

Discussion February 20 and 21:

1. Read Genesis 32 and Genesis 33.

Re-read our definition for Grace:

Grace can be seen when God moves towards the sinner-saint; actions that manifests as unmerited kindness* towards the sinner-saint. Grace can also be seen when God moves towards the sinner-saint to accomplish His will or His pleasure in their life.

(*Remember* Kindness plays out more specifically than favor; kindness is specific blessings pertaining to the individual and the specific season they're in.)

Keeping this definition in mind, are you seeing any instances of Grace that you hadn't seen before?

2. Write Genesis 27.41 here:

Write Genesis 27.44-45 here:

In your own words, what is happening in Genesis 32.1-5?

What do the messengers tell Jacob in Genesis 32.6?

How do you think Jacob feels about this message given his last encounter with Esau in Genesis 27?

3. Write Genesis 28.15 here:

Write Genesis 31.3 here:

Write Genesis 32.1 here:

What theme do you see present in these verses?

4. Jacob is clearly afraid of Esau; what is his **first** response when he hears Esau is headed his way with 400 men in Genesis 32.7-8?

What is Jacob's **second** response in Genesis 32.9-12?

What is significant about this prayer? (Hint: Genesis 28.13-15 and 31.3)

If you're being honest, is prayer your first response when you face a problem? Why do you think it's so tempting to try and fix a problem with our own solutions rather than to turn to prayer?

5. In your own words, what is happening in Genesis 28.13-21?

Why do you think Jacob is doing these things?

6. Write Hosea 12.3-4 here:

According to Hosea, after Jacob wrestled with God, what did he seek?

Is this different from Genesis 28.20-22? How?

20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, **21** so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, **22** and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."

7. Write Genesis 32.21 here:

Where is Jacob located in the procession?

Write Genesis 33.3 here:

Why do you think Jacob has now placed himself in the front of the procession...meeting Esau first?

Is there an aspect of your future that you need to wholly turn over to God and trust Him with?

8. Meditate on Exodus 33.19 this week:

And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

What is your response to this?

February 20 and 21, 2024: God's Grace to Jacob, pt.2

I. Recap of Events:

A. God decides that Jacob will receive the spiritual blessing/blessing of the firstborn (double portion of the inheritance, status of the firstborn, as well as the right to perpetuate the lineage: God's chosen people and the progeny bringing forth the Messiah).

Romans 9.11-13:

11 *Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—* **12** *she was told, "The older will serve the younger."* **13** *As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."*

The Lord lavished Grace on Jacob.

B. God used a season of discipline to transform Jacob (which means "heel-catcher") into "Israel."

"Heel-catcher" had a reputation of:

Trickster

Con-man

Scoundrel

Rascal

C. God used Jacob's season of discipline (under his uncle Laban) to drive out Jacob's tendencies to connive, lie, and manipulate; the success was mixed:

-When cheated out of his preferred bride, Jacob didn't resort to his trickster ways to leave with Rachel after securing her over Leah.

-Jacob didn't manipulate a solution to the repeated wage changes he suffered at the hands of Laban, instead he acknowledged and showed thankful for God's righteous intervention in this matter.

-When the Lord visited Jacob in a dream and told him to depart Laban's camp to return home with a promise of protection (Genesis 31.3), Jacob "tricked" Laban by telling him of his plans to leave.

D. Additionally,

-Jacob still references YHWH as "The God of my Father, the God of Abraham."

Jacob has a reverential, distant knowledge of YHWH but not an intimate and personal relationship with Him.

-Jacob is plagued with fear, even though God has promised Jacob that He will be with him and keep him.

Jacob leaves home fearful of his brother because Esau so desperately wants to murder him.

Jacob confesses that he leaves Laban's camp in a deceitful way because he was afraid.

Even though all of this is scary, Jacob had been given that promise from the Promise-Keeper Himself:

Genesis 28:15:

*Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. **For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.***

Jacob doesn't trust or depend on God to deliver him to the future that God also promised him:

Genesis 28:13-15:

***13** And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. **14** Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. **15** Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."*

32.1 *Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. **2** And when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.*

This angelic visit is a Grace from the Lord and intended to bolster Jacob's spirit for what lies ahead.

Genesis 27:41-45:

***41** Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob." **42** But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. **43** Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran **44** and stay with him a*

while, until your brother's fury turns away— 45 until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?"

