

God is here, and I didn't know it!

Genesis 28:10-19a

July 17, 2011

We can read the Bible as our _____.

Abraham & Sarah → Isaac Isaac & Rebekah → Jacob & Esau

When Jacob is fleeing from Esau, he stops in a “certain place” and puts _____ under his head to sleep.

A well-known image from this passage: _____

In the Bible angels are _____.

1. The first thing God does is: _____.

2. Then, God extends all of the _____ of the past to Jacob (vv. 13-15) including: land, offspring, blessing the world, be with you, keep you, bring you back here, won't let you go

That night, Jacob was _____ to God's real presence with him.

Prevenient Grace:

Jacob takes that stone that he was sleeping on, sets it up, and pours _____ on it.

Ebenezer =

We humans need _____, physical reminders of God's presence and saving grace. This is one of the reasons why we have _____.

Reflection: Is there a time in your life when God was present and you didn't know it at the time?

Prayer Concerns:

Monday: Read Genesis 12:1-4

In this passage, we see God call Abraham and Sarah to go where God leads them and leave everything behind, their family, their home, everything. But God makes promises with them; God has great things to do with and through them.

* God's promise to Abraham and Sarah is not just for their own benefit; it entails all of the families of the earth being blessed. How have you witnessed God blessing the world through other people? How is God trying to bless the world through you?

* Abraham and Sarah did not get to see many of these promises fulfilled in their lifetime. The promises of God don't always get worked out in our timing; sometimes they take generations. Are you willing to be a part of God's blessing, even if you don't see it fulfilled?

Tuesday: Read the hymn: Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing (The United Methodist Hymnal #400 or on the internet)

* The dictionary defines a *fount* as a source or origin. Who is the fount of every blessing?

* Most instruments need to be tuned. The tuning process involves adjusting the instrument to get it to the correct pitch, so that it makes the right sound. How might God tune our hearts to sing God's grace? How do we get in tune with God?

* For some reason, we are prone to wander from God. What is the hymn writer's response to his wandering heart?

Wednesday: Read 1 Samuel 7:3-14

In this passage we see Samuel beginning his ministry as a judge over the people of Israel. They have been wandering and turning away from God, so the first thing Samuel does is call the people to turn back to God, and they do. God is with them and gives them victory over the Philistines, so they take a rock and call it Ebenezer, the stone of help, to remember how God helped them and showed mercy to them yet again.

* When have you been wandering in your own direction and needed to turn back toward God?

* When has God helped you? How might you remember and celebrate this?

Thursday: Read the hymn: Standing on the Promises of God (The United Methodist Hymnal #374 or on the internet)

* What are some of the promises of God?

* What does it mean to “stand” on God’s promises?

Friday Read Luke 1:46-55

This is called the Magnificat, and it is a song of praise that Mary sings shortly after she is told that she will give birth to Jesus. It is a song that lifts up God’s saving grace and remembers God’s mighty deeds in the past. It is a song that recounts God’s promises to previous generations and yet includes Mary within those promises.

* God’s promises are in continuity with the past, and yet they also include us. If you were to write a Magnificat, what would you include? Can you name some of God’s saving actions in the past and the present? How has God’s promise continued through you? Try writing your own magnificat and including these things.

Saturday: Hebrews 11

If the Bible contains our family story, Hebrews 11 gives the highlight reel. We see a long list of our ancestors and the ways that they kept the faith and trusted God's promises. But the end of the chapter, 11:39-40, tells us that even though they were faithful, they did not get to see the promises of God fulfilled.

* Do you ever feel like you are a part of something bigger than you? Are you primarily concerned with what you receive out of God's promise, or do you have a wider vision? How might you embrace God's vision, knowing that the promises might not be fulfilled in your lifetime?

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