

distinction with

We are singing again to God's praise.

and we'll sing this time from the words on the screen. The hymn, Bless the Lord, O My Soul. Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning, it's time to sing your song again.

Whatever may pass, whatever lies before me, and may be singing when the evening comes.

[11:08] Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, worship his holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

Rich in love and your soul to love her. Your name is great and your heart is kind.

For all your goodness I will keep on singing. Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, worship his holy name.

[12:07] Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

And on that day when my strength is failing, the end was here and my time was down.

Still my soul, I'll sing your praise again. Ten thousand years and then forevermore.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, worship his holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name. I'll worship your holy name.

[13:12] I'll worship your holy name. If you could turn with me please to Genesis chapter 33.

Amen. Well, we'll read from the end of Genesis 32, verse 29.

Genesis 32 and verse 29 through to the end of Genesis 33. This is God's word. Then Jacob asked him, that's the Lord whom he was wrestling with.

Please tell me your name. But he said, why is it that you ask my name? And there he blessed them.

So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, for I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.

The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. Therefore, to this day, the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the thigh.

[14:44] And Jacob lifted 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.

And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the woman and the children, he said, who are these with you?

Jacob said, the children whom God has graciously given your servant. Then the servants drew near, they and their children, and bowed down. Leah likewise and her children drew near, and bowed down.

And last, Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. Esau said, what do you mean by all this company that I met? Jacob answered, to find favor in the sight of my Lord.

[15:50] But Esau said, I have enough, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself. Jacob said, no, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand.

For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. Please accept the blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.

Thus he urged them, and he took it. Then Esau said, let us journey on our way, and I will go ahead of you. But Jacob said to him, my Lord knows that the children are frail, and that the nursing flocks and herds are a care to me.

If they are driven hard for one day, all the flocks will die. Let my Lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly at the pace of the livestock that are ahead of me, and at the pace of the children, until I come to my Lord and see her.

So Jacob said, let me leave with you some of the people who are with me. But he said, what need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my Lord.

[16:58] So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan Aram. And he camped before the city.

And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he pitched his tent. There he erected an altar, and called it El Elohi Israel.

Amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us. We'll sing again a prayer as we meditate and prepare to come back to God's word. Speak O Lord as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word.

Sorry Adam, that was a bit quicker than usual. It's not in the book, it's Speak O Lord as we come to you.

[18 : 17] But we can sing it unaccompanied if it's... Amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us.

Take your truth, run it deep with us, shape and fashion us, bring your riding hands.

From the light of Christ, finally seen to him, in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak O Lord and fulfil in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence through humility.

[19 : 45] Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of humility.

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see, your majestic love and authority.

Words of heart that can't bear our fear. Let the truth prevail, O Lord, not believe.

Speak O Lord and bring you our might. Help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.

Truths and change from the dawn of time that will echo them through eternity.

[20 : 50] But by grace we'll stand on your promises. And by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

Speak O Lord till your church is built. And the earth is built with your glory.

Amen. Amen.

preached the truth about ourselves and about who you are and about all that you have done for us father and in the Lord Jesus Christ speak to us Lord we pray as we bow before you and as we wait in expectation for you to meet with us and while we pray for ourselves we pray for others who sit around your word at this time we think especially of Stuart as he preaches in Barvis tonight and we ask that he would know the help of the Holy Spirit as he brings your word to them there we pray for Scott as he will have finished preaching in Gerlach now we pray for rest this evening for him and for Fiona and for Katie and Lily and Angus and as they take a few days off this week we pray that they would know a refreshing time together and that you would give them strength as we pray the same for Gordon having coming through exams over these last few days we pray for Anthony as well as he speaks to the YF tonight we thank you Lord for the gifts that you've given him and for the way that he is able to share with the young ones and and with us the fact that the science that we can study does not push us away from you but actually brings us to you and shows us how you are working in this world and we pray for Mary as well as she goes to Leverborough to share our testimony that you would give all of those whom you have given opportunity to speak for the words to say and that they and we would know your blessing as we wait upon you so hear our prayers and help us we ask in Jesus name amen Genesis chapter 33 is where we've got to this evening it's a few weeks since we were in Genesis so just by way of reminder we left Jacob at the end of Genesis

