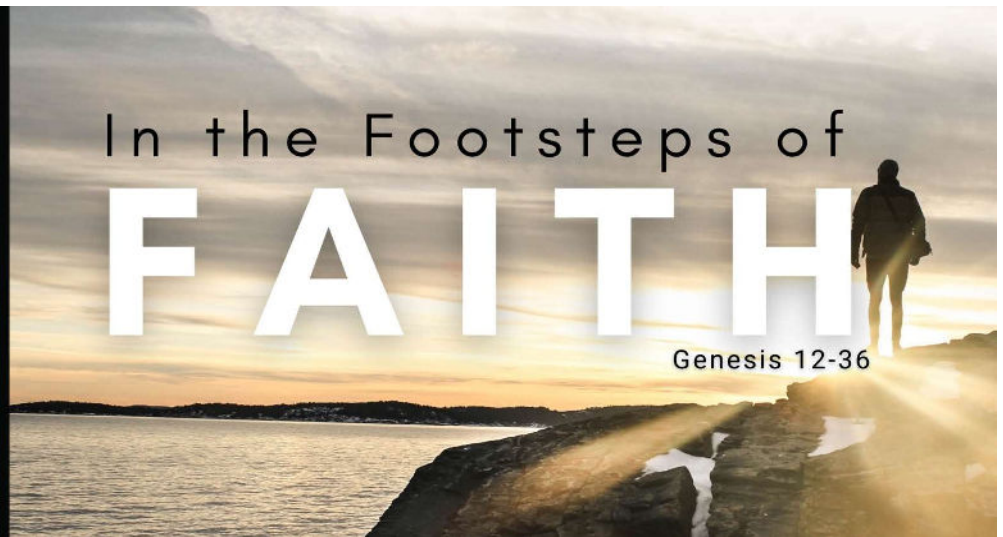




Midweek Study

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The Beauty of Reconciliation

(Genesis 33:1-20, 36:1-43)

Jacob/Israel - Changed, But Still Changing

Sometimes Jacob, Sometimes Israel! He takes **three steps forward, two steps back**. Chapter 33 shows Jacob (Israel) still tricking and lying to Esau. However, he does recognize God's hand of blessing in his life (v.5, 10, 11).

Notice five flaws¹ about Jacob's actions in chapter 33:

- 1) **By scheming instead of trusting (v.1-2)**
- 2) **By bowing instead of limping (v.3-7)** He could have leaned on his limp, which reminded him of God's strength.
- 3) **By pleading instead of witnessing (v.8-15)** He didn't tell Esau about his new name or his encounter with God.
- 4) **By promising but not performing (v.12-17a)**
- 5) **By settling instead of obeying (v.17-20)** He went to Succoth and built a house and tents for his cattle. Then he moved to Shechem. Though it is not clearly stated, Jacob should have gone to Bethel (Gen. 31:13; 28:20-22).

Boice states, "We recall that the angel of the Lord had changed his name from Jacob, which means 'cheat' or 'supplanter,' to Israel, which means 'God rules (or conquers).' God had changed Jacob's name. Yet, although the Spirit of God superintended the writing of Genesis (and all other canonical books), **it is significant that from this point on in Genesis, Jacob is called 'Jacob' twice as often as he is called 'Israel.'** When Abraham's name was changed from Abram to Abraham, the second name was used consistently thereafter. **But in Genesis 33-50 we find 'Jacob' forty-five times and 'Israel' only twenty-three times.** Apparently there was still a lot of the 'old man' in the 'new' patriarch."²

Esau – Godly Heritage, Worldly Legacy

Genesis 33:9 – Esau said, "I have enough." The Hebrew word "rav" means "much" or "plenty".

Genesis 33:11 – Jacob said, "I have enough." The Hebrew word "kol" means "everything" or "wholeness".

POINT: Materially speaking, Esau has more than Jacob. However, he is not whole because he does not have God. Jacob could say, "I am whole" or "I have everything" because he was greatly blessed and he had Jehovah God. Two different people may both have material wealth, but **if you Jesus, you have EVERYTHING!**

¹ The first four are from Warren Wiersbe, *Be Authentic*, "Be" Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Pub., 1997), 71-72.

² James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 824.

In Esau's line there are no great spiritual names.³ **Adah (v. 2)** means "ornament" or "morning." **Elon (v. 2)** may mean "a region where deer are found." **Zibeon (v. 2)** means "hyena." **Basemath (v. 3)** means "perfume." **Eliphaz (v. 4)** means "pure gold." **Nahath (v. 13)** means "rest." **Zerah (v. 13)** means "rising" or "east." **Dishon (v. 21)** means "gazelle." **Alvan (v. 23)** means "wicked." **Shepho (v. 23)** means "bald." **Aiah (v. 24)** means "hawk." **Eshban (v. 26)** means "restorer." **Ithran (v. 26)** means "advantage." **Keran (v. 26)** means "turtle." **Akan (v. 27)** means "swift." **Aran (v. 28)** means "mountain goat." **Jobab (v. 33)** means "jubilation." **Bozrah (v. 33)** means "fold." **Acbor (v. 39)** means "mouse."

Esau's son Eliphaz was the father of Amalek, and the Amalekites were also Israel's enemies (Ex. 17:8–16; Num. 14:39–45; Deut. 25:17–19; 1 Sam. 15).⁴

Three Steps to Reconciliation:

1) Will the Offender **Acknowledge** the Offense? (33:1-4)

While no admission of guilt is recorded here, Jacob's humiliation before Esau suggests he is trying to reconcile.

2) Will the Offended **Accept** the Apology? (33:5-8)

As Jacob tries to offer gifts to Esau, Esau is ready to reconcile and has no need of gifts. Reconciliation requires willingness from both parties.

3) Will the Offended **Answer** with Forgiveness? (33:9-20)

Bob Russell writes, "Jacob and Esau reconciled, but they continued to live separately from each other. Like Abraham and Lot their herds were too large to live very close. Reconciliation doesn't always mean an intimate relationship results. It does mean, 'I release my right to retaliate. I'm willing to reestablish communication and begin rebuilding the relationship.'"⁵

He continues, "Years later Jacob and Esau together attend to the burial of their dad. (See Genesis 35:28-29.) Thankfully they had found a place of forgiveness and reconciliation that allowed them to bury their father together and share their grief. Is there someone from your past to whom you need to apologize? Is there someone you need to forgive and embrace? It doesn't mean you have to give expensive gifts or you have to determine which one of you was right. It just means you say, 'Our relationship means more than the hurt we experienced. Let's be family. Let's be friends. Let's be one in Christ.'"⁶

Extra Note: As Christians, you and I have been given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). We are helping people understand that Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5) has reconciled holy God and sinful man through what He did on the cross.

The "ministry of reconciliation" is telling people that good news! God offers His salvation to everyone who will believe and accept what He did for us. To reconcile with other people is beautiful, but to reconcile with God is eternally beautiful!

³ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 2:932–33, as quoted in Boice, 846.

⁴ Wiersbe, 74–75.

⁵ Bob Russell, *Nobody's Perfect: Genesis Chapters 24-33* (Louisville, KY: Bob Russell Ministries, 2007), 28.

⁶ *Ibid.*