

Pentecost 19 (Proper 24)

October 19, 2025



Through faith in Christ, therefore, Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that he has becomes ours; rather, he himself becomes ours.

– Martin Luther–

Two Kinds of Righteousness

PROCLAMATION POINTS

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

Genesis 32:22-30

Jacob, the trickster, had much to fear as he camped along the Jabbok, waiting to see his brother Esau for the first time in many years. He had stolen his brother's blessing and his birthright and now he had heard that his brother was on his way to meet him with 400 men. He had every reason to assume that his brother was coming for a fight. Little did Jacob know that the real threat coming his way was not from Esau, but from God himself.

A stranger appeared out of nowhere and wrestled with Jacob all night long, only gaining the advantage by dislocating Jacob's hip. The mystery of this man's identity is only clarified by inference, not directly. The man refused to identify himself, but he gave Jacob a new name, identifying the twin as one who has wrestled with God. Even in a direct encounter with Jacob, God remained veiled, both by the darkness of night and by his refusal to tell Jacob who he is.

- *Why do you think "the man" refuses to identify himself directly? Even when God identifies himself (like in the person of Jesus) how often do human beings truly recognize him?*

Jacob came away from his encounter with God with a limp. His striving with God had permanent consequences. God's work on behalf of his people is the work of death and new life. Jacob the Trickster is brought to an end and Israel the Wrestler is raised up, but a remnant of Jacob remains..

- *How was Jacob/Israel's experience similar to death and resurrection? How was it different?*
- *What are some ways believers wrestle with God? Do we always know it's God we are wrestling with? How do we tell the difference?*

Psalms 121

Contrasting dramatically with Jacob's difficult encounter with God, the psalmist knows God to be one who keeps and preserves Israel from danger. When faced with fear the psalmist looks to the Lord, fully expecting his aid. He trusts that God is working good in and for his people. Paired with the story of Jacob's wrestling match, this psalm is a reminder that God's work on behalf of his people, while often hidden, is ultimately for our own good.

- *Psalms 121 is often heard at funerals. What is it about this psalm that brings comfort to people in the midst of deep darkness?*
- *The psalmist reminds us that the Lord never sleeps (vv.3-4) How does this bolster your trust in him?*

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Remaining steadfast in faith over time is never easy. Temptations and false paths are endless and the believer is not immune to their allure. Timothy is reminded of this in our epistle reading. He is further reminded that he has been given a precious gift to help him withstand these temptations. The Word of Christ that has been delivered to him, the Word of faith, will guide him through the treacherous terrain of life in this world. That Word of Christ is testified to in Scripture, equipping the saints to live lives of faithful obedience.

- *What does it mean to say that scripture is "inspired" by God? How do you understand that term?*
- *What is the relationship between Christ as the Word of God and Scripture as the Word of God?*

Despite the availability of the Word of Christ, the epistle warns that the day is surely coming when people will reject sound teaching, preferring instead, a word that tickles their ears. A word that affirms the sinful inclinations of the human heart will always hold greater appeal than a word that convicts sinners and calls us to obedience. Saving faith requires a constant hearing, again and again, of the life giving Word.

- *What are some examples of myths that lead people away from Christ? How does the church faithfully respond to these myths and false teachers?*

Luke 18:1-8

Continuing the theme of unusual encounters with God as found in Genesis, Jesus offered a strange and rather confusing parable of a feckless judge and a persistent widow. The widow would not relent in her pursuit of justice, until the judge finally gave her what she demanded. He did it just so she'd leave him alone. This judge, who violated the two greatest commandments by loving neither God nor people, was entirely unfit for his position. Like the unjust manager, he serves as a negative example. The summary of the parable is that if even an unjust judge will eventually grant justice, certainly God, who is faithful, will also grant justice. God's chosen ones are encouraged to stand fast, despite the apparent delay in God's final judgment.

- *Is this parable intended as encouragement to continually ask God for whatever we want?*
- *How can the delay in Christ's return be a stumbling block to faith?*