

The Altar Alters Awareness

Ready:

"When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.' -- Genesis 28:16

Set

The sun set and the night grew dark. Much-needed rest awaited a tiresome journey looming with uncertainty. Hardship and heartache sparked a long walk to a distant land.

Perhaps you can relate. Difficulty and disappointment define your journey. The new team isn't what you thought; the season isn't going as planned; all you've worked for seems in vain. Beyond the competition, your home life isn't stable, relationships are rocky and relief seems non-existent. Is hope possible these days? Where is the final destination? It sure does seem like a long walk to a distant land.

In Genesis 28, Jacob stopped for the night on his journey. He placed a rock under his head and drifted to sleep. God spoke to Jacob in a life-changing way; here's what He said: "I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go.... I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you," (Gen. 28:15). Jacob awoke anew. He quickly built an altar using the same rock on which he slept. God's proclamation promised protection, purpose, power, peace and His presence.

Surely, the Lord was in that place.

What was once stony and hard became sacred and holy. The altar changed everything. The altar altered awareness. Jacob arose in awe and assurance. He named that place Bethel (meaning house of God) to remember the Divine in the difficulty. Jacob's issues weren't instantly solved, and He still had to travel his journey. But, it was totally repurposed and redeemed.

Could God be doing the same thing in your life today? Could it be that the LORD is in this place and you aren't even aware of it? Could an altar—a place of worship and remembrance—alter your journey ahead?

As a disciple of Jesus, the new covenant promise is that the Holy Spirit now dwells within you and empowers you with everything you need for life and godliness (Eph. 1:13-14, 2 Pet. 1:3). The path forward is marked with continual surrender.

Why? Because surrendering to the Holy Spirit's work unleashes transformation, for "wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom"; or as another translation puts it, "wherever [the Spirit] is Lord, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17 NLT, TPT). When the Holy Spirit has Lordship

over your circumstances, disappointments and “long walks to distant lands”, the altar of your heart is altered. Your awareness of His presence is amplified. The path forward may not instantly change—but your heart has, and that’s what God desires.

One day, you may look back to the place you’re standing now, remember the altar of surrender, and agree with Jacob: “What an awesome place this is!” (Gen. 28:17).

Go

- Which situation in your life right now do you need to surrender?
- How does worship change your perspective?

Workout

2 Corinthians 3:16-18

Overtime

“Lord, would You alter my heart through surrender. I give my present difficulty and disappointment to You. Use it in my life, and help me walk this journey ahead with boldness, knowing that You are with me every step of the way.”



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