

Genesis 28:10-22

Notes:

Unexpected encounter by God: Jacob's Ladder

We meet Jacob here on the run from his brother Esau, who wants to kill him in revenge for stealing his rightful blessing. Esau being the first born was supposed to inherit the lion share of the inheritance and have a blessing from their dying father Isaac. Not only did we learn last week that he stole Esau's birth right for a bowl of stew, but Jacob encouraged by Rebekah his mother disguised himself as Esau and stole the blessing also living up to his name.

Stopping for the night, taking comfy stone for a pillow he lays down for the night. He dreams of a stairway to heaven, angels ascending and descending via this gateway to heaven. God is at the top of it and declares despite Jacob's obvious sin of deception and theft, He blesses and promises him that He will be with Jacob and bring him back to this land. Not only that but his descendants will be a blessing to all people of the world. God's grace and mercy in action here.

Up until this encounter Jacob had no apparent relationship with God, in this passage we see the beginnings of transformation of Jacob.

Andy's focused on a couple of verses which are 16-17:

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

Just as Jacob woke from his dream to realise God is in this place, is it time that we woke up to His presence, the spiritual reality that God is among us by His Spirit?

1 Cor 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

You are God's Building, the house of God, the gateway to heaven, when we are gathered or scattered throughout the week. We are empowered to be Bethel (house of God) every day of the week, with the potential to be full of God, full of His Spirit, full of His word, full of His resurrection power, full of His love, full of His grace, full of His forgiveness and full of His fruit.

Something needs to change, firstly our attitude, come with expectation, as we gather to worship together, to help fill us up for the coming week, we need this time, to encounter the Lord in the gathering, we won't be able to sustain our walk without each other or not gathering.

Let's not be like Jacob and declare 'Surely, the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.'

But always to say "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

- 1) God's grace is on display in Jacob's life, despite living up to his name as a 'twister' and 'deceiver' God over looks this as sees his potential. Reflect on Ephesians 2: 1-10 and wonder at God's grace toward us too?
- 2) We are God's building, not made by human hands, a people called and chosen. Reflect on 1 Corinthians 3:10-16. What do you think the precious and common materials represent as we build upon the foundation of Christ?
- 3) How important is the gathered church to me? Do we come with an expectation to see God at work, or is it just the same every week for us? What needs to change?