

Genesis 27 Lord Over Dysfunction 7/21/18

When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.”

“Here I am,” he answered.

² Isaac said, “I am now an old man and don’t know the day of my death.³ Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴ Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.”

⁵ Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, ⁶ Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, ⁷ ‘Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.’ ⁸ Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: ⁹ Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. ¹⁰ Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.”

¹¹ Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin. ¹² What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing.”

¹³ His mother said to him, “My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me.”

¹⁴ So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. ¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. ¹⁶ She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. ¹⁷ Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made.

¹⁸ He went to his father and said, “My father.”

“Yes, my son,” he answered. “Who is it?”

¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

²⁰ Isaac asked his son, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?”

“The LORD your God gave me success,” he replied.

²¹ Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.”

²² Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” ²³ He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him. ²⁴ “Are you really my son Esau?” he asked.

“I am,” he replied.

²⁵ Then he said, “My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing.”

Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. ²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come here, my son, and kiss me.”

²⁷ So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said,

*“Ah, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a field
that the LORD has blessed.*

*²⁸ May God give you heaven’s dew
and earth’s richness—
an abundance of grain and new wine.*

*²⁹ May nations serve you
and peoples bow down to you.*

*Be lord over your brothers,
and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.*

*May those who curse you be cursed
and those who bless you be blessed.”*

³⁰ After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father’s presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. ³¹ He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, “My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

³² His father Isaac asked him, “Who are you?”

“I am your son,” he answered, “your firstborn, Esau.”

33 Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!”

34 When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me—me too, my father!”

35 But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.”

36 Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me: He took my birthright, and now he’s taken my blessing!” Then he asked, “Haven’t you reserved any blessing for me?”

37 Isaac answered Esau, “I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?”

38 Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!” Then Esau wept aloud.

39 His father Isaac answered him,

*“Your dwelling will be
away from the earth’s richness,
away from the dew of heaven above.*

*40 You will live by the sword
and you will serve your brother.*

*But when you grow restless,
you will throw his yoke
from off your neck.”*

41 Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

42 When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, “Your brother Esau is planning to avenge himself by killing you. 43 Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Harran. 44 Stay with him for a while until your brother’s fury subsides. 45 When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I’ll send word for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?”

46 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I’m disgusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living.”

(Pastor prays)

You have in front of you one of the most pathetic stories in the entire Bible and it’s about the patriarchs Isaac, Jacob and their families. On the outside it seems like they’ve got it all together, but go behind closed doors and that good-looking, church-going family is a wreck. Isaac the father is spiritually dull and completely unplugged. Rebekah the wife smiles a lot, but behind that smile is a manipulative, deceitful and driven woman who cloaks her treachery in righteousness.

They have twin boys, Esau and Jacob. Esau is rebellious and obtuse, but he connects well with the father. He likes fast cars and fast women. In fact, he married two Hittite women and it drives his mother insane. Although Esau’s dad doesn’t approve, he secretly admires Esau’s brash life.

Then there’s Jacob. He’s a momma’s boy. She dotes on him and he loves it. His name, Jacob, means “trickster, heel grabber” because he was holding onto Esau’s heel as they came out of the womb. And although Jacob is God’s chosen vessel, he doesn’t really seem to have a conscience in this story.

This story is unique because all of us are in it somehow. You see, everyone in this story is trying to do his/her own thing with their own agenda and yet what happened in the end is exactly what God said would happen back in Genesis 25. This passage is, in many ways, an encouragement. If you have a messed-up family, you are not alone. God’s not done. Dysfunction doesn’t mean disqualified. If you think you missed God’s will for your life, you’re wrong. 1 Thessalonians 4 says that God’s will for your life is your sanctification, growing more like Christ.

We are going to look today at the story and see that nobody in this story is innocent, just like nobody in this room is innocent. But through all of the deceit and distrust and scheming and cheating, God accomplished His will through deep mercy and unstoppable grace. The will of God is accomplished through deeply flawed people to show us that the power and perfection and praise belong to God and God alone. Sin abounds in this story, but don’t forget what the New Testament tells us: where sin abounds, God’s grace abounds even more.

God's Grace is Greater Than All Our Sins.

Let's point out sins in the four main characters.

It's a Sin to be Bullheaded

Isaac. The story opens with Isaac as an old man. You see him there in verse 1. He is old and partly blind. Verse 2 lets us know that he could die at any time (even though he lives another 30-40 years) and he needs to give his last will and testament. He needs to make sure that everything went to his oldest son. *Primogeniture* – that was the custom at the time. Only one problem: God had given specific instructions to Rebekah and Isaac about the boys. Back in Genesis 25: 22-23, *The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. ²³ The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."*

That was God's word. Jacob, not Esau, was to receive the inheritance. Isaac knew that but he was bullheaded. Not only that, Isaac was playing favorites. From the very beginning in Genesis 25:28, the Bible tells us Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game. Isaac was ruled by his base desires. Look at verse 3-4, *Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴ Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die."*

So far we see that Isaac is rejecting, ignoring God's word. He is ruled by his desires and playing favorites but there is something else. Isaac is completing ignoring the fact that Esau isn't qualified. In Genesis 25:23 is the prophesy. In Genesis 25:29, he sold his birthright. He's married to not one but two Hittite