

OCTOBER 20, 2019
NINETEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Faith pursues God's blessings.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 18:1-8	Parable of the persistent widow
Monday	Genesis 32:22-31	God renames Jacob
Tuesday	2 Timothy 3:14–4:5	Paul's instruction to Timothy
Wednesday	Genesis 14:17-24	Abram blessed by Melchizedek
Thursday	Psalms 42	Longing for God
Friday	James 5:13-18	Prayer of faith
Saturday	Psalms 121	Assurance of God's protection
Sunday	Luke 18:9-14	A Pharisee and tax collector pray

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." **Genesis 32:26 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of hope, give us strength to endure life's struggles and faith to pursue your justice and mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord, in your name we drink and sup: teach us to pray and not give up. Help us to look to you this day and show our thanks in all we say. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord protect you from this time on and forevermore.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Lord Jesus, You Shall
Be My Song*



CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Think of something you are trying hard to accomplish. How do you go about it?
- When you see something that is unfair, do you expect God to fix it? Why or why not?
- Faith is a gift worth pursuing with all your heart. How do you explain this?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Genesis 32:22-31.

This is an amazing story. The "man" who wrestled with Jacob was actually God (vv. 28, 30). Even more, God does not win the wrestling match, and that seems to be okay with God. God honors Jacob whose name means "trickster." The trickster had deceived his father Isaac to unfairly gain his older brother's inheritance and, more importantly, the blessing that goes from Abraham and Isaac and now to Jacob instead of Esau. Like the widow in Luke 18:1-8 who persistently bothers the unjust judge to get her justice, Jacob does whatever it takes to be blessed. And God so honors that determination that God gives Jacob a new name, Israel, which in this story means "you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed" (v. 28). Jacob and God's people will now be known as Israel, a term that commends the importance of wrestling with and being persistent for God's blessings. Yes, it is true that God is the more persistent one, but God wants us to pursue the divine blessing and pursue an active life of faith instead of a complacency that takes God's word and righteousness for granted. How do you pursue God in your daily life of faith? How do you wrestle with God?

Pray: **God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thank you for honoring our wrestling with you as faithful followers, through Christ our Lord, amen.**

SERVICE



Psalm 121:1 asks, "From where will my help come from?" The answer in the next verse is, "My help comes from the Lord." We are God's hands and feet in the world. When you see someone less fortunate or in need, where does their help come from? It, too, comes from the Lord with your help. Who in your life could use a helping hand? Take time to reach out to them through an act of kindness and tell them that the reason you are doing so is in response to God's loving presence in your life.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



The theme this week is God's blessings. God blesses Jacob and King Melchizedek blessed Abram. The scripture readings also tell of the importance of prayer. In Luke 18:1, Jesus says to, "pray always and not lose heart". When done in the home regularly, prayers and blessings help us grow in our faith. Say a prayer at every meal and at bedtime this week as a reminder to pray always. Make it a practice to bless others this week by making the sign of the cross on foreheads or hands as people leave for work or school and say the words:

May the Lord protect you.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org