



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions Pass The Promise Series, Lesson 20

Lesson Title: Jacob and Esau are Reunited

Take Home Point: God heals families with forgiveness.

Warm-Up:

The mountain clans of the Hatfields and McCoys probably comprise the most famous story of feuding in America. Hatred and armed sniping have been passed from generation to generation. Some family members on each side have even been killed through the years because of some wrong, now since forgotten or ignored. In fact, the original cause of the feud is no longer of importance, since, through each generation, new offenses pile up to perpetuate the animosity. How sad that so much life, happiness, and peace has been thrown away to ensure that each clan sees its own version of justice delivered.

Read: Genesis 32:3-21 and 33:1-11

Observation (What happened?):

What did Jacob say to God and remind him of in his prayer?

What did Jacob do to prepare his brother Esau for their meeting?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

How did God answer Jacob's prayer for deliverance?

How do you think Jacob felt to be forgiven after all those years?

Insight:

Both Jacob and Esau showed true strength of character in this week's Bible event. Real strength is found in humility and forgiveness. Jacob humbled himself in praying to God. What it took to accomplish that change of heart in Jacob was revealed in his new name – Israel, which means "He struggles." It was a struggle for him, but he knew God had given him all he had, with many promises besides. Esau, too, demonstrated real strength in forgiving Jacob. And it was not simply that Esau now had enough to cover for the lost birthright. He could have told Jacob he now had a large family and many possessions so Jacob could get lost, but he didn't do that. He spoke lovingly to Jacob and welcomed him. Too often in our culture, forgiveness is considered weakness, an unwillingness to stand up for "rights" or "justice." But God has told us that he is the Judge and we are to defer to him. And what better judge could we desire than the One who is always right and never wrong?

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How do you feel when you are forgiven for hurting or wronging someone? How does that help you forgive others?

Where in your life does the healing of forgiveness need to take place? How are you dealing with it?