

RISING GENERATIONS

THE UPPER ROOM

My Heart, My Home

Rachel Kinney



Home is where the heart is, right? I am on an airplane on my way back to Nashville. After three weeks of traveling in South America, I miss my favorite place to eat breakfast, my dance class, and my hikes near the river. I miss shopping for groceries in a store where I can read all the labels.

Before this trip, I might have said my heart was in Nashville, where my apartment, my friends, my church, and my job are. Nashville is my home. Yet traveling through Peru, Paraguay, and Brazil, living out of a suitcase, I realized I may have misunderstood. Your heart is not where your home is. Home is where your heart is.

You cannot leave your heart behind. It comes with you, making itself known through its steady beat, racing when you think you might miss a flight, or opening wide when you see a beautiful skyline or a breathtaking view.

If the saying is true, we are always at home. With each beat of our heart, we are reminded that we are here and alive and at home in our bodies, in the world, in God.

When I get homesick, stressed, bored, or fed up with the constant movement and transitions of life or travel, I take a moment and listen to the *ba-dump, ba-dump* of my heart. The rhythm grounds me; and I realize that all my experiences, memories, thoughts, and hopes are within me. In that moment, I am able to relax, connect, and make new memories. By having heart, I have everything I need to be at home.

When Jesus sends out his disciples to spread the gospel, he tells them, “You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff” (Matthew 10:8–10, NRSV). Jesus does not send them out without gold or silver because material things are bad, but they are not the real treasure. The disciples—as they are, without even a change of clothes—have everything they need. They carry their home in their hearts. They realize that no matter where they stay, they are able to love and be loved. No matter what circumstances or setbacks they run into, they are able to spread the peace of God. Wherever they are, they belong to God.

So when I get back to Nashville, I am going to enjoy my favorite peanut-butter ice cream from the shop down the road, the oak trees, and my reliable Internet connection. Yet these are not my treasures; they do not tell me that I am home.

It took traveling thousands of miles for me to realize that I can’t leave my treasure behind because my heart is my treasure. I can’t leave my home because I can’t leave the ability to love, to connect, to be one of God’s beloved.

Dig Deeper

Take a moment to find your heartbeat. Use your fingertips to find your pulse or listen to the rhythm in your chest. Sync your breath with your heartbeat in an easy pattern, letting your whole body be in harmony. With each breath in, think, I am here. With each breath out, think, I am home.

Rachel Kinney has eaten ice cream in twenty-eight countries and plans to continue her research.