

## **Genesis in Biblical Perspective: The Gospel of Christ from Genesis – A Saved Man Is a Changed Man**

**Genesis 33**

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We are in our study on the life of Jacob and we have reached his first day of him being a new creation in Christ. What a momentous day as a new believer. The sun rose on a man who had been given a new name and a new heart. Let's see what happens in Genesis 33. Genesis 33:1–11 says

*[1] 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.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, and the Word of our God abides forever. Father, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of our heart be acceptable in Your sight O Lord, our Redeemer, Amen.

This is a new day for Jacob whose name is now Israel, in more ways than one. He has arrived back in the Promised Land. In the last study we covered Jacob's

conversion. God has declared to Rebekah that the older would serve the younger for Jacob I have loved. We have seen the sinfulness of Jacob, the deceptiveness of his mother and instead of trusting God for the blessing they connived their way to the stealing of the family blessing, the covenant blessing and the birth right. The result is that Esau is going to kill him. Jacob goes off into exile for twenty years as an indentured servant to Laban. In that process Jacob is deceived and manipulated by Laban but God's presence was with him. God has met him at Bethel before he left the Promised Land where the ladder came down from heaven. God is the Savior for He will come down to save His people. There God promised to go with Jacob and that He would make a nation of him. He said He would bring him to Himself and give him all the blessings he would need to serve Him.

After that twenty years, he now returns with eleven sons and one more promised. So the nation is given with all the prosperity he needed to serve the Lord and accomplish His purposes and He had the presence of the Lord. Jacob has been freed from the enmity with Laban and there at a place called Peniel he met God face to face. Laban is behind him and Esau is in front of him. Esau is coming with four hundred men. Jacob took his possessions and put them in two camps. One camp he sent ahead with the servants and his possessions and all of their children. Then in the next camp he put Leah and her children, then Rachel and Joseph. Then Jacob stayed behind as they crossed over the River Jabok and he sent them on ahead thinking that when Esau meets the first camp that those in the later camps will then be able to escape. Jacob is back there preserved at the end.

That night at the River Jabok a man reaches hold of Jacob and it's not just any man for he names the place Peniel, meaning I have met God face to face. God reaches out to lay hold of him and subdue him but like all men born in their sins Jacob strives against God. He wrestles against God and then God with a supernatural touch merely touches the socket of his hip and the core strength of the man physically is removed even as He breaks him spiritually. With the helpless leg Jacob quits striving against God and he clings to God and says "Bless me. I will not let go unless You bless me." You can't be saved without the grace of God but saving grace has to be a severe grace. God's grace and mercy is what saves us, but God's grace and mercy will always a severe grace and mercy for God must touch us and break us. Then our striving is stopped. Then we cling to Him.

As Jacob is broken and as he clings to the Lord, the sun rises and a new man, with a new name, new heart and a new life rises us. He names the place Peniel, meaning I have seen God face to face. He rise up with this helpless leg, limping behind him but now he goes ahead to meet Esau on that day. Now we pick up on what happens on that first day of his new life, as this man with a limp now walks ahead. He sees Esau coming with his four hundred men, this company of militia that is with him. The last thing Jacob heard from Esau was "I'm going to kill my

brother.” Jacob has been gone for twenty years. He sees Esau coming and something amazing happens. The man who is walking with a limp now walks tall.

When God’s severe mercy comes, God’s severe mercy is a saving mercy and grace and a transforming mercy and grace. When a man or woman has been saved by grace the result of God’s saving grace with its severe touch to break us brings forth a new creation, who is at the one hand old and on the other hand humble. There is boldness and humility. With boldness Jacob comes to the front of his family, no longer at the back of his family. He is not waiting to preserve himself to see if he can get away with some of his family but he now goes to meet Esau face to face, with a limp.

Notice as we read this encounter, Jacob bows seven times. The Bible mentions that because in the courts a king would teach every servant to bow in his presence seven times. So Jacob is taking the official posture of a servant and acknowledging his older brother Esau as lord. He does so visually by bowing seven times and having all of his family bow as he introduces them. Then on seven different occasions Jacob either says he is Esau’s servant or he says Esau is my lord. So Jacob verbally and visually takes the posture of humility now. This is a different man.

The old Jacob would have been conniving, deceiving, manipulating and all of that. Esau even asked Jacob about the first camp he met saying “What’s the meaning of all of that?” Jacob said “Those are my gifts to you.” Esau says “I don’t need that. You keep it.” The old Jacob would have said “Okay.” This new Jacob insists and acknowledges all the stuff he owns and all these children he has God has given to him and he says “I have enough. Please take this gift.” He urges Esau and insists he takes the gift. Then Esau takes it.

