

SERMON 19TH JULY 2026

Based on reading from Genesis 28:10-19a

In our OT reading today, Jacob is on the run – running away from his brother, Esau who has vowed to kill him. As far as Esau was concerned, Jacob was not a good brother to have because he kept taking what belonged to Esau.

Those of us with siblings, sometimes feel like Esau. We believe that our siblings, or a particular sibling is always trying to take what should or what rightfully belongs to us. We also believe that both or one of our parents are/is condoning their actions.

Let's pause for a moment and reflect on why we feel the way we do about our sibling(s) and our parent(s).

- Why is it that we never seem to do right by our mum, or our dad?
- Why is it that our sibling(s) is/are allowed to say or do things to us without them receiving any reprimand?

We can ask more questions, but let's remind ourselves about Jacob and Esau, and the circumstances surrounding their birth – and their actions towards each other.

1. Rebekah didn't have a straight forward pregnancy and asked God about it. God told her certain things about

her pregnancy that, I believe, coloured the way she behaved towards her children. Do you remember?

God told her that: (a) she will have twins;

(b) the older child will serve the younger.

She believed what God told her and the younger child was given a name that reflected this: Jacob, meaning 'supplanter', 'schemer', 'usurper'.

So, aided by his mother, Jacob is now trying to escape the fury of his brother, Esau, having duped their father into giving him the blessing that should have been given to Esau. I recounted that last week so I won't go over it today.

Communication is very important in every relationship.

Most, if not all of us, assume:

- ✓ we assume that the other people already know, so there is no need to tell them or explain.
- ✓ We assume that they will not understand if we told them or try to explain.
- ✓ We assume that the information is not that important anyway.... We assume a lot and, may be, cause a lot of pain and anguish because of our assumptions.

To assume is human so, let us all always assume this one thing: That God truly loves us and will always look out for

us, irrespective of our indiscretions and selfishness.

Actually, let's assume a second thing: we cannot ever flee from God.

As Jacob did in our Old Testament reading, we may try to flee from the consequences of our actions and pray that everyone would leave us alone, but God will never leave us alone. God will stand by us, like he stood beside Jacob in his dream of that divine ladder.

God introduced himself to Jacob and reassured him of his divine presence where ever he went. God also told Jacob that others will be blessed through him.

each one of us. The question is, in the midst of the chaos that we or others have created, can we hear God? God has a way of reaching out to each one of us. I pray that, like Jacob, we will recognise that 'surely God is in this place' and that God is always with us. Amen.

Almighty God knows, sees, hears, understands and acts.

- ❖ God knew what Jacob had done.
- ❖ God saw the division that resulted from his action(s).
- ❖ God heard the cries of everyone that was caught up in it, including Esau's desperate plea with his father for a blessing: do you only have one blessing, father?
- ❖ God understood that each member of this special family was aching in their own unique way, and that a time away and apart was prudent.
- ❖ God used this frantically distressing situation to tell Jacob and to remind us that he will never leave us or forsake us. 'I have plans for you', God whispers to