He said, Jacob, the supplanter, the trickster, the deceiver, the one always weaseling out of things, the one always with a plan. That's who I am. Okay? That's all I have.

This is who I am. And then if God can get us to see who we are and what he can do, and people like us, history can be changed. Because right after this, God says, it's always waiting for you to see who you really were, because now I'm going to give you a new name.

I'm going to give you new destiny. We need to come to the point where we see that our greatest battle is not simply lust. It's that we lust after the wrong things.

And our greatest battle is not just anger. It's that we're angry against the wrong things. And then we realize who we are, that there's no righteousness of ourself, but there is one who is found worthy, the lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ, the man in that passage.

God's greatest gift to you and me is to have times of struggle where we have nothing else to prove and nothing else to lose. A dangerous man is someone who has nothing to lose. Maybe the problem is, and let me just diverge to a side point in the sermon, we're under challenged as men.

We're under challenged. So Pastor Greg likes to bike, and Pastor Jesse, and I don't know if Joseph Z does, maybe like free climbs walls. I don't know, you know.

But some of you men, the most godly thing you could do, and this is a total diversion. It's not in the text. You don't call me here to me.

The godliest thing you could do after this conference is go get healthy. I'm just saying, I'm just saying your spiritual life is directly connected to your physical and emotional health, and you will not be spiritually vibrant. I'm not judging you.

Heaven knows me. But if you're eating McDonald's three times a day because you think you're going to make a documentary, which you're not, you know. I saw it at Super Size Me.

Yeah, the guys, not good, okay, not good, not good. Your spiritual life is connected to your physical health. You're like, man, I got to get rid of this demon of anxiety.

No, you got to stop drinking so much caffeine. So, you know, man, I just, I'm so tired in the middle of the day. What did you eat for lunch? Oh, you carb loaded.

No, duh, you're tired. Men, you were made to sweat and to toil and to work and to do hard things. So, Pastor Greg and Jesse ride bikes, and it's insanity what they do, but I promise you, you'll never feel more alive when you push your physical body.

You'll never feel more spiritually alive. Some of you need to, you know, like, I don't have time. Yeah, yeah, you do.

You have 24 hours in a day. So, this last year, I did it. I did a thing.

I felt the Lord called me to it where I ran a marathon. Some of you know this. Some of you may not know this.

All right. I ran a marathon distance 26.2 miles every single day for 153 days straight. Thank you.

I'll take that. Thank you. I know that struggle.

And I'm telling you, it was one of the most transformative spiritual experiences of my entire life because I attempted something that everybody said was impossible. Did you go to your doctor? No. No doctor's going to go, that's a great idea.

Let's, yeah, sure. Just, no, no, I didn't, I just, I'm not going to bother with that one. And there were literally, there were days where like, I was one day, I was 102 degree fever.

I was, I had, I had stuff coming out both sides of the body. That's the best way I could say it, you know, PG version. Okay.

And I will, I, I, I, that's sick. I'm nauseous. I feel terrible.

And it took me nine and a half hours that day to cover that distance. But God was doing something in me. I had one day I was in Woodland Park, Colorado.

It was December 23rd. And I don't know if you guys were, I'm from the Midwest. We had this winter bomb come in.

It was minus 20 degrees below zero. Like if you go outside for too long, you will get frostbite. And so I put on like 10 layers of clothes and then, blessing God, it was snow on the ground.

And then I got a face mask on. I can't wear my glasses, which I am blind without these things because if I wear them, they fog up. And it was, I mean, it was just bad anyway.

So now I'm running, I'm freezing and I can't see the struggle. And what I learned in doing something that everybody says is impossible is there's nothing impossible. Most of us in this room are only doing what David Goggins says, 40% of what we're capable of.

And what I learned is it's never the external excuses you give yourself why you can't do something. It won't be because of time or money or I'm this age or I got this sickness or that sickness or a new knee or an old knee or 10 knees or a new hip or 10 hips. It's never the external things that stop a person.

It's always the internal lies you tell yourself. Yeah, it's too hot. No, because then it won't be hot.

Then one day it'll be too cold. It'll always be the internal excuse. And you know what we do? We go, well, I'll start tomorrow.

