

C. Esau Still Doesn't Understand the Things of God (12-17)

Bruce Waltke: *The limp is the posture of the saint, walking not in physical strength but in spiritual strength. God's severe mercy allows Jacob a victory, but it is a crippling victory. Paul expressed a similar truth in another oxymoron: "when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).*

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Has God directed you to go back to people in order to reconcile? (Why is it true that (with rare exceptions) if there are broken relationships the answer is, "Yes!"?)
- Why does reconciliation mean that we must crucify your flesh with its passions and desires?
- In the text of Genesis, can you identify where Jacob is told to go reconcile? ...what his emotional state was like during the process? ...
- In the text, can you see how Jacob demonstrates the necessity of prayer and costly sacrifice in order to reconcile?
- Do you think what happens in Jacob, in the wrestling match, provides a good picture of what it looks like when by the Spirit our flesh with its desires is crucified?
- Why is reconciliation usually a process that is rarely done perfectly? How does Jacob's life demonstrate this?
- How does Jacob also foreshadow Christ?
- Have you been trying to obey the Lord in *going to the land* (the various things you consider blessings), but not in going to *your relatives*? ...your spouse? ...your family? ...your brother or sister in Christ? (31:3)

Genesis: Truth for Understanding Our World (Part 22)

The Blessing of Abraham Reconciles Relationships

Jerry Cisar — November 13, 2016

Text: Genesis 32 – 33

Introduction

- A. The blessing of Abraham leads to *reconciliation in relationships*.
 - i. Galatians 3:14; 5:5, 16-24
 - ii. 'Peace' isn't just a sense we have *within ourselves*, it is much more. It is the *end of hostilities* in our relationships.
- B. Our text is a picture of the desires of Jacob's flesh being put to death—a work that has been in progress over the course of his life. When this work is done, He is Israel!

I. A Fearful Mission of Reconciliation (32:1-8)

- A. Two aspects of the command to return and a promise. (31:3)
- B. Jacob had a message from heavenly messengers, and immediately sends messengers with a message for Esau—a message expressing a desire for reconciliation.
- C. Just because God calls us to reconcile with others doesn't mean reconciliation is going to come easily.

II. Reconciliation Requires Prayer and Costly Sacrifice (32:9-21)

- A. God's command to live at peace with others requires prayer.
 - i. Jacob prays.

- ii. As believers we can learn from this:
 - a) We pray to... *“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Our Father in Heaven...”*
 - b) We can remind the Lord why we are in our predicament. *You sent me!*
 - c) We do not pray because we are worthy of God's blessing.
 - d) But we ask nonetheless! Lord, save we pray. Deliver...
 - e) On what basis? God's promises.
- B. God's command to live at peace with others requires sacrifice.
 - i. Costly Sacrifice
 - a) This is a huge gift. This kind of sacrifice always effects the heart.
 - b) These gifts are intended to be conciliatory.
 - Luke 19:8
 - Proverbs 18:16; 21:14
 - ii. Jacob refers to these gifts as *gifts*, and not *blessing(s)*.

III. Reconciliation Requires a Transformed Grasp (32:22-32)

- A. Jacob is entirely alone... except suddenly there is a man wrestling with him. Who is this “man”?
- B. Jacob is not going to let this night pass without receiving a blessing from his dark experience.
 - i. Jacob has separated himself completely from all his blessings.
 - ii. The one who has spent a lifetime grasping at the heel, Jacob, seems to have lost interest in what he was grasping for. Now he grasps for the Giver more than the gift.

- a) It is here that his name is changed.
 - From Jacob, who grasps at his brother's heel,
 - To Israel, *“One who contends with [for] God.”*
 - b) This name given to Jacob is that by which God's people will be called forever: *Israel*.
- C. Jacob's victory through an injury... a weakness.
- i. Throughout scenes 2 & 3, Jacob has been in darkness. Now, for the first time the sun has shined on Jacob.
 - ii. When we are in the process of crucifying our desires, life can seem very dark, but when our fleshly will dies, light shines brightly.

IV. Humility and Restoration Brings Reconciliation (33:1-17)

- i. Jacob puts himself at risk in the front, and genuinely humbles himself in his approach—bowing 7 times.
 - a) Jacob 7-fold humbling of himself may foreshadow Christ's humbling of Himself to reconcile us to Himself. (Philippians 2:6-8)
 - b) *Therefore God has highly exalted Him...*
 - ii. Jacob's efforts at reconciliation have had an effect on both Jacob and Esau.
- B. Jacob uses language of *reconciliation* and even *restitution*.