

The 3 Faces of Restoration

Scripture: Genesis 33

After Jacob spends 20 years under Laban, he finally starts his journey home. He is filled with doubt and fear and yet he journeys forward. Along the way, he is again dealt with by God and God wrestles with him. Jacob declares during this struggle that he will not let go until he receives God's blessing. Finally when Jacob has learned his lesson, God dislocates his hip and he receives the name Israel.

It was after a personal encounter with God, that God changes Jacob's name from supplanter to prince. The change was not in just the name, but it was also accompanied by a change of heart. This is what the grace of God does to all those who have had a personal encounter with Him. The grace of God changes the heart and transforms lives.

How does God transform us?

1. It begins with God's word and is taught to us by the Spirit
2. People, often times unpleasant
3. God can also use circumstances
4. Time, it can be short wait or a long wait

The purpose of all this is to transform us into Christlikeness. Hebrews 10:36 tells us that ***patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that He has promised.*** This is why we must continue to obey God's commands, because it is as we are obeying then we will receive all that He has promised.

The 3 Faces of Restoration.

1. Face your fear.

After 20 years, Jacob will finally come face to face with his brother Esau, who he had cheated out of his birthright. There was a possibility that after all these years that Esau still wanted to kill him. He was about to face his greatest fear: the consequence of his past sins of deceit.

But Jacob was determined to go home, because this was part of his promise to God in the desert. At this point, Jacob already knew God but God was still not in control of his life. So although he sent his men to Esau, who had reported to him that his brother was on his way. So Jacob, who still did not completely depend on God, still tried to do things his way. Like we often fall prey to.

Gen 33:1 says ***then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming and four hundred men with him.*** He was about to come face to face with what he feared the most, but he no longer chose to hide from it. Jacob arranged his company keeping Leah, Rachel and their children at the very back. While he went to the very front of the company, ready to face Esau.

He was now a changed man, a transformed person. He was willing to brave his fears and face them, confident that God would keep His promise to bless him.

2. Face down in humility.

Genesis 33:3 says that **but he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.** This was an act of humility and repentance. Bowing in fact is an act of respect reserved only for royalty.

Jacob was not only offering his high respect to his brother, Esau, but it was also an expression of his humility and deep regret for his past sins.

This was indeed a humbling act for Jacob. As a result, Esau ran to meet him and embraced him. (Gen 33:4). It was only when Jacob faced his fears, accepted his contribution to the problem, and became face down in humility did the relationship between the brothers was restored.

It was after this that Esau noticed the women and children behind them. One by one they came forward and bowed down before Esau just as Jacob had done. This shows us the power of modeling. It was by Jacob's example of humility that prompted the same response from his wife and children. This is the importance of being Christlike models to our children and spouses.

3. Face God in worship.

After all these had happened, Jacob erected an altar and called the place El Elohe Israel, which means "God is the God of Israel. (Gen 33:20) Finally, Jacob had finally surrendered to God. Finally learned to depend on God. Finally understood God's faithfulness and grace. That is why is Exodus 3:6 God introduces Himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

APPLICATION:

Patiently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage's lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

	Personal: Are there some fears that you have to own up to? Fears that you have to come face to face with? Is there anything that is preventing you from facing down in humility? Do you really face God in worship? Are there relationships in your life that need restoration?
	Family: This is a good opportunity to have a heart to heart evaluation with your family. Are there things that can help you improve and become better parents, better role models of Christlikeness? Are there things that can help you improve to become better spouses, better reflections of Christ? Are there things that can help you improve to become better children?
	Discipleship: Discuss with your discipleship group if there are still some relationships in your life today that need to be restored? Are there any lurking fears in your life? What are your hindrances to becoming humble?
	Church/ Ministry: In the light of all that is happening in the world today, how am I actively and intentionally sharing the gospel to those who are around me?

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.