



Week 4: Genesis 33:14 (NIV) “But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.”

There are many stories about brothers in the Bible. Often the brothers are jealous of each other. Usually they end up helping each other after all.

Remember Abraham from last week?

Abraham and Sarah had only one son, Isaac. (No brothers there!) But Isaac and his wife Rebekah had twin sons- twin brothers- named Esau and Jacob. And our story today is about these brothers. The Bible tells us that these two looked and acted very differently from each other. Esau is hairy and wants to be outdoors hunting. Jacob is quieter and prefers to stay near their tents.

Now even with twins, there is one who is a little bit older. Esau was a little bit older than Jacob.

In those days, every father gave a special blessing and special gifts to his oldest son. When the father dies, the oldest son becomes the owner of his father’s household. But Isaac’s wife Rebekah wants her younger son Jacob to get the special blessing and gifts from Isaac.

One day, Esau comes home very hungry and Jacob says that he will feed him if he promises his oldest-son gifts to Jacob. Esau agrees and takes Jacob’s food. But both brothers know that the special oldest-son blessing has to come from their father Isaac. Isaac is getting older now, and he can’t see very well. Rebekah helps Jacob with a tricky plan. Jacob puts on Esau’s clothes and covers himself with animal fur so that Jacob feels and smells like his brother Esau. Isaac is fooled and he gives his special blessing and gifts to Jacob.

Esau is angry when he finds out, and he threatens Jacob. So Jacob runs far away to Rebekah’s brother. He lives there many years. He gets married. He has sons and a daughter of his own. He is successful and becomes rich.

During this time, God speaks to Jacob. God reminds Jacob that he will soon have to return home, to take his place as the son of Isaac. Meanwhile, Esau is still living in Isaac’s house and taking care of their mother and father.

Finally, Jacob puts his whole family onto camels and travels the long way back to Canaan, to Isaac’s house.

Jacob is very nervous about what Esau will do when he gets there. Jacob sends messengers to Esau. He wants Esau to know he is coming with a big family and lots of animals and riches to share. A message comes back to

Jacob that Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men. Now Jacob is more nervous than ever. When Jacob is coming close to home, he even hides half of the family, just in case. Jacob sends herds of animals to Esau as a gift. He sends more than 500 animals to his brother. When he finally sees Esau coming towards him, Jacob goes forward. He bows down to the ground 7 times to honor Esau. And then Esau does a surprising thing. Esau runs to meet Jacob and embraces him; he throws his arms around his neck and kisses him. And they cry with gladness to be with each other. Then Esau welcomes Jacob’s whole family and accepts his brother’s presents. And they go home together.

The story of Jacob and Esau reminds us to forgive each other and to celebrate coming home together.

R Y B T W I N S U H R S V
 E T C E N S O A Q U I E T
 M N M O J A C E O N B T I
 R E B E K A H M S T Q A N
 A W L Q D C C N B E N E S
 F T D I A F E O C R I R M
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 A D H A I R Y I I C P I O

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