



(Jacob's Dream by William Blake)

We take a breath and come intentionally into God's presence

The Lord be with you: **And also with you.**

We bring before God our lament for the week that has passed and our commitment for a holier, better tomorrow. Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

Holy Spirit draw us close and minister your grace to us, open our hearts and minds to all you have to say and show us this day. **Amen.**

Genesis 28:10-19a

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel.

Reflection

Jacob is travelling on his own to the land of Haran, sent away for his protection by his mother Rebecca after they colluded together to take his brother Esau's birth right blessing.

Maybe he is feeling repentant, vulnerable, uncertain of the future; but for now he is asleep on a hard stone under the stars, and God meets him there. In an insignificant place, without it appears any bidding on Jacob's behalf.

He dreams a vivid dream of a ladder between heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending. This is such a beautiful image, signalling the closeness of heaven and heavenly beings to us. It speaks to God's continual relationship in and between the realms, and of reaching out to us even when we are not reaching out to God. We talk of the night watches, the unsettled time in the night, but it is in the dream of the night that God initiates this transcendent communication with Jacob.

In this divine speech, God talks of the promises he made to Abraham and Isaac, Jacob's father and grandfather and how God's promises even with Jacob's imperfections, continue to him. He is still part of God's covenant and generations will be blessed through this line. In this unknown journey he will not be alone God will be with him; in his displacement, in his travels and in the unknown land in which he will settle.

You sense a renewed vigour in Jacob, a sprightliness as he awakes. He is reassured. He has heard God's word to him. He better understands who he is and that his life has purpose. He has a new sense of vocation and knows that wherever this journey leads (and it still has plenty of ups and downs) God will be with him. He has been in the presence of God, or rather God has been in his presence. God came to him. The magnitude of what has happened is not lost and Jacob full of adoration builds an altar to the Lord from the hard stone that was his pillow, and names the place Bethel meaning 'house of God'.

This passage is warming to me as we see earth and heaven are all part of God's intermingled sphere. I love that the angelic and divine surrounds us, even though we remain mostly unaware of it. Maybe we are more 'open' to the mystical in the dream like hours, when we try to make sense of ourselves and the world we live in. Sometimes this is a time of great uncertainty and anxiety, and maybe it is in that time that we can find comfort in knowing God's angels are at work between heaven and earth and ask God to reveal to us God's divine presence. And with the reassurance of God's presence at night, to gives rise to new understandings in the day, of God being with us. **Amen**

Worship Music

These are the days of Elijah with lyrics

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca9LnzJnpjQ>

Be thou my vison Nathan Pacheco Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBrlmVdF1Nw>

Servant King – Lucy Gibson (attached)

Prayers

God of mercy, Lord of life
You have made us in your image to reflect your grace and light.
Thank you for your great generosity and mercies to us, new every morning.
Grant us rich awareness of your presence and
strengthen us in our weaknesses to be faithful to the calling we have in you.
Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

God of mercy, Lord of life,
Breathe your healing, freedom from evil, and peace across the world.
We pray for the countries struggling to cope with the rise in infections.
Grant wisdom, integrity and a desire for good to all leaders and governments.
Give insight to those developing medicines and vaccines and generosity to freely
share knowledge and resources.
Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

God of mercy, Lord of life,
We pray for those who have lost or are in fear of losing their jobs,
business or financial security.
We pray for all who are homeless and hungry.
Those who are fearful for today and tomorrow.
Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

God of mercy, Lord of life,
We pray for all who are unwell, all who are struggling in body, mind and spirit.
Touch them with your healing, reassure them of your love and hold them in your
warm embrace.
We lift before you all those for whom we pray....
And those who have no one to pray for them....
We pray for one another...
For our family and friends...
For our own needs and frailties...
Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

God of mercy, Lord of life,
We commend to your safe keeping all those who have recently died...
All whom we have loved and for who our hearts grieve.....
We thank you for them and for your reassurance of your heavenly kingdom
and your great faithfulness in life and death. **Amen.**

In this moment of stillness we lift before God the prayers of our own hearts

**We commend ourselves and the whole of creation to your unfailing love.
Amen.**

**Our Father, who art in heaven;
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,**

**As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.
In the name of God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ Amen.**