

Saint Timothy Lutheran – Edmonds, WA

February 21, 2010 – Rev. Craig A. Patterson

“Who Is Worthy To Be Forgiven?”

(Text: Genesis 32:10; 50:15-21; Rom.3:24)

Context: In this “First Book of Moses” (as Genesis is called in the Hebrew), we are given the accounts of two men through whom God displayed his great mercy. First, we see Jacob who planned with his mother and then carried out the faithless plan to steal his brother’s birth rite. Still, in a marvelous way, God showered his mercy upon this previously self-centered young man. Next, we learn from the story of Joseph and his brothers who were envious of him and the favored status that Joseph enjoyed before their father. In a dramatic turn of events (guided and used by God) mercy is showered upon these evil-minded brothers. Jacob was selfish. Joseph’s brothers were envious and mean, yet they found God to be merciful. Hundreds of years later, a monk by the name of Martin Luther, discovered God’s grace and mercy in his study of Scripture.

I. **Like Jacob and Joseph, The World Is Full Of Fearful, Doubting People Who Behave Selfishly.**

- A. The story of Jacob displays before us a behavior that is not acting with faith and trust in God.
 - 1. Distrust leads Jacob and his mother to plan and carry out the sinful deed of taking the birth rite away from Jacob’s brother, Esau.
 - a. There’s enough sin to go around: Rebekah (the mother) was partial toward her son Jacob. Jacob agreed with and went along with the plan of his mother to steal his brother’s birth rite.
 - b. Esau, because he was hungry for a good meal, sold his birth rite.
 - c. Jacob tricked his elderly, blind father (who hesitated, but gave the blessing anyway) and received the blessing that should have gone to Esau. Dishonorable behavior fills this story.
- B. The story of Joseph’s brothers demonstrates a mercy and love that is given to totally undeserving ones.
 - 1. Joseph’s brothers, who had sold him into slavery, came to Egypt in search of food during a famine and encountered Joseph (though they did not recognize him at first).
 - 2. Joseph’s brothers did not deserve anything good from Joseph, only punishment.
- C. What is your story? Are you deserving of God’s mercy and forgiveness?
 - 1. Now, that person who has hurt you the most, is he/she deserving of God’s mercy? Of your mercy? Who is?

II. **God Works Repentance and Sorrow Over Sin In Human Hearts That Leads To Forgiveness. God’s mercy targets undeserving humans and frees them from guilt and shame. (No one deserves God’s mercy, but we all “qualify” for it.)**

- A. Jacob was crushed by the reality of his wrongdoing and the fear of the consequences of his sinful behavior toward Esau and toward God. (Gen. 32:10)
 - 1. The sincerity of Jacob’s repentance is something that God alone can judge.
- B. Joseph’s brothers feared Joseph and repented of their transgressions and sins against Joseph and against God. (Gen. 50:17)
 - 1. Joseph, speaking to his brothers, said, “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, for the saving of many lives...” (Gen. 50:20).
 - 2. “Love covers a multitude of sins,” writes the Apostle Peter. (I Pt. 4:8).
 - 3. Luther’s dying words, “Truly, we are all but beggars.”