Bible Stories for Adults

Jacob Flees and Returns

Genesis 28 - 36

Opening

Gathering: Tell of a time you tried to deceive someone, only to be deceived yourself. How did it make you feel about what you had tried to do?

Today's Focus: To recognize that God keeps His promises, even when we don't keep ours and when we don't trust Him as we should.

Key Verses: 
God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. Romans 11:29
I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go ... I will not leave you until I have done what I promised you. Genesis 28:15
May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away. Genesis 31:49-50

Opening Prayer

Lesson

It's All in a Name (Genesis 25)

How did Jacob and Esau get their names? = He grasps the heel means he deceives (pulling my leg)
Genesis 25:24-26 = Esau (hairy) was born hairy, Jacob (he grasps the heel) held Esau's heel
How did Esau personify the wild, rugged nature implied by his name?
Genesis 25:27-28 = He was an outdoorsman, a skillful hunter; Jacob was indoors mama's boy
How did Jacob personify the deceitful con-artist nature implied by his name?
Genesis 25:29-34 = Stole Esau's first-born birthright for stew; shows Esau's poor discernment

A Stolen Blessing (Genesis 27:1-41)

How did Jacob's deceit show itself later in life?
Genesis 27:6-7, 14-19 = He deceived his father Isaac to get God's blessing in place of Esau
What blessings did Isaac end up giving to Jacob and Esau?
Genesis 27:28-30, 38-40 = God's promises to Abraham passed to Jacob, Esau cursed
Was Esau cursed because Jacob did right in deceiving Isaac for God's blessing?
Romans 9:10-18 = No, result was part of God's plan from the start (Jacob's approach wasn't)
How did Esau feel about what had happened?
Genesis 27:36, 41 = Hated Jacob for it and planned to kill him after Isaac died

Jacob Flees (Genesis 27:42-28:9)

What did Rebekah plan to do to protect her favorite son Jacob?
Genesis 27:42-45 = Send him to her brother Laban until Esau's anger subsided
How did Rebekah again use deceit to convince Isaac to send Jacob away?
Genesis 27:46-28:2 = Had Isaac send Jacob away to find a wife from the family
Did Isaac do this to get rid of his less favorite and deceiving son?
Genesis 28:3-5 = No, he saw God's hand in blessing Jacob, remembered call to keep separate
How did Esau react when he learned why Jacob left?
Genesis 28:6-9 = Saw he was wrong marrying outside the family, married Ishmael's daughter
Jacob’s Ladder  \((\text{Genesis 28:10-22})\)

How did God confirm to Jacob that he was the heir to His blessing? = After 40 miles over mountains
Genesis 28:10-12 = Came to him in a vision as Jacob traveled to Haran
Stairway was probably like the stairs on the sloping side of a ziggurat (temple-tower like Babel)
What promises did God make to Jacob in this vision? = Everything He had promised to Abraham
Genesis 28:13-15 = Promised land, many descendants, protection, blessed to be a blessing
How did Jacob respond to this vision God gave him? = Abraham built an altar at Bethel (Gen 12:8)
Genesis 28:16-19 = He worshiped God and consecrated the place
How did Jacob respond to the blessings God had promised to him? = Conditions promised in v13-15
Genesis 28:20-22 = Because of promises, pledged to be faithful & promised to return a tithe

Jacob Meets Uncle Laban  \((\text{Genesis 29:1-14})\)

How was Jacob able to find the family of his uncle he didn't know in a place he didn’t know?
Genesis 29:1-2, 4-6 (1-6) = God led him to the right place at the right time to meet Rachel
How did God show His presence with Jacob during this meeting?
Genesis 29:3, 7-10 (7-10) = God gave strength to move the stone that usually required many
How openly was Jacob received by his uncle?
Genesis 29:13-14a (11-14a) = Accepted him as part of the family

Like Nephew, Like Uncle  \((\text{Genesis 29:14-30})\)

What pay did Jacob want for his work as a shepherd for Laban? = Rachel – ewe, Leah – wild cow
Genesis 29:14b-18 = The hand of Rachel in marriage after 7 years of work
How did Laban respond to Jacob's request? = He deceived the deceiver
Genesis 29:19-23 = Accepted, but them switched daughters on Jacob at the wedding
Where had Laban's deceitful nature been evident before?
Genesis 24:29-31, 53 = Catered to Abraham's servant because of riches he saw
How did Laban explain his action and use it to get 7 more years of work out of Jacob?
Genesis 29:26-27, 30 (26-30) = Custom to marry older first, offered Rachel for 7 more years

