

Messy Life: The Story of Jacob

Part 7


The Grace of God
in the House of God

TALKING POINTS WALKINGPOINTS

Leader's Guide

2025-3-30



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- 1 Review the **Sermon Summary** to see the ways God's grace **surprised, offended, overflowed** and **impressed** Jacob. Which of those reactions made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ... and **why** do you find **those reactions** surprising?
- 2 According to Romans 4:4–5, **who** gets **what he's due**—the achiever or the believer? **Who** gets **righteousness**—the achiever or the believer?
- 3 Romans 3:9-20 describes **all** of humanity. How are we all described?
- 4 If we got what we achieved (ie, what we deserve), what would that be? (See Matthew 5:20.)
- 5 What do other world religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) say we must do to please their gods?

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- 6 According to James 2:10, what must one **do** to please the True God, the God of the Bible? (James 2:11 explains the rationale for God's "all or nothing" standard. What is it?)
- 7 Read Luke 23:39-43. What destiny did those two criminals deserve (see v. 41)? According to v. 43, what destinies did each of them experience? How do you explain that?
- 8 What do people who do not realize that God demands perfect righteousness **do** (Romans 10:3)?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- 9 Have **you** "kept the whole law, not stumbling at even one point" (James 2:10)? Has **anyone** ever?
- 10 In the words of John 1:29, what did "the Lamb of God" **do**?
- 11 In the words of Isaiah 53:4-7, **how** did he do it?
- 12 On a scale of 0—100%, **how certain** are you that **your** sins have been "taken away" by the Lamb?

1 Take note of any particularly strong negative responses to the content and follow up individually as needed.

2 **Achievers** (workers, do-ers) get what is due them, what they worked for.
Believers get grace, get righteousness.

- 3
- “under” sin
 - unrighteous
 - not understanding
 - not seeking for God
 - turned aside from God’s ways
 - evil-doers
 - evil-speakers (malignant words, lying, poisonous words; cursing, bitterness)
 - violent
 - destructive
 - rejecting peace
 - rejecting God
 - accountable to, and guilty before, God
 - useless

4 **Hell** (not entering the kingdom of heaven)

- 5 **Islam:**
1. Profess the Muslim faith five times a day during prayer
 2. Pray five times a day, at set strict times, facing Mecca
 3. Giving 2.5% of one’s wealth to the poor
 4. Fasting during the month of Ramadan
 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca

Note: Even with these practices, Allah alone decides your fate. Martyrdom is the only work guaranteed to send a worshiper to paradise.

Hinduism: In Hinduism, with over a million different gods, there disagreement regarding the nature of salvation. Generally it is taught that salvation is achieved by ridding oneself of bad karma through selfless devotion to and service of a particular god, through understanding the nature of the universe, or by mastering the actions needed to fully appease the gods.

Buddhism: In Buddhism, one must follow the eight-fold path in order to achieve Nirvana:

1. right view
2. right resolve
3. right speech
4. right conduct
5. right livelihood
6. right effort
7. right mindfulness
8. right meditative absorption

6 We must obey all of God’s law, all of the time, without exception.

Breaking one law makes one a “law-breaker”, and the wages of law-breaking is death (hell).

7 Humanly speaking, each of them deserved capital punishment. In God’s economy, they deserved hell. One went to hell, the other to paradise. How so? Jesus forgave him, by grace.

8 They establish their own rules for righteousness (eg. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and “good person-ism”).

9 No, you have not. Only Jesus has.

10 He **take away** sin. Problem solved—for all who repent and believe.

- 11
- He Himself bore our griefs, carried our sorrows.
 - He was pierced through for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities.
 - The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him; by His scourging we are healed.
 - Yahweh caused our iniquity to fall on Him.

12 Be ready with your own answer—and the biblical basis for it—but allow your group members to give their answers first. Take note of any uncertain responses and follow up individually as needed.

