

Sermon Notes 5/16/21

## “The God of Israel”

How should we respond to Genesis chapter 33?

1. Lead with humility by God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

Genesis 33:3

Genesis 32:30-31

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

2. Be a testimony of God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

Genesis 33:5

1 Corinthians 15:10

Genesis 33:11

Ephesians 4:32

3. Stay focused on God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

Genesis 33:17

Genesis 33:18-20

Matthew 6:19-21



Esau and Jacob reconciled.

# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 33: May 16-23

## Genesis 33

Genesis chapter 32 ended with a cliffhanger. Jacob heard that his estranged brother Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men. Assuming the worse, Jacob sent hundreds of livestock ahead of him, as a gift to Esau, hoping to appease his brother's wrath. He split his family into two different camps, thinking that if Esau attacks one camp, perhaps the other camp will escape. That night, the angel of the LORD wrestled with Jacob and put Jacob's hip out of socket. Jacob survived the wrestling match and was given the name Israel (wrestles with God). But then the chapter ends, and Jacob is still facing the danger of his approaching brother. Only now Jacob is weak and limping. What do you do in times of uncertainty when you feel weak and broken?

### Read Genesis 33:1-11

1. Who did Jacob see coming to meet him in verse 1?
2. How did Jacob arrange his family to meet Esau? (33:1-2)
3. How did Jacob approach Esau in verse 3?

Paul Kissling notes,

The name change to Israel "is meant to embody a new character, a change from one who seeks to control to one who is controlled." This is followed up by Jacob changing his cowardly plans to send the bribes, wives, and children in front of him (Gen 32:13-21). Instead, he himself went ahead of them at the risk of his life... The picture of an old, limping Jacob who struggles in pain to bow seven times before his brother is striking. Jacob presents himself as entirely vulnerable before Esau.<sup>1</sup>

4. What did Esau do when he saw Jacob in verse 4?
5. What did Jacob say when Esau asked him about his family? (33:5)

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009), 364.

6. What did Jacob say when Esau asked him about all the flocks he sent ahead of him? (33:8 see also 32:13-20)

7. What did Esau say to Jacob in verse 9?

8. What did Jacob say his meeting with Esau was like in verse 10?

After the wrestling match with God, Jacob knew that it was only God's grace that he was still alive (32:30). Jacob sees this reconciliation with Esau as another reminder of God's grace in his life. Derek Kidner writes,

The meeting is a classic of reconciliation. The stream of gifts and demure family processions, almost comically over-organized (as it turned out), give some idea of the load on Jacob's conscience and the sheer grace of Esau's reply. Guilt and forgiveness are so eloquent in every moment of the mutual reproach (3, 4), that our Lord could find no better model for the prodigal's father at this point than Esau (cf. 4 with Luke 15:20).<sup>2</sup>

9. What did Jacob say about the way God had blessed him in verse 11?

Four times the Hebrew word for grace (*hēn, חַן*) is emphasized in this chapter. Kent Hughes observes,

Jacob's awareness of God and his grace is all over the Genesis passage. Esau never once mentioned either grace or God directly. But Jacob references "the children whom God has graciously given your servant" (v. 5b) and his desire "to find favor [grace] in the sight of my lord" (v. 8b) and again, "If I have found favor [grace] in your sight" (v. 10a), and finally, "God has dealt graciously with me" (v. 11).<sup>3</sup>

### **Read Genesis 33:12-20**

10. What was the plan that Esau proposed to Jacob in verse 12?

11. What excuse did Jacob give for not going with Esau in verse 13?

12. What was the plan that Jacob proposed to Esau in verse 14?

---

<sup>2</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 182.

<sup>3</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 406.

God had promised Jacob that He would bring him back to the Promise Land (28:15), and Jacob left Paddan-aram in obedience to God's command to go back to Canaan (31:13). A trip to Edom would take Jacob in the wrong direction both geographically and spiritually. Dennis Prager notes,

While Jacob seemed truly happy to have reconciled with Esau, he deemed it best if they each went their separate ways. Jacob probably believed in the words of an old expression, "they buried the hatchet, but each one remembers where the hatchet was buried." Too much exposure to each other might fray their fragile truce.<sup>4</sup>

13. What did Esau offer to Jacob in verse 15? What was Jacob's response?

14. When did Esau begin his journey back to his home? (33:16)

15. Where did Jacob go in verse 17? What did he do there?

16. Where did Jacob set up camp in verse 18?

17. What did Jacob do in verses 19-20?

Verse 18 says that Jacob arrived "safely." Bruce Waltke writes,

The word is ambiguous. It means either he arrived "safe and sound" back in the land (12:7) and/or he entered the city of Shechem peacefully (34:21). Both are true. Here he walks in the footsteps of his grandfather Abraham, staking his future in the Promise Land. He sets up an altar where Abraham had (cf. 12:6-7), purchases land in faith (cf. Gen. 23), and, though not stated here, digs a well (John 4:5-6; it can still be seen today).<sup>5</sup>

18. What helps you to show forgiveness to someone who hurt you?

19. How can you be a testimony of God's grace this week?

20. How will you stay focused on God's plan for your life?

---

<sup>4</sup> Dennis Prager, *The Rational Bible: Genesis* (Washington, DC: Regnery Faith, 2019), 396.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 460.