

Making Space for God

Invocation: Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you; I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures. I wish no more than this, O Lord, into your hands I commend my soul; I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands, without reserve, and with boundless confidence.

Charles de Foucauld

Looking to the Past- Take some times to settle yourself. Invite the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts for the day. Think back over where you have been this last month. Review your journal. What burdens, emotions, and concerns do you carry? What are you thankful for? When have you experienced the Lord's presence? Journal your thoughts and offer these to the Lord.

Scripture Reading- Jacob's Dream at Bethel- Genesis 28:10-42

Chapter 27 ended with Esau breathing murderous threats against his brother for stealing his blessing. Rebekah surmised that she needed to get Jacob out of Dodge quick. As before, she skillfully stage-managed the situation with her husband and two sons. She convinced Isaac that Jacob needed a wife and she was not going to tolerate another local Hittite woman in the camp like the two wives of Esau. So Isaac decided to send Jacob 600 miles north to find a wife among Rebekah's family. Everybody was happy except Rebekah who lost a son in order to save him.



Jacob's Dream by Marc Chagall

The journey through the desert marked the transition between one season of Jacob's life and the beginning of another. What happened next had profound implications not only for Jacob but for us as well.

Questions for Reflection

1. Jacob deceived his father, riled his brother, and lost his mother in a short span of time. What might he have been feeling as he began his journey?
2. Dreams are important in the book of Genesis. When we dream, our conscious mind is not in control, our unconscious is. What role have dreams had in your own life as you relate to the Lord? What helps you remember a dream?
3. In his dream, Jacob saw angels going up and down a stairway between earth and heaven. Sit with that image for a while. What are the implications for your life now?
4. Jacob said of God, "You were in this place and I was not aware of it. What is the number one thing that prevents you from being attentive to God's activity? What are you going to do about that?"

5. The Lord appears and promises Jacob land, descendants, blessing for all the families of the earth because of his descendants, protection and presence all the days of his life. Which of those promises apply to you today?

6. Jacob took the stone and created a memorial pillar. He gave the place a special name. What could you create that would help you remember key moments of God's activity in your life?

7. Jacob's response to God's overwhelming graciousness was to make a vow. What vow's have you made or would like to make as a result of God's goodness to you?

Reading for Reflection

In a world too vast and a lifetime too short for me to carry all responsibility...the loving presence of God does not burden us equally with all things, but considerately puts upon each of us just a few central tasks, as emphatic responsibilities. For each of us these special undertakings are our share in the joyous burdens of love. This state of having a concern has a foreground and a background. In the foreground is the special task, uniquely illuminated, toward which we feel a special yearning and care...But in the background is a second level, or layer, of universal concern for all the multitude of good things that need doing. Toward them we feel kindly, but we are dismissed from active service in most of them. And we have an easy mind in the presence of desperately real needs which are not our direct responsibility. We cannot die on every cross, nor are we expected to.

Thomas Kelly in Sanctuary of the Soul page 61

Hell is not something God enjoys. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to everlasting life. That is His wish. God is not trying to keep people out of heaven; he is trying to get them in, and I believe that He will admit anyone who, in His judgment, can stand it—and I'm not being funny. That is deadly serious. For God, this isn't play time. This business of being in heaven is very serious indeed. If you got there and found you didn't like God—well, actually, most people don't like God—that would be a problem. In heaven you're going to be right up against Him, constantly, forever. You have to be ready for that. People who don't like God enough to seek Him and spend time with Him here are very likely to find heaven utterly agonizing.

Dallas Willard in Conversation, Issue 8.1, page 17

There are values which we cannot but want to uphold, values which though they can be conceived of as independent of God are in fact the ropes and pulleys by which God draws men and women to him. These values were summarized more than two thousand years ago as truth, goodness and beauty... Concern for truth is a silken chain by which the Creator draws men to seek him. Another of the lures by which the Omnipotence draws me to search for him is the attraction of goodness, especially moral goodness...The fact that many people feel it necessary to pretend to be better than they are bears witness to man's ineradicable craving for goodness.

Christopher Bryant in The Heart in Pilgrimage



Jacob's Ladder by Pawel Przyrowski. Stained glass window in London Restaurant

Benediction

O Lord my God, to you and your service I devote myself, body soul and spirit. Fill my memory with the record of your mighty works; enlighten my understanding with the light of your Holy Spirit; and make all the desires of my heart and will center in what you would have me do. Amen