



The Benefice of the Piddle Valley, Hilton & Ansty, Cheselbourne and Melcombe Horsey

Sunday 20th October 2019
18th Sunday after trinity (proper 24)

Altar Colour – Green

Readings: Gen. 32: 22-31, Psalm 121, 2 Tim. 3:14-4: 5, Luke 18: 1-8

Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Genesis 32:22-31 (ESV) - Jacob Wrestles with God

The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

COMMENT: We have here an ancient tribal legend with a deeply theological meaning. The story of Jacob's struggle with a man he could not overcome, but who also wounded him, symbolizes his inner spiritual struggle. It also relates the tradition of how the nation of Israel got its name and how one of the peculiar

dietary customs of the Jewish people came about. The struggle between Jacob and the man he met at the Jabbok emphasizes two important points: Jacob's persistence and his ultimate blessing by the LORD. As the story was told up to this point in his life, Jacob had been anything but a spiritually minded man. Indeed, he had been a trickster and a deceiver many times. He himself had been deceived twice by his uncle and father-in-law into working for fourteen years before obtaining the wife he desired. While his story is told without censure and reflects the tribal customs of ancient times, Jacob was still regarded as one of the patriarchs of Israel through whom the LORD had brought the nation into being. This extended narrative implies that the struggle at the Jabbok, which he renamed Peniel, represents a change in the character of the man. Further, the story reinforces the tradition that it was the LORD's choice and grace that brought Israel to its special status and developed its subsequent spiritual heritage. In other words, the story becomes a parable of how Jacob (and Israel) had to reckon with God in order to be spiritually regenerated and reconciled with his brother, Esau, whom he had so grievously deceived. The restriction against eating the thigh muscle (v. 32) appears nowhere else in the Old Testament, but may have been a taboo in more ancient Semitic tribal life.

Luke 18:1-8 (ESV) - The Parable of the Persistent Widow

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

COMMENT: This story of the persistent woman seeking justice reflects a much more primitive legal system than the one to which we are accustomed. The woman had direct access to the judge on several occasions. This would be a situation where village elders met in some public place such as the market square or the village gate to hear and judge the complaints of neighbour against neighbour. The woman, too poor to afford a bribe and without influential relatives

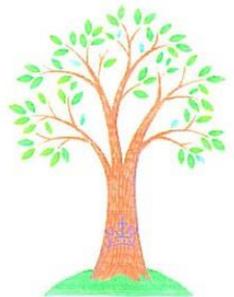
or friends, had only her indomitable persistence to gain a satisfactory decision. Such perversions of the law would appear to have been common. It could be argued even today, that wealth and influence can determine whether justice is done or in some cases not done! Any consideration of injustice is not as important as the reason why Jesus told the story and why Luke included it in his narrative at this point. The story contrasts God's merciful and speedy judgment with that of the weary judge who just wanted to get the woman out of his hair. The point of the parable is that if persistence prevails with one who cares only for his own peace and comfort, how much more will it prevail with God who has compassion on his children. Be persistent in prayer!

Post Communion: We praise and thank you, O Christ, for this sacred feast: for here we receive you, here the memory of your passion is renewed, here our minds are filled with grace, and here a pledge of future glory is given, when we shall feast at that table where you reign with all your saints for ever. **Amen**

Blessing: God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Benefice Prayer Requests:

- Please continue to pray for those who are ill, in hospital, recovering from illness or surgery: June Kellaway, Ann Lambert, Faye Lord, Terry Jeanes, Katie, Lisa Bailey, Roger Gray, Bernard, Martin, Marion Traynor...
- We pray for Adam and Valerie married at Piddlehinton on 19th October
- Please pray for those who grieve.
- Please pray for our benefice schools of Piddle Valley and Cheselbourne for the children, teachers, staff and governors.



*If you would like to add someone to the Prayer list,
please email the Rector.*

What's going on around the Benefice!

Food Bank: As a benefice we will continue to collect a packet/tin a week to support those in the wider Dorchester community who are in need.



For more information about how to access the foodbank can be found on the following website <http://dorchesterbc.org.uk/food-bank>

Tuesday 22nd October: Stepping Stones Home Group Meet twice a month on a Tuesday evening at 7.30pm, at Orchard Cottage, Melcombe Bingham. (Richard and Julie Saunders on 01258 880585.) *All Welcome*

Thursday 24th October: 9.30am Morning Prayer, with Alan Neades Piddlehinton

<u>27th October 2019</u> <i>Altar Colour - green</i>	<u>19th Sunday after Trinity</u> 8.30am Holy Communion 9.30am Family Eucharist * Joint Service with Alton Pancras 6.00pm Sung Evening Prayer 6.00pm Choral Evening Prayer with choir	Cheselbourne Piddletrenthide Piddlehinton Hilton
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Dates for your diary

Tiddlers at Piddle Valley School Tuesday 5th November 10.00 to 11.30pm. For More details please contact Alicia

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