Can you imagine that moment when Jacob comes bowing seven times to Esau and the text says Esau fell upon his neck, thankfully without a sword. He hugged and embraced Jacob and Esau wept. I have to believe that the most amazed man in the Middle East at the moment was Jacob, because last time he heard Esau talking he was going to kill Jacob. Now he welcomes Jacob. Esau is the man who just conquered Edom and the land of Seir. This is a man that has an army and could do him in. This is a man with some vengeance rights but he falls upon him and embraces him. Jacob says “You have accepted me. I see God’s face in your face.

The two brothers are reconciled but Esau comes up with a plan for Jacob to come to his house in Edom. Let’s see what happens in the following text. Genesis 33:12–20 says

*[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.*

Esau wants Jacob to come to his house and tells him he will protect him and everything he has. Jacob says “No, I don’t think I can travel at your pace with my nursing flocks and children so let me go at my pace and eventually I will see you.” When Esau offers to allow Jacob to have some of his people Jacob insists that he go on and that he’ll follow. The old man dies hard. Jacob is a Christian now so he is not going to just lie but he is leaving out the part that he never has intentions to come to Seir. Jacob’s plan was to go to the Promised Land which is where he is supposed to go, but instead of telling Esau that he just tells him to go on ahead and when he catches up with him he’ll see him, with no intention of ever catching up to him.

Jacob goes on to Succoth and it’s called that because he built booths there for his family and livestock. In other words, he settled in a little bit. He pitched a tent. He purchased some land from the sons of Hamor and oh did he make a mistake! It was a really big mistake! He did something right which was wherever he landed he would built an altar to worship. Do you want to know who is a believer? A believer loves to worship and wherever their tent is there is an altar. Wherever they are they will worship. *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship (Romans 12:1).* A believer’s life is worship. They will also go give worship where God says to go and give worship and the way that God finds it acceptable.

As we come to the Lord’s Table what are some lessons we can glean from this text? I would like to give you five of them from this text. The first lesson is that you who have been touched by God’s saving grace, been broken by His supernatural power even with the severe grace so that you no longer strive against God, but you cling to God who holds you, then you can depend on one thing for sure and that is God’s common grace is at work in you, around you and all of your life. God is working. God is working in saving grace and redeeming grace in the lives of His people, like He did with Jacob.

He is working in your life. Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. God's saving grace has come to you, takes hold of you, works in you and He is now at work on you, at work in you and is going to work through you. He is also working all around you. By the way, He is not just working in the lives of His people, He is working in those who are not His people. The rain falls on the just and the unjust. It is God's common grace and it's not just His redeeming grace for His elect that is out there bestowed all around us, before and there it is at work. You and I who have been purchased by redeeming grace as trophies of grace are also beneficiaries of God's common grace.

What do I mean by that? Here is Jacob being saved by God's saving grace, being brought back to the land with God's presence with him but he has an enemy behind him and that is Laban. Laban doesn't love the Lord but that doesn't stop the Lord. The Lord says to Laban, "Don't say anything good or bad to Jacob." God's common grace restrains Laban from being as evil as he would have been and the result is a benefit in Jacob's life. As Jacob leaves Laban behind and he is walking toward the Promised Land here is another enemy, Esau. He is not a man of God nor does he love the Lord. God's common grace has come upon him and that's why Jacob says to Esau, "You have accepted me and I see God's face in your face." Jacob knows that God somehow has worked in Esau's life so that instead of Esau falling on his neck to kill Jacob, he falls upon his neck to embrace him and weeps as a prodigal brother.

That's God's common grace. We don't know how many times God is out there working all around us in common grace to protect us, to provide for us but you can depend on it. God is not only working in you and in His people but God is even working in those who are not His people. What if the king is a tyrant? *The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will (Proverbs 21:1).*

The second lesson from the text is that saving grace is a transforming grace. There is no such grace to say that I'm saved so I'll just go and live the way I used to. When God's saving grace gets a hold of somebody the way they live doesn't save them but saved people live differently. They don't take sin lightly. They hate sin, they have been delivered from sin and they don't want to practice sin. Will they be perfect? No, but there will be a change. *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17).* There is a changed life at work.

Look at the new Jacob, Israel. Don't look at the old Jacob who was self-reliant in his own strength and manufacturing things by his own wits, conniving, deceiving, negotiating and manipulating. That Jacob is no longer. Here is a man that now when someone asks him "What do you have?" he says "God has given me everything" and he insists on honoring God for everything that is in his life, from possessions to people to children. "Everything that is here has been given me the hand of a gracious God. I didn't deserve it for it was God's grace that gave it

to me.” He now insists on honoring a brother. “You’re my lord and I am your servant.” This is the same man who would have known the same promise to his mother. I know I’m speculating here but it’s hard for me to believe that Rebekah at didn’t at some point tell him what God told her, “The older shall serve the younger.” Yet Jacob insists to Esau to say “I’m the servant and you’re the lord. If God wants to change it then God will change it but I will honor my older brother.”

