Reconciliation (Part 3 in family series)

Cornerstone Community Church – Pastor Jerry Ernst
October 25, 2026

Scripture: Genesis 33:1-11

Genesis 32 & 33 is about the reconciliation between two brothers. Jacob stole Esau's *birthright* (Gen. 25:29-34) and *blessing* (Gen. 27), which caused these brothers to separate for 20 years. Jacob caused Esau much pain and wanted to make amends by making the first move.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer - *"He who can no longer listen to his brother will soon no longer be listening to God."*

I.) THE STEPS FOR RECONCILIATION: JACOB TO ESAU (Genesis 32:1-21; 33:1-3)

Jacob *approached* Esau first (Genesis 32:1-21) - Jacob's messengers were instructed to show Esau that Jacob's intentions were peaceable (32:3, 17-18).

Jacob showed *humility* to Esau (Genesis 33:1-3) - *"(1) Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men;"*

- Jacob came humbly before Esau, showing honor.

Jacob openly *respected* Esau (Genesis 33:3, 5, 8) - *"(3) He himself went on ahead and **bowed down** to the ground **seven times** and he approached his brother." "(5) …your servant." "(8) …to find favor in the sight of my lord."*

"bowed down... seven times" -

- Bowing seven times was a *symbol* of total submission and respect.
- In Bible times, a common practice for a vassal was to bow - take a few steps – bow again - before his overlord.
- This public display took time because salutations started at a far distance and then drew closer.

II.) THE RESPONSE FOR RECONCILIATION: ESAU TO JACOB (Genesis 33:4-11)

Esau *saw* Jacob's heart *"(4) But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept."*

- ***Fell on his neck*** – symbolizes submission (Luke 15:20 - Prodigal Son).
- ***Kiss*** – a sign of friendship, gladness, and special honor.

Esau *understood* the "BIG PICTURE" (Vv. 5-7)

- When Esau saw these relatives his heart was touched, and he knew he must forgive & forget.

Esau *accepted* the Gift (Vv. 8-11)

- To openly receive and exchange this gift - was to *pardon the past*.

III.) RECONCILIATION REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE

- **CONVICTION: Matthew 5:23-24** - *"(23) Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, (24) leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be **reconciled** to your brother; then come and offer your gift."*

Reconciliation: (Gk: *diallassó*): ***"Reconcile, resolution, reunion, settlement, to change thoroughly, bringing together."***

- **ADMISSION**: The *offender* must admit wrongdoing. Jacob couldn't have done this earlier, but his life was changed (Genesis 32:22-32).
- **BROKENNESS:** Humility always accompanies a spirit of personal responsibility for sin and true remorse.
- **WILLINGNESS**: Without *both parties* willing to reconcile, nothing is resolved.
- **ACCEPTANCE:** The *offended* party accepts sincere apology (Matthew 6:12-15)

Reconciliation questions:

1) Is there someone you have offended you need to approach?
2) Have you sincerely accepted the apology of an offender?
1) Will you let go of the past – to have peace in the present?

Proverbs 19:11 - *"(11) The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his **glory** is to overlook a transgression."*

Psalm 133:1, 3 - *"(1) How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! ... (3) For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore."*