



MESSAGE/SERIES:

Series: Biblical Beginnings

Message: “Reconciliation”

Text: Genesis 33:1-20

DATE: July 4, 2021

SCRIPTURE FOR THIS WEEK:

(These verses will help you understand themes within as you read our core text as scripture proves scripture)

Genesis 33:1-20, 19:1, 42:6 (Bowing before Joseph), Proverbs 16:1, 1 Samuel 20:41 (David & Jonathan), **Luke 15:20**, 2 Samuel 14:17, Matthew 10:16 (Wise & Innocent), Genesis 32:24-29 (Jacobs divine meeting), Genesis 30-32 (Peniel), Genesis 12:6-7 (Shechem), Matthew 5:23-24, Romans 6:23 Proverbs 15:8 (God will not receive our gift),

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

[Genesis 33:1-20]

“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.

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. 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.

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.”

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.

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.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 33:1–20.

“It is one thing to be privileged with a special visitation from or a manifestation of God to us, but it is quite another to live in the power of it.”

-Arthur Pink

BACKGROUND & OTHER STUDY HELPS:

[BOWING SEVEN TIMES] “Bowing seven times. One way that a person showed respect for a superior in the ancient world was by bowing to the ground. To magnify the honor being given and the subservience of the person who bowed, this gesture could be repeated seven times. Some Egyptian texts from El Amarna (fourteenth-century b.c.) portray vassals bowing seven times to Pharaoh.”

Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ge 33:1–3.

[EL Elohe Israel] “The name given to Jacob/Israel’s altar, “El Elohe Israel,” is an acknowledgment of his own name change and his acceptance of the role of covenantal heir that had been promised at Bethel (28:13–15). For another example of naming an altar, see Exodus 17:15.”

Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ge 33:20.

-Also meaning God is the God of Israel

[HUMAN NATURE] A theme is seen throughout Genesis. Jacob had an experience with God and yet he still battles his flesh. We still see his sinful nature coming out after the experience with God.

- Psalms 39:5
- Romans 3:23
- Jeremiah 17:9

[RECONCILIATION] “*Theology of Reconciliation*. Christians distinguish between vertical reconciliation (our being reconciled to God) and horizontal reconciliation (our reconciliation among one another). Vertical reconciliation (as described in Rom 5:1–11)—**God’s reconciling us to himself—is what makes possible horizontal reconciliation** (as envisioned in 2 Cor 5:17–20 and Eph 2:12–20). It can be summed up in five points.

First of all, ***reconciliation is the work of God; but we participate in that work.*** This parallels the biblical teaching on peace, where God is the author of true peace. Paul states this in 2 Corinthians 5:18: “All of this [reconciliation] is from God.” We in turn are entrusted with this ministry of reconciliation, becoming ambassadors for Christ’s sake.

Second, ***God begins the work of reconciliation with the healing of the victim.*** This is consistent with the message of the great prophets and the ministry of Jesus: God is especially concerned with the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. It may seem counterintuitive in that most people associate reconciliation with the repentance of the wrongdoer. This is all well and good, but practically speaking (especially in the reconciliation of peoples) the wrongdoers seldom if ever repent. Does this mean then that the victim is held hostage to the wrongdoing forever? God can heal victims, and even lead them to forgive the wrongdoers before the wrongdoers repent.

Third, ***in reconciliation, we are made a “new creation”*** (2 Cor 5:17). The experience of healing means that the victim (and the wrongdoer, if there is repentance) does not return to the state in which they were before the violence or the wrongdoing. They are taken to a new, often unanticipated place. Practically, this means that reconciliation will require changes in both parties, not just in the wrongdoer. God’s grace makes that change possible.

Fourth, ***we pattern our suffering on the suffering and death of Christ.*** Working for reconciliation nearly always requires undergoing *suffering: for the victims, the wrongdoers, those who are ministers of reconciliation. Suffering in itself is not redemptive; it is only so when it can be connected to something larger than ourselves.

For nonbelievers, that “something” is often an altruistic impulse to aid suffering humanity. Christians pattern their suffering on the suffering and death of Christ so that they may come to know the power of his resurrection (Phil 3:10–11).

Fifth, **reconciliation will only be complete when all things have been reconciled in Christ**. Because all of creation is interconnected, only when everything and everyone has been reconciled at the end of time (cf. Eph 1:10; Col 1:20–21), will God be “all in all” (1 Cor 15:28). God is not only the author of reconciliation, God is also the end toward which it moves. Thus that every attempt at reconciliation remains incomplete does not surprise us. But we live in hope that God will indeed bring this all about.

What has become apparent in some secular circles is not just that there is a Christian counterpart to other practices of peacemaking, but that the Christian theology can also provide a spiritual basis that can sustain people working for peace and reconciliation. It is becoming increasingly apparent that some kind of personal or spiritual basis larger than the strategies of peacemaking themselves is necessary to help prevent burnout in this work. This may be one of the most important contributions of Christian faith to the international practice of peacemaking and reconciliation.”

Robert J. Schreiter, “Peacemaking and Reconciliation,” ed. William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2008), 639–640.

OUTLINE:

I. PREPARATION FOR RECONCILIATION

A. (Gen. 32:30) Jacob had to meet with God before he could go for God...
(He and God had a meeting before he met with Esau)

1. God had picked a fight with Jacob prior to this meeting to bring a **better understanding of his weaknesses**

a) *Many times we must be brought low before we can ever lift our heads to see the path before us (overwhelming without His strength)*

b) *Many times we must get to the place of desperation (Jacob could only hold on)*

c) *Prior to this meeting, Jacob had relied on lying and deceit as his mode of operation and now he knows God's accountability*

(1) God had shown sovereign in ensuring His will ... even through evil man God's will be accomplished

(2) Yet God had met Jacob to prepare him to minister to Esau and his family

II. OUR HEART IN RECONCILIATION

*“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.**”*

A. Jacob's heart revealed

1. **Jacob looked up and saw Esau and the masses** and the evidence points to a heart of fear in Jacob
 - a) *Jacob divided up His family for protection*
 - b) *He puts the servants upfront to protect His family from potential harm*
 - c) *Jacob is behind the servant and in front of Rachel and Joseph*
2. Jacob bows and progresses closer bows again so on for seven times (he is fearful of Esau's anger (more than even the custom required))

“Jacob said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.”