Jacob’s Children  \((\text{Genesis 29:31-30:24})\) = Write names of sons on board in order under mothers' names

How did God respond to Jacob's love for Rachel and dislike for Leah? = Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah
Genesis 29:31 (31-35) = God gave Leah 4 sons, kept Rachel barren (Jacob loved her more)
How did Rachel respond to Leah's fertility and her barrenness? = Dan, Naphtali
Genesis 30:1-3 (1-8) = She had Jacob have 2 sons through her maid Bilhah, like grandpa
What did Leah think of her sister's tricks? = Gad, Asher
Genesis 30:9 (9-16) = She had Jacob have 2 sons through her maid Zilpah, Also tried magic
Did Leah regret doing this when God opened her womb again? = Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah
Genesis 30:17-18 (17-21) = No, she thought it pleased God; had 2 more sons & a daughter
Notice the meanings of the names given Jacob's sons and compare with their blessings in Genesis 49

What did God do for Jacob after ending the competition at 11 kids? = Joseph
Genesis 30:22-24 = He blessed Rachel with Joseph (name – asked God for another son)
How did Jacob feel about this son of his loved wife? = Next week's story, Chose favorites like parents
Genesis 37:3-4 = He loved him more than the others, they hated Joseph for it
What happened when Rachel had her second son? = Benjamin
Genesis 35:16-19 = She died in childbirth bearing Benjamin
Jacob's Becomes Wealthy  *(Genesis 30:25-31:12)*

**Why did Laban want Jacob to stay longer than the 14 years?**  =  Blessed to be a blessing  
*Genesis 30:27-28*  *(25-30)*  =  He knew that God had blessed him by Jacob's presence

**What compensation did Jacob request?**  
*Genesis 30:32*  *(31-33)*  =  No pay, just the blemished livestock

**How did Laban try to cheat Jacob out of his wages?**  
*Genesis 30:35*  *(34-36)*  =  He cleaned the flocks of blemished animals before Jacob could

**Had Jacob made this request because he knew God would provide for him and bless him?**  
*Genesis 30:37-39*  *(37-42)*  =  No, he planned to cheat Laban out of flocks by divination  
A vivid sight during conception was thought to leave its mark on the embryo

**Did God punish Jacob for his lack of trust?**  
*Genesis 30:43*  =  No, He blessed Jacob despite his faithlessness

**Did Jacob recognize these blessings were from God?**  
*Genesis 31:5-9*  *(1-9)*  =  Yes, only God could provide the blessings despite Laban's efforts

**What helped Jacob recognize that God's hand was at work?**  
*Genesis 31:11-12*  *(10-12)*  =  God told him so in a vision

Jacob Flees From Laban  *(Genesis 31:13-21)*

**What else did God tell Jacob in this vision?**  
*Genesis 31:13*  *(3)*  =  To leave Laban and return to Canaan

**How did his wives feel about leaving their home and family?**  
*Genesis 31:14-16*  =  They no longer felt like part of the family, Unhappy with Laban's deceit

**How did Jacob's deceitful nature show itself in this leaving?**  
*Genesis 31:20-21*  *(17-21)*  =  He snuck out and didn't tell Laban he was leaving

Laban Chases Jacob  *(Genesis 31:22-55)*

**How did Laban respond to Jacob leaving without a goodbye, and why?**  =  Hundreds of miles  
*Genesis 31:22-23*  *(1-2)*  =  Chased after him, felt that Jacob had taken what was his

**Did Laban punish Jacob or try to take back his livestock and wealth?**  Why or why not?  
*Genesis 31:26-29*  *(24-29)*  =  No, because God had warned him to take care with Jacob

**If he was unable to take things back from Jacob, why did he continue with the chase?**  
*Genesis 31:30, 34-35*  *(30-35)*  =  Wanted to find the gods Rachel had stolen, Rachel deceived

**How did Jacob respond to his encounter with Laban?**  
*Genesis 31:36, 42*  *(36-42)*  =  He had dealt respectfully although Laban had deceived

