

Jesus Conquers Hate | Genesis 33:1-4, 16-20

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INI - SDG

Genesis 33:1-4 Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. ² And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. ³ Then he crossed over before them and bowed 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.

Genesis 33:16-20 ¹⁶ So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. ¹⁷ And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. ¹⁸ Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. ¹⁹ And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. ²⁰ Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.

One day Jesus needed to get across the lake, but he had no boat. He simply walked across the water. Peter saw him and by faith in Jesus' promise he too walked for a little bit on the water. That was a miracle, but it was nothing compared to the miracle of our text this morning.

By faith in God's promise Peter walked across the water, but the miracle we have this morning is greater. Jacob by trusting God's promises embraced in brotherly love Esau, the brother who had vowed to kill him.

This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains."

Those who trust God's promise can learn to forgive and to be forgiven. Jesus' presence and power can heal the most strained, even the most damaged relationships. Those who grasp Jesus promises with both hands can do miracles.

I gave one of my confirmations students a worksheet which asked a question. Before the fall into sin Adam and Eve had the image of God, which is holiness and righteousness, according to these passages what do we have now? The answer the worksheet was looking for was "a sinful nature." The answer the student wrote was, "the promises of God." His answer was better than what was expected.

This is what we have now. We have God's promises, and by faith in these promises we can work miracles. Not miracles of feeding 5,000 people, or calming the storm or raising the dead. But miracles of spiritual healing, of restoring broken relationships, miracles of forgiveness and love and salvation.

Trust His Promises.

In order to walk on water Peter had to step out of the boat. Jacob had to go forth and meet his brother. The brother who had vowed to kill him. The brother that was now coming to meet him with 400 men. You see a guy who vowed to kill you coming towards you with 400 men are you going to go out to meet him? I don't think so.

Peter stepped out of the boat trusting in God's promises. Jacob went alone trusting in God's promise to be with him. He trusted God's promise to bring him back home.

God can heal the most broken relationships and do greater miracles, but it starts by trusting God's promises. You have to step out of the boat, you have to walk forward to meet Esau.

Stepping out of the boat doesn't mean you jump off a cliff just to see if God gives you the power of flight. That would be testing the Lord. Stepping out of the boat applies to those situation where you know it is God's will. His word calls you to come forth.

Coming to your pastor to say, our marriage isn't going so well, or I'm having problems with this sin or that sin. These would be a couple examples. It seems safer to hide your sin. But God's word says to confess your sins.

It can feel like stepping out a safe boat into a raging sea. It can feel like walking towards an angry brother coming with 400 soldiers. But what we are really doing is stepping out of the boat into the promises of God. When Peter stepped out of the boat, he lost faith and quickly started sinking, but Jesus did not let him drown. The size of you faith is not what matters. Those step forward onto God's promise, no matter how weak their faith, will not drown.

Psa 91:15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

Face Your Sin

Trusting God's promises often means facing the consequences of our own sin.

For the first time in his life Jacob faced the consequences of his own sin head on. Before this he lied to his father. He ran away from his brother. He snuck away in the night from his uncle Laban. Always Jacob chose to lie and deceive rather than to face the consequences of his own sin, but now he stands and faces the consequences of his sin. He is able to do this by faith in God's promises.

The kids today have the story of Nicodemus. Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. Jesus responds to Nicodemus that he needs to stop skulking about at night and come to Jesus by day in the light, confessing his sins, not attempting to hide from them.

John 3:19-20 the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

It is a scary thing to face our sin and the consequences of our sin head on. Jacob was terrified of what would happen when he met Esau face to face. Yet, Jacob trusted God's promises and went in the light of day to meet his brother.

God does not promise us that when we similarly face the consequences of our sin that they will simply disappear as they did for Jacob. He does promise is that He will be with us. He promises that our sins will be washed away. He promises that if we must go through suffering, He will be with us.

God's promises to us are not made void simply because we fail. His promise are true even in our sin.

Release Worldly Treasures

Grasping God's promises means letting go of everything else. God's promises must be grasped with two hands not one.

Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Jacob spent his whole life grabbing what he wanted. I want this. I want that. That's what Jacob means, heal grabber. He is grabbing what he wants through deceit and treachery.

Now instead of holding on to these things. He lets them go. Everything he has he sends on ahead of himself, even his wife and children. The desire to grab and hold these things is what caused the anger between him and his brother. This is what caused him to run away from his uncle Laban. The night before our text Jacob wrestled with God. The angel of the Lord wanted to leave and Jacob grasped Him with both hands. In order to grasp the Lord Jacob had to let go of all these other things.

This account ends with altar, EL Elohe Israel. That is translated God is the God of Israel.

Remember that Jacob's name is now Israel. Jacob is claiming God as His own God. Before God was always the God of Abraham and Isaac.

Now says Jacob, "He is my God, the God of Israel. "

There is that old slogan: this is not your father's Oldsmobile. Well Jacob says, "God is not my father's God but mine." Not because God has changed but because Jacob has learned to let go of the things of the world and hold on to the promises of God. He has learned to be a promise grabber instead of a heal grabber.

Every new generation has to learn this for themselves, learn that God is not the God of their father but my God. Every generation needs to learn to make God's promises mine.

All we have for now are the promises of God. Yet, if we learn to grasp them by faith, we can move mountains, walk on water, heal the deepest rifts between people, and be forgiven and washed of our sins through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us that they "**through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong,**" Hebrews 11:33,34

Therefore let us look **"unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."** Hebrews 12:2

When we trust the promises of God nothing is impossible not even the reconciliation of a brother who has sworn to kill us.

Zec 13:9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, `This is My people ; And each one will say, `The LORD is my God. "

Amen