**Jacob: Deceiver or Man of God?**

**Going Back In Order to Go Forward**

This afternoon we are going to talk about the effect of the sin that happens in families, and God’s plan to help us move on to an emotionally healthy spirituality.

Two passages which, at first glance seem to be in conflict:

Exodus 34:6-7 Punishing… for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation. vs.

Ezekiel 18:19-20 The child does not share the guilt of the parent.

Q: Which of these is true? Both!

When we have two seemingly contradictory statements in the Bible, they do not contradict, but they offer a new and deeper insight into knowing God and into our relationship with him.

[Ex: Eph 2:8-9 v. James 2:24-26]

How to solve such dilemmas: Ask, which of the two statements is the more fundamental truth about God?

Then interpret the second in the light of the first.

Ezek 18:19-20 is the more fundamental truth.

So, what does Exodus 34:6-7 (and also Exodus 20:4-6) mean?

It means that in this life, when people sin, it brings consequences IN THIS LIFE.

The Hebrew word for punish can be translated not punish but bringing consequences.

Sin brings in suffering, and it *tends* to be generational within families. (as we will see with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph).

This afternoon, we will talk about generational “sin.” We will talk about what we bring into our relationship with God from our families (and others in our past), but also how to move beyond the damage caused by this—how to throw off the spiritual baggage.

We learn patterns of behavior from our families.

EHS talks about the “Ten Commandments” of our families.

Some are explicit (spoken). Others are implicit (never actually stated)

You shall go to college, get a degree and be successful. (if not, you are a failure)

You shall not contradict your parents or leave the control of your parents.

You shall put your family before friends, work and the church.

What are some of the patterns in your family?

Lack of intimacy/affection

Lying works.

Over-controlling

Look out for self first.

Anger, lack of self-control to manipulate others

Lack of praise. Over-reaction to errors.

Over-functioning—overly responsible for others.

Abandonment/Emotional distance

Identity in what you do. You must achieve to be loved.

Laziness—victim mentality

Conflict avoidance

Addictive behaviors (which may be the result of one of the above)

Two things to remember (and both are biblical)

1. Even as Christians, we tend to inherit the negative patterns from our family.

2. As Christians, our first loyalty needs to be to Jesus, not to family.

We have established the first, biblically. Let’s establish the second.

Family is important and God uses family but…

Mark 3:31-35 Here are my mother, and sister and brother. Whoever does God’s will is my mother and my brother.

Does this mean that Jesus disrespected his family? NO!!! (wedding at Cana and on the cross)

And “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” Matthew 10:37-39.

We put off the sinful patterns of our family’s past.

We honor our family (as did Jesus), but we put Jesus and discipleship to him first.

In God’s family we are loved for who we are, not what we do.

Success is defined as living faithfully and seeking the kingdom first, not producing “results.”

All families are “broken.” Some more and some less.

We need to recognize this spiritual baggage.

But I have good news: The negative patterns can stop with your generation.

Ezekiel 18 is a fact.

Exodus 34 is a tendency.

But it will take recognizing the family patterns.

Recognizing the patterns that are not of God.

Through time, abiding in God, discipleship and work, throwing off that baggage.

To do this, you will have to take an honest look at your family dynamics, even back to your grandparents

Hopefully, it will help you to have more compassion for your parents.

My negative family patterns:

A very cold, distant, neglectful and unattached grandmother on my mother’s side.

A womanizing grandfather on my father’s side, and an overly dominant great grandmother.

My parents inherited this lack of emotional attachment and lack of self-awareness.

My dad expressed stress as anger. He never figured that one out.

My personal baggage:

Lack of intimacy—both emotional and physical.

Conflict avoidance

p. 89 Our fear of bringing secrets and sin into the light… we prefer the illusion that if we don’t think about it it somehow goes away. It does not. Unhealed wounds open us up to habitual sin against God and others.

So, let’s look at the generational sin in Jacob’s family.

Lies/deceit (Abraham to Pharaoh about Sarah, Isaac to Abimelech about Rebekah,

Jacob deceived Isaac. He stole both the first-born birthright and the blessing. His name means deceiver. Laban deceived Jacob.)

Jacob’s children lied about Joseph’s death and even went through a fake funeral.

Manipulation by lying.Now, that is a disfunctional family!

Favoritism of children, jealousy

Abraham favored Isaac and Ishmael was jealous of Isaac. Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Later, Isaac and Sarah had Ishmael sent away.

Isaac favored Esau over Jacob. Jacob was jealous of Esau. Jacob and Esau wee estranged.

Jacob favored Joseph and Benjamin. Brothers were jealous. Sold Joseph into slavery.

Unhealthy marriages:

Abraham took a concubine.

Isaac had a poor marriage to Rebekkah—they worked at cross-purposes.

Jacob took two wives and two concubines.

But…

Faith ran in the family as well. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were men of spectacular faith.

All families have generational sin.

The book goes into Joseph.

I will look at Jacob.

Fought with his brother at birth.

Stole his birthright and the blessing

Completely estranged from Esau.

And he had some marriage problems!

But Jacob had a comeback. He has some bad patterns and he has not been spiritual.

Genesis 32:22-32 At Peniel

You will no longer be deceiver. You will be “He struggles with God.”

Earlier he struggled against God. Now he is fighting for a relationship with God.

And look what happens next:

Genesis 33:1-5 What a scene!!!! Deceit done. Jealousy overcome.

Genesis 35:9-15 God blesses Jacob.

Jacob sets up a stone pillar at Beth-el… The house of God.

By then his sons were old enough that they repeated many of Jacob/Israel’s patterns, but Joseph ended the sibling rivalry.

Genesis 45:4-7 God turned generational sin into a “great deliverance.”

We need to recognize both the good and the bad patterns/generational sins in our families.

We need to be honest about the “baggage” we caried into our Christian lives.

We need to start the hard work of realizing the godly family.

In God’s family we are loved for who we are, not what we do.

Success is defined as living faithfully and seeking the kingdom first, not producing “results.”