No, that's the worst time to start. The best time to start is right now, right now, right now. So maybe I want to fast.

I'm going to start after the conference and I've been there before. I'm like, what does that mean? It means I'm going to eat everything I possibly can humanly eat. Okay.

And then some, and I've been there that day, go man, lunch is here. I don't think God's speaking anymore. I'm going to eat.

What am I trying to tell you? Don't do hard things. Do very hard things because in the very hard things, your life can change. And if you want to change your life, take massive action.

Now, now that's why I talk about 40 days of fasting. And what I'm going to tell you about right now is nights of prayer. Do something no one thinks is impossible.

Sometimes your inconvenience is really good for you to go deeper in your faith. Jacob struggled. The Bible says it was a struggle.

It was not easy. If it was easy, the strong man Esau would have done it, but God wasn't looking for the man that was strong on the outside. He was looking for the man that he knew was really strong on the inside that knew I will not let God go.

I don't care what anyone says. I don't care if my church runs a hundred or a hundred thousand. I won't let God go.

I'll never let him go. I'll believe his promises. I'll remind him day and night.

God, but you said God, but you said God, but you said for 10 years and 20 years and 30 years, I will be that person who wakes up in the middle of the night and gets on my face before God. The greatest thing about Leonard Ravenhill was not his preaching. It was his prayer life.

And Leonard Ravenhill was known. There's rumors how much he prayed, but literally hours upon hours every day, I want you to do some extreme things. So tonight after the evening service for anyone that wants to stay tonight, I'm going to say as long as I humanly can.

And then, then some at least a two or three in the morning, maybe they'll daybreak and wrestle with God in this tent for what God's going to do in the deliverance conference. And I just wonder, I just wonder if there's any of you that'll give an hour, two hours, three hours, we'll just have some worship music going. I'll let the prayer team of global vision lead.

You go, what are you gonna do? I'm going to shout so I don't go to sleep. I'm going to walk so I don't go to sleep. I'm going to do Jericho walks around the tent.

I'm going to ask, I'm going to touch every chair and believe God's going to do something great because sometimes God wants you to only fast food. He wants you to fast sleep. So I hope you'll join me.

Now here's another opportunity that I'll get to the final part of this text. Are we okay? Okay. You've got Joseph Z coming and then you've got David Harrison coming.

So let me tell you about something really awesome and creative. Now I've, Greg has volunteered on the phone. So I hope you still volunteered.

I'm pretty sure he is. So, you know, my life's been changed by doing weird things like 75 hard did that four days of fasting did that. Um, super juice me 28 days drinking celery.

That's terrible. I did that. Okay.

Just, just give me something weird. I want to do that. Right.

I'm really, I'm really perplexed that supposedly Oral Roberts prayed, fasted for seven months before he got used by God. Like my wife would say no. So, um, so anyway, seven months is not in the cards right now, but I want to do this crazy, insane challenge.

I want to call it the global vision initiative or challenge. Did you know the circumference of the earth? Of course you knew this is about 24,901 miles, give or take. I thought, what? I wonder if I could run that many miles consecutive.

So by running, so I thought, what, how long would it take me if I ran a half marathon every single day? And that comes out to five years, just five years. Now for Greg and pastor Jesse, I don't know which one of them to do it first. Whoever probably loves Jesus more, we'll get it done first shots fired.

And, uh, and so, but I wonder, so you say, are you gonna do that? Oh yeah, I'm doing that. I want to start October the seventh because that's the anniversary date. I want to start those marathons.

And you say, how do you, how do you focus? I don't focus about the next day. One thing I learned was never think about day two. I'm just thinking about day one.

And you know what? It was just about getting to the next mile. That was it. That was it.

So yeah, on October the seventh by God's grace and for his glory, so I want to raise awareness to deliverance, to revival, to foster care and adoption and youth mental health. So if running a half marathon, you know, can help accomplish that. I want to do it.

But I wonder for some of you, maybe that might be just, there's like 30,000 verses in scripture. Maybe you commit to read the Bible through and in two months or one month, or maybe you go like Mr. B style and you get a YouTube video going and you just read the Bible until you fall asleep and try to read. I've always wondered how long it'd take to read the Bible consecutively live on YouTube.