[23 : 54] Genesis 32 and he is limping after this wrestle with the man that he discovers in the course of the wrestle is actually the God man and so Jacob he is he's marked forever he's limping after wrestling with God but he's happy because he has received the blessing of God in that experience painful as it may have been and that's the first point for tonight blessing received that's what Jacob has experienced he has received the blessing of God so blessing received verses 29 and 30 of Genesis 32 says and there he the Lord blessed him that's Jacob so Jacob called the name of the place Peniel saying for I have seen God face to face and yet my life has been delivered and it must have been for Jacob as we tried to think about the experience that he had it must have been an incredible experience for him he must have felt in that moment and in the moments that followed an amazing spiritual high because Jacob had felt the touch of God upon his life he has in his own words seen God face to face and yet he's not dead he's alive his life has been delivered and he received the blessing of God and so he names that place where he receives that special blessing he names that place Peniel as we just take a moment to apply this we all have our Peniel experiences sometimes we can have a communion weekend where we have known God come very close to us and it's like a Peniel experience there's a spiritual high we talk about being on the

mountaintop sometimes it's a free church camp or an SU camp

Scaldale weekend the young folks have just had one of these these can be the equivalent of a Peniel experience where there's a special measure of blessing poured out that we enjoy in these places maybe there are some who can think back to faith mission conventions of yesteryear even fellowships in times of revival and for most of us if we've been Christians for a period we can recall special times where we have known the touch of God upon our lives where we have experienced the blessing of God in a special way and we can be thankful for these Peniel experiences but like Jacob we can't stay permanently in Peniel

Jacob has been called of God not to settle in Peniel this was not the final destination this is not the place that he was he was asked to go to and settle down and Jacob has an instruction to keep on keeping on until he gets to the land of Canaan and that's our calling as Christians most of the Christian life is lived in the ordinary routines of life as we keep on keeping on walking with the Lord serving the Lord trusting the Lord obeying the Lord as Jacob was called to Oswald Chambers on the day that I was preparing this had a comment which was from a totally different text but it speaks into this experience he says the test of my religious character isn't what I do in exceptional moments it's what I do when nothing tremendous or exciting is happening we're called to keep on keeping on thankful for the Peniel experiences so first point is blessing that's received that brings us kind of up to date with where

Jacob had been and as we move into chapter 33 the next point is behold Esau and that takes us to verse 1 and Jacob lifted his eyes and looked and behold Esau was coming and 400 men with him sometimes there can be things in our calendars our diaries and we see them up ahead and we dread them it might be exam dates it might be the date that's been set for an appointment where we have to go and meet with a consultant it might be some work event that we are called to attend we see them we see the dates coming close and we dread them and this is the moment that Jacob has been fearing even he's been dreading for the last 20 years because if we remember the story Esau 20 years ago vowed that he would kill his brother remember Jacob had stolen the blessing that was supposed to be given to Esau and Jacob had deceived he'd lied to his father and when Esau sees what Jacob had done and sees how he's been double crossed he's absolutely furious and he determines in his mind and he speaks out in front of his mother and says that he will kill his brother Jacob when he gets his hands on him and so Jacob hears of this takes the advice of his mother and he runs from the family home he gets as far away as he can for his own safety so Jacob all that happened 20 years ago so for 20 years all was in his mind as I wonder what will happen on the day that I

[30 : 58] I end up seeing Esau and now Esau is coming Jacob looks up and on the horizon he can see that Esau was coming behold Esau and not only is it Esau but he's told by the messengers that Esau has 400 men with him 400 men equated to a battalion so he's got an army with him so there's great tension at this point we can't imagine what Jacob is feeling as he sees and as he hears the news of his brother coming close with this army and so it's not much wonder that we're told in verse one behold Esau is coming in Hebrew you don't have bold you don't have underline you don't have exclamation marks so the word behold is the equivalent of our bold underline and exclamation mark what the writer is saying at this point is drop everything pay attention put your phone down wake up behold

