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Genesis 31:1 – 36:43

Where's the family trust? Jacob's father-in-law thought Jacob cheated him and accused him of stealing. Rachel did steal from his father, then hid it and lied about being on her period so her father wouldn't look where she was sitting. Jacob ran off with his family and flocks, but was afraid to meet his brother and sent gifts ahead to the brother. When the brother welcomed him, Jacob went the other direction to settle down.

Lord, help me to build trust and love in my family and in my church family. In His name, amen.

Genesis 37:1 – 41:57 (chapt. 38)

It's hard to keep track of who's who, and you definitely need to understand the customs of the day! Even then, it's an odd story in the middle of Joseph's story. The idea of a woman having a child, especially one of her married family, seems so foreign to us today. And then the real odd part is when the birth was the same as their grandfather's.

Lord, our ways are not the old ways and are not Your old ways. Help us understand! Help us understand not only the old ways, but also how those pertain to us now and how Your ways have meaning in our life. We want to draw closer to you! In His name, amen.

Genesis 42:1 – 45:28

I wish Joseph didn't feel like he had to deceive his brothers, even though they had sold and treated him so bad.

Lord, help us to be honest and open in our relationships regardless of past experiences, even if it's hard! In His name, amen.

Genesis 46:1 – 50:26

Famine so bad that they had to sell themselves into slavery! My first thought is I hope we never do that, then I thought but maybe we do only a different kind of slavery – too much debt, addiction, etc.

Lord, if any of us are under the bonds of slavery, in any form, help us break free! Give us tools and people to help us. In His name, amen.

Exodus 1:1 – 4:31

Pharoah's daughter KNEW Moses was a Hebrew baby. What a risk she took taking him into the house of Pharoah and adopting him as her son – unless Pharoah had so many children he didn't keep track of his grandchildren.

Lord, thank-you for protecting Moses so his/our story can unfold. In His name, amen.

Exodus 5:1 – 7:13

Moses doesn't feel secure/worthy and protests against God. How often do we do this, just not so obvious?!

Lord, help us feel secure and worthy in You so much that I'll say "Yes, Lord" when I hear You call me! In His name, amen.

Exodus 7:1 – 12:30 – First part of Chap 10

God says He made Pharaoh stubborn so the Israelites would know God was God! So all the plagues weren't for Pharaoh, they were to convince the Israelites who God was, that He was the great I AM. That's not how it's taught in Children's Sunday School.

Lord, help me see You as the great I AM. Sometimes I think I need ten plagues, but help me see You as the awesome God You are! In His name, amen.

Phyllis Halsema

Genesis 31

Jacob and his family felt a resentment of his father-in-Law, Laban, because of his growing wealth. Also, God told him to leave. The Lord gave Jacob a dream which included goats in order to show Jacob that God was aware of Laban's mistreatment and wanted to bless Jacob's flocks, despite Laban's attempt to cheat him. God was directing the outcome.

Prayer... Lord, we know you are in charge of our actions and thoughts. Help us to please you in ways it will also help others. Amen.

Genesis 32

Jacob prepares to meet his brother, Esau, after many years. He sends messages ahead to meet him, organize his camp for protection, and then wrestle with a man until daybreak. The man later identified as God or an angel of God. Jacob's hip was dislocated during the struggle. The man renamed Jacob as "Israel" meaning one who wrestles with God.

Prayer... God, help us to realize that we can't do anything without you. We may wrestle our thoughts and fight to do the right thing, but if we listen to you and have faith, we are the winner. Amen.

Genesis 33

Jacob and Esau return to meet each other. Jacob bows seven times demonstrating humility. Esau runs to Jacob, embraces him and they wept... A sign of forgiveness. Their relationship was restored. Jacob offers Esau livestock and he accepts. Jacob builds an altar at his new dwelling at Shechem and named it El-Eloke-Israel, declaring God as a god of Israel.

Prayer Lord, help us to be kind to family and everyone. I pray for broken relationships to be mended and have forgiveness in our heart. Let humility overcome hatred. Amen.

Genesis 34

This chapter tells about Dinah, The daughter of Jacob and Leah. She was raped by Shechem, The Prince of the land. He became obsessed with asking her father, Hamor, to get her for his wife. He didn't love her. In this chapter, God regretted making man on the Earth. He grieved about it. God uses human emotions, so humans could understand the feeling and emotions. He wasn't pleased with the way humans were acting.

