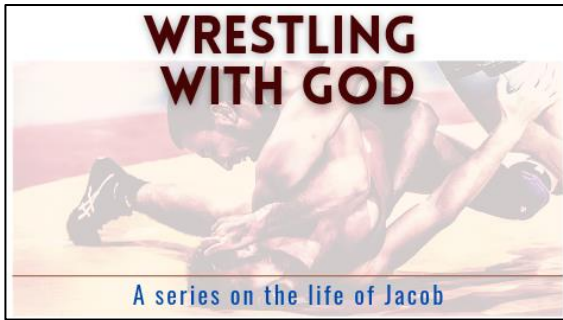




PAULSGROVE
BAPTIST CHURCH



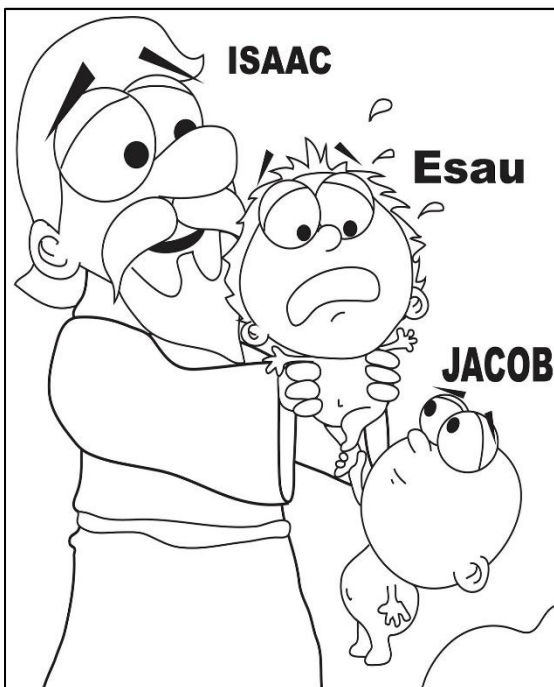
Sunday 9th May
Grace and Grasping
Genesis 25:19-34

GRACE (v.19-23)

GRASPING (v.24-34)



Conversation starter: "Why do we often want to remain in control of our lives, even though we have the grace of Christ and his way is best?"



Things to think about, discuss, and pray through this week:

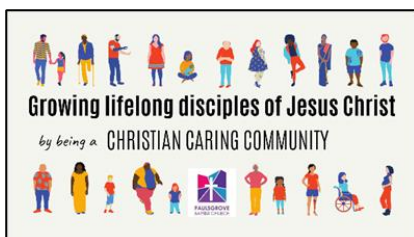
How was God's grace evident in the birth of Jacob?

List all the ways God has shown His grace to you through Jesus. Which are most precious you?

What areas of your life do you tend to want to remain in control of?

What does this tell you about:

- Your acceptance of grace?
- What you're still fearful about?
- Trusting that God's plan for you is best?



The prayer of letting go (surrender/release)

Digging Deeper:

Following the model of prayer used in the service today, you might like to continue to use this throughout the week. You can use the prayer of letting go for every area of life – here are some further examples:



- Sit comfortably and still in quietness, breathing calmly, closing your eyes if you find it helpful, and turning your attention to God.
- With hands palm up, bring to mind the people and relationships in your life and picture holding them in your hands. (Or write on a piece of paper, or simply imagine in your mind). Name them before God.
- Take a few moments now to bring before God your concerns for them, any anxieties or fears you have over them, your dreams and desires for them.
- When, or if, you are ready, you can turn your palms down, (or picture this in your mind/turn over your piece of paper) as an act of intentionally placing the people you care about, one by one, into God's Hands, entrusting them to His care. Perhaps you could pray something like, "Father, I release this person (name them) into your Hands, thank you that you will hold them in your love." We can spend endless hours worrying about the people we care for, and yet we are powerless often to change anything. Or we can try to make what we want for other people happen, like Rebekah with Jacob, manipulating and seeking to control. The most powerful thing we can do for those we care about, and the most freeing thing we can do for ourselves, is to release them into the Hands of the all-powerful and all-good God who loves them.
- So as we release those we care about, we turn our palms back up again, and ask God what He wants us to receive from Him at this time. Remember, this prayer of letting go is an invitation from God to greater freedom. So pay attention here as to what He wants to give you in exchange. Is there a word or a picture in your mind, is there a sense of peace or joy, is there a Bible verse or song lyrics that come to mind? Pay attention to these things because this is God's Spirit at work in our hearts.
- With palms up, hold in your hands any grievances you may have, with God or with others, any regrets, any quarrel, any desire for revenge. Or perhaps any behaviours that you sense are not helpful or healthy.
- Maybe you can ask God to highlight anything He wants you to release to Him today – often we have blind spots, or have areas of our lives we are reluctant/unwilling to acknowledge or surrender. Are you willing to pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." (Psalm 139:23-24). If you are struggling to pray this, honestly acknowledge to God where you are, and ask Him to reveal to you anything He wants you to know or understand. Shame and fear can prevent us being honest before God, or honest with ourselves – ask God to shine His light to reveal whatever might need revealing.
- When you have named these before God, acknowledging the reality of them, turn your palms over as an act of letting go of these things that entangle and trap us. What words of surrender do you want to say to God as you do that?
- When you are ready, turn your palms up to receive from God His forgiveness, His peace, His strength, His freedom, or whatever it is He has for you in these moments.

Amen.