

Wrestling with my angel

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A year or so ago the story of Jacob wrestling the angel came up in the lectionary. My husband preached that day, and as he read the scripture I sat up at the last line: “And he was limping because of his hip.”

I limp because of my hip, and a limp is a hard thing to hide when you process up and down long aisles in a church and you go up to the table and the pulpit and the like. I smiled when he read that line, and the congregation did, too.

Since then the image of Jacob wrestling that angel has stayed with me, and I often go to an earlier line of the story: “I will not let go until you have blessed me.” I’ve found that a helpful image as I wrestle with something, picturing myself continuing in the struggle, and not giving up, and not giving in, until a blessing has come out of it.

Today I asked someone what he would say to God or ask God when he died and presumably went to heaven. I heard him talk about something he struggles with as he tries to live out his faith. It brings him some anguish, this issue, and part of that anguish is the uncertainty of it and the fact that he would even dare to question God. So I encouraged him to continue to wrestle with it until he had received a blessing.

I have no idea if my great wisdom made any sense to him, because that’s the thing about wisdom: what seems deep and powerful to us ends up as [a poster with a picture of a kitten](#) for someone else.

So maybe the wrestling is just for me. I’m still waiting to receive this blessing, and most days I wake up feeling like some devious angel has punched me right in the hip joint. But I will not let go—not yet. There’s a blessing just around the corner.

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