Prayer... God loves us, but sometimes he is disappointed in our sinful actions. Help us to do the right thing... Just like we teach our children to do the right thing. Be with us, guide and direct us. Amen.

Genesis 35

God commanded Jacob to go to Bethel and build an altar. Jacob ordered everyone to change their clothes and get rid of their idols, which they did and buried them under an oak tree.

God reaffirms that Jacob is now Israel. Jacob promises three things... (1) God will make him into a nation, (2) kings will be among Jacob's descendants and (3) God will give the land to Jacob's descendants.

There were a lot of deaths in this chapter... Deborah, (Rebecca's nurse) and Rachel both died. Jacob showed much sorrow Isaac dies at the age of 180, both Jacob and Esau bury him.

Prayer... Thank you God for always being there at times of sorrow and grief. Knowing you are there gives us peace that nothing else can. Amen.

Genesis 36

This chapter describes Esau, Jacob's twin brother, listing his sons, grandsons, and the kings Edon, The nation that came from Esau. Also, it shows us God as a creator of all things and sets up the story of God, beginning of the human race and purpose for all your humanity.

Prayer... Thank you God for all the new creations you've made. Amen.

Genesis 37

Jacob always favored Joseph, giving him a special robe and causing jealousy among his brothers.

Joseph has two dreams where his brothers and parents bow down to him, which he shares with his family. The Brothers hated him even more after he shared his dream with them. They believed Joseph would rule over them. The brothers plot to kill Joseph, but instead sold him to a passing Ishmaelite traders. The angry brother deceived Jacob by presenting Joseph with a bloody robe, making them believe Joseph had been killed by animals.

Prayer... help us to love our family and our neighbors. You tell us not to want what others have, but sometimes it's hard. Make us pleased with what we have. Amen.

Genesis 38

This chapter happens about the time Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt about 1728 BC.

Judah moves away from his family and marries a Canaanite woman. Two of his three sons were put to death by God, each while married to the same woman. Judah's first son, Er, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord killed him. His second son, Onan, refused to fulfill his obligation to Tamar, his brother's widow.

After Judah slept with Tamar, she asked for items that are unmistakably personal and valuable: his seal, his cord, and his staff, for proof that he had sex with her. When Judah learned that Tamar was pregnant, he ordered her to be put to death for prostitution. Tamar sent the seal, cord, and staff to the man to whom they belonged. Judah recognizes them and confesses that he did wrong.

Prayer... Lord help us to acknowledge our sins, seeking God's grace and mercy through different times. Give us faith that we will trust in you. Amen.

Genesis 39

Joseph was purchased as a slave by Potiphar, who was an Egyptian official. He placed Joseph in charge of the household. Joseph faced a significant challenge when Potiphar's Wife attempted to seduce him. Joseph was falsely accused and imprisoned after refusing her advances. An important lesson is that obeying God in all circumstances works out for the best. Joseph knew that adultery was a sin and refused... Even though it might have caused him his life, because he trusted God to bless those who obey.

Prayer... Lord help us to do the right thing, especially at times we are tempted to do the wrong thing, even if it seems right at the time. Amen.

Genesis 40

It seems odd to me that the two of Pharaoh's officials had dreams the same night, as they were imprisoned with Joseph. They ask Joseph to interpret the dreams. So he would try, but saying only God can do that. Yet Joseph's predictions were correct. It shows me that even in prison, Joseph continued to have faith despite his circumstances in jail. God gave him the talent to serve and bless others, even when we are at our lowest point.

Prayer... God help us to serve others who are troubled even if we think we have nothing to offer. Amen.

Genesis 41

The same thing happened in this chapter in Pharaoh's dream, only it was seven healthy cows and seven other cows were just skin and bones. The skinny ones ate the healthy ones. Then with seven ears coming out of a healthy stock of corn and one thin and dried up stock grew with puny ears. The thin dried up ears ate the healthy ones... What is the Bible trying to tell us with the predictions?

Prayer... Help us to understand what God is trying to tell us. Amen.

