
Jacob's Ladder for Us

A sermon by the Rev. CanonCarolynne Williams
Proper 11 - Year A

The Story of Jacob's ladder is not new to some people. It is not one of those hidden stories in the Old Testament. This story about his dream stands on its own as one of the more well-known stories in scripture "God transmits to him the ancestral promises, fulfilling the expressed wish of his father" (Genesis 28:3-4). His dream reflects an actual world that can be touched and built upon.

God transforms an ordinary stone on which Jacob lay his head to sleep and he slept in an ordinary place.

The place is Bethel. Bethel an ancient city north of Jerusalem. It was also called Luz, where the Hebrew people met with God.

There were many encounters with God by the people during that time. Jacob had many encounters. Others had encounters as well. Somehow the same seems to happen today. We just learn and hear about these encounters with God in different ways, today.

The dream reflects an actual world that can be touched and built upon.

The people who were experiencing these encounters with the Holy talked about them. They talked about them as a part of their daily lives.

Today many are not as open to talk about these encounters.

Jacob's encounter transformed him in how he not only believed, but it changed his perspective in life and living. It all came to him in a dream, as he slept.

There were many encounters with God by the people during that time.

WE all dream at one point or another during our lives.

What I find interesting about this encounter with God is that it was and is viewed as a Holy encounter. A divine connection with one greater than themselves. Being within the mystery of God's presence and understanding the love surrounding one in the midst of the divine.

His dream has not been explained away as a psychological ... "transference. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway. A ladder resting on the earth, with its top reaching heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

"There above it stood the Lord, and he said, "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Issac".

Fifteen years ago, I had a dream which was similar. I was serving here at St. Philip and had been ordained by this community. I was beginning to embrace more openly the essence of my work and service here and was becoming more of who I am in God. In my dream there was a staircase. The staircase was wide enough for those on the staircase to pass one another as if they were ascending and descending. I recognized just about everybody as they passed one another.

God's angels in human form.

For me, in my dream, when I arrived on the next landing above, there stood my mother and my Aunt Rosa. They were both smiling as I turned toward them.

There were people I'd known for a while and there Aunt Rosa was standing next to her were new faces as well. When I reached the next level ,as if I was going to another floor.

In normal life they both had died years before. And yet they were both smiling and facing me with open arms. My mother had been very sick before she died. Yet, there she was standing, smiling with my Aunt Rosa being next to her. They spoke with their heart. Those ascending and descending, did not say a word to me, but there was a connection through the love of God for us all.

I share this with you today because our connection was through the divine presence of God. I still draw from that dream to this day. Perhaps not in the same form, but it served to help me to continue my transition in learning to love those who may not love me. It serves to allow me so see myself as I truly am and can be which enables me to serve as I have been called to serve. Trusting in the creator of us all.

The divine, the holy one is with us all through whatever we may be experiencing. God's presence is undeniable and strong. Jacob counted on God to lead him in a manner in which he had not considered before.

I certainly am not comparing my experience as Jacobs 'experience. What I am coming to learn is that the beauty of the presence of God being in our lives and with us is where ever God chooses to be with us there are no limitations. God's presence is palpable and distinct.

When it comes to our benefits in God there are no parameters. God is everywhere. If you do not share in this possibility, keep on living and being as we all can be. Facing ourselves and only ourselves, seeing none other, but ourselves.

We as a people are on a journey. Our journeys our paths come to us in different ways. When we expand the presence or the possibilities of humanity, we eventually understand that there are over 193 countries on this earth. Different races, creeds, languages, customs, laws and manner of being with one another is still a part of our charge as it has been for generations and centuries. What will be found in other places? What will the outcome be? Who knows?

In Revelation we are told that God is the alpha and the Omega.

Somewhere along the way as we pass through this place, hopefully we will continue to live with hope and consider loving they neighbor as we are called to do.

We can't do anything that is worthwhile alone. Consider asking for divine presence as we attempt to love another. Its not a lot to ask when God is in charge of what really matters.

Amen.