

It feels a whole lot longer than 2 weeks ago since we were studying the sibling rivalry between Jacob & Esau. I'll be honest I was not sure that going back to where we were was the right call, until I was watching the news & reading stories on social media. And the feeling that we are all in this together was gone. Well, not completely gone but mostly. Isn't it interesting how, when the threat is gone, we jump back to where we were and our scripture has something to say about it? Some might say coincidence, but I think we can agree that the Holy Spirit is at work.

To refresh our memory – 2 weeks ago we looked at the time when Jacob stole the birthright & blessing from Esau, by impersonating his brother. We read some of the story again today but focused on Esau's point of view. To say that he was mad is an understatement. Furious, does not even seem to cover it. When his father really has nothing left for him but a promise that he will have a life away from home, Esau is done. What options does he have? Esau thinks all he can do, is to take what is rightfully his, by force. He's going to kill Jacob. Rebekah intercedes and warns Jacob to flee.

Can we relate to Esau? Have you ever said something in the heat of the moment? Did time pass and you felt differently? I have. I want to say mostly when I was younger, but there are still times. As I came back to study this passage, I realized that when I've studied the stories of "Jacob & Esau" that I've pretty much ignored Esau. I am so eager to get to the good stuff. And if I do pause, I think Esau is over reacting. But in skipping over Esau, I've failed to see how many more times I've been like Esau, than Jacob wrestling with God!

It is entirely too easy right now to pick a side on everything, whether it is political party, virus related, is the weather nice or not. We have begun to pick sides with little regard for the damage that might come as a result. It would be easy to use this text as a reason for why it is right to do it. We could be team Jacob – he took what he wanted. We could be team Esau – he was tricked out of what was rightfully his, so he is justified to take it back by

any means necessary. We explored 2 weeks ago that picking a side is unhelpful – which is still true. But what happens when you move beyond picking sides and wish for vengeance or punishment for another person?

We know that it is entirely too easy to see something bad as a punishment for some action. We saw people, not from here, that said Harvey was punishment for _____ (fill in the blank). We know better than that. We understand the power of the natural world and know that God vowed to Noah that nature would take it's own course. So, what happens when it is an individual who chooses to take matters into their own hands.

Vengeance is mine said the Lord. This passage from the book of Romans is often quoted but we also see it throughout the Old Testament. We saw that God made that promise to Cain when he was sent away – that anyone who met him would leave him alone because God placed a mark on Cain and anyone who killed Cain would pay for it seven times over.

Esau appears to be consumed with hatred – so much that Rebekah intercedes and gets Jacob out of his path. Think about this for a moment. Esau was not making an idle threat – the kind that we may utter under our breath. Esau's threat was serious enough that Rebekah believed it. This is the point in the sermon, where your Pastor talks about violence never being the way. And I truly believe it, BUT every day it seems to get harder to say, not because I believe differently but because it happens daily, relentlessly.

I joke about being a hippy from California and as my Father-in-Law says, granola eating, Birkenstock wearing, loving everyone – this is me and I don't see it changing. But in my effort to bring peace and love, to get people to listen to each other – it's getting harder and harder. I find myself relenting, choosing not to engage in every fight that I see. Eventually, everyone will tire themselves out, right? But God's call in our lives is also relentless. God shows over and over again, that God loves the un-loveable. God is not done with Esau, even though he vows to murder his brother.

God doesn't speak but is working through Rebekah. If Jacob is not around Esau then it cannot happen.

We know the end of this story already. We know that Jacob grows up A LOT. When he finally is face to face with his brother, he comes on bended knee ready to submit to whatever his brother is ready to dish out. And yet, bloodshed doesn't happen. We'll look more in depth at this story soon, but God is not done with either brother. And God is not done with us.

It is easy to be tired. It is easy to be weary. It is easy to throw our hands up and cry – ENOUGH. Enough storms, enough virus, enough recession, enough layoffs, enough virtual everything. Enough. And yet, God is not tired. God is not weary. God is listening to our cries of enough and is carrying us right now. It's easy to be discouraged. I know that I was when it looked like Laura was not going to leave much of the places that I love so much. My heart was broken before the storm even came ashore. And yet, we all came through it ok. We're making our ways back home. We're uncovering, unpacking and cleaning up. Something, unfamiliar to us. We're not distributing flood buckets, we're not giving away water, we're not sheltering students. We're simply here.

So what does Esau teach us about God? That God is not done with us, no matter what we say. God is with us. God is letting us catch our breath, relax and is getting us ready for what's next. When God calls, will you answer? In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.