I've thought about that. But what extreme thing could you do? This equals out to about 25,000. Could you pray for 25,000 minutes? I don't know how many hours that is, but could you do it? Oh no.

What extreme thing could you do? Maybe for five years in a row, you just commit to send an encouraging text message to a friend. We'll figure out some other initiatives to bring people on board, but I want you to do something that no one thinks is possible that you don't think is possible. It's extremely hard, very hard.

I know that compares to Jacob's struggle. I get it, but it's time to do hard things. Men are under challenged.

Like do you realize you have to sign up for discomfort in this nation? You have to sign up for discomfort. I did this race called The Last Man Standing Race. I did it in Mountain Home, Arkansas.

Mountain Home, Arkansas. It won't go no further. Where the idea is you run four miles every hour until you're the last person standing.

And I failed. I came in top 10, but some lady beat me, and that gets women beating me. I just didn't like it.

But I ran 16 hours, but the world record is 102 hours. So I'm like, okay, I don't know what drug they're on just to stay awake, not counting the physical part, but I'm insane enough to think it's possible. Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile when everyone said it was impossible, but after Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile, everybody broke the four-minute mile.

And I'm sure whenever the new ... Which one of you, are you two set the new record for the Tour Divide? I'm sure it'll make other people believe it's possible, and they'll break that. I want to challenge you men. Maybe the most godly thing you can do is go do something very, very hard.

Maybe it's to do 100 push-ups a day for 30 days, or an all-night of prayer, which I hope some of you will stay tonight for as long as you can. Now, if it's going to get you into a struggle with your significant other, it's not worth it. But maybe you come into this tent and you go to war for kids and grandkids, or the nation, or teenagers.

Our churches do all-night prayer meetings when I was ... Our little Baptist church, and you sign up for an hour, and then someone else comes and takes the hour. So, I always thought, I'll sign up for 2 a.m. I don't have a car. I'm going to ride the bike down the highway to get to church.

I'd pray for 10 minutes at the altar, I'd fall asleep, and then somebody at the church would eventually take me home. There was something weird and radical about getting up so early and pressing in. You were made for more, and the more that you were made for is the more of God.

So, I'm telling you, what you need is not a new book. It's not a new experience. It's God Himself.

Sometimes, God will meet you in His greatest places when you're in your deepest struggles, spiritually, physically, and emotionally. I'll give you one more thing. I'll bring this sermon to a close.

One of the other things I learned on this marathon ... On Thanksgiving Day, I was running a marathon. My wife said, you've got to be home when you do the turkey. So, I got up at 1 a.m. and I went running, and I thought, I'm going to thank God for a thousand things.

I got to hurry fast. A thousand things. I realized I don't know a thousand things.

I collectively cannot think of 1,000 different things. So, I thought, oh, this would be so many a minute, so many a mile. So, I thought, okay.

So, eventually, I started thanking God for the veggie tails, for colors. Thank you for green. It's so green.

Thank you for red. It's so red, and blue, and beige, and whatever. I was trying to think of everything.

Thank you for this book in my library. Thank you for that book in my library. I just couldn't think of a thousand things, and then God said, I want you to thank me for every difficult, hard time you've ever gone through in your life.

So, I went back as early as I could remember, and I said, God, I thank you that my birth parents were drug addicts and alcoholics when I was born. I would not be the man I am today had I grew up in Denver, Colorado. God, thank you for sending me to an aunt and uncle in Kansas, and then thank you for that first aunt and uncle that kept me for two years and sent me to another aunt and uncle.

Thank you, and I just began to go through everything. God, thank you that even though my aunt and uncle, great people, the alcohol destroyed my uncle, and he didn't get saved till after this, but they got a divorce when I was in sixth grade. I said, God, thank you for that divorce.

I wouldn't be as independent as I am had you not taken us through that, and then God, thank you that when our church split when I was a teenager, I didn't understand it at the time, but thank you for that, and God, thank you that when I was in high school, I was hit by a drunk driver head-on at 70 miles an hour, followed my pastor to an Easter sunrise service, and my knee was forever blown out. Thank you for that, and then God, thank you for that, and I just went through every difficult time in our marriage. Thank you, God, when my oldest daughter tried to take her life because I was unaware of the pressure and the crushing weight on the next generation.

