

## Kathi's "The Next Chapter" 28:16 Story (Question!)

"When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." – Genesis 28:16 NIV

I need to make a confession. I didn't really understand the idea of the 28:16 stories at first. Don't get me wrong, I LOVE to hear people's stories! I find them so inspiring and uplifting! And I totally understand the need to share our stories. I just didn't realize that maybe not everyone's idea of a 28:16 story is, well, EVERY story. I'll try to explain.

One of my mom's favorite 'Kathi stories' from when I was really little - like just starting to talk - was when people would ask me where I got my red hair (Mom's was jet black, Dad's was bright white!). She said I never hesitated, even the first time she heard my reply. "God gave it to me!" I just knew 'the Lord was in this place!'

Just last night when I was talking to Kyle, Leann, and Becca, and mentioned that I was doing this today, they were all surprised I hadn't given a 28:16 story yet, and they immediately started teasing me about how long I was going to take! Kyle even said he'd better cut his sermon short (you're welcome?) and Becca & Leann now both have signals to let me know when it's getting too long (I like to call that "teamwork"! ). Btw, I was asked to write it down, and I've timed it under 5 min!

So when Heather asked if I would consider telling a 28:16 story about my experience with 'The Next Chapter,' I thought "Well, yeah! I could do that!" I truly think it's SUPER easy to find a 28:16 story when going through 'The Next Chapter' guide book! I've been through the whole thing 4 times now: when rolled out in a leadership meeting; in the workshop lead by the Family Ministry Team; over three gatherings (and counting!) with my small group; and even once on my own.

From the energy and excitement of Mary Hausler and other young adults dreaming of "Fireside Chats" with professionals in faith; to the work in progress by the Family Ministry Team to begin using their "Faith Milestones" in order to celebrate significant events of faith for all of our members (stay tuned!); to one member of my small group sharing about her beloved mother's experience teaching cooking & nutrition classes for those less fortunate and making a personal goal to team with LFO (Let us Feed Others). God is ALL OVER these gatherings and His love is just palpable! I STRONGLY encourage ALL of you to go through this guide and welcome the Lord into your story! And you're in luck - there are several more 'Next Chapter' gatherings scheduled!

But my own personal favorite "Surely, the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it" story while going through 'The Next Chapter?' That moment when I felt like I've been slapped-up-side-the-head? That LISTEN to me! HERE I AM! story?

Well right now, it's more like a 28:16 question for me: How do we keep THIS place? This "out of my comfort zone" place? This "I-can't-sit-in-MY-pew-spot-because-we-don't-even-have-pews-anymore-and-the-front-of-the-sanctuary-keeps-changing" place? This literally IN YOUR FACE Christian community that we have RIGHT HERE TODAY, IN THIS PLACE, when we move into a much, much larger place???

Every group I've gone through 'The Next Chapter' with, has mentioned this in some way. I've heard how welcoming our church is. I've heard that people are getting to know each other so well here. I've heard that worship services feel more like a small group experience IN THIS PLACE. The Bible clearly tells us that Christians are to live in community. Never an easy task, and I'm now realizing, may be even harder when we can spread out again and I can avoid people with a different opinion than me; who don't look or act like me (ok, there will still be a lot of redheads there!). But how do we maintain this community when we aren't literally bumping into each other right and left? And on "Gathering Place Lane" we'll have a whole new set of neighbors. Btw, I also love to look at page 31 and get so excited about how to reach out and welcome in those new neighbors!

So this has been my "God Moment" in going through 'The Next Chapter.' This is my "Surely the Lord is in THIS PLACE, and I was not aware of it" story. Today, this is my 28:16 Story. And I just can't wait to hear where the Lord is in our 'next chapter' and our 'next place' of OUR 28:16 Story!