

## Awkward Family Reunion

A. **Slide1,2 My trip to Nepal:** 1st chickens to market. Nerangin (Brahman).

B. **Pray:**

### II. **Slide3a Intro:** Awkward Family Reunion

A. **Intro:** Ever have an awkward family reunion? An awkward family gathering?

1. Usually it's **awkward** because of *broken relationships, or unsettled business*.

**Or**, maybe just a weird aunt **or** crazy uncle.

2. Here in ch.33 it's an *Awkward Family Reunion* because of **both** a *broken relationship & unsettled business*. (Jacob & Esau)

a) I've always felt God doesn't like *unfinished business*. **Go if you're in Sin** (Mt.5:23,24)

**Go if they are in sin** (Mt.18:15).

B. **Slide3b** Rick Warren said, **When it comes to conflicts you are a skunk or a turtle?**

1. **When the skunk** in the relationship gets upset **they spray & everybody knows it**

2. **When the turtle** in the relationship gets upset, **they pull into their shell & hide**.

C. **Slide3c** There are actually **3 main ways** we deal with conflict:

1. **Escape Responses** (turtle/ostrich). **Let's pretend it didn't happen**.

a) **Avoiding** – some say, *I don't want to rock the boat*, **but** that's just cowardice.

Don't run from the problem.

b) **Appeasing** – some believe in *peace at any price*. **Or** say, *I just always give in*.

That's codependency. That's *peace-fakers, not peace-makers (blessed are the...)*

2. **Attacking Responses** (skunk. *react*, not act). **Let's fight** (but not fair). It's the bully, or manipulator.

3. **Peacemaking responses** (the right way). **Let's fix it**.

a) Jesus *never ran* from a conflict. God blesses peacemakers. *A peacemaker is a bridge builder*.

b) So deal with conflict by...keeping it *gospel centered & grace based*.

### III. Slide4 THE REUNION (1-16)

#### A. JACOB PRESENTS HIMSELF (1-4)

B. (1) Even though he's been given a new name, **Israel**, he doesn't seem to be living up to it yet... **as** ch.33 starts out with **Jacob**.

1. Normally a name changed in Scripture...the name changed (Abram/Abraham, Saul/Paul. Simon/Peter). **It's odd when it reverts back...like** with Peter/Simon in Jn.21.

a) **But** after Jacob gets his name change the ratio is enlightening (after the name change, **70 x's in Genesis** it's still **Jacob** & only **40 x's Israel**)

2. **Sometimes** he acted like **Jacob the heel-catcher**, **other times** like **Israel, the prince with God**.

a) Ohh, just like me. **Sometimes** the old **Brian**, **other times** the new **Brian**.

3. God had to give Jacob a **limp** to encourage him to **walk by faith**. **What has he given you?** (**sometimes** it's **loss**: loss of finances, a friend, a job, some security. **Other times** when I've been faced with a **seemingly impossible situation**)

4. How far does our **behavior** match our **Christian profession** & express our **new nature?** **And what's my % of being called old Brian vs. New Brian?**

C. (3) **Bowing himself to the ground seven times** - the 7-fold prostration was used to express subordination to a superior.

1. **The irony is that...**the lordship & prostration of Jacob before Esau is actually what he **stole** from Esau. 27:29 **Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you.**

2. **Slide5** The 7-fold prostration is known from ancient Near Eastern sources. For example, in **the Amarna Letters** (a series of letters exchanged between the Egyptian pharaoh and his underling governors in Canaan) we read: **"Seven times and seven times I fall at the feet of the king, my lord."**<sup>1</sup>

D. **Slide6** (4) **And kissed him** - The Hebrew scribes copying the traditional text may have been suspicious of the sincerity of Esau's kiss since **they marked the verb form with small**

<sup>1</sup> Faithlife Study Bible (Ge 33:3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

*dots above the words*. This is a known **scribal device** used to *draw attention to something unusual*.

1. The narrative does not contain anything that suggests Esau was *insincere*.

E. **Slide7** We note Jacob's almost comical over-organization, the stream of gifts, the family procession...which gives us a window into Jacob's *conscience*.

