

Service of the Word: All Saints 19th October 2025

(Luke 18:1-8, Genesis 32.22-31, 2 Timothy 3.14 – 4.5)

May I speak in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

In today's readings, we are introduced to three bold characters: an unnamed widow, the patriarch Jacob, and Timothy, Paul's protégé.

We have listened to three forms of divine persistence: the persistence of **Waiting**, which is the patient endurance of God's timing; the persistence of **Wrestling**, which is the determined struggle for God's blessing; and the persistence of **Working**, which is the steadfast commitment to God's mission.

At times, our Christian journey may feel more like a marathon run through the wilderness, barefoot, than a leisurely morning stroll. We are called to faith, but faith is never a passive action. It requires us to keep striving—a tenacious refusal to let go. As these three diverse Scriptures show us, our faith has the power to transform us, to make us stronger and more resilient.

The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)

Our Gospel reading, the Parable of the Persistent Widow, tells us of a determined woman who had nothing to offer but her steadfast refusal to let go. She was willing to wait for justice to be served, even when the odds were vastly stacked against her.

Jesus, our master storyteller, tells this parable for an apparent reason: the unjust judge neither feared God nor respected man, but this widow—this nobody—came to him again and again, nagging, begging, refusing to be dismissed. Eventually, the judge concedes, not out of justice, but because he refused to be worn down by the widow's dogged tenacity. His words:

'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'

The confident stance of the widow is simply a reflection of her holding steadfast in addressing her needs and her unwavering faith that someone would come to her aid.

And Jesus' punchline is startling:

'Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

If her determination worked on a wicked judge, how much more will **our** resolve work with a righteous, loving God?

Our Heavenly Father is not bothered by our prayers; He delights in them. He doesn't need to be convinced to be just; **He is justice**. He simply asks us to persevere in waiting and praying, not losing heart in the face of delay, because the delay is often part of the preparation.

The Persistence of Wrestling (Genesis 32.22-31)

If the widow shows us that waiting pays off, the journey of Jacob shows us the perseverance of **Wrestling**.

On the eve of meeting his estranged and potentially hostile brother Esau, Jacob sends everyone away, leaving him alone to face the meeting. In the darkness, he is confronted by a man, and he wrestles all night long until daybreak.

This is not just a physical struggle, but a divine one. Jacob refuses to let go, even after his hip is wrenched brutally out of joint. He hangs on, his faith unwavering, and says,

"I will not let you go unless you bless me."

What a moment of audacious faith! Jacob's bold decision to struggle with God rather than let Him leave.

The wrestling match left Jacob changed: he was given a new name, Israel—**"he strives with God"**—and he walked away with a permanent limp.

The blessing often leaves a mark. We receive God's favour, but it usually comes through a painful night of wrestling with ourselves. The dark night of the soul, that breaks us of our old, self-reliant way of walking.

The lesson is this: if you are struggling today, if you feel like you are wrestling in the dark, remember Jacob. Don't let go. Your determination will leave you limping, but it will also give you a new name and a blessing!

The Persistence of Working (2 Timothy 3.14 – 4.5)

Finally, Paul's letter to his young protégé, Timothy. This is the persistence of **Working**, of enduring in the mission.

Paul knows Timothy is in for hardship. The world is getting darker, and false teachers are everywhere. But Paul does not tell him to hide; he tells him this:

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"

This is the reality, hard, daily, enduring work of ministry and discipleship;

- **To continue in what you have learned: The determination to stay anchored to the truth of Scripture, even when it's unpopular.**
- **To preach the Word: The resolution to speak the truth, even when the crowd wants a different message.**
- **To endure hardship: The determination to keep showing up, even when it costs you.**

Timothy's perseverance is not just about personal righteousness; it's about the mission. It's the audacity to be faithful in a faithless generation, to keep working the field even when the harvest looks meagre.

In conclusion, I encourage you to reflect on where **you** can cultivate audacious faith in your daily life as a modern-day Christian. Let the examples of the Widow, Jacob, and Timothy inspire you to be constant in your faith journey.

- **Do you need the Determination of Waiting?**
 - **To keep praying. Do not lose heart in the belief that God hears you, and He will bring you justice if you are willing to wait.**
- **Do you need Unyielding Wrestling?**
 - **Don't let go of God in the darkest of moments. Hold on until the blessing comes, even if you limp away changed.**

- **Do you need the Persistence of Working?**
 - **Staying firmly in your belief in the Word. To keep preaching, to keep serving, to keep teaching, to keep enduring hardship, knowing that your labour in the Lord's work is never in vain.**

Amen