

## Patterns of Grace and Gratitude Week 5

Saturday, May 15



Photo credit: Tim Kreps

*Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, LORD, you who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two camps. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'" ....Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.*                      *Genesis 32:9-12 & 33:1-4*

Have you ever had to travel a bridge that looked like this to get back to family? It might literally be a beat-up bridge. But it could also be symbolic. Maybe there have been harsh words said. Or totally different belief systems that separate you. It could be feelings were hurt because one child seemed to be favored over another. In any event, sometimes family dynamics are hard. And we end up in a figurative foreign land, not speaking the same language and not even sure we would want to talk even if we did speak the same language.

But sometimes we must go home. We belong there and we belong to each other even though we are different. Jacob and Esau were twins with a long history of differences and deceit. Esau usually got the raw end of the deal. And now Jacob is worried that his twin brother, Esau, will kill him for his misdeeds. But instead Jacob received a brotherly kiss. There are two important parts of grace: repenting and forgiveness. Jacob is definitely a scoundrel and he repents before God. Esau offers forgiveness. This is a shining example of grace. We can't really logic our way through it. But God's fingerprints are all over it. Are there places you need to return? And are there people you need to face with repentance or forgiveness? Pray for the courage to return or forgive.