

Bible reading Genesis 28:10-19a

Hymn 475- Singing-The Faith- *O God of Bethel, by whose hand thy people are still fed*

## Genesis 28: 10-19a

### Jacob's Dream at Bethel

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards 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; but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

### *New International Version (NIV)*

#### **Reflection**

Each time I read the text it takes me back to my childhood. As a family we were not so privileged for children to have their own beds. As children we used to sleep on hard floors and sometimes with no pillows. For me it was comfortable for I did not know any difference and that was the way of life. I only realised the discomfort of sleeping on the floor later in life when I started sleeping on a bed. I can therefore resonate so well with Jacob spending a night at this place where he took a stone and laid his head. I now know the discomfort of sleeping on the floor because now I know the comfort of a bed. I like my pillows nice and soft because I want to be comfortable during my sleep. This reflects how life situations can be difficult and you may find yourself between a rock and a hard place. Jacob could not

continue with his journey because it was getting dark and late at night. He was in a difficult position of choosing between two equally unpleasant decisions. Have we not been in a place and time we wished it did not get dark and continue walking than to sit in a cold dark place? Sometimes we might not understand why things happen the way they do, but God is in it all. It is in that hard place that Jacob had an encounter with God. It seems Jacob was comfortable enough to even dream whilst resting his head on a stone. Sometimes we wonder how we managed to smile when everything unpleasant was going on! There are times I smile with tears in my eyes and say "I am ok" yet I will be hurting inside. It is mostly when we are at our worst, feeling hopeless, helpless and vulnerable that God sees us. In Genesis 21:8-21 Hagar heard God when she was at the point of breaking down and giving up. Some of us could have felt overwhelmed with the unpleasant happenings around us due to Covid 19 and reached breaking points but God was and is with us. God was beside Jacob when he was sleeping in this foreign uncomfortable land. God is besides us when life takes us to foreign uncomfortable environments. Hymn 472 says "O God of Bethel, by whose hand thy people still are fed; who through this early pilgrimage hast all our forebears led. Thy hymn is acknowledging that it is the hand of God that continues to

guide. Let us be encouraged to know that our God will never forsake us no matter how we feel or see things.

AMEN! 🙏🙏🙏

### Prayer

Father we thank you for watching over us when we are at our weakest point, times when we feel vulnerable, hopeless and helpless. Times when we feel scared, uncertain and doubtful because of circumstances, you hold us with your righteous hand. We can only lay your afflictions at your feet because its only you who can carry them for us. Hold our hands Lord and take us through the challenging and difficult times. You were beside Jacob as he lay in foreign and uncomfortable land. We can only trust in you and you alone be our pillar of strength. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen 🙏🙏

*Prepared by **Rev Mary Sachikonye Methodist Minister for (Mile Cross, Costessey, Trinity Thorpe Marriott, Hosford and Drayton) for a time as this. We are a church without walls. We should therefore, continue to proclaim the good news. I will be sending **Words of Hope** every week so that we may continue to nourish our spirits and continue to live in HOPE!***