

**Sunday 19 October 2025,
The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity**

Collect:

God, our judge and saviour,
teach us to be open to your truth
and to trust in your love,
that we may live each day
with confidence in the salvation which is given
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for this week:

Genesis 32:22-31; Psalm 121; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5; Luke 4:16-24

Jacob's conflict with his brother Esau underlies this episode in Genesis. Four chapters ago he had left his family, having tricked his father into giving him the blessing and birthright due to the eldest, Esau. During his first night running from his irate brother Jacob experienced a visionary dream, seeing a ladder dropped down from heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. Now Jacob is about to meet with his brother again, and once more at night he meets with God, or God's messenger. Jacob's wrestling evokes the conflict with Esau, but more importantly, he engages with God, and continues to do so even when God seems to be threatening, the result being that he receives both scars and a blessing. Psalm 121, often recited at funerals, comes from a collection used by pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem, and thus fits with Jacob whose understanding of his true place in the world is revealed as he journeys.

Paul tells Timothy in our second reading to keep to the path that he has been taught – the past provides stability. This contrasts strongly with Jacob who is encouraged by God in his striking out to new places. But then Jacob's story becomes part of the sacred Scriptures that Paul enjoins Timothy to continually refer to and adhere to. Which reminds Timothy that following Scripture doesn't mean taking the easy way – it needs testing and teasing. In effect, through engaging honestly and openly with Scripture we wrestle with God.

Wrestling with Scripture requires perseverance, much like the widow when she is dealing with the unjust judge in today's Gospel reading. But continuing in faith also involves dedication and persistence, as was the case in the early church, with both elements of Judaism and of the prevailing culture striving to wipe out the radical Christian communities. No wonder Paul spent much time encouraging Timothy to stick to the faith of his parents and that the episode of Jacob wrestling with the angel has become much remembered in the Church.

We praise and thank you, O Christ,
for this sacred feast:
for here we receive you,
here the memory of your passion is renewed,
here our minds are filled with grace,
and here a pledge of future glory is given,
when we shall feast at that table where you reign
with all your saints for ever. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Isaiah 45:22-25; Psalm 119:129-136; Romans 15:1-6; Luke 18:1-8
Bible Sunday