

7/12/26 Devotional: Surely the Lord Is in This Place

Scripture: Genesis 28:16–17

“Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I wasn’t even aware of it!’ But he was also afraid and said, ‘What an awesome place this is! It is none other than the house of God, the very gateway to heaven!’” — NLT

This week, we have seen a lot of places.

We have walked the streets of Oaxaca. We have eaten wonderful food. We have stood among the ruins of Monte Albán and looked across the valley. We have watched the streets come alive with the music, dancing, and celebrations of Guelaguetza.

Yesterday, we reminded ourselves:

Don't just look. See.

Today, I wonder if God is inviting us to see one more thing.

“Surely the Lord is in this place.”

Jacob spoke those words after encountering God in an unexpected location. There was no temple. No church building. No sanctuary. Just a place where Jacob had stopped for the night.

But God met him there.

And suddenly, Jacob saw the place differently.

Today, we will return to a room we know well.

We patched its walls.

We painted it.

We cleaned it.

We moved furniture.

We decorated it.

Then, on Friday, we watched that same room fill with students and families. We watched children celebrate moving up a grade. We watched one young man become the first person in his family to graduate from high school.

Today, we will walk into that same room again.

But this time, the church will gather.

There will be singing. There will be prayer. The Word of God will be opened. Brothers and sisters in Christ will worship Jesus together.

The room hasn't changed.

But perhaps our eyes have.

Surely the Lord is in this place.

One of the things this week has taught us is that God does not limit His work to the places we normally call sacred.

God is present in a classroom.

God is present around a dinner table.

God is present when someone holds a paintbrush.

God is present in the celebration of a family.

God is present in crowded streets filled with music.

God is present in the faithful, ordinary work of Jaime and Martha.

And today, we will see that a room can be a school, a graduation hall, and a sanctuary.

Because the church is not ultimately a building.

The church is the people of God gathered in the presence of God.

Tomorrow, we begin the journey home. We will leave Oaxaca. We will return to our families, our church, our work, and our normal routines.

But perhaps the question we should carry home is this:

Where have I been saying, "God isn't here," simply because I haven't learned to see Him there?

Maybe our prayer as we leave Oaxaca should be the prayer of Jacob:

"Surely the Lord is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it."

Today, as we worship with our brothers and sisters in Oaxaca, listen.

Look around the room.

Remember the paint on the walls.

Remember the families gathered there.

Remember the graduate standing there.

Remember the work of the Amaros.

And then worship.

Because surely the Lord is in this place.

Reflection Questions

Where have you unexpectedly encountered God during this trip?

How has this week changed the way you understand a “sacred” place?

Where might God be inviting you to see His presence when you return home?

Prayer

Lord God,

Surely You are in this place.

You were here before we arrived. You have been at work through Jaime and Martha, through teachers, students, families, and this church. Thank You for allowing us to see a small part of what You are doing.

Today, as we gather for worship, remind us that we are one family in Christ. Though our languages, cultures, and homes may be different, we worship the same Jesus and belong to the same kingdom.

Give us eyes to see Your presence today.

And as we prepare to return home, do not let us leave behind the things You have taught us here. Give us eyes to see You in our homes, our church, our neighborhoods, and our ordinary routines.

May we learn to say wherever You lead us:

Surely the Lord is in this place.

Amen.