

Connecting

Week 2 Connecting to family, friends and other assorted peoples.

1. Just because we are family doesn't mean we connect (Jacob and Esau) This is true of our physical family and our church family. Sometimes family is well a tough place to find love. Sometimes our family do stuff that hurts.
Listen to this passage;
2. Esau Sells His Birthright

Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.) Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Genesis 27:1-36 Jacob deceives ISAAC, Rips off his brother and cuts the connection. His decision.

A couple of things here. This is not a template for family relations. It is just the opposite. It says that even God's people can take advantage, abuse and they sometimes do the wrong thing.

Yep.

3. We decide to connect (like Facebook or twitter you friend people). Here Jacob decided on a path that would disconnect his brother. take his birthright, take what is owed to him. He used tricks to get ahead, he used deceit to get ahead. Yet Jacob had to learn about integrity. Later on in his story he gets ripped off. He wants one woman as his wife and the dad tricks him into marrying another. Tough lesson. He then has to wait for the women he loves. Tough lesson. You see, with this kind of behaviour, there will always be a consequence. It may be minimal at the beginning. But it will be outed. Jacob was alienated from His family for years because of what he did. Treating our family or even our church family with contempt has a consequence.

We need to find ways to be thankful for our families and our church. We need to find ways to stay connected, we need to find ways to build up the relationships within the church and within our families.

Jacob is not the ideal for pastoral care practice, Jacob is not the role model for family relationships, Jacob is not much of a model at all.

Yet God used him amazingly. IT's weird who God uses.

So as we come to reconnect we need to come to grips with some of that

1. Reconnecting costs.

That's told in Gen 32:1-21 Rather than read it all again. Jacob is a bit hesitant about Esau's reaction when they have their family reunion. So he goes the expensive gift tact.

In an attempt to reconnect with Esau, Jacob thinks he has to buy favour so he gives gifts.

Funnily, Esau didn't need it. All those years ago Jacob took the birth right yet Esau thrived and became a wealthy man in his own right.

Look at Esau's reaction

Gen 33:8-9

Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company that I met?" Jacob answered, "To find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

But I suppose the thing here is: how do we reconnect with someone we have alienated ourselves from, some who perhaps we have wronged or maybe they wronged us so we walked away. How do we do that?

Matt 5:23 points out how important it is.

Mat 5:23 "So if you are presenting your gift at the altar and remember there that your brother has something against you,

Mat 5:24 leave your gift there before the altar and first go and be reconciled to your brother. Then come and offer your gift.

It is so important that we can stop worship to make it happen. IN other words a lack of connection with people, family, either church or our families, stops us connecting with God until it is resolved.

So here we go.

Transparency. Honesty, apology. Notice, Jacob tried the buying thing but it wasn't what Esau wanted. Esau wanted a relationship. That's part of it all. Connecting is about relationship and the concept of church is built on relationship to God and each other. As we reconnect now after the separations we have had, it is time to rebuild relationships. With the inclusion of integrity, transparency, honesty and if Need be, the odd apology.

That is the cool thing about being God's people, we understand the concepts of forgiveness. We get apology because Jesus keeps apologising for us it's one of those huge things to be thankful for reconciliation. Actually this process of reconciliation, forgiveness, God's grace are all things to be hugely thankful for.

But Learning lessons costs even reconciliation costs. But sometimes it's not financial.

Gen 32:22-32

Gen 32:22 Later that night, he woke up, quickly took his two wives, his two women servants, and his eleven children, and forded the river at Jabbok.

Gen 32:23 He took them across the river, along with all his possessions.

Gen 32:24 And so Jacob was left alone, and he struggled with a man until daybreak.

Gen 32:25 When the man realized that he hadn't yet won the struggle, he injured the socket of Jacob's thigh, dislocating it as he wrestled with him,

Gen 32:26 and said, "Let me go, because the dawn has come." "I won't let you go," Jacob replied, "unless you bless me."

Gen 32:27 Then the man asked him, "What's your name?" "Jacob," he responded

Gen 32:28 "Your name won't be Jacob anymore," the man replied, "but Israel, because you exerted yourself against both God and men, and you've emerged victorious."

Gen 32:29 "Please," Jacob inquired, "Tell me your name." But he asked, "Why are you asking about my name?" And he blessed Jacob there.

Gen 32:30 Jacob would later call that place Peniel,

because "I saw God face to face, but my life was spared."
Gen 32:31 The sun was rising above Jacob as he crossed over from Peniel, limping due to his wounded thigh.

4. Connecting means STAYING connected- might take some work. We might need to wrestle with God about some of it. BY this I mean, it might not seem fair that you have to start the reconciliation process when you feel you have been wronged. Here is the thing. It isn't about our rights, its about what is right. Our reaction to others is what Jesus calls us to adjust. Maybe after our confrontation with God we are left limping or out of soughts but hey we are called to the ministry of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a coming together of both parties. A movement of one to the other.

2 Corinthians 5:18

2Co 5:18 All of this comes from God, who has reconciled us to himself through the Messiah and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

This is cool, God's demonstration of reconciliation to us is the template of how we are to do the reconnecting thing with others. And that is our ministry. I find it interesting that our ministry isn't youth ministry or children's ministry or men's ministry or women's ministry. It is bringing them all to God.

Now, why is this a thanksgiving sermon. WE give thanks for what God has done, but we give thanks for what He is going to do through us and that is to reconcile people to Himself. That is our ministry as individuals, as families and as a church.