Genesis 42

When Joseph's brother went to Canaan to get food, Joseph treated them as spies and one of them to bring Benjamin, the youngest brother to him and I will give you food. They did that. Why did Joseph do that? Was it revenge for their betrayal? Or to see they had repented and changed? Or to make sure Benjamin was safe?

Prayer... Lord, I pray that I can do the right thing so I'm not questioned about my motives. Let my true actions be the reasons. Amen.

Genesis 43

Jacob still continued testing Joseph, as he was trying to see if his brothers had a change of heart or if they were the same man who threw him into the pit and were deaf to his cries for help.

Prayer... Help us understand that God as creator of all those things helps us to set up our story and our purpose. Without God, we are helpless. Amen.

Genesis 44

Joseph still tested his brothers by placing a silver cup in Benjamin's sack. When the brothers found the cup, they felt guilt and concern. To me this chapter shows me the forgiveness of family restoration and closure.

Prayer... Lord help us to love those who are close to us and forgive any mistakes or tests they put us through. Amen.

Genesis 45

Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers after they go to Egypt to find food. He forgives them for selling him into slavery and that God sent him there to save their lives during the famine.

Prayer... Help us to forgive others even if we don't understand the reason that they hurt us. Amen.

Genesis 46

Joseph reunites with his father, Jacob. We need to realize that through God everything He promised will be. He promised to always be with him and make his family into a great nation and bring them back to Egypt.

Prayer... Help us to believe and trust what God has promised us. It will be done in his time. Amen.

Genesis 27

Joseph settles in Goshen with his five brothers. Pharaoh allows them to stay caring for his livestock. Jacob died at approximately 148 years old and requested to be buried in Canaan not Egypt.

Prayer... Help us to live good lives and be faithful. Amen.

Genesis 48

This chapter, to me, teaches us lessons about faith and family. It is important to pass down a legacy of faith, showing God's sometimes unexpected blessings and trusting his plan.

Prayer be with us as we keep our family relationships close as they are a blessing to us. Amen.

Genesis 49

Chapters 48 and 49 go together before Jacob dies... Calling his sons together to tell them his final instructions for them.

Prayer... Help us to listen to our parents when we're young because they won't always be there to give us advice and blessings. Amen.

Genesis 50

This chapter is primarily the death of Jacob and Joseph with burial wishes. Important when Joseph was near death, he said "my time to die is almost here. But I know that God will take care of you and lead you out of this country to a land, he promised to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Prayer... Help us know that God will take care of us if we only believe. Amen.

Exodus 5

The main thing God demanded to Pharaoh was freedom for his people. God made it clear that Israel belonged to him not Pharaoh and those that belong to Him should be free, not bound.

Prayer... Lord help us to remember that you made us to be free, not to belong to anyone. We were made in your image. Amen.

Exodus 6

God shows His faithfulness and His powerful ability to deliver his promises to bring his people to a promised land. It begins the genealogy of Moses as he considers a part of the Israelites.

Prayer... Lord help us to realize we are part of you. Let us know we are loved and needed in order to become a complete person. Amen.

Exodus 7

Pharaoh didn't obey the demands that Moses and Aaron gave so the plague began. First turning the Nile River into blood that lasted seven days. This shows as a warning about obeying God, disobeying, and doing our will instead of his.

Prayers... Help us to see all the small “nudges” or signs you give us to lead us in the right direction. Amen.

Exodus 8

God inflicts upon Egypt to persuade them to release the Israelites. This includes a plague of frogs, gnats. (Or lice) and flies. Pharaoh rejected it still! God gave him many chances to repent.

(Sidenote) God hardened Pharaoh’s heart to demonstrate His power.

Prayer... Help us to do the right thing because there are consequences. Amen.

Exodus 9

Plagues continue with God’s orders that were given to Moses. It involves death of livestock, the outbreak of boils on humans and animals, and hail storms that destroyed crops and killed livestock and people... While sparing the Israelites in Goshen.

Prayer... Lord help us to be humble, to spread God’s glory throughout our neighborhood and our world. Amen

Exodus 10

Plagues continue with locust and darkness to consume all vegetation while darkness covers Egypt for three days. (Israelites are still having light in their dwellings.) All of these plagues were to reveal God’s name, power, and glory to the Egyptians and Israelites. Also to teach them to fear and worship him.

Prayer... We ask for your forgiveness for our sins as you did Pharaohs. Amen