

Genesis 32: Cell Notes

'When your past threatens to catch up with you...'

On Sunday we carried on looking at how Jacob was a flawed yet chosen man; his personal journey of living in faith and fear at times seems to run concurrently. After 20 years of separation from his brother Esau it looked as if Jacob would inevitably come into contact with him on his journey through the region of Seir. Jacob had been visited by an angel (in chapter 31) telling him to go on his journey and had even had a fresh delegation at the start of ch 32.

Jacob & Esau's background:

- Jacob 's name came from the manner of his birth (ch27 v36 – 'he cheats')
- Jacob had deceived his father and robbed his brother of his birthright.
- Esau planned to kill Jacob (ch27 v40) so Jacob fled to Laban.

Q Do you think Jacob was right to still be so fearful of his brother or not?

Q Are there relationships we have with family, friends, neighbours, colleagues (etc) that cause us to be anxious or fearful? Are there times of the year or events that are harder to deal with? Invite people to share.

Q When Jacob is making his schemes and plans in v1-8 does his confidence seem to be in God's character or something else?

Jacob's prayer (a mixture of faith and hedging your bets) v9-

- What do you find encouraging about how Jacob prays in v9-12?
- On Sunday we were encouraged to consider the character of God as our starting point when we pray in times of worry or fear e.g Isaiah 12 'Behold God is my Salvation: I will trust and not be afraid.' On a piece of paper write "Behold God is..." in the middle and come up with a list of his qualities around the outside (e.g. Comforter, Provider etc)
- Use those qualities to help inspire your time of worship!
- We noted on Sunday that when Jacob finished praying he went back to his own plans and schemes – dividing up goats and camels etc) -he didn't allow his prayer life to impact his actions.

When Jacob wrestles with God v22-32, notice:

- God comes and meets with Jacob when he is on his own. God contends with Jacob in a manner he understood (he was a man who had had battles with family all his life). God appeared to Joshua as a soldier (Josh 5 v 13-15) because this was a manner he could relate to. How did God first reveal who he was to you? What was it about God's character that first made an impression on you? What is God revealing to you now about his character?
- God asks Jacob who he is (v27) as he is forcing Jacob to face up to his past. In what ways do we have to 'face up to our past' when we become a Christian?
- After the 'wrestling' episode Jacob receives a new name, walk and relationship with God. There are opportunities here to draw out examples of how our relationship with God changes after we become a Christian!