

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH

October 16, 2022

19th Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE: Rebekah Olson; Singers: Hannah

HYMN #479 "In Shady Green Pastures"

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 121

**LEADER: I lift up my eyes to the hills--
where does my help come from?**

**ALL: My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.**

**LEADER: He will not let your foot slip--
he who watches over you will not slumber;**

**ALL: indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

**LEADER: The LORD watches over you--
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;**

**ALL: the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

**LEADER: The LORD will keep you from all
harm--
he will watch over your life;**

**ALL: the LORD will watch over your coming
and going
both now and forevermore.**

HYMN #193 "My Jesus I Love Thee"

CONFESSION OF SIN: *Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy and ask You for Christ's sake, grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: Stay close to
your parents!**

READER: Nathan Kalstad

EPISTLE LESSON: *2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 18:1-8 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about*

justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAISE SONGS: 1 or 2 praise songs chosen by Hannah

SERMON: "THE SECRET OF THE BLESSING" Genesis 32:22-30 **That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man**

said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. 28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." 29 Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

In each of today's Scripture lessons we see "The Secret of the Blessing." Jacob found the secret of God's blessing and he got it. In our Epistle Lesson, Paul the Apostle was teaching young pastor Timothy the secret of God's blessing in his ministry. In our gospel lesson the widow who was being denied justice by a corrupt and lazy judge found the secret of getting the help she needed.

You all know what it is: "Hold on, hang on, press on...lift up your eyes to the hills and expect help to come from the Lord in His perfect time." If you are going through a time of serious trouble, just remember this one thing, hang on. Let's look at a few lessons from Jacob wrestling with THE ANGEL OF THE LORD.

I. JACOB WAS ALONE

Genesis 32:24 So Jacob was left alone,

Anyone who wants to attack someone waits for that person to be all alone and vulnerable...even God does that! So many of us hide in a crowd or hide behind someone else. Sometimes we need to get alone and wrestle with whatever forces come against us. We never get strong unless we struggle.

FBI: The FBI has been doing some very questionable things in recent months. They have been targeting those investigating election fraud and pro-lifers. They attack them with

brutal force when they are alone and no one is watching are guarding. Even President Trump and Mike Lindell have been targeted at vulnerable moments. I personally am very concerned about how the new army of IRS agents will treat conservatives. I kind of feel like Deitrich Bonhoffer must have felt in Nazi Germany...always wondering when the government will come to get you because you question them.

SOLUTION: But instead of living in fear we need to be asking the same question that Jacob asked, "WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?" God is also there and using the situation to bless us. Mike Lindell is a born-again Christian who has had a mighty encounter with God to transform him from a crack addict to a prominent business man and speaker. The same God promised to never "leave us or forsake us" in Deuteronomy 31:6 was with Mike Lindell when the FBI cowardly ambushed him when he was alone. I am sure he has read over Moses' words to Joshua as the mantle of leadership was passed in **Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.**" Our pro-life leaders and investigative journalists like Matt Walsh and Candice Owens need to hang on to this verse every day. So do you and I. Let me repeat it: **Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.**"

JOSEPH: God is with us and working for us, even when we are alone and attacked by powerful forces. When they attack truth, they are attacking God. Jacob's son Joseph had a time when his brothers attacked him when He was alone and I am sure he wondered where God was. But he went from prisoner in chains to prince of Egypt and he eventually realized that GOD WAS WITH HIM ALL ALONG. In Genesis 50:20 Joseph addresses his brothers who feared him because they had hurt him and here is what he said: **Genesis 50:20 You**

intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

SUMMARY: JACOB WAS ALONE. We are mostly attacked and tested when we are alone and vulnerable from our point of view. But we must never forget that we are never alone, God is always with us.

II. JACOB WAS WOUNDED

Genesis 32:24b&25 ...a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.

SERIOUS: This attack on Jacob was a serious attack. The Lord wounded him and he limped the rest of His life. The same thing happened to the Apostle Paul who had what he called in 2 Corinthians 12 "***a thorn in the flesh.***" It was a serious pain for him too. He even called it "***a messenger of Satan***" yet he still acknowledged that it was ultimately from God for a good purpose. Most of us carry serious wounds too. I know you all well enough that I know what they are...but some of you have powerful secret wounds that you carry and we don't know about.

