Sermon: **“Then a man came and wrestled with him until just before daybreak”** (Genesis 32.24)

I have never understood why some people like watching a boxing match.

Our story has a night-long wrestling match!

Context – Jacob cheated his brother, fled to Uncle Laban, married twice, and now returning to face Esau.

Imagine his fears – Esau was coming with 400 men! He sent all over the river Jabbok, except himself.

Wrestled with a man (angel? God?) and demanded a blessing; he was given the nickname Israel.

TEXT. Who was he really wrestling with? Himself and his fears.

Do we do the same?

Our whole lives can be seen as a struggle – growing up, education, leaving home, paid work, relationships, major life decisions, illness, death. But also when we own up to mistakes, when the simple faith as a child confronts a God who is different, even getting a new presbyter.

TEXT. So we wrestle with our faith, our concept of God, some of this wrestling is ongoing.

Encountering God has deep effects – Noah, Abraham, Moses (burning bush and Sinai), Samuel, Paul. Their encounters radically changed some part of their lives.

Our encounters with God may not be as direct as theirs, but still can occur – through prayer, Word for Today, reading Touchstone, Study Groups, but in many other ordinary ways too.

TEXT. What is the point? For Jacob he was wrestling with his conscience as much as anything.

For us? We want to know what God wants (it is the best for us), but sometimes what we are facing goes against the grain of how we see ourselves, or see God, or how life works. God wants is to change us, and our attitudes/thinking.

Another way of looking at this is to see life as a journey – which has its ups and downs, twists, crossroads.