Esau is coming this is the moment and we all have our behold moments we all have these moments in our experience where our hearts stop and we're gripped by fear and one of the things that we need to see in the the whole spread of the scriptures is that very very often the behold moments come immediately after the blessing moments so when we have experienced a great measure of the Lord's blessing we actually have to be on alert because often very often what follows on is a moment where we're filled with fear and dread and there's an attack and there's threat the blessed life the life that we are called to live when we are walking with the Lord is not a life that is without behold moments the Bible is clear Jesus is very straight and honest with us about the fact that in this world if we are following him that's the only place where we find blessing if we are following him we will still have trouble John 16 33 Jesus says in this world you will have trouble you will have tribulation that's the bad news there will be behold moments but Jesus goes on in the same verse to say take heart I have overcome the world and we share in that overcoming if we stay close to him so blessing received behold Esau and the third point we come to hear is we see bowing

Jacob verses 2 and 3 and he that's Jacob put the servants with their children in front and 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 the thing I want to note just as we see in our mind's eye Jacob and the gap between Jacob and Esau getting shorter and shorter we have this distance this vast distance of 20 years which is now down to just a few yards we don't know the space and as the space gets smaller and smaller and as Jacob approaches his brother what does he do well he does a very un-Jacob like thing he bows and not just once he bows himself to the ground verse 3 seven times as he comes near to his brother in the past

Jacob he's always trying to boss his brother he's always trying to get one over on his brother but at this point seven times that number of completion he bows down and then in the verses that follow all those who are with Jacob are called to do the same thing so in verse 6 we read that Jacob's servants bow down and in verse 7 Jacob's wives and his children bow down and so what we see here is Jacob whom we've got to know over the last wee while Jacob who was so full of pride he's always looking for looking out for number one he seems to be humbled Jacob who always used to walk with a swagger after this wrestle with God he now walks with a limp and there's a humility about Jacob's posture and his approach that we've never seen before now some of the commentators aren't agreed on this some of the commentators say this is just typical

[37 : 07] Jacob this is just business charm he's trying to endear himself to his brother he's just trying to protect his own neck this is all show but we don't know that from the text and I think probably it's more likely that this bowing down is a reflection of the repentance that was going on in process in Jacob's heart through this wrestle God had taught Jacob to submit to him and to submit to others including the brother that he had wronged so we see bowing Jacob a humbled Jacob and as we think about him I think we have a pointer from Jacob down the line of his family to Jesus because remember if we follow the family line of Jacob all the way through we get to Jesus where was the blessing going to come through it was going to come through Jesus and what did Jesus say about his own coming into this world he said in Matthew 20 verse 28 he came not to be served but to serve

Paul in Philippians chapter 2 verse 8 speaks of Jesus and he says that he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross so we see a bowing humbled Jacob I think and Jacob is pointing us to the servant king to the humble Lord Jesus and if we are Christians if we are Christ's ones we're called to be like Christ we're called to be humble we're called to be servant hearted we're called to be people who are quick to bow down as Jacob did in this scene so we see a bowing

Jacob fourth point brothers reconciled one of the big stories in the world of music and entertainment over the last few months is the reunion of the Manchester band Oasis and what makes the story of the Oasis reunion most compelling is that there are two brothers who were at war for 15 years or whatever it was who were reconciled in the concerts you see this reconciliation and the music comes from that and people are saying well this is the greatest reconciliation that there ever was but I think we can confidently say that this reconciliation between Jacob and Esau was a greater one we see here with Jacob and Esau there are brothers warring brothers who are reconciled and as we see this meeting it's an amazing thing to read of verse 4 down to verse 7 the tension is tangible the gap is closing the question has been asked how is

Esau going to react and we're told in verse 4 that Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him and they wept and when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children he said who are these with you Jacob said the children whom God has graciously given your servant then the servants drew near they and their children and bowed down Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down and last Joseph and Rachel drew near and they bowed down and they have this enduring picture in our minds of this embrace between Jacob and Esau and these tears of reconciliation now the question is did Jacob expect this response and I think it's fair to say from the tension and the anxiety that we read of in the passage that he didn't expect this but he should have expected this because this is what he prayed for if you just glance back for a moment to