This is a changed man. He now honors his brother instead of defrauding his brother. Here is a changed man who gives an extravagant gift, obviously in some repentance over the way he has manipulated and defrauded his brother, insisting on it. Here is a changed man. It’s hard to believe this is the same man who was conniving, manipulating and deceiving as he stole the birth rights from Esau. Jacob says to Esau about his gift, “Brother, take it for I have enough.” That is a changed man because if money and things are your god you don’t ever have enough, but if you have Jesus that’s enough. Jacob says “That’s enough.” Esau says “No, Jacob I don’t want to take it.” Instead of ceasing the moment Jacob insists he takes it.

Here is a man who is not only committed to his contentment in the Lord but to going where the Lord directed him. “I’m not going to go to Edom. I’m going to go to the Promised Land.” I have to confess, he didn’t do it like I would have liked for him to do it. I think he should have just told Esau he couldn’t go to Edom but he had to go to the Promised Land. I guess he thought things were going pretty good and he didn’t want to mess things up and he was reconciled with his brother but that doesn’t mean I have to go where my brother is going. Always remember that. We are to be at peace with all men but when we’re at peace with unbelievers that does not mean we have to walk with them to Edom. We don’t have to walk in sin to be at peace with others. So he says “no” and rightly he moves to the Promised Land. Here is a changed man. Where he puts his tent, he puts worship. Where his tent is an altar is built.

Here is a third lesson. Men of God, there is a lesson for us here. I know, rejoice, relish and cherish the extraordinary gifts given to women of God, in the body of Christ and in the leadership calls God gives to women, but I believe as a man goes so his marriage goes, usually. As a man goes so his family goes and as the men of a church go so go a church. I had the privilege to share with our graduates a statistic I found through a place called Summit Ministries that works with high school graduates that takes them onto college. They found out that one out of every two professing Christians who go to college will deny the faith before they leave college. The great news as that many come back to the Lord later but just think of the wasted years. Now, that’s astounding!

Summit Ministries dug down a little deeper and they went into the lives of those fifty percent. It wasn’t that they were overwhelmed by a mocking professor or the data of their philosophy class. When they left home and came under the attack of Satan, out of that fifty percent, nine out of every ten of them ultimately shared

that the reason for leaving the faith was a broken home. I can't depend on God. My dad and mom told me to depend on them and I couldn't depend on them. How can I depend on God? I couldn't depend on them in the name of God who told me to come to God. So nine out of every ten of them come from a broken home but I'm not going to stop there because the ministry dug deeper. Those nine out of the ten who ultimately denied the faith in the context of being away from their home in college, out of the disappointment and chagrin of being abandoned by a dad or a mom, nine out of every ten of those nine out of every ten, it was the father who had abandoned them. The dad wasn't there. That broke their heart more than anything. That caused them to distrust the words of a heavenly Father about His Son for them.

Men, it's time by God's grace, not in our resolution, but by God's grace to walk to the front. Come to the point for our marriage. We are going to be there for our wife, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, in times of difficulty and in times of ease. We are going to be there in the way that our Father has always been there for us and we're going to be there for our children. That doesn't mean that we're going to enroll them in thirty thousand athletic leagues. That means we're going to get in their life. We're going to monkey around in their life. When we rise up and be in the wayside we're going to be in the lives of our children and bring our children into our lives. Men, to the point in Christ's church. O men of God, have done with lesser things. Rise up and serve the King of Kings. The church for you doth wait. Lead her in the name of Christ and begin with your own families, your extended families and certainly with our marriage.

Single men, what a wonderful moment in your life to say "God, I am at the moment unencumbered by responsibilities of those who are committed to my care for it is in these moments that I prepare myself to be ready to be a man of God and oh yes bring me Miss Right, but now I have the moments to become a man who is right with God. These are my moments."

The fourth lesson from the text is that we have the opportunity to acknowledge the importance of acceptable worship. As Jacob walks through this first day of his new life by the saving grace of God, he does these two marvelous acts of obedience. He says 'no' to Edom and 'yes' to the Promised Land. When he gets to the Promised Land the first thing he does is erects an altar. That is absolutely crucial. Wherever God's people are they erect altars. Our lives our worship and we will worship. Where is our tent? In our home there will be a family altar where we worship. God's people will acknowledge the importance of acceptable worship that is given to God.