Esau comforted himself by planning to kill Jacob; Esau's very soul was soothed as he plotted ending his brother's life.

The Lord removed the veil between this temporal, physical world and granted Jacob the ability to see the spiritual realm that surrounded him and in so doing, Jacob saw the angels of God that were ever protecting him.

The Lord is also Graciously reminding Jacob of the dream at Bethel where angels ascended and descended on the ladder and God spoke to Jacob placing that call on Jacob's life:

-Jacob's offspring would be as numerous as the dust of the earth, and they would have a land to dwell in

-Jacob would participate in the lineage that would bring forth the Messiah

-God would be with Jacob, keep him, and not leave him until He had done all that He had promised Jacob

Who will Jacob depend on?

Mahanaim-Hebrew, "two camps"

Jacob's camp, along with the angelic camp sent by God to minister to Jacob.

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, 4 instructing them, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now. 5 I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants. I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.'"

Jacob starts by elevating Esau to position of Lord and denigrating himself to that of servant; this seems to be an attempt to alleviate any concern that Esau might have that Jacob is here to insist on the status aspect of the birthright.

Jacob goes on to detail his prosperity; this is not Jacob bragging. This is Jacob reassuring Esau that he's not here for a handout, or even worse, here in need of the double-portion aspect of the birthright.

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him.” **7** Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps, **8** thinking, “If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape.”

These 400 men can be interpreted several ways; first, let’s remember Isaac’s blessing on Esau:

Genesis 27.40:

By your sword you shall live...

Also, Esau has assimilated with Canaanites and Ishmaelites and because of marriage and children, has become a proper chieftain within these tribes known for their warlike tendencies.

This large guard accompanying him might simply be an entourage, and Esau has insisted on their company to display his greatness before Jacob.

It’s also possible that Esau hadn’t made his mind up as to what his disposition was towards Jacob.

At best Esau is undecided and at worst he does intend intimidation and harm.

Of course Jacob becomes “greatly afraid and distressed.”

Jacob is afraid and he resorts to his analytics and starts conniving the best defense; he’s using man’s wisdom instead of relying on God.

9 And Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,’ **10** I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. **11** Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. **12** But you said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’”

We should all get in a pattern of problem, then pray...problem, then pray.

Jacob starts with a reverential admission of “*O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac.*”

Jacob goes on to place himself in a low standing: “*I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown.*”

Jacob is placing the Lord high and himself low. And within the distance that exists between God’s high standing and Jacob’s low placement is God’s Grace.

When we pray like that: acknowledging who God is and taking an honest assessment of ourselves, we marvel at that Grace and can’t help but fall in-love with Him.

It is so important to include in your prayers a remembrance of who God is.

Jacob is repeating the promises of God. Jacob appeals to 2 promises that the Lord had made him that simply can not come to fruition if he and his family are slaughtered at the hands of Esau; those promises are:

- His offspring numbering as the dust of the earth and
- Returning to his country/home

God will never deny His promises because He can’t deny Himself. When we incorporate God’s promises into our prayers we are demonstrating faith and trust in Him that He can and will fulfill those promises.

Some of promises you can pray:

- For the Lord to be near (Hebrews 13.5)
- For comfort during trials (2 Corinthians 1.3-4)
- For the Lord to work all things for good (Romans 8.28)
- For peace when we pray (Philippians 4.6-7)
- For the Lord to forgive no matter what (1 John 1.9)
- For the Lord to give wisdom (James 1.5)

Jacob will also display thankfulness; recounting how all those years ago he left home with only a walking stick but the Lord mightily increased him to this prolific family, a family that is so large he can divide it into 2 companies.

13 So he stayed there that night, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau, **14** two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, **15** thirty milking camels and their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. **16** These he handed over to his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on ahead of me and put a space between drove and drove." **17** He instructed the first, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these ahead of you?' **18** then you shall say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a present sent to my lord Esau. And moreover, he is behind us.'" **19** He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, "You shall say the same thing to Esau when you find him, **20** and you shall say, 'Moreover, your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he thought, "I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterward I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me." **21** So the present passed on ahead of him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp. **22** The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. **23** He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had.

This seems to be another attempt at Jacob using man's wisdom to curry Esau's favor because Jacob's still afraid; we can see that he's still afraid because he sends the gift ahead of him...he's not leading the gift, he's all the way at the rear of it.