3. Jacob acknowledges God's grace in his life before his brother who is not a God-fearing man

*“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.*

4. Jacob has his whole family bowed to Esau as a grand display to win over Esau's affection (Jacob was still manipulating Esau)
 - a) *Is Jacob Using God's grace and blessings to win our battles for our own personal pursuits will be judged in the end*

5. Jacob continues to address Esau as Lord and himself as Esau's servant because he was fearful
 - a) So many times will seek to win people over by giving them authority over us in those situations
 - b) God does not call us to be doormats but rather Humble (this is excessive)

6. (v8) Jacob admits that he was seeking to wow Esau with the gift to gain favor with Esau

"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.

7. (v10) Jacob relates the meeting with His brother as like seeing the face of God
 - a) *Deliberate flattery is deployed here to win Esau over*
 - b) *Jacob wanted proof that he had forgiven him*
 - c) *Jacob is still working on his own strength in these moments*

"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.**"

d) *Jacob makes excuses as to why he does not want to travel with Esau*

- (1) It appears as Jacob still does not trust Esau (Maybe rightfully so/ but no need to fear)
- (2) The excuse that children are weak
- (3) The excuse of the herds being weak and he cannot push them
- (4) There is never cause for a Christian to lie or twist the truth due to fear

e) *Jacob lies to Esau when saying he would meet him in Seir (Since scripture makes note that Jacob did not go to Seir)*

*“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.*

f) *Jacob did not even want Esau’s servants to stay behind and help Jacob*

- (1) Fear of any help from Esau would lead to a bad ending for him and His family

g) *Jacob’s lie was revealed when he makes a temporary home in Succoth and not Seir*

- (1) Jacob was probably wise in not living alongside Esau (due to the size of their herds)
- (2) Jacob was probably wise in not staying around Esau for too long as Esau was a man of the world and the word indicates our relationship should not be too close (Unequally yoked 2 Cor 6)
- (3) Still, Jacob had no need to lie to Esau

*“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.**”*

- h) *Jacob acknowledges God as His God at El-Elohe-Israel*
- i) *Jacob's name had been changed by God to Israel*
 - (1) Jacob was still acting like Jacob and not Israel a transformed man
 - (2) Man must daily choose to follow Jesus and submit to His will even though God has chosen/called and appointed us to His mission (co-laboring of the Holy Spirit)

- j) *Still, Jacob had not been called to grow roots in El-Elohe-Israel but rather to return to Bethel*
 - (1) Often times will give God praise in places he does not desire for us to give praise
 - (a) Jacob must arrive at the place of submission (Bethel-before God will fully bless)
 - (2) Jacob paid money and grew roots (invested in the wrong place and wrong people)
 - (3) Jacob possibly just wanted to be away from Esau (fear may have been the cause of his wrong investment)
 - (4) Jacob built an altar and dedicated that place to god but God wasn't in it

B. Esau's heart revealed

“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.”

1. Esau looks up sees Jacob and runs to meet Him (love overcame anger)
 - a) *He runs to him*
 - b) *Embraces him*
 - c) *Kisses his neck*
 - d) *Wept*

2. Esau recognizes that Jacob is blessed with family

*“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.**”*

3. Esau questions the gifts and grand show
4. Esau assures him he does not need his stuff
5. Esau appears to be genuinely glad to see Jacob

(v11) Due to Jacob's arm twisting Esau accepts

6. Esau didn't need the gifts
7. This act of God was made light by Jacobs human effort (God had already done a work in Esau to forgive)

(v12-14) Esau appears to want to protect his brother

(v15-17) Esau offers up help/servants to keep Jacob safe and be a help along the journey

8. It appears as if Esau just wanted to show kindness

III. GOD'S HEART AND RECONCILIATION

A. God had heard Jacob's prayer at Peniel or Penuel (Face of God)

1. God had heard and worked in Jacob's heart to prepare him to meet Esau
2. God had obviously worked in Esau's heart to prepare him for Jacob
 - a) *God doesn't need us to play God*
 - b) *We must pray and allow God to work the details out as He sees fit*

B. God had commanded Jacob to return to the land of his birth (Canaan)

1. Genesis 31:13 *“I am **the God of Bethel**, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.”*

2. Succoth was not part of Canaan but rather right outside of Canaan (Jacob had not yet obeyed God at this point)
 - a. Times when we are right outside of His will and command (still inside of his permissive will)

C. God had blessed Jacob and made His blessings known to Esau

1. When we belong to God the Blessings that have been poured out on because of Jesus

a) in spite of our prideful maneuvers to still try and handle things yourself

(1) We should not be legalistic and look at every flaw of Jacob but rather realize the need to trust and enjoy our relationship with Jesus

“Unless faith remains active we shall cease to live in the power of the vision of His glory.”

-Arthur Pink

Meditation Moment:

- Have you made a commitment to stand with Jesus as an individual?
 - Have you succumbed to fear even though God has shown you He will never leave you?
 - Are there people you need to make a move towards in reconciliation?
 - We should not worry about every little detail in reconciling but rather to honor and trust the Lord in the process and He will bless us.
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