

Learning Together 7th After Pentecost Covid-19 - Jacob's Ladder

Have you ever had dream that seemed both strange and also very real? Long, long ago, there was a man named Jacob who had a dream like that. The dream came to him one night while he was sleeping outside with a rock for a pillow, and it had a special message for him that he really needed to hear. Before I tell you what that message was, let me tell you why he was sleeping outside with his head on a rock. (That doesn't sound very comfortable!)

Jacob had a twin brother named Esau. In those days, the oldest son in a family got to become the head of the family when the father got too old. Now, even though Jacob and Esau were born on the same day because they were twins, (actually they were even born in the same hour) Esau was born first, so he was the one who was supposed to become head of the family. Jacob was jealous of his brother, so he came up with a plan to trick both his brother and his father into making him the head of the family instead of Esau.

Jacob's plan sort of worked – sort of. Being head of a family takes more than just someone saying you are the head, it takes acting responsibly. And acting responsibly does not mean tricking people into getting what you want! So instead of living happily ever after as head of the family, Jacob had to run away because Esau was so mad, Jacob was afraid his brother might hurt or even kill him. So that is the short version of how Jacob came to be sleeping outside, all by himself, scared and alone, with no nice warm bed and just a rock for a pillow.

That night, Jacob dreamed that right in front of him was a big ladder that went from the ground near where he was sleeping all the way up to heaven. Climbing up and down the ladder were God's angels, going back and forth between heaven and earth. Then in his dream, God stood beside Jacob and promised him a future with a big family where he wouldn't be alone and scared. God also told Jacob he didn't need to feel alone now, either, saying "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." When Jacob woke up, he built a pillar of rocks to mark the place where he had his amazing dream, so he would always remember.

I wonder if you have ever felt alone and scared? Loneliness and fear are common feelings, especially in this time of staying at home because of Covid-19. One of the important points of this story about Jacob is that we are never alone. God is with us. Even when we have done things we are not proud of, God still loves us. Often we think of God as being up in heaven but another important part of this story is where Jacob meets God in his dream – God is beside him, not calling down from the top of the ladder, but standing next to him. There is no place in heaven or earth where God will not be there for us.

My challenge for you this week is to pay attention to your dreams by starting a "Dream Journal". You can buy a little notebook or make one by stapling paper together, then put

it next to your bed with a pen or pencil. The next time you have an interesting dream, right it down or draw a picture of it as soon as you wake up, before you forget it. It can be fun later to go back and remember what you dreamed or to share your dream with someone else. You really have to be quick, though, because most dreams fade away almost immediately and you will forget them by breakfast if you don't get them down on paper right away!

Say this echo prayer with me:

Dear God...thank you for dreams...and families....Help us to be kind to others...even when we feel jealous...or angry...and to remember... you are always with us...wherever we go...Amen



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