

Traveling Mercies

Scripture Reading — Genesis 28:10-22

"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go ..." Genesis 28:15 —

I am old enough to remember a practice that my own family and many others have taken up at the beginning of a long trip. It was a prayer in the driveway in which we asked God to provide "traveling mercies." Ultimately it was a request that God would protect us along the way and return us safely home.

We live in an age of safety requirements. Safety belts and air bags are required in every automobile. Tires have to meet safety standards. Windows are made of safety glass. Rear doors have child-safety locks. But only God can keep us truly safe.

In the midst of his lonely escape from a brother plotting to kill him, Jacob meets God. In a sleep-induced dream, Jacob sees that God is with him, and he hears God make a promise of protection.

God will go with Jacob and watch over him. In this journey, God will ensure a safe return. God promises that he will never leave Jacob. And Jacob the schemer finds that God is the planner and provider. Jacob is learning the lesson God shared with Abraham: traveling mercies are about traveling with God.

Traveling mercies mark our movements as pilgrims along God's pathway. God wants us to come home. The destination isn't a matter of geography. Home is being with God--wherever we are.

Prayer

Dear God, many of us wander. We never seem to be settled. Please guide us and make us pilgrims walking with you, day by day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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