



St. Paul's 2026 Stewardship Campaign

Be Thou My Vision

An invitation to discern and embrace God's Vision
for our congregation and our lives.

Week 3: Church: Where We Learn to Wrestle with God!

*This week we have three devotions sent on Monday, Wednesday and Friday,
using the readings from this past Sunday
and helping us further explore the question, "why the Church?"*

*The devotion will be sent by email,
but if you would like to download a pdf you can access it at:*

<https://stpaulsclearwater.org/stewardship>

(There is a direct link at the bottom of this email)

Day 1: Wrestling with God – Genesis 32:22–31

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

Take a few minutes to place yourself in God's presence. Still and open your heart.

Today's Reading: Genesis 32:22-31

Returning to the home he had fled many years before after stealing his brother's birthright and his father's blessing, Jacob wrestles all night long with a divine adversary who ultimately blesses him and changes his name to "Israel," a name that means "he wrestles with God."

Slowly read the following Scripture out loud.

²² The same night [Jacob] 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.

Reflection:

Jacob's wrestling match with God is one of the most mysterious and powerful stories in Scripture. It's a moment of vulnerability, struggle, and transformation. Jacob doesn't run from the fight—he holds on, even when wounded, until he receives a blessing. This is a picture of spiritual formation: not avoiding struggle, but engaging it with faith, trusting that God meets us in the wrestling.

Journal Questions:

What are you wrestling with in your faith right now?

How might God be using this struggle to shape or rename you?

What does it mean for you to "not let go" until you receive a blessing?

If you cannot think of a circumstance in your life today, go back and remember a time where you struggled with life and God. How did it transform your life? Where was God in your story?

Read the scripture again. This time place yourself in the story. Allow yourself to wrestle with God! Just see where God takes your prayer.

Write about your prayer experience:

Closing Devotional Thought:

The church is a community shaped by these sacred struggles. Like Jacob, we are called to wrestle with God—not in defiance, but in pursuit of deeper relationship and transformation. Our limp becomes a sign of grace, not weakness.

Day 2: Formed by the Word of God

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." — 2 Timothy 3:16

Take a few minutes to place yourself in God's presence. Still and open your heart.

Today's Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

The writer of this letter continues his instruction of Timothy, his younger colleague in ministry, by emphasizing the importance of faithful teaching despite opposition.

Slowly read the following Scripture out loud.

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have known sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

^{4:1} In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: ² proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound teaching, but, having their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. ⁵ As for you, be sober in everything, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

Reflection:

Paul reminds Timothy—and us—that Scripture is not just for knowledge, but for transformation. The church is a community rooted in the Word, shaped by it, and sent out to live it faithfully for the sake of the world God loves.

Journal Questions:

What part of Scripture has recently challenged or comforted you?

How do you experience God's Word as "sweet" or "wise"?

In what ways is God equipping you for good works through Scripture?

At worship on Sunday we imagined these words from Paul coming from someone who inspired our faith. You are invited to experience that again. Remember someone who most influenced or inspired your faith. Take a few moments to remember them, to see them with you now. Read the scripture again out loud imagining that this person has just handed you this manuscript as their own writing. Have a conversation with them about this reading and their experience, and your experience with God's Word.

Write about this prayer experience:

Closing Devotional Thought:

Discipleship is not passive. It's a daily practice of listening, learning, and living. Scripture is the Spirit's tool for forming us into the likeness of Christ. When we engage it with open hearts, we are equipped for every act of loving service and merciful justice.

Day 3: Persistent Faith

"Will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night?" — Luke 18:7

Take a few minutes to place yourself in God's presence. Still and open your heart.

Today's Reading: Luke 18:1-8

Jesus tells a parable of an unjust judge who is worn down by a widow's pleas. Jesus is calling God's people to cry out for justice and deliverance. For if an unethical judge will ultimately grant the plea of a persistent widow, how much more will God respond to those who call.

Slowly read the following Scripture out loud.

¹ Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my accuser.' ⁴ For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.' " ⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸ I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Reflection:

Jesus tells the story of a persistent widow who refuses to be ignored. Her tenacity is a model of faith that doesn't give up, even when justice seems delayed. The church is called to be a community of prayer and perseverance, trusting in God's faithfulness even when the answers are slow to come.

Journal Prompts:

Where in your life are you being called to persevere in prayer?

What does persistent faith look like for you today?

How can the today church embody the widow's courage and tenacity in seeking justice?

Read the scripture reading again allowing yourself to enter the story. Talk to God about a situation in your life that seems to have an answer delayed. Be sure to let God speak to you!

Write about your prayer experience:

Devotional Thought:

Faith is not always easy. It requires endurance, especially when we face injustice, silence, or suffering. But Jesus assures us: God hears. God responds. And our persistence is not in vain.
