

## Tenacity!

Genesis 32<sup>22-31</sup>; Psalm 121; 2 Timothy 3<sup>14</sup>-4<sup>5</sup>; Luke 18<sup>1-8</sup>

*Jacob said, I will not let you go unless you bless me.  
[Genesis 32<sup>26</sup>]*

Tenacity has become unfashionable - we live at a point in history when we expect everything to be instant and we lack both patience and tenacity for things that take time. If something needs fighting for, so many just give up.

The Psalmist leads the assault against the instant - he looks to the permanence of the hills and derives that certainty that God will work things out. But, as the hills took millennia to be seen as they now are, so the evidence of God's care make take time to be seen - indeed, we can only truly see it from the perspective of eternity.

That is all very passive and beautiful, but the other readings today are more active, even aggressive:

- ✦ Jacob wrestles with God and says that he **will not let you go unless you bless me**. He ends up sustaining an injury that means that he has a limp for the rest of his life. I can't help but think how many of us are prepared to engage in a struggle with God that may harm us or if we simply expect that faith should make life easy for us? Can we point to the scars from our experience with God?
- ✦ The Gospel has that strange story of the persistent woman litigant and the lazy judge who gives in because of her persistence. Jesus then asks the question, **will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night?** When we want something from God, do we persist? We are happy to invest time and emotional energy into things that matter - just think of those who will wait all night for the sales to open, or those who want sport or concert tickets who repeatedly press redial to secure their bookings - and the same is true of our dealings with God.
- ✦ Paul writes to Timothy and tells him that he needs to be **persistent** in teaching people about **scripture**, about **training**, and in avoiding just saying what people want to hear - **the time is coming when people will**

**not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires** the result of which is that the **truth** becomes a casualty and they **wander away to myths**.

A poem for you:

Two frogs fell into a can of cream.  
or so I've heard it told;  
the sides of the can were shiny and steep,  
the cream was deep and cold.

'Of, what's the use?' croaked Number 1,  
'Tis fate; no help's around.  
Goodbye, my friends! Goodbye, sad world!  
and, weeping still, he drowned.

But Number 2, of sterner stuff,  
dog-paddled in surprise,  
the while he wiped his crazy face  
and dried his creamy eyes.

'I'll win awhile, at least,' he said,  
or so I've heard he said;  
'It really wouldn't help the world  
if one more frog were dead.

An hour or two he kicked and swam,  
not once he stopped to mutter;  
but kicked and kicked and swam and kicked,  
and hopped out, via butter!

Tenacity in faith may be unfashionable, but it does have its rewards!