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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Vayishlach – Jacob’s Reconciliation with Esau

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Vayishlach, which is Hebrew for “and he sent,” and it goes from Genesis 32:3 to Genesis 36:43.

This parashah begins with the story of Jacob wrestling with God at Peniel, where his name was changed to Israel (Genesis 32).

It also tells the story of Jacob reconciling with his brother, Esau (Genesis 33).

Then we read about Jacob’s daughter, Dinah, being defiled in the city of Shechem, and her brothers killing all the males in the city out of revenge (Genesis 34).

Afterward, Jacob returns to Bethel, and the parashah speaks about the birth of Benjamin and the death of Rachel and the death of Isaac (Genesis 35).

The parashah concludes with a record of Esau’s descendants (Genesis 36:1-15)

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to explore reconciliation.

One of the most touching moments in Scripture is when Jacob reconciles with his brother Esau:

Genesis 33:1-4

[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. And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.](#)

Now, these two brothers had *a lot* of issues between them. Their relationship was full of manipulation, deception, and betrayal. In fact, the last thing Jacob knew was that his brother Esau was planning to kill him!

The fact that these two brothers were able to reconcile was really nothing short of a miracle. Jacob was extremely nervous about his encounter with Esau right up until this moment when they embraced. Somehow they were able to put their painful past behind them and move forward.

We know that Jacob had grown up a lot since his last encounter with Esau, and Esau likely changed a lot too. This story is a reminder that people do change. Feelings change. Over time, the painful emotional wounds can heal.

Jacob's wrestling match with God transformed him and brought him to a place where he seemed to feel real remorse for his past actions. Even before Esau forgave him, he tried to make amends as much as possible by sending gifts ahead of him (Genesis 32:13-21). When they finally met, he bowed before Esau in humility, insisting that Esau accept his gifts. Perhaps we can see this as Jacob offering some form of restitution for the wrong Esau had suffered.

This story reminds us never to lose hope for people. They *can* change. Pray for them, hope for them. As the Christian philosopher Søren Kierkegaard once wrote:

“Never cease loving a person, and never give up hope for him, for even the prodigal son who had fallen most low, could still be saved; the bitterest enemy and also he who was your friend could again be your friend; love that has grown cold can kindle.”

-Søren Kierkegaard

As believers, let's be a people of hope and love. Let's believe that people can change. And in the meantime, let's focus on wrestling with God and asking Him to reveal any areas where we need transformation.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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