



Frisco First

JACOB: THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY, ACCEPTANCE, AND BELONGING. •
FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION • GENESIS 32:12-33:11; COLOSSIANS 3:12-15 •
3/27/2022

MAIN POINT

Reconciliation. (Gen 33) Jacob faces his past and reconciles with Esau, yet Reconciliation does not necessarily mean restoration. In reconciling, Jacob places appropriate boundaries in his relationship with Esau. Restoration with God leads to restoration with others.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When was a time when you were truly afraid? What caused that fear?

What fears would you say are most prevalent in our society and in our churches?

Fear can be a strong motivator for us, sometimes it is helpful other times it is paralyzing. Fear should drive us to God. Throughout the series we have seen Jacob make mistakes and hurt people. He responded at times by hiding or running. In Genesis 32 and 33, Jacob must face his fears and trust in God.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 32:1-12.

What are some reasons that Jacob might have been afraid of Esau?

Why did Jacob send his servants? What do you think was going through Jacob's mind when his servant's told him that Esau wanted to meet?

As we have studied, Jacob swindled Esau out of a birthright and stole his blessing. Esau at one point declared his desire to kill Jacob. Esau was a strong man with a large following, so Jacob sent servants and gifts to try to please Esau so that he would not have to face him.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 32:22-28.

How had Jacob's separation with his family shown itself in his relationship with the Lord?

Have you ever felt like Jacob? Have you ever had a moment when you had to confront the truth about yourself? What were the circumstances?

Why do you think God brings us to points like that?

In fear, Jacob retreated. He began wrestling with someone, not realizing that it was God. In his encounter with God Jacob was changed. He was forced to first be restored to God before he could reconcile with Esau.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 33:1-11.

How would you describe the different emotions that Jacob and Esau were feeling?

What was the motivation for the blessings and generosity that they had for each other? How might their interaction have been different if Jacob had not encountered God the night before?

How can Jacob serve as an example for restoration in our life with God and with others?

Jacob was still anxious even after encountering God. Esau was joyous to see his brother, he ran unashamed, to his brother. They blessed and greeted one another. The Lord enabled their relationship to be restored because both had come to trust in God. In Colossians 3, Paul taught on this sort of relational restoration.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 3:12-15.

Why did Paul start with our standing before God? What three ways does Paul describe our standing with God?

How does our standing with God affect the way we should treat others? Which of the attributes and commands that Paul gives us comes the easiest to you? Which one is

the hardest?

Paul described believers as being chosen, holy, and loved. We must first understand what God has done for us in order to know how to live. The attributes and callings that Paul gave stem from what God has done, we love because we are loved, we forgive because we have been forgiven. Being restored to God enables us to be restored to others.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How has fear kept you from fully trusting in God?

What is one attribute or calling from Colossians 3 that you want to work on this week? Why?

How does your standing with God affect the way you see other believers?

How does the work of God in your life change the way you approach non-believers?

PRAYER

Lead your group in prayer, thanking God for restoring us to Him, for choosing us, for loving us, for making us holy. Pray that the people of our church would be known as people of kindness, compassion, love and forgiveness.

COMMENTARY

| GENESIS 32:1-33:11

32:1-2. For the second time while on a journey, Jacob saw God's angels (cp. 28:12). As before, he named the place where he encountered them. In this case he called it Mahanaim, "Two Camps," probably in recognition of the fact that both people and angels were at the same location.

32:3-12. Remembering Esau's death threats from 20 years earlier (27:41-42), Jacob now made a special effort to gain Esau's favor with the assistance of messengers. The first prong of his strategy was verbal: Jacob had the messengers call Esau "lord" and himself "your servant," thus honoring Esau's position as firstborn—even though he had previously taken Esau's birthright and blessing. Jacob also made sure he was the first to initiate contact between the brothers, in order to seek Esau's favor.

To prepare for the coming confrontation with his brother Jacob did two things: first, he divided his group in two so at least some of his people could escape if necessary; second, he offered a prayer with three elements: an admission that he was unworthy of the many blessings God had given him, a prayer for rescue, and a reminder of God's promises to prosper and multiply Jacob.

