

10th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 2nd August 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsieigneur****Readings:**¹ Genesis 32:22-31 / Psalm 17:1-7, 16 / Romans 9:1-16 / Matthew 14:13-21**Series Title:** Called to Discipleship, Who Me? How?**Today's Theme:** *"Wrestling, Trusting, Offering:
Discipleship and Stewardship in God's Mission"***Genesis 32:22-31*****Jacob Wrestles at Peniel***

²² The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. ²⁴ Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵ When 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. ²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." ²⁷ So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸ Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed." ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, yet my life is preserved." ³¹ The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

Psalm 17:1-7, 16***Prayer for Deliverance from Persecutors******A Prayer of David.***

- ¹ Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry;
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.
- ² From you let my vindication come;
let your eyes see the right.
- ³ If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me;
my mouth does not transgress.
- ⁴ As for what others do, by the word of your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.
- ⁵ My steps have held fast to your paths;
my feet have not slipped.
- ⁶ I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me; hear my words.
- ⁷ Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.

¹ All scriptural quotations are lifted from New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. (NRSVUE)
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¹⁶ As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;
when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.

Romans 9:1-16

God's Election of Israel

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit— ² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own brothers and sisters, my own flesh and blood. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ⁵ to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

⁶ It is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all those descended from Israel are Israelites, ⁷ and not all of Abraham's children are his descendants, but "it is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you." ⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants. ⁹ For the word of the promise is this: "About this time I will return, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁰ Nor is that all; something similar happened to Rebecca when she had conceived children by one husband, our ancestor Isaac: ¹¹ even before they had been born or had done anything good or bad (so that God's purpose of election might continue, ¹² not by works but by his call) she was told, "The elder shall serve the younger." ¹³ As it is written, "I have loved Jacob,
but I have hated Esau."

¹⁴ What then are we to say? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

¹⁶ So it depends not on human will or exertion but on God who shows mercy.

Matthew 14:13-21

Feeding the Five Thousand

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

SERMON

As we approach a season of reflecting on financial giving and stewardship, it is important to begin in the right place. Stewardship is not first about budgets, buildings, or balance sheets. It is about discipleship. It is about how we respond to God's call upon our lives and how we use what God has entrusted to us for the sake of God's mission.

Today's readings invite us to consider how discipleship and stewardship are inseparably connected.

In Genesis, Jacob spends the night wrestling with a mysterious figure beside the Jabbok River. By dawn, he has been changed forever. He receives a new name, Israel, "for you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed"².

Jacob's story is one of transformation. Much of his life had been spent grasping, controlling, and securing blessing for himself. Yet in this encounter he discovers that blessing comes not through possession but through surrender.

This is where stewardship begins. Before God asks what we will give, God asks who we are becoming. Stewardship is the fruit of discipleship because generous giving grows from transformed hearts.

Churches can wrestle with similar questions. We may be tempted to think of buildings, finances, and resources primarily as things to preserve. Yet discipleship calls us to ask a different question: not merely how can we keep what we have, but how can God use what we have for the kingdom?

Jacob leaves the river limping but also blessed. We see that God's purposes are often discovered when we loosen our grip and place our trust in God's hands.

The foundation of stewardship is trust, and the Psalmist offers a prayer of deep confidence:

"Guard me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings"³.

Fear often tempts both individuals and congregations to hold tightly to resources. We fear there may not be enough for the future. We fear uncertainty. We fear change.

Yet the psalm reminds us that our security ultimately rests not in our possessions but in God's faithfulness.

We are surrounded by evidence of this faithfulness. The buildings we occupy, the ministries we share, and the resources we steward have all been entrusted through the generosity of previous generations of disciples. Their faith was an expression of trust that God would continue to work through the church long after they were gone.

The same trust is required of us. Stewardship is not about preserving our security or maintaining the status quo. It is about participating faithfully in God's future. In God's purpose beyond ourselves.

² Genesis 32:28

³ Psalm 17:8

In Romans, Paul expresses profound sorrow for his fellow Israelites. His concern reflects his confidence that God is accomplishing purposes far greater than any individual or group can fully understand.

One of the dangers facing us as a congregation is the temptation to become inward-looking. Resources can gradually become centred on our survival rather than mission.

Paul's vision reminds us that God's concern is always wider than our own.

St Peter's exists not for itself but for God's mission. Therefore, the resources entrusted to the parish—including its finances, property, and buildings—must ultimately serve that mission.

A church building is not simply a historical asset. It is a gift entrusted to the people of God. Its significance lies not merely in its existence but in its capacity to support worship, discipleship, hospitality, service, and evangelism.

Of course, without maintenance, the building will fail. However, the question is not simply whether a building is maintained. The deeper question is whether it is helping to advance God's mission in the community.

Stewardship becomes an act of discipleship when we view our resources through that missional lens.

Today's Gospel provides perhaps the clearest picture of stewardship.

Faced with a crowd of thousands, the disciples see only scarcity. They urge Jesus to send the people away. Jesus responds:

"They need not go away; you give them something to eat"⁴.

The disciples immediately focus on their limitations:

"We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish"⁵.

Jesus, however, focuses on what is available.

The miracle begins when the small offering is placed in his hands. Jesus blesses it, breaks it, and shares it. What seemed insufficient becomes more than enough, and all are fed.

This story offers a powerful lesson for stewardship. How often do we look first at what we lack: insufficient funds, aging facilities, declining numbers, or growing demands?

Yet Jesus asks a different question: What do you have?

The miracle was not created by the disciples, but by God. Yet the disciples participated by offering what they had.

⁴ Matthew 14:16

⁵ Matt. 14:17

The same remains true today. Financial gifts, volunteer service, buildings, land, and community partnerships may seem limited in themselves. Yet when offered faithfully to Christ, they become instruments through which God works.

These readings reveal a common pattern. Jacob is transformed through surrender. The Psalmist learns trust. Paul points to God's larger purposes. The disciples discover that God multiplies what is willingly offered.

Together they remind us that stewardship is a discipleship issue before it is a financial issue.

We are not owners but stewards. Everything we possess ultimately belongs to God and is entrusted to us for God's purposes.

As we begin reflecting upon our giving in the coming year, may we not simply ask, "What can we afford?" Instead, may we ask, "How is God calling us to participate in God's mission through all that has been entrusted to us?"

For when disciples place their lives, resources, and even their buildings into Christ's hands, God has a remarkable way of turning apparent scarcity into abundant blessing for the sake of the kingdom.

Let us pray.

Gracious and generous God,

You have given us all that we are and all that we have. As Jesus took the loaves and fishes, blessed them, and used them to feed many, so take the gifts we offer, the resources we steward, and the lives we place in your hands.

Free us from fear and teach us to trust in your abundance. Grant us hearts of faithful discipleship, willing to give of ourselves for the sake of your kingdom. May our offerings of time, talent, and treasure become instruments of your grace, serving the needs of our community and proclaiming the good news of Christ and the growth of your Church. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.