1. What **shear grace** of Esau's *response & reply*.

2. We watch this dance of **guilt & forgiveness** all the way through this movement.

3. Matter of fact **our Lord** could find no better model for *the prodigal's father* at this point than Esau. **Compare vs.4 with Lk.15:20. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.**

a) I love when God shows me when **unbeliever's** look more godly than us. It's so humbling. [quote: "Every Friday at mosque the Rohingya pray for Jaya & CM."]

b) Often we see **unbelievers** doing a much better job **exhibiting**, & to a greater degree **living out**, *gentleness or patience, love or peace*, than many Christians.

c) **Now**, how can they manifest *the fruit of the Spirit* if they don't have, *the Spirit*?

(1) Well, there is a difference in **Quality**. **Unbelievers** can only exhibit these spiritual virtues to the extent of **human ability**.

F. **Slide8 JACOB PRESENTS HIS FAMILY AND FLOCKS** (5-16)

G. (9-11) Jacob earlier used the Hebrew word *minchah* of his **gift** to Esau (Gen 32:13, 18, 20, 21) - **a term associated with offering tribute to a superior**.

1. **Now** in v.11 he uses *berakhah/ blessing*. This term, spoken directly to Esau, suggests that *Jacob views the gift as restitution for his theft of Esau's blessing years ago*.

2. Esau **accepts** the gift without **reciprocation**, suggesting that he considers the gift a **settlement** for the wrong originally done to him.

H. (10) **Like seeing the face of God** - Jacob's explanation, that seeing Esau's face was like seeing the face of God, showed he knew this deliverance from harm by Esau was *of God*.

I. (14) **Until I come to Seir** - Delitzsch suggests, **that he intended to visit Sier one day, and deceived Esau by deceiving himself**.

1. What should he have done/said? Spoke plainly/told him the truth, that *he was under oath to go to Bethel.*

#### IV. Slide9 THE RETURN (17-20)

- A. Jacob now: built a house, buys a field, erects an altar & names the place.
- B. (17) Built himself a **house**, which suggests he lived in Succoth for some time (his children have grown to adulthood in ch.34).
  1. Jacob managed to extricate himself, and never the two meet again...**till** dad's funeral (35:29).
  2. **But Succoth** was a *step backward*, **spiritually** as well as **geographically**.
    - a) It's difficult to reconcile the call to **Bethel** with the *prolonged stay* involved in building cattle sheds & a house, *east of the Jordan*. (makes it to Bethel in Ch.35)
- C. Slide10 (18) **Shechem** - The city where Abraham *built an altar* after God appeared to him and promised him the land of Canaan.
  1. **Settling for 2nd best:** **Shechem** offered Jacob the attractions of a compromise. His call was to **Bethel**; **but Shechem**, about a days journey short of it, stood attractively at the crossroads of trade. *Derek Kidner*
  2. **What are you settling for?**
  3. **The next ch.34 shows the cost of it, paid in rape, treachery and massacre.**
- D. (19) **piece of land** - As done previously by **Abraham** (23:9), **Jacob** purchases a plot of ground in Canaan. He apparently had the same motive - a family burial ground - in light of Josh 24:32.
- E. Slide11a (20) **El-Elohe-Israel** - God, the God of Israel.
  1. This name, marks **the land** as belonging to him and his descendants, by mandate of God. **But** it's also significant because of **his new name** given to him in the last chapter, **Israel**. *He's my God & the God of this land.*
- F. **What's the importance of this title?** Well, let's remember how he has named God previously.
  1. Slide11b 31:5b **But the God of my father has been with me.**

2. Slide11c Now it seems like David said, *O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.* Ps.63:1

G. No ending song:

H. \*\*\*\*\*

I. See what Jacob **lost** because he did not claim his *spiritual privileges*:

J. His limp (33:3).

1. He **bowed** before Esau instead of walking (limping) and faced him man-to-man. It is always tragic when a “prince with God” cringes before a man of the world! *Better to limp by faith than to bow in self-trust.*

K. His power (33:1-2, 8-11).

1. See Jacob scheming again, bargaining with the enemy. *Did God not assure him of His power? Had God not promised to see him through?*

L. His testimony (33:12–17).

1. Jacob **lied** to Esau about the flocks and traveled in the opposite direction. The two never did meet until they buried their father (35:29). **No doubt, at that meeting, Esau asked Jacob what had happened to him after they parted.**

M. His tent (33:17).

1. Jacob built a **house** and settled down in Succoth.

N. His vision (33:19).

1. He moved again and pitched his tent *toward the city of Shechem*, not unlike Lot. He lost the vision of God’s city (Heb.11:13-16). *Wiersbe*