32:13-21. Jacob, who had been so adept at taking from others in the past, now arranged to give a generous gift to his brother Esau. Only after Esau had received all the gifts would Jacob meet him.

32:22-23. As a final measure of self-protection that night, Jacob put one more barrier between himself and Esau, moving his family and possessions across the "Jabbok," a westward-flowing tributary emptying into the Jordan River 15 miles north of the Dead Sea. Perhaps Jacob believed that Esau would have compassion on his wives and children, and so end his pursuit.

32:24-30. Now Jacob experienced his third and final encounter with God while on a journey (cp. v. 1; 27:12-15). A man, understood by later Israelites to be God or an angel possessing the authority of God (Hos. 12:3-4), wrestled with the elderly patriarch until daybreak. The fight ended when the divine being dislocated Jacob's hip. Jacob, injured but still unwilling to release his grip on the being, demanded that He bless him. Asserting His authority over Jacob (see note at Gen. 1:5), the man changed Jacob's name to Israel, linking the name with the fact that the patriarch had struggled with God), as well as with men, and had prevailed.

Jacob was the third person to be renamed by God, joining Abraham and Sarah (17:5,15). The patriarch's inferior status is reflected in the fact that, unlike the divine being, who asked for Jacob's name and got it, Jacob was unable to learn the being's name. The renamed man now renamed the place Peniel—or Penuel—lit "the face of God," because he had seen God face to face and yet was spared from death.

33:1-3. Following his transforming encounter with God, Jacob went from hiding behind his wives and children (32:22-23) to boldly taking the lead in protecting his family. In his encounter with Esau and his 400 men, Jacob went on ahead of the group, arranging his family behind him according to their status. In a display of respect unparalleled in the Bible, Jacob bowed down to Esau seven times as he approached.

33:4-11. Even as Jacob had been changed the previous night, it seems that Esau had changed too. Perhaps he had been warned by God not to harm Jacob, even as other adversaries of the patriarchs had been before (20:3-7; 31:24). The once-estranged brothers "hugged... kissed, and wept" together in gracious reunion—a scene that anticipated a reunion between estranged brothers in the next generation (45:14-15). Esau, who had three wives and five sons (36:2-5),

inquired about Jacob's family. Each of the mothers approached Esau with their children and respectfully bowed down. The fact that Joseph was the only named son in the group and was mentioned ahead of his mother foreshadows his leading role in later narratives.

Though Esau encouraged Jacob to keep what animals he had earlier sent ahead, Jacob insisted that Esau take the gift as a confirmation that the younger brother had found favor with him.

| COLOSSIANS 3:12-15

3:12. New people in Christ were "to put on" certain virtues as they would don new clothes. Paul addressed them with three descriptive terms. They were God's "chosen ones." Through faith in Christ, they had taken their place among God's people. Believers were "holy"—set aside for God's service and for moral purity. They also were loved; they lived in God's love. Paul's descriptive terms offered strong motivation for believers to incorporate the qualities of character that followed.

3:13. Paul added two character qualities to his list. The Greek term rendered "accepting" means "putting up with." Believers were to endure offenses patiently. The word translated "forgiving" has the sense of pardoning others as a gift of grace. If a believer had a "complaint" (grievance) against another Christian, the offended person was to take the initiative to forgive the offender as (in the same manner) the Lord graciously had "forgiven" the one offended. Christians were to take the initiative to forgive others because of their personal experience of Christ's forgiveness.

3:14. Above all literally is "over all." As an outer garment covering the items Paul had listed, believers were to put on "love"—agape, determined good will that seeks others' best interests. Such persistent good will is "the perfect bond of unity."

3:15. Christ had called believers to His "peace"—spiritual wholeness under His lordship. The phrase "in one body" implies believers' oneness under Christ's rule as the Head of His body, the church. They were to allow Christ's gift of spiritual health to exercise "control" (literally, "act as an umpire") at the center of their lives (in their "hearts"). Gratitude was to be a continuing characteristic of their life together. The exhortation to "be thankful" applied especially to corporate worship.