



Devotion for Thursday, May 14, 2020:

Genesis 32:24-31

²⁴Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' ²⁷So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' ²⁸Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.' ²⁹Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him. ³⁰So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.' ³¹The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

- NRSV

There is a long history of wrestling with God in scripture. In this story with Jacob (Israel) it is a very literal wrestling, but often times the struggle is more spiritual and emotional. The psalms in particular have a lot challenging passages.

Those passages challenge God and how God is dealing with or treating humanity. One of the more famous ones is Psalm 22, which Jesus quotes on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me". This one is often misunderstood because the psalm is one of great faithfulness, rather than hopelessness as it comes across in Jesus' limited reference, but the point is still valid. Sometimes it feels as if God is not present with us.

Perhaps you are feeling that way during these trying times. Wrestling with a feeling that God may be absent. I certainly wouldn't hold any anger or resentment people have toward God because of our current state of things against anyone, and God doesn't seem to do that either. God is big and strong enough to stand up to all our scrutiny and anger. God isn't hurt or lessened by our anger and always responds with love. God is willing to wrestle with us.

Patient God, please accept our frustration and anger. Help us to remember that such things are a part of any relationship, even our relationship with you. Give us faith to trust that you can handle such things and still love and care for us always. We are so grateful for your understanding and kindness.

In Christ, Pastor Travis Larsen