

LECTIONARY REFLECTIONS, PROPER 10A

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**Genesis 25:19-34**

**Psalm 119:105-112**

**Romans 8:1-11**

**Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

**Genesis 25:19-34:**

This Hebrew Scripture is about the birth and youth of Esau and Jacob, sons of Isaac and Rebekah. The brothers are twins and Rebekah's pregnancy with them was an omen of things to come – the children struggled with each other in the womb, making her miserable. At this point Rebekah received a word from the LORD foretelling that even though both sons would produce nations, the second born would be stronger and the first born would serve the younger. Esau was born first, and Jacob was born right after him, gripping Esau's heel as if to pull him back into the womb so that Jacob could be born first. The expression, "to grasp the heel" is a Hebrew idiom that describes one who is a trickster or at least who engages in deceptive behavior. Even at his birth, Jacob displays who he is. As the boys grew, Esau became a man of the outdoors who hunted and worked in the fields. Jacob stayed close to home. One day, Esau came in from working outdoors and was hungry. Jacob was cooking a stew and Esau begged Jacob for a portion. Jacob used the opportunity to try to bribe Esau with deception, saying that he would trade the bowl of stew for Esau's birthright. Now Esau is somewhat impulsive and perhaps a little overly dramatic and exclaims that a birthright would do him no good if he dies of hunger so with that, he sold his birthright to Jacob. Now this is no casual thing that Esau has done. His right as the firstborn entitles him to many things, including a double share of his father's inheritance. What he has given Jacob is worth far more than one serving of stew. But Esau is incapable of delaying gratification, so he impulsively sets the stage for Jacob to become stronger and for him to serve his younger brother.

***Jacob is a trickster, a man of deception. And yet from him God makes the great nation of Israel. What does this mean that God would use a person so flawed of character to become the founder of a nation? God seems to have a knack for choosing people with weakness and flaws to carry out his plans. This means that you and I have no excuse for not saying yes to God. That's good news, isn't it?***

**Psalm 119:105-112**

This excerpt is from Psalm 119, the longest of the Psalms. It is a timely reminder that even in times of deep trouble, God's judgments, his commandments, his statutes and his precepts make a foundation for living. This "word" from God is like a lantern lighting the path of our steps, keeping us from falling into traps, enflaming joy in our hearts.

***What discipline have you started in your life that will help you incorporate God's Word into your soul so that it can shine like a light upon your path?***

**Romans 8:1-11:**

The theology of Paul here richly and beautifully proclaims that if we set our minds on things of the Spirit versus things of the flesh, we will choose life and will find the law of God fulfilled in us. Christ has won for us this ability. What we need are constant reminders of this Good News.

***How can you remind yourself and your brothers and sisters that God has won for you the victory of being able to set your mind on the Spirit and on the fulfillment of God's law in you?***

**Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

This well-known parable of the Sower of the Seed should strike a familiar chord with us. We have heard it many times along with many homiletical interpretations of the various soils. But there are two pieces of good news in this parable that bear repeating. First of all the Sower (who we understand to be God) casts the seed extravagantly. While this would not be good farming practice today, the Sower does not seem to care that some of the seed, in fact most of the seed seems to fall in places where it is not going to produce fruit. But the prodigality of the Sower's seed scattering is Good News because some of it in fact cannot help but fall in places where it **WILL** produce fruit. And the good news about the fruit that it will produce is that it will produce 30, 60 even 100 fold. This is a harvest of such abundance that it far surpasses anything that any farmer of the day could possibly produce. God gives himself to us abundantly and produces within us fruit for His Kingdom that is far greater than anything we could possibly imagine or produce on our own.

***What extravagant seed of God's has fallen on you? Is it producing fruit? Can you give yourself over to the possibility that the fruit it is producing will grow farther than your wildest dreams? What seed can you cast extravagantly? Perhaps the reminders spoken of in the Romans text above – Reminders of God's abundant love and Christ's salvific victory?***

**THE COLLECT:**

***O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.***