

Genesis 33:1-11 And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two female servants. ² And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. ³ He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

⁴ But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. ⁵ And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, “Who are these with you?” Jacob said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.” ⁶ Then the servants drew near, they and their children, and bowed down. ⁷ Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down. And last Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. ⁸ Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company that I met?” Jacob answered, “To find favor in the sight of my lord.” ⁹ But Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.” ¹⁰ Jacob said, “No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. ¹¹ Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.” Thus he urged him, and he took it.

Genesis 33:1-11 | Jacob and Esau Reuniting

This Sunday is our last day in Genesis.

- Next week, Brad and Amber Jones are missionaries we support to Vanuatu. They will be here to share their story of ten years of making disciples cross culturally and how we can be a part of that ministry.
- Jacob will share on giving and what it means to be a generous people.
- Then we will begin our summer series moving through Colossians.

Last week Jacob was on his way to a fearful encounter with his brother Esau. They had not seen each other in 20 years and parted on the worst of terms, with Jacob having cheated Esau and Esau having committed to kill Jacob.

But on the way to this encounter, Jacob is met by a mysterious man at night, and they begin to wrestle. The man turns out to be the Lord. Jacob seeks his blessing and the Lord blesses him and gives him a new name, Israel. Jacob walks away from the meeting with a limp, and a new identity grounded in the blessing of the Lord.

Today we see that this principle in scripture, what the Lord accomplishes in our relationship to him. By bringing healing and reconciliation between us. He seeks to accomplish between our relationships with one another. That which he does vertically between us he also does horizontally amongst us. God was once Jacob's enemy, who he ran from until the day he stood and fought, facing the one who could truly bless him and confessing his broken self made identity. Today he does that same thing with his brother, in it we see a picture of the gospel.

1. Deciding to Move

Genesis 33:1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel... ² And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all.

Esau is approaching, and he is bringing 400 men with him. It is a particularly threatening scene especially when your last interaction was a death threat. So Jacob begins to organize his family for what might be a catastrophe, but one which must be faced. So he divides them up for protection, and the order shows his hand of what will become one of the most important plot points for the remainder of Genesis, Jacob's favoritism of Joseph.

Genesis 33:3 He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Just as Jacob wrestled wounded with the Lord and found himself only in a position to admit who he was and beg for a blessing. So too does he present himself before his brother whom he sinned against, offering the only submission he could offer from afar, which was to bow seven times as he approached his estranged brother.

Genesis 33:4 But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

I think this moment is probably beyond Jacob's imagination for what could have taken place. His brother, sees him from afar, and does not continue walking but breaks out running, and Jacob and Esau meet to hug and embrace and kiss one another. Together in the exuberant joy of their reuniting, they weep.

There reunion has no words. Instead it is an overflow of brotherly love. A reunion which Esau clearly shows, he no longer counts his sin against him but has forgiven Jacob. They weep for the men they were, for the threats and lies and deceit, and the 20 years of fellowship lost. It is a mourning and a joy. It is a sunrise with limping. A death and resurrection. What it means to be the types of people who hurt each other but love one another. It's forgiveness.

Genesis 33:5 And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."

Esau looks and sees, Jacob's wives, his children, they've all drawn near at this point. He asks who they are and Jacob explains they are the children, the Lord's blessing. Remember, it's the blessing that Jacob stole from Esau, but also the one which Esau knew belonged to Jacob. They each stand beneath the work of the Lord.

Jacob had sent several caravans of gifts before him to meet Esau and Esau asks about them. Jacob explains they were sent to find favor in his sight.

Genesis 33:9 But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

It is a lesson in grace. The forgiveness that Jacob was to receive from Esau was the same as that which he had received from God. It was a true forgiveness, which means it was free. It was a gift, a cancellation of moral debt. It could not be bought, only received. And Jacob makes the connection between this moment with Esau and his night wrestling with God, seeing God's face and living.

Genesis 33:10 Jacob said, "No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me."

To see the face of God and be accepted. This is the hope of the gospel.

You know Jesus borrows a line from this scripture in one of his most famous parables, the prodigal son. It is all of our stories. We ran from the Lord our father, and lived in our own squalor. Upon our return we humble ourselves, seeking only to be received as a servant. But Jesus gives us this image to hold close in our minds that we might see the heart of God. When the Son who turned on his father comes back.

Luke 15:20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

This is the hope of the gospel. That though we are a long way off in our sin, our father draws close to us. This is his love for us, that he runs to us embraces us and kisses us, calling us his children. But our story is even more. It is that in Christ, the Lord gave his son so that we might be with him. This is the unimaginable depth of the father's love towards us. This is the promise, that by faith in Christ we might be joined in delight to our father in Heaven. The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off.