Genesis 32 and at verses 9 to verse 12 we have there as Jacob is in a state of fear and alarm at the prospect of meeting his brother he prays to God and he says in verses 9 to verse 12 O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac O Lord you said to me return to your country and to your kindred that I may do you good I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love

and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan and now I have become two camps so he acknowledges God he calls on the name of the Lord he's thankful for all that God has done for him thus far and then he says help me verse 11 please deliver me from the hand of my brother from the hand of Esau for I fear him that he may come and attack me the mothers and the children but you said

[43 : 22] I will surely do you good and so Jacob has prayed he's asked God to deliver him to protect him to do him good and what we see in Esau's response is an answer to Jacob's prayer Esau's response is not because of anything in Jacob it's not because of any work that Jacob had done it's not that Jacob had been whatsapping his brother and sending messages on social media just to try to bring things to a state of peace there's been no contact there's been no intervention there's been nothing but hostility and distance and so all that we see in the grace that is evident in Esau's response it's

God's work God has effected this reconciliation between the brothers and a reflection of the mercy of God is seen in Esau as Esau runs to meet his brother Jacob and then embraces him it's a picture of the love and the mercy of God in this moment Jesus actually takes this phrase these words to describe in the parable of the prodigal son the way the father goes to meet the son as the son is coming home so all of this is God's work we see God's hand in this one commentator here says Jacob saw God's love in Esau's face love that not only protected him from Esau's revenge but even better had restored him with his long lost brother and so we see here in these verses brothers reconciled but this reconciliation actually was costly to Jacob because we remember Jacob has wronged Esau he stole the blessing that should have come to him and so in an attempt to put that right Jacob offers gifts he offers blessing gifts to Esau and we read about that in verse 8 and following Esau said what do you mean by all this company that I met Jacob answered to find favour in the sight of my Lord but Esau said I have enough my brother keep what you have for yourself Jacob said no please if I find favour in your sight then accept my present from my hand for I have seen your face which is like seeing the face of God and you have accepted me please accept my blessing that is brought to you because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have enough thus he urged them and he took it and so there's reconciliation but it's costly and reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel if we go from the Old

Testament to the New Testament and think about the gospel message at the core of the gospel message is reconciliation the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5 20 where the gospel call says we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God that's the call of the gospel to you and to me we who were estranged from God because of our sin are called to be reconciled to God but at what cost well the cost is detailed in the next verse in 2 Corinthians 5 verse 21 we implore you on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God there's the call now here's the cost for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of

God see the cost of our reconciliation with God has been paid in full by Jesus and the blessing of God the God whom we were estranged from the God whom we were distant the God whom we have sinned against the blessing of God is offered to us freely in and through the finished work of Christ we could have sung the hymn that says who is like the Lord our God strong to save faithful in love my debt is paid and the victory won the Lord is my salvation brothers reconciled point number five we're almost there beware of being sidetracked remember Jacob is on God's way he's following [49 : 26] God's call he's on the path that God has laid out for him but there is a danger at this point that he could be sidetracked verse 12 then Esau said let us journey on our way and I will go ahead of you but Jacob said to him my Lord knows that the children are frail that they are nursing flocks and herds that are cared to me if they are driven hard for one day all the flocks will die let my Lord pass on ahead of his servant and I will lead on slowly at the pace of the livestock that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children until I come to the Lord and Seir so Esau said let me leave with you some of the people who are with me but he said what need is there let me find favor in the sight of my Lord so Esau returned!

that day on his way to Seir but Jacob journeyed to Succoth and built himself a house and made booths for his livestock therefore the name of the place is called Succoth so what do we see here well what we see is that Esau and Jacob yes they've made peace and yes there is a reconciliation that has been effected but there's now a separation it seems actually that Esau now that they've been reconciled it seems that Esau expects Jacob to come and live with them in Seir so Jacob hears Esau saying well just follow me I've got the place I've got the property I've got plenty of space

let's all go and live together over there in Seir but Jacob's not very keen why is he not keen well there's various possible reasons the relationship is fragile they haven't spoken for 20 years there's been a whole lot of stuff going on between them and they've just managed to shake hands but to go and live together in the same place probably would be too much pressure on the relationship we know what it's like to live together with our whole family for

Christmas for two or three days and it can be pressurized and Jacob is maybe saying to Esau well you know maybe too much too soon let's not all go and live in the same space just immediately the relationship is still fragile and so he's not keen to go to see her and on top of that there's just the trust issues Jacob likely still is fearful that Esau will attack him he hasn't attacked him at this point but what's to say that once he gets back to his own homeland with all his people around him he may turn so there could be trust issues still there that cause Jacob to be reluctant to go with his brother to see her but the main reason I think that Jacob doesn't go with his brother to see her is because God did not call him to go to see her God called him to go to

Canaan and to go to see her would take him in a different direction away from Canaan so Jacob sees the danger of being sidetracked and he determines that he will go a different direction to his brother and this can still be a danger if we follow friends and family over following the Lord if we put what our friends and family say over what God says we can end up being sidetracked we can end up drifting off course so we have to be aware of that I think that's the lesson that we've been taught in this little section Sinclair

Ferguson says this Jacob knew that he had to go in a different direction to his own flesh and blood we are living in critical times for the family says Sinclair Ferguson and there are two great errors the first is not to love and care for our family the second is to make our family our idol and to make our family more important to us than the Lord Jesus Christ and Jacob was in that dangerous place at that time would he go the way that Esau was saying or would he go the way that God was saying and he determines that he will go God's way and not deviate from God's course beware of being sidetracked last point just a word to finish is back to Canaan because that's what we discover at the end of this chapter it says in verse 18 and Jacob came safely to the land of Shechem which is in the land of Canaan on his way from Paddan

[54 : 56] Aram and he camped before the city and so it goes on to the end of the chapter but what we learn as we finish this chapter is that Jacob after many twists and turns he has arrived in the land of Canaan and what does that tell us that tells us that God has kept his word that he will take him to that land that he is going to give him here the commentator says Jacob arrived in Canaan his safe arrival was God's fulfillment of his promise to him at Bethel 20 years earlier you can go back to Genesis 28 verse 15 and God said I'll take you there and what we read here is that God took him there so we finish by seeing that God is faithful and what he says he will do what he promises he will fulfill his people like Jacob are far from perfect and their lives are far from clean

Jacob's life and his character it's messy beyond belief and it's still going to be messy we're not quite there yet the next chapter is darker than dark so we see here God is faithful his people like Jacob are imperfect they are messy God's plans are complex they are higher than ours they take us places we would never expect to go and sometimes we don't understand why we're there but the main lesson to take away tonight is that God is faithful he keeps his promises we see it in the Jacob story but we see it far more clearly in the Jesus story the one who came down the line of Jacob the one in and through whom we are blessed so let's as we finish tonight be encouraged to keep on trusting the God of Jacob and we let's pray heavenly heavenly father we thank you for your word and we pray that you would press it into our hearts our lives our our minds help us we pray to learn the lessons that you would have us learn from this passage we thank you for moments of blessing for seasons of blessing for the refreshing that we receive when we hit places like

Penny L help us we pray to be aware though that often after blessing there is trouble there are the behold moments make us wise we pray help us to be humble to bow before you and to be ready to bow before those that you put around us that pride would not mark us but that humility would be something that is seen in our lives that we would be more like Jesus we thank you for the gospel for the reconciliation that is offered to us in the gospel and we thank you that the price has been paid that we don't have to pay the price of our salvation because Jesus has paid it in full enable us to receive that grace and enable us we pray Lord Jesus to follow you we are conscious that often we can be sidetracked sometimes by our own sin our own stubbornness sometimes because we listen to voices that would take us in a different direction to the way that you would have us go so give us

wisdom we pray that we would walk close with you and give us faith we pray that we would trust you as the

God who never breaks your word but always keeps your promises us and we pray all this in Jesus name amen we'll sing to conclude our mission praise 201 guide me oh thou great jehovah help him through this spirit land i am weep but thou are mighty holding with thy powerful hand bread of heaven bread of heaven feed me now and evermore feed me now and evermore open now the crystal fountain western he in sweet dark love and the fiery cloudy feather lead me all my journey through strong deliverer strong deliverer be thy still my strength and shield be thou still my strength and shield then

I tread the verge of Jordan let my anxious peace aside death of death and hell's destruction land be safe on Canaan's side songs of praises songs of praises I will ever give to thee I would never give to thee now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more Amen