

## ABOUT FACE | GENESIS 33:1-20 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 2/11/2024

I. Facing Esau (1-4) | II. Faces of Family (5-7) | III. Face of Favor (8-11) | IV. Face of Falsehood (12-16) | V. About Face (17) | VI. Facing Future (18-20)

**INTRO:** When you wake up in the morning and you go to your bathroom mirror, what's the first thing that you see? **YOUR FACE!** Most likely you Look at it, then Wash it as you prepare for your day. – *"I heard it said that is not good to look into the **FACE OF MAN** before you have looked into the **FACE OF GOD!**"* – Well, Jacob just had an all-night, **FACE-TO-FACE** wrestling bout with God (**32:30**) but as the day dawned, he is **ABOUT TO HAVE A FACE-OFF WITH ESAU\***

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**I. FACING ESAU (1-4)** – The moment had come for Jacob to **FACE his greatest fear**. Imagine how he must have felt... both **Exhausted** and **Enlightened**. – Without a break in between, **Jacob "Looked Up and Saw" Esau and the 400 coming his way (1a)** – *Yikes!* – Nevertheless, he was ready deal with it. So, he arranged his family in order of his preference (1b-2), and **He was ready to protect them, limp and all** (*His limp was a reminder that he was to depend on God! (32:31)*)

**A. He Crossed Over (3)** – *Jacob bowed seven times! Why?* – Did he forget what God declared, that *"the Older would serve the Younger?" (25:23)*, did he forget that *"his mother's sons were to bow down to him?" (27:29)*. It was not Forgetfulness or even Fear, but FORMALITY! – Both **Chuck Smith** and **Henry Morris** note that according to the **Tel Amarna Tablets**, it was *'Proper to bow to the earth seven times when approaching a king.'* Jacob respectfully bowed before Esau greeting him as a king, because Esau had become the ruler over the area of Mount Seir, the area known as Edom. **So, he is giving honor to his brother's position, bowing before him seven times, a custom in those days.** (*By faith Jacob crossed over his fear! He remembered God's Promises*)

**B. He Was Embraced (4)** – Jacob's awkward approach of *'Limping and Bowing,'* was quickly overlooked as Esau drew near. **He ran to Jacob and embraced him! His actions were in no way revengeful but accepting! Esau thronged on Jacob's neck** and they both began to weep with tears! (*A full-on FACE EMBRACE! – What an incredible moment of reconciliation this must have been.*)

**P/A – Nothing to Fear!** The fear of Esau that Jacob faced over the last 20 years was **GONE!** Why? Because *'time is a great healer'*... NO! **I believe that God changed Esau's heart toward Jacob...Wow!** Yes, **God can do the same for our foes!** – *This is what can happen when you "Cast all our care upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet 5:7)* – *This is what happened when we pray in faith, without doubting (Jam 1:6)*. – God softened Esau' heart, **just as He did Laban's**, who wanted to do Jacob harm. **Jacob Faced Esau and Reconciliation was the result!**

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**II. THE FACES OF FAMILY (5-7)** – As the two reconciled, **Esau turned to FACE the women and children...** his sisters-in-law and nephews and nieces, **whom he had never seen before!** *"Who are these with you?"* **Jacob credits his offspring as a Gracious Gift from God (5).** (*Whatever stage of life you are in; Do you see kids as a Gracious Gift from God? Or have they become little rascals to you?*)

- Then, in order of succession, **each approached Esau** and *respectfully bowed before his FACE.*
- Notice that Jacob placed **Rachel and Joseph last**, because he sought to protect them.

**P/A – Family Reunions!** It's a blessing when families can come together in peace. (*Make time for it!*)

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**III. THE FACE OF FAVOR (8-11)** – Esau questioned the reason for the droves of animals. Jacob explains that it was for Favor or Grace (8) – Jacob was used to working or paying for his debts, so his GIFT for was more like a PAYMENT for Esau's Grace or Favor. (*To appease him*)

- This is the **OPPOSITE** of what God offers to us in his Son! **(Eph 2:4-8)** *For by GRACE, you have been saved!* (*God's gift is 100%FREE! God's Gift is not for your favor, but for your blessing!*)

**A. Jacob's Present (9)** – As Jacob gift was presented, Esau did not immediately accept it. He claimed... *"I have enough."* Even without the Abrahamic Blessing he was content! – Spurgeon commented on Esau's satisfaction: *"Esau thus received what he most wanted, for he cared very little for the spiritual blessing, — not being a spiritual man, — and when he obtained the temporal blessing, that satisfied his heart, and he said, 'It is enough.'" — C.H. Spurgeon*

**B. Jacob's Insistence (10-11)** – He understood that their reconciliation depended just as much on Esau accepting the gifts as it did on Jacob giving them to him. – So, giving such large presents to Esau was **Jacob's method of apologizing**. If Esau were to receive his gifts Jacob would know that Esau was willing to extending forgiveness to Jacob.