There's some things they need more than just read your Bible more and pray more. Thank you for that. Thank you when those people left our church eight years ago.

We started to press into the Spirit. When I took a stand with IHOPKC, and people wrote letters, and the legal counsel of the SBC wrote a friend of mine and said, do you know Malachi's involved with a cult? IHOP's not a cult, all right, you know, and you know what I discovered? I went through some of those shameful things I would never tell you, and I discovered that when you can thank God for your deepest failures, your darkest hurts, and your most vocal critics, the enemy has nothing against you at all. Come on, let's give the Lord a round of applause.

Because it was those times of crushing that gave oil for fire to arise. The biggest problem about problems is you think you shouldn't have any. But what if those problems were the very things God was using to get you to this point where you say, you know what, I'll wrestle all night with God.

I'll do it. I'll do it. I'll do it.

All alone. I'll do it. The final part here in this passage.

Verse 28, he says, and your name shall no longer be called Jacob. For Israel, for you've struggled with God and with men and have prevailed. Israel means Prince of God.

A nation was born in a day. Then Jacob said, tell me your name, I pray. Because now he wants to know God.

You know what we need to, you know, it'll be the breakthrough for you is discover who God really is in every situation. You don't need to know all the names of all the demons out there because there's a corresponding, matching, much greater name of God that goes to every one of those demons. Learn those names.

Much more powerful. And he said, why is it that you ask about my name? And he blessed him there. Now we don't get this full picture because Jacob, who's now Israel, now knows that his food is God.

His rest is God. His drink is God. His provision is God.

His protection is God. His success is God. Don't chase success.

Don't chase significance. Chase God. Chase God.

And thereafter, the solitude and the struggle, we find surrender. And the life that God wants to lead you to is a life of daily surrender. So the Bible says in verse 30, so Jacob called the name of the place Peniel.

For I've seen God face to face and my life is preserved. He's not talking about his life being preserved from Esau. His life was preserved because he saw God face to face.

Because the Bible says no one sees God face to face and lives. If you want to see God and to experience God, it will come after the darkest nights of the soul. It'll only come that way.

So your family's falling apart. You don't know what to do. On the other side of that door is God.

The church has gotten rid of you. And you feel betrayed because that associate pastor stabbed you in the back. That deacon stabbed you in the back.

That family that you thought was with you to the end that you gave, you invested hours with are now gone. And they're now lying about you on Facebook. On the other side of that door is God himself.

And you need to stop wrestling with people on Facebook and learn to wrestle with God in the prayer closet. That's where you get real oil. Real oil.

Not the cheap stuff. Because worship comes when you give him a sacrifice. And if there's no sacrifice, there's no worship.

And to have God in your life and on your ministry will cost you something. And it'll always be a life of faith. Now, take your Bibles to Matthew 26.

I want to close with this. I can't plead with you enough to be a man who wants God more than you want to sleep or eat or breathe, but that's what I'm asking you to do. I wish I could beg you not to seek to be famous, but seek to be fruitful.

And to give your life where no one will ever see you, but God sees you. Matthew 26, verse 36. Then, let me just use a different name here.

The man. The same man I believe wrestled with Jacob now has a much greater wrestling match. Then Jesus came to the place of Gethsemane, the place of crushing, and said to the disciples, sit here while I go and pray over there.

And he took with them Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then he said, my soul is exceedingly sorrowful even to death. Stay here and watch with me.

And he went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed, oh my father, if it is possible, let this cut pass from me. Nevertheless, not I, but you. Maybe the greatest thing you can do during the deliverance conference is get on your face somewhere, go out in these woods somewhere, not the neighbor's houses, the woods.

Amen. Legal counsel. Anyway, get on your face and get a hold of God.

Jesus is the greater Jacob. A nation was born in a day and so was eternal redemption. If Jacob would not have won that wrestling match with God, we wouldn't even be here today.

And if Jesus hadn't won the main event in that garden, we wouldn't be here today. You are never more like Jesus than when you're on your face in desperation for God's will, not your will. God doesn't want you to have your vision.

He wants you to have his vision. God's not worried about your fame. He's concerned about his fame.