**How did Jacob and Laban decide to bury the hatchet?**  =  Mizpah means watchtower - God will watch  
*Genesis 31:44-45, 49-53*  *(43-55)*  =  Made a covenant of peace in God's name

Jacob Comes Back Home  *(Genesis 32:1-12)*

**How did God confirm to Jacob that he was doing the right thing?**  
*Genesis 32:1-2*  =  Sent his angels to meet him as he entered Canaan

**What did Jacob find important to do as he neared his father's land?**  
*Genesis 32:3*  *(3-5)*  =  Prepare Esau for his return – Let Esau know he wouldn't take anything

**How did Esau reply to the news of his brother's return?**  
*Genesis 32:6*  =  Headed out to meet Jacob with 400 men

**How did Jacob respond to this news?**  =  Divided everything into 2 groups in case Esau attacked one  
*Genesis 32:10-11*  *(7-12)*  =  Thanked God, asked for protection, reminded of promises

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Jacob Wrestles With God  
(Genesis 32:22-32)

How did God respond to Jacob's request? = Object lesson that struggles now are with God, not men
Genesis 32:24, 28  
(22-32)  =  Changed name to Israel (he struggles with God) - life transition
What reminder did God leave with Jacob of this encounter?
Genesis 32:25, 31  =  An injury at his hip would be ever-present reminder

Jacob Manipulates Esau Again  
(Genesis 33)

What had Jacob done the day before to manipulate Esau in preparation of their meeting?
Genesis 32:13, 16, 20  
(13-21)  =  Send herds in stages as gifts to prepare Esau
How did he show his preferential love for his family when he met up with Esau?
Genesis 33:2-3  
(1-3)  =  Put the most expendable in front; seven bows signify total submission
Did the gifts have their desired effect? = Gifts would make Esau indebted
Genesis 33:4, 8-11  
(4-11)  =  Yes, Jacob poured on the flattery and made Esau keep the gifts
How did Jacob deceive Esau one last time?
Genesis 33:13-14, 17  
(12-20)  =  Sent Esau ahead, promised to meet in Seir, went to Succoth

Dinah and the Shechemites  
(Genesis 34:1-31)

What happened to Jacob's daughter after settling near Shechem?
Genesis 34:2  
(1-4)  =  Shechem, a local noble, raped her
Was the rape a spur-of-the-moment act or did he have other intentions?
Genesis 34:11-12  =  No, he wanted to marry her
How did Jacob's sons use deception to get revenge? = Attacked & killed them while healing
Genesis 34:13, 15, 24-25  
(5-31)  =  Made Shechem & men get circumcised
What lesson did this story give to the Israelites who would later return?
Genesis 34:14  =  Not to intermix with uncircumcised, Jews were called to remain separate

Jacob Returns to Bethel  
(Genesis 35:1-29)

Did Jacob stay at Shechem after the incident? = Had everyone get rid of all idols, cleansed the family
Genesis 35:1-2, 5  
(1-6)  =  No, they moved to Bethel as God commanded
How did God respond to Jacob's faithfulness in following Him back to Bethel?
Genesis 35:10-12  
(7-15)  =  Restated his new name, repeated His promises
Who died after Jacob had returned to Canaan?
Genesis 35:19, 27-29  
(16-29)  =  Rachel died in childbirth, Isaac died at 180 after seeing Jacob

Response

1. When have I held a grudge against someone when I should have forgiven them?
   (Genesis 27:41; 37:4; 50:15-21; 1 Samuel 17:20-30; Matthew 5:38-48; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11)
2. Do I show preferential love to certain members of my family and less to others?
   (Genesis 17:18; 25:28; 29:30; 37:3-4; 48:17-20; 1 John 3:11-20)
3. Do I say that I trust God, and then turn around and do things my own way?
   (Genesis 30:37-42; 31:20-21; 1 Samuel 28; Proverbs 14:12; Isaiah 55:8; Matthew 14:28-31)
4. Do I struggle with God to get closer to Him or to go further from Him?
   (Genesis 32:24-32; Ephesians 6:10-12; Job 30:20-23; 40:1-14; Colossians 1:28-2:3)
5. Am I patient enough to wait 20 years for God to prepare me for His purpose?
   (Genesis 12:4; 31:38-42; 41:46; Joshua 14:6-11; Acts 7:20-23, 29:30, 34-36; 2 Peter 3:8-9)