

It is what it is?

Week of September 20

Have you ever done or said something you later regretted? Sadly, the ones we hurt the most are usually the ones we love the most, the people who are closest to us. There are probably numerous things many of us would do-over if given the chance—the angry words spoken in haste, the ultimatum declared out of hurt. But because we are ashamed to let go, or perhaps because we are still hurting, we risk losing the joy of some of the most precious relationships around us. And in defeat, we conclude that because we did the stupid thing or made the unkind remark, “It is what it is.” This thing can never be fixed. Or can it?

Even though we cannot reverse time and correct wrongs, or rewind the clock and fix what we’ve broken, God can. He is God of the past, the present, and the future. God can step into our past, heal our hurts, right our wrongs, and work to mend what was broken if we give our regret to Him. He is willing to forgive the moment we call out to Him. Now, the Lord may call us to swallow our pride and go to that person. But if we choose to do the right thing—the healthy thing—and obey Him no matter what, the Lord can restore what was lost and mend what was broken beyond belief.

Genesis 27:41-46

Isaac and Rebekah loved their twin sons, but they did something that many parents are tempted to do at times—show favoritism. Isaac favored Esau and Rebekah favored Jacob. It may be that at times a parent can relate to the personality-type of one child better than another, but parents must work at valuing each child individually. Parents must view a personality difference as a treasured attribute that makes that child unique. Openly favoring one child over another – with no effort in learning about (valuing) the things that makes each child unique – is unhealthy and emotionally damaging. This is what Isaac and Rebekah were doing and their family suffered as a result (for background, see Genesis 27:1-40).

1. Rebekah insisted on a scheme that eventually severed her relationship with her favored son, Jacob. Perhaps you have experienced the negative effects of favoritism, either as a parent or as a child. What advice would you give a young parent in an effort to guard against this?

What affect did Jacob’s lie (devised by Rebekah) have upon his brother, Esau? (see Genesis 27:34-36, 41)

Jacob succeeded in stealing his brother’s birthright and blessing, but what did the deception cost Jacob? (see Genesis 27:42-43, 28:5, 32:6-8)

Read Genesis 32:17-31

When Jacob left Canaan he owned nothing but a walking stick, but after twenty years his household filled “two large camps” (Genesis 32:10). Yet, notice his wealth did not bring him peace. He still heard Esau’s threat in his head, and upon finding out that Esau was on his way “with an army of 400 men” (v6), fear swept over him. Immediately Jacob began to prepare generous gifts of herds and livestock for his brother in hopes to appease him. He organized his servants to go before him with the gifts and eventually sent his entire family and every possession across the Jabbok River. Jacob is alone in the camp—no wealth, no family, no identity.

2. Sometimes it seems God has to strip away everything in order to get our attention. Why is this?

What happens to Jacob on the eve of this encounter with Esau? (see Genesis 32:10)

That night by the Jabbok River Jacob met God face-to-face. He asked, “What is Your Name?” But Jacob knew who wrested him to the ground because he names the place *Peniel* which means “face of God” (v30). When there was nothing left for Jacob, the Lord gave this heel-puller a new name, a new identity. Although God had to wrestle him to the ground, Jacob would never be the same. Known as a deceiver his entire life, Jacob now had a new name, a new identity, and the blessing from God he had always wanted: “From now on your name will be called *Israel*.”

3. Have you ever been reduced to nothing—a time when everything you had built your life upon was suddenly taken away? What did you learn from that experience?

When Jacob may not only have been thinking, “It is what it is” but now it’s over—God had so much more in store for Jacob. Jacob’s descendants became the nation of Israel. What does it say to you that God can restore broken persons to the point of changing their present and future?

Think for a moment about someone you know that needs to know God. Prayerfully imagine – dreaming in the realm of where the Holy Spirit works – how their life might look if they came to know the Person of Jesus Christ (not religious rules, not the language of Christian-ese, not anything fake, but a real love relationship with their personal Savior). How would their present be different? How might their future be different? Who else might come to know the Lord through their influence?

God can meet any of us at our lowest point. He is good at that. The Lord can go places we cannot, into the deep recesses of a person’s heart, mind, and thoughts. God can heal our past, and see to it that no person is out of His reach. Why? Because He loves us! We may limp away, but we (your friend, family member, co-worker, that person you’re praying for) will never be the same. The Lord has so much more for you, for me. Do you believe that? Let’s spend some time in prayer.



Text: Genesis 27:41-46

The Plain Truth:

Healthy folks would rather _____ away in the _____
of God than walk in _____.

- a) _____ Person
- b) The _____
- c) The _____ Person

Our ultimate hope is not in government, finances nor political leaders. Our hope is found in the living Christ. You are urged to attend "The Response NC" Prayer event on Saturday, September 26 at the Charlotte Convention Center on 501 College Street Charlotte. Go to www.theresponsenc.com to register.

One Year Bible Reading

Sept. 20: Isaiah 33:10-36:22, Galatians 5:13-26, Psalm 64:1-10, Proverbs 23:23
Sept. 21: Isaiah 37:1-38:22, Galatians 6:1-18, Psalm 65:1-13, Proverbs 23:24
Sept. 22: Isaiah 39:1-41:16, Ephesians 1:1-23, Psalm 66:1-20, Proverbs 23:25-28
Sept. 23: Isaiah 41:17-43:13, Ephesians 2:1-22, Psalm 67:1-7, Proverbs 23:29-35
Sept. 24: Isaiah 43:14-45:10, Ephesians 3:1-21, Psalm 68:1-18, Proverbs 24:1-2
Sept. 25: Isaiah 45:11-48:11, Ephesians 4:1-16, Psalm 68:19-35, Proverbs 24:3-4
Sept. 26: Isaiah 48:12-50:11, Ephesians 4:17-32, Psalm 69:1-18, Proverbs 24:5-6

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