CINDY: Cindy Knight called me on Tuesday night to tell me about a mighty encounter she had with a stranger at the store who came up to her and prayed over her and gave her a special message from the Lord. Is Cindy's pain and suffering great and real and almost unbearable? Yes. Is God with her? Yes. Is God doing something in and through it too? Yes.

PARADOX: I like the way one preacher described this thorn from God and the devil. He put it this way, "***Good and evil run on parallel tracks and both arrive about the same time.***" "You meant it for evil but God meant it for good." "Death is an enemy but "To live is Christ to die is gain." "ALL THINGS work together for good for those who love God."

“Hard things will come our way but nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

REAL: These wounds are real. We are in a spiritual battle. It hurts at times. It even can kill our body. But God is in it working out His deep designs. Disabled William Cowper so powerfully puts it this way: **“Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill, God treasures up His bright designs and works His sovereign will.”** It hurts to come under the scalpel of God and have the sin cut out of our lives, sometimes God’s scalpel is even the devil or “bad things”...but the end result is the filling of the Holy Spirit and spiritual fruit and that makes it worthwhile. JACOB WAS WOUNDED.

III. JACOB FOUND THE BLESSING

Genesis 32:26b Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

Jacob hung on to his attacker when he realized it was God. Jacob endured the serious pain in his hip. The attacker said, “Let me go,” but perhaps under his breath said, “But I hope you don’t.” Then as daybreak approached the Lord blessed him for hanging on:

1. Jacob got a new name: from JACOB “deceiver,” his old name, to a new name, ISRAEL, “wrestle (contend) with God” (Triumphant with God)
2. Jacob was bold and asked to hear the Name of God. He asked, “What is your name?” This would be that name of God that no one knows how to pronounce, YAWHEH OR JEHOVAH or something similar. Today we have the power of Jesus’ Name which we need to use fearlessly. God didn’t answer Jacob but now He has given us the name to use today: JESUS.
3. Jacob knew that he was living on borrowed time: he had seen God in human flesh, face to face and lived.

When we know we are on borrowed time it helps us to live fearlessly.

4. Jacob was NO LONGER AFRAID to face his potentially angry brother that he had cheated. God took away his fear.

BORROWED TIME: God rescued me from flying into a boxed canyon in Alaska when I was flying through the mountains with descending clouds, poor visibility and terrible turbulence and high winds. A couple years later I was visiting Alaska and flying over that same mountain range in a commercial jet on a cloudy day. A hole opened up in the clouds right below my window and I looked down and saw that same boxed canyon that I flew into on that fearful day of September 16, 1999, the day after my 39th birthday. God reminded me that my life “ended” in 1999 and I am now on His borrowed time. In 2007 I got cancer and lived through it. I was reminded that I am on borrowed time. In 2022 I walk around with the threat of strokes, a hole in my heart and a complicated sleep disorder. I am reminded that I am on borrowed time. These troubles are what we NEED TO EMBRACE to get the greater blessing of living a on a higher plane for higher purposes, purged from sin and filled with the Holy Spirit and faith. But to get the blessing we need to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and He is bigger than the devil and is working it all out for His greater purposes that we will rejoice in for all eternity.

BLESSED: I love what one preacher said when he described the morning after Jacob wrestled with the angel: *His hair was disheveled, his body was black and blue, his clothes were torn and he limped into camp. His family rushed to him and in horror said, “What happened to you?” And much to their surprise he smiled and said, “I got blessed!”*

So here is my question for you today? What is the devil throwing at you today and how is God using it to bless you now and for all eternity? Can you say with the Psalmist in ***Psalm 119:71 “It was good for me that I was afflicted...?”*** THAT IS THE SECRET OF BLESSING:

HOLD ON! Or as another anonymous poet puts it, *“God hammers us and hurts us and with mighty blows converts us in to trial shapes of clay which only God understands, while our tortured hearts are crying and we lift beseeching hands. God uses whom he chooses and with every purpose fuses us to try His pleasure out. God knows what He’s about.”*

Again, here is THE SECRET OF BLESSING, HANG ON and trust Him who died on Calvary’s cross for you to turn your pain into a blessing. HE WILL...IN HIS TIME. Amen

HYMN #502 “I’m Pressing on the Upward Way”

LORD’S PRAYER: *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION: The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace. Amen

Doxology (AH #390) *Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men. A-men. A---men.*

POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson