

Jacob and Esau's Lesson

Week of Sept. 30 - Oct. 6, 2019

Introduction

Jacob is so human, so like us. He hasn't always done the right thing, especially where his twin brother Eli was concerned. Ever since being born second, Jacob was always angling to be first. Finally, out of fear, Jacob flees town to avoid his brother's rightful wrath. Now Jacob hasn't seen his brother in 20 years, and is very concerned about the reunion. In this week's lesson we witness the cost of making amends, with family and with God's promise.

Lesson

19 He also instructed the second, the third and all the others who followed the herds: "You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. **20** And be sure to say, 'Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.'" For he thought, "I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me." **21** So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. **23** After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. **24** So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. **25** When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. **26** Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

29 Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.**32** Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

Questions

1. Jacob sends lavish gifts to Esau (whom he has shamed by stealing his birthright and blessing) ahead of his arrival. Is this a good strategy for reconciliation?
2. Jacob hasn't seen Esau in a very long time and seems very apprehensive about meeting him. What do you do when you are apprehensive about something? Do you turn to God in prayer?
3. Have you wrestled with decisions you've made? Jacob wrestled with God all through the night. Have you ever wrestled with God?
4. Is there a blessing you want from God? What would you do to get that blessing?
5. Sometimes a blessing comes after long and painful wrestling matches with God. Has your persistence led to a blessing?
6. Jacob's name was changed to Israel which means 'he who struggles with God and overcomes'. What are your struggles with God?

7. Was there a significance to the wrestling happening throughout the night, ending at daybreak?

Prayer

Dear Lord, I thank you for allowing me to wrestle with you. Please let me use the times that I am wrestling with you to draw me closer to you for your good. Amen