Sermon Series: Living with an Attitude of Gratitude
Sermon Title: Thankful for the God Who Was Always There – November 1, 2026
Scripture Reading: Genesis 28:10–22 (NIV)
Key Verse: Genesis 28:16 (NIV)

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Genesis 28:16 (NIV)

“Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.”

Key Thought

Just because we do not recognize God's presence does not mean He isn't there. Sometimes we become so focused on what is happening around us that we overlook what God is already doing or has done in our lives.

Overview

In Genesis 28, Jacob is traveling away from home, leaving behind family conflict and facing an uncertain future. Along the way, he stops for the night in an ordinary place, using a stone for a pillow. What Jacob does not realize is that God is about to meet him right where he is.

Through a dream, God reveals His presence and reminds Jacob of His promises. When Jacob awakens, he recognizes that God had been there all along.

Jacob's experience reminds us that we can become so consumed with our present circumstances that we overlook God's presence, forget His promises, and fail to appreciate the many ways He has already been faithful to us.

Point 1: Recognize God's Presence in Unexpected Places

Scripture

Genesis 28:10–12 (NIV)

“Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”

Reflection

Jacob was not looking for a special encounter with God. He was simply traveling, tired from his journey, and looking for somewhere to rest. Yet in that ordinary place, God revealed something extraordinary.

Sometimes we expect to experience God's presence only during worship, prayer, or significant moments in our lives. But God is not limited to the places or circumstances where we expect to find Him.

He can reveal His goodness through an unexpected conversation, an ordinary act of kindness, a difficult situation, or a moment we might otherwise overlook. We must be careful not to become so distracted by what is happening around us that we fail to recognize what God is doing.

Reflection Questions

Am I paying attention to the ways God may be working in my everyday life?

Have I become so focused on my circumstances that I am overlooking God's blessings?

Where might God be showing up in my life that I least expected?

This Week's Application

Look for evidence of God's presence in ordinary moments.

Pay attention to unexpected blessings and opportunities.

Thank God for the ways He is working, even when you do not immediately recognize them.

Point 2: Remember God's Promises in Uncertain Seasons

Scripture

Genesis 28:15 (NIV)

“I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go…”

Reflection

Jacob was traveling into an uncertain future, but God reminded him of something greater than his circumstances. He promised to be with him, watch over him, and bring him back to the land.

God did not explain every detail of what Jacob would experience along the way. Instead, He assured Jacob that he would not face the journey alone.

We often become so concerned about what might happen tomorrow that we overlook what God has already promised us today. Our worries can become louder than our faith, causing us to focus on what we cannot control instead of remembering the One who is always with us.

Even when life feels uncertain, God's faithfulness remains unchanged.

Reflection Questions

Am I focusing more on my worries than on God's promises?

What promise from God's Word do I need to hold on to right now?

Can I trust God's presence even when I do not know what lies ahead?

This Week's Application

Remember God's promises when uncertainty arises.

Focus on His faithfulness instead of your fears.

Trust that God is with you wherever life takes you.

Point 3: Reflect on Where God Has Met You Along the Way

Scripture

Genesis 28:16–22 (NIV)

“Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” (v. 16)

“Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it.” (v. 18)

Reflection

When Jacob awakened, he realized that God had been present in a place he initially considered ordinary. He took the stone that had served as his pillow and turned it into a reminder of his encounter with God.

What had been an ordinary resting place became a place of worship and remembrance.

Sometimes we become so focused on what is happening in our lives right now that we forget to appreciate what God has already done. We may be so concerned about the prayers we are still waiting for Him to answer that we overlook the prayers He has already answered. So focused on what we have lost that we forget to appreciate what we still have.

Jacob reminds us that sometimes we need to look back over our lives and recognize the many places where God has already met us along the way.

Gratitude grows when we stop focusing only on what we need God to do and begin appreciating what He has already done.

Reflection Questions

When I look back over my life, where can I recognize God's presence and faithfulness?

What blessings have I received that I may have taken for granted?

How am I expressing gratitude for what God has already done in my life?

This Week's Application

Take time to reflect on God's faithfulness throughout your life.

Thank God for blessings you may have overlooked.

Express your gratitude through worship, generosity, and a renewed commitment to Him.

Living It Out This Week

Recognize God's presence in unexpected places.

Remember His promises when life feels uncertain.

Reflect on His faithfulness with a grateful heart.

Pastoral Encouragement

There will be moments when life becomes so overwhelming that we struggle to recognize anything beyond what we are facing. We become focused on what has gone wrong, what we have lost, or what we are still waiting for God to do. But Jacob's story reminds us that God's presence is not dependent upon our ability to recognize Him. He can be working in our lives even when we are unaware of it.

Take a moment to look back over your journey. Think about the situations you made it through, the prayers God answered, the doors He opened, and the blessings you may have overlooked. You may discover that God was present in more places than you realized.

You are still here because God was there. You are still standing because God was there. And if God was faithful to you then, you can trust Him to be faithful to you now.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for being present in our lives even when we fail to recognize You. Help us become more aware of Your presence in unexpected places, remember Your promises when life feels uncertain, and reflect with gratitude on the many ways You have been faithful. Forgive us for the times we have focused so much on our circumstances that we overlooked Your blessings. Give us grateful hearts that recognize Your goodness and respond through worship, commitment, and generosity. In Jesus' name, Amen.