

Weekly Rhythm

[Rhythm of Worship](#)

Sunday 3 August

The 8th Sunday after Pentecost, Year A

Comment and Questions

[Genesis 32:22-31](#)

Jacob wrestles with a "man" at the Jabbok River and is renamed Israel because he has "striven with God and with humans, and has prevailed."

Earlier in this chapter Jacob sees the host of heaven ascending and descending on a ladder connecting heaven and earth. Jacob's pathway is connected to God and God to Jacob's pathway (the same is true for us). Now as Jacob journeys to meet with Esau (he tricked Esau and so he dreads this encounter) he encounters God in a dramatic way. He wrestles with a man, and in declaring that he has met God face to face Jacob shows that he believes this man to be God or perhaps represents God in some way. Jacob is determined to hold on to this God even in his weakness (his injury). Jacob insists on a blessing and this comes to him in the shape of a name change: from Jacob (meaning "he supplants") to Israel (meaning "one who strives with God").

How is "striving with God" a positive attribute?

How does this encounter with God give Jacob "food for the journey"?

[Psalm 17:1-7, 15](#)

The setting of this psalm is an ancient courtroom. A plea is made to God, expressing the confidence that God is the righteous judge. He will rule in our favour.

[Romans 9:1-5](#)

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, declares his great concern and anguish for his own people. Paul is concerned for any persecution or rejection of the Jews. He lists the eight privileges they have shared in. God will not abandon them, we will discover, as we continue through these chapters. God completes what he has begun.

[Matthew 14:13-21](#)

Upon hearing of the death of John the Baptist, Jesus and the disciples withdraw to a quiet place, but the crowd follows, and more than 5000 people are fed. In his grief at John's death, Jesus seeks out a quiet place. But the crowds find him and he translates his grief into compassion for the people. The disciples sound like us, "We have nothing..." "What can we do?" "The task is too big." But Jesus acts out of a framework of compassion. He works with the little that is given. He will work with the little we give.

The miracle of 'enough for everyone' is central here.

Why are there twelve baskets left over? The twelve tribes were fed by God in their desert wanderings on their journey to the Promised Land. Again Jesus (God) feeds as he restores the people of God.