So here is Jacob walking to the Promised Land and committed to worship, but there are also three sinful acts. The old man is still at work there that Jacob has to deal with. First of all, he makes the commitments and uses deceitful words. He didn't tell a whole lie but he told a half lie when he said I'll come to Seir when I

get there but he really had no intentions of going to Seir. Another sinful act is that he went to the wrong place. He wasn't supposed to go to Shechem. He was supposed to go to Bethel. Now in Genesis 35 he'll eventually get to Bethel. When he goes to Shechem he settles in among the Canaanites. There his daughter loses her purity. He goes and takes his family to the wrong place and he erects worship in the wrong place. Not any worship is acceptable to God, but what God commands in worship and that is our fifth lesson.

The fifth lesson is not any worship but God's worship that God commands is acceptable. There are many pastors and elders who are fighting, hopefully with graciousness and openness, to preserve what I think is under attack in the church today and that is God-centered worship. I'm not talking about traditional or contemporary but I'm talking about God-centered worship. We turn worship services into believer-centered worship or seeker-centered worship. I believe that the key to life is life must be lived as worship. When life is lived as worship there is no room in the heart for other idols, but I also believe that the pace is set for the believer to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service of worship, when a church understands the sacredness of assembled worship, where it must be God-centered.

Now should it be thoughtful for every new believer, older believer, younger believer or hurting believer? Yes. Will it put things on the lower shelf to make sure any seeker hears and understands the Gospel and is welcome? Absolutely yes, but it is not seeker-centered or believer-centered. It must be God-centered worship and that is the key to life. *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. What is idolatry? Idolatry is putting up for worship in our life anything other than the living God. Idolatry is anyone or anything that you think you can't live life without. When God is enough then whatever I have is enough and there is no room for idolatry.

My heart goes out to the young women whose hearts are captured by the Britney Spears or Paris Hilton culture of the day, in which the worth of woman is how much lust can she provoke in a watching eyes of a man, but I know that's ultimately an issue of idolatry. We can't tear down those idols fast enough. Here is what has to happen. When that young woman goes to the closet, opens it up, and dresses, not to gain a lover of the world, but she dresses for the Lover of her soul, Jesus Christ. *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)*.

We don't want young men caught up with those like Eminem for that coolness is disconnected, disrespectful and arrogant. We want young men who will say 'no' to that and be God's man. I'll be connected to those around me. I'll treat people with dignity and respect. I'll look them in the eye because God made them. I'll reach out to them and help them. The point isn't how aloof I can be but the point



is how much I can be a servant in the name of Jesus Christ. These are men of God.

It's really ultimately a matter of worship and that's why this "war on worship" that has nothing to do with musical genre, but has everything to do with whether we are worshipping under the eye of God or not. That is what sets the pace for life from which our lives can draft, *so, that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. So come to the Table.

It is a Table of reconciliation. We as brothers and sisters will eat as one. If a rank unbeliever like Esau is moved by God's common grace to be right with his brother, how much more should we who have been saved by grace refuse to be a fracture or divisive and if I have anything against anybody this Table says to settle it. Be right. If you need to forgive someone or something against someone or confess, then make it right. When people are touched by that they have the same response that Jacob did. When Jacob was touched by Esau's willingness to forgive him, he said "You've accepted me and I see God's face in your face." Whose face do people see in our face?

Have we been addicted to the elixir of bitterness, thinking the more we drink it we'll kill somebody, not knowing that bitterness is a poison that doesn't kill anybody but the one who drinks it? O God, give us a heart of reconciliation. God, give us a heart of contentment. Jesus is enough and therefore I have enough. I love my Jesus. To me to live is Christ and He is my life. Come to Him if you never have.

Jesus represents the body and blood. Jacob, touched by the hand of God, broken, walked with a limp to the point for his people. Now look beyond Jacob. Here is your Savior, bruised and rejected, crawling to Calvary, with more than a limp, to the point that you may have life. Jacob's hip out of socket with his thigh muscles gone so Israel says they won't eat of any thigh muscles of any animal from that point on. O mercy, there is much more lesson than that, but look to Jesus. There He went bruised to the point. There He redeemed you in His passion, broken, despised and rejected yet He went to the point and saved us from our sin for that's the One you sit down and eat with but know this; He is coming again.

Revelation 19:6 says [16] *On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords*. He is our Champion, our Savior, our Lord, strong to save, hallelujah! What a Savior! Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Please come with us to the Table. Prepare our hearts that we may partake and feast with You. Lord, there is no other place more important than right here before

You, but Father, what makes it important is that we're fixed on Jesus. Lord, where we need to banish bitterness, forgive and be forgiven, have the Table in the name of Christ call us, but have the Table also bring us to receive in glory a Savior who was broken that we might be redeemed and who is strong to save for I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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