24 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. **25** When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and **Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.** **26** Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." **27** And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." **28** Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." **29** Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. **30** So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." **31** The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. **32** Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the thigh.

Who is Jacob going to depend on? Himself or the Lord?

So notice that Jacob is alone and then this man shows up, this is of course the preincarnate Christ.

The wrestling match goes on for a while, but the Lord could've ended that match at a moment's notice.

The match goes on and if you're wondering why, it's because the Lord wants something of Jacob's: He wants the last bit of those conniving and manipulative tendencies of Jacob's.

It has to end and God's putting an end to it here by wrestling those tendencies away from him because God wants Jacob to depend on Him. And that's what we see when Jacob's hip is put out of joint.

This injury is important because remember what awaits Jacob: his brother and his accompaniment of 400 men. Jacob was vulnerable before...but now he's injured. God injures Jacob so he's left with no choice but to depend on God for protection from Esau.

The injury is in Jacob's hip and Jacob can no longer stand or rely on himself, but that's exactly what the Lord wants. He doesn't want Jacob on his own 2 feet anymore, he wants Jacob to have to hold on to Him if Jacob is to do anything from this moment forward. Once Jacob is weak and holding on to the Lord, depending on Him, that is when Jacob is strong.

Jacob then asks the Man for a blessing but first, the Man wants to know Jacob's name. And Jacob has to reply "heel-catcher" knowing everything that name is thick with:

Trickster
Con-man
Scoundrel
Rascal

The Lord will lavish Grace on Jacob here and say "no longer" and rename the "heel-catcher" Israel because he has striven with God and men and prevailed.

The only way to win against God is to lose to God and throw your arms around Him, no longer standing on your own 2 feet, wholly dependent on Him. And that's exactly what Jacob did that earned him the new name Israel.

Jacob names this place Peniel which means the "Face of God" and we see that his injury was thorough because he leaves limping.

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 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.*

Jacob physically held onto God, utterly dependent on Him; and here Jacob demonstrates that dependency on God. Jacob knows the future ahead of him and trusts on God to secure it for him. Esau might not have forgiven him and those 400 men might be an army intent on slaughtering, but Jacob is trusting God with his future so much so, he's at the front of everything.

Jacob bows to Esau demonstrating social and familial submission.

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.*

God hardens and softens hearts according to His divine will, and here Esau's heart is so tender to his brother, Esau runs to greet Jacob. Jacob was certainly terrified as Esau quickly closed the distance between them, but the Promise-Keeper was better to Jacob than his fears. Whatever change occurred in the heart of Esau it was for the purpose of blessing Jacob, and to some degree even blessed Esau, because at last these 2 are reconciled to one another.

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.*

Esau has received common grace from the Lord in the form of abundance and thus he refuses Jacob's generous gift. Jacob will go on to insist that Esau take the gift because he is so desirous of demonstrating his good-will towards Esau.

Also, by accepting the gift it would demonstrate complete and total reconciliation between the brothers. Within this culture, if you declined a gift it was a sign of enmity, but Esau accepting the gift confirmed to Jacob that they were indeed reconciled to one another.

12 Then Esau said, *“Let us journey on our way, and I will go ahead of you.”* **13** But Jacob said to him, *“My lord knows that the children are frail, and that the nursing flocks and herds are a care to me. If they are driven hard for one day, all the flocks will die. 14 Let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, at the pace of the livestock that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir.”*

Esau goes on to propose prolonged sojournings together, however Jacob wisely knows God's favored people cannot be too closely allied with this family who has married not only Canaanites but also a family that God has rejected.

Sadly Jacob slips into old tendencies when he declines the offer by blaming the children and flocks and herds. The children and flocks and herds had already come so far, so they weren't too “frail” to continue on at a normal pace. This was Jacob fearing how Esau might react if he was outright rejected.

15 So Esau said, *“Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.”* But he said, *“What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.”* **16** So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. **17** But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built himself a house and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

Again with those old tendencies, Jacob doesn't follow through with what he tells his brother. Instead, Jacob allows Esau to get a few days ahead then journeys the opposite direction (north) to Succoth.

18 And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city. **19** And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. **20** There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel. Jacob does arrive in the Promised Land but doesn't obey God's instructions which were to return to Bethel.

He builds an altar calling it El-Elohe-Israel, which means the God, the God of Israel. YHWH, is at last, his God.