- He even **flattered Esau** saying, *'Seeing your FACE is like seeing the FACE of GOD!'* – Jacob literally just saw the Face of God and *his life was preserved (32:30)*. In like manner, he used this phrase because he desired a Favorable Outcome from Esau.
- **"My Blessing"** – Jacob also referred to the Gift as *"His Blessing, which God had graciously given him."* This hints towards his guilty conscience, since Jacob stole Esau's Blessing (27:26)
- Jacob's persistence resulted in Esau's acceptance as *he took the gift.*

**P/A – How do you Gain Favor with others?** – When you give to others, do you have secret motives? – When someone wants to bless you do you refuse it? – **Are you quick to forgive?**

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**IV. THE FACE OF FALSEHOOD (12-16)** – In seeming sincerity, **Esau suggested that they all journey together back to his home at Mt. Seir (12).** – But Jacob was reluctant (13-15). Though happy to have made up with his brother, **Jacob wanted to avoid becoming overly close to Esau.** (*Probably because he remained fearful of Esau*) – **So, Jacob made excuses!**

- Although his excuses had **some validity**, **he still practiced Falsehood and Deceit:** **(Prov 12:17)** *He who speaks truth declares righteousness, but a false witness, deceit.*
- **When we say we are going to do something, we should do it.** Jesus plainly stated to *"Let you Yes be Yes, and your No, No. For whatever is more that these is from the evil one."* **(Matt 5:37)**
- **Why didn't Jacob JUST TELL HIM** that he had different plans? – Personally, **I would rather hear things straight up**, than have people **beat around the bush.** (*It's to best Communicate your intentions upfront*) – **(Eph 4:25a)** *Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor..."* – Peter tells us that when we **"Bless Others"** we also receive a blessing **(tt. 1 Pet 3:8-12)**

**P/A – As you look on the MIRROR, Do you have a Face of Falsehood?** (*it only leads to trouble!*)

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**V. ABOUT FACE (17)** – While Esau journeyed south for Mt. Seir, **Jacob distanced himself from Esau by heading in an entirely different direction!** He headed northwest to place that would be named **Succoth**, which lit. means, **Booths** or **Tents**.

- At Succoth, **Jacob constructed a home and animal stalls**, which was **a compromise in many ways** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were **to be sojourners in the land**, residing in **tents...not houses!** (A “HOUSE” suggests permanence!) – **(Heb 11:9-10)** says, **By faith he [Abraham] dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.** (Those who live by faith know that this land is a temporary place! We too are just passing through, waiting for our heavenly habitation!)
- While we can understand Jacob’s **ABOUT FACE** from Esau, **Jacob also pulls an ABOUT FACE FROM GOD!** – **Dwelling in Succoth even for a short time was a compromise** because Jacob was to head **BACK TO BETHEL (31:13)**, which was in the promise land. **His compromise is still disobedience to God.**

**P/A – When God instructs you to go somewhere, Are you one who WANDERS before fully obeying the Lord?** (Instead of doing an **ABOUT FACE** we should **FALL ON OUR FACES** before Him!)

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**VI. FACING HIS FUTURE (18-20)** – Finally, Jacob arrives in **Shechem**, which was in Canaan. This is **the promised land** which his **FUTURE OFFSPRING** would eventually possess. **Even the bones of his favored son Joseph would be buried in Shechem in the distant future (Josh 24:32).**

- Having purchased **a plot of land** from the family of **Hamor**, we’re told that **“Jacob Settled there” for a bit too long!** – As a result, **his granddaughter gets raped and two of his sons commit ravenous murder!** (But we’ll save that for next week!)
- Back in **(28:21-22)** Jacob vowed, **“If God will be with me and keep me in this way that I am going and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, <sup>21</sup> so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God.** – **Now Jacob builds an altar to the Lord** to worship and thank Him, and as a **MEMORIAL** to what the Lord had done. As he names the altar, Jacob uses his **new name for the first time: EL ELOHE ISRAEL**, i.e., **God, the God of Israel.** (God brought Jacob back to **FACE HIS FUTURE** in the promised land)

**CLOSING THOUGHTS:** I have **3 Take-Aways** from this teaching that we can apply to our lives:

- ◆ **FACE YOUR FEARS** – **Head on!** Knowing that the Lord is going before you to protect you.
- ◆ **Maintain an HONEST FACE, not a POKER FACE** – Be Truthful in all your dealings!
- ◆ If you’re Running from the Lord, you need to do an **ABOUT FACE... “returning to Him”** with **All your heart**, and with every intention of forsaking the sin that separates you from Him.

Oh, that the **FACE OF GOD** would be upon us and that we would always look to Him in truth, that **OUR FACES** would be **Radiant as Moses’s** was, when he came down the mountain.

**(1 Cor 13:12)** **Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then FACE-TO-FACE; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.**