Don't worry about your reputation. Worry about his testimony. We must become men who have been marked by God.

By God and God alone. Not I, but you. Not I, but you.

If all of your kids leave you and turn from the faith, not I, but you. If all of your kids turn from the gospel, not I, but your will. I don't care if they go after other identities, other sexual preferences.

You have to remain faithful to God. The enemy's number one tool to try to make people change what they believe is to use their kids to do it. And we have to be people say, you know what? I'm going to the place of crushing to die because when I die, he lives.

He lives. He lives. He lives.

Do you want to be used by God? Forget me. Forget me. Forget this sermon.

Just remember there's no other way around it. It's the crushing. Some crushing just comes in your life because it's life and some because you sign up for it.

But if life is really, really hard and you're really, really broken and you're on the verge of giving up, that's actually a really good place to be because desperation is a powerful tool. Two things will change your life, inspiration or desperation. But I've always found desperation is a more powerful tool.

How can I get you eating better? Well, just let the doctor say, you know, if you eat anymore, you have a heart attack and die. OK, I'll eat better. Got it.

I got it. You know, desperation and let that desperation leads to aspiration. Don't try to be the next Greg Locke or Joseph Zee or, you know, Tom Cruise.

I mean, David Harrison be you. And the greatest thing about you is becoming a man of prayer to know God. The greatest need in America is we have men that know God.

Would you stand to your feet? I'm just going to pray. I'm going to hand the mic over. I'm asking you to sign up to a life of death and surrender and sacrifice.

And embrace the pain and sign up for more pain. Some of you just need to get your life healthy. It's a sin to be as unhealthy as some of us are.

I'm just stressed. I go eat. Stop it.

That's the deliverance. It's the old video. Stop it.

Stop it. You are made to be warriors. You are made to be the Jacobs.

Psalms 24, verse six says, this is the generation of them that seek your face near that final phrases. Oh, God of Jacob. That's the final phrase.

The revival generation is those who will seek God's face just like Jacob did. Some of you need to stay in this tent till midnight, 1am. Some of you need to go outside and prayer walk.

Some of you need to fast for dinner or breakfast tomorrow. Something extreme. I don't know.

Some of you need to get up and start taking ice showers for a month straight. I don't know what it is. It's something that's very uncomfortable.

We're not made to be comfortable. We're men. We're warriors.

You can't stop us. I love the Navy SEAL idea. If you're going to stop us, you're going to have to kill us.

That's it. The only way to stop a Navy SEAL is to kill them because if they can still move and grab a gun, they're going to keep on marching and the mission's not going to be done until they're dead or it's accomplished. May it not be said that Navy SEALs had more of something in them than the men of God at Global Vision Bible Church did on September the 1st, 2023.

So Lord Jesus, today I pray you raise up some spiritual Navy SEALs, some spiritual army rangers, some special forces that realize the missions you're going to call them on no one else can know about. These are missions and battles. They're going to be one in the dark of night and they're going to be wearing these nightgoggle visions and they're going to see what others don't see because they're in a battle and they're in a war and they're going after the spiritual Osama bin Laden of this world because they're tired of all the attacks on their kids and their grandkids and the church God.

Raise up some young men. Some young man says, I'm going to fight for purity and fight for holiness. I'm not going to fight to be on the platform.

I'm going to fight to be under the platform, in the place of prayer, giving him my oil, giving him my sacrifice and saying, God, give me more. I can take it. I can take it.

And when I can't take it anymore, you will be strong when I am weak. God, raise them up, raise them up, raise them up, raise them up. Repeat after me, Lord Jesus, make me a man, a man of God.

Give me desperation, holy desperation for your glory and your fame. Help me to walk in humility and servanthood and kindness like Jesus, like Jesus, like Jesus. On the count of three, I want you guys to let out a roar like men who know they're going somewhere now.

You've now been given a mission and you're going somewhere with this. So on the sound of three, make some noise. One, two, three, make some noise.

Yeah. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

What a name. What a Savior. What a God.

Welcome to the Spiritual Navy Seals. Welcome, Jacobs. God is going to give you a new name.

He's going to transform your life. He's going to save your family, save your city, save your church. Oh, we have just begun to fight.

Wow.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ho5iu7WHPFw.mp4>

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