**Wednesday 5th August 2020**

Read the **Psalm 17.1-7- A prayer of David**

Read the Bible passage for today: **Genesis 32:22-31- Jacob wrestles with God**

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

Some reflections on these passages:

**Psalms**: David seems to be open to being vulnerable with God. He allows God to examine and test him, even in the middle of the night when he is least likely to be on guard or ready (v3). David has a trust in God, he is sure that when he calls out to the LORD, he will answer him (v6). David wants to be on the right path, the one God set out for him. He has experienced being on the wrong path and probably knows how different life can be on this path. But he knows that the only way he can stay on the right path is by God’s word and knowing the wonderful love of God. He says, ‘Show me the wonders of your great love’(v7).

**Genesis:** In the previous verse we are told that Jacob was on his way to meet his brother Esau, who he was estranged from. Jacob sent his family and everything he owned over the stream called Jabbok (v22-23) while he stayed behind. In doing so, he exposed his family to danger. He could lose it all, but he would be spared, a sign of cowardice. However, God had other plans. That night, Jacob wrestled with, what the Bible calls, a man. This wrestling match lasted for some time, but Jacob did not give up (v24).

At some point, Jacob must have realised that this wasn’t just any man. Jacob refused to let him go unless this man blessed him. As the greater blesses the lesser, so he must have known it was the LORD. Interestingly, the man responds by asking for Jacob’s name. Jacob’s name meant supplanter or deceiver. So far, he had lived up to his name (See Genesis 34). But from now on, he would be known by a different name, Israel, because he had struggled with God (v28). In the Bible a person’s name was held with importance and significance, it was their identity. A change in Jacob’s name signalled a complete turnaround for him, and a change in his character. Our names can be an important part of our identity and we may only be aware of this when someone gets it wrong.

The LORD did one more thing to Jacob. He touched the socket of his hip, leaving Jacob with a limp (v25). Jacob had prevailed with the LORD because the LORD had let him prevail. Now this “touch” would hardly seem a blessing. He would be in no condition to have taken Esau on in single combat. However, the weakness of Jacob would become a great blessing indeed. Our weaknesses and vulnerabilities do not stop God from using us. Paul understood that, ‘God’s power is made perfect in weakness’ (See 2 Corinthians 12:9). Maybe you feel like you have a thorn in your side like Paul or maybe you’re walking with a (metaphorical) limp like Jacob. We all have wounds and weaknesses but they are never a barrier to God. It may just be the thing that keeps us walking on the right path.

**Questions**

How do these passages speak to us? What is God teaching us through them?

Are we open, like David in the Psalms, to allow God to examine us and challenge us? Or more like Jacob at times, trying to avoid situations?

What can we learn about God from these verse in Genesis, where he used Jacob despite his weakness? Have you seen God at work, despite your own weaknesses and vulnerabilities?

Jacob (Israel) has a new identity, this doesn’t solve the issues of his past but God calls something different out in him. What new season is God calling us in to? How is he preparing us and pruning us, ready for this next season?

During a challenging time, a time of unknown do we trust God, like David did, to call out to him and know he will answer?

**Collect for last Sunday**

Lord God,

your Son left the riches of heaven

and became poor for our sake:

when we prosper save us from pride,

when we are needy save us from despair,

that we may trust in you alone;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

**Prayers**

* Those who are seriously ill with COVID and those who are looking after and supporting them. Keep praying for Rebecca and all those we know.
* For all who are struggling with their mental health and are feeling very anxious or fearful during these times. Pray for peace.
* Pray for comfort for those who have lost loved ones and are mourning. Pray for the family of Shelia Merritt.
* For those who are shielding and those feeling very alone and isolated.
* For all NHS workers, care workers and other key workers who continue to work hard. Pray for strength.
* Those working towards a vaccine for COVID. Pray for guidance and wisdom.
* For those who govern our country, Prime Minister and Cabinet and all MP’s who are guiding our nation at this time. For all world leaders, for wisdom in their decision making.
* Leaders of all Churches, including the Archbishop Justin, Bishop Alan and Bishop Michael and Bishop Richard. Pray for strength and wisdom.
* Pray for refreshment and rest for Rebecca and Sharon while they are both on holiday.
* Prayer of thanks for God’s goodness and faithfulness.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,

to the mercy and protection of God.

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**