Sermon Summary Genesis 28:10–22

There are times when we may wonder whether God cares, whether he really does have a plan for our life. We wonder, “Is it something I’ve done? Have I permanently blown it? Have I missed God’s will? Has he turned his back on me?” Today, as we continue our study of Jacob’s life, we see a man who was asking these same questions. He fears for his future because he knows he’s blown it in the past... just as we have. As he traveled to Haran, Jacob was alone in a strange and dangerous country. Alone except for God, that is! (Genesis 28:10-22) One night as Jacob falls asleep, he has a very unexpected dream which reveals the grace of God in a very powerful way.

I. God’s grace surprises. (v. 12-13) Three times in verses 12–13 we find the word “behold”. The Hebrew word indicates something unexpected, something startling or surprising. This Hebrew word could be translated, “Oh my!” At some point in our lives most of us have been surprised by God’s grace. After all, there was the mess you made, the relationship you ruined, that secret sin you stubbornly held on to, and yet God showed up in all of His grace when you most needed Him to! In your case, what was the occasion for God’s surprising grace? There may have been no stairway to heaven or attending angels, at least that you could see, but God showed up in a way that was totally surprising! We have already seen that God’s grace surprises. Here, in this particular context, we also discover that God’s grace often offends us—at least when we see God’s grace being extended to others—who we know don’t deserve it!

II. God’s grace offends. (v. 26-27) Through this vision, God re-affirms His covenant commitment to Jacob, in language very similar to His assurance to Abraham as given earlier in Genesis 12:1–3 and later to Jacob’s father Isaac in 26:3–4. But Jacob demonstrated no ethics (27:11–12). He spoke bald-faced lies to his father all while keeping a straight face (27:19, 24). And yet here is God, assuring Jacob of his presence, his protection and his blessing!

There’s something about grace that just seems wrong—especially when it’s displayed towards someone other than us. Why, because it’s so undeserving! But isn’t that the very nature of grace? Its recipient is always undeserving. That’s what makes grace, grace! Grace offends because we don’t understand our own wicked hearts. Oh, we might agree that we need a little boost from God. We think we don’t really need grace. We’re almost there. If you believe that, you would be wrong. The truth is, we are all “Jacobs”. We can all be dishonest, deceitful and self-serving, can’t we? If grace makes you angry, you are blinded to your own sin. Truth is, we all need God’s grace. Yet from this passage, we also see that grace overflows!

III. God’s grace overflows. (v. 13-15) God holds nothing back from Jacob. All that he promised to Abraham and Isaac, he promised Jacob (Genesis 12:1–3; 26:3–5). He is promised a place, a people, a program and God’s presence and protection (v. 28:13b-15). And yet there’s a problem with this lavishness; God seems to promise too much! Once more, we are left to ponder the unlikelihood of it all. To Jacob, God’s promise wouldn’t have seemed very relevant at that particular moment, would it? This would have seemed like far off, way distant, stuff. We see that:

- No matter how far off some promise provisions may be...
- No matter how unlikely they may presently appear...
- No matter that we can’t possibly conceive of how God will ever bring them to pass...

Nevertheless, God promises something that “Jacobs” can grab hold of today. For He says, “I am with you, and I will keep you wherever you go” (v. 15). This assurance is not for some time down the road - it is for right now! Since God was ‘with’ him, Jacob had all that he really needed. And as New Testament Christians, so do we! Has God not said to us, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you”? (Hebrews 13:5) Has he not said, “I am with you always, even till the end of the age”? (Matthew 28:20) How often have we said, along with the apostle Paul, “But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength”? (2 Tim. 4:17). Finally, from this snapshot of Jacob’s life, we see that grace impresses.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*The Gospel is offensive. We protest: "I'm no 'charity case!'"
Well, let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to see about that...*

Monday— Study 1 Corinthians 1:18-21.

Tuesday— Study 1 Corinthians 1:22-25.

Wednesday— Study 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

Thursday— Study 1 Corinthians 1:30-31.

Friday— Study 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

Saturday— Study Titus 2:11-15.

Need blank copies for doing more
"Five Question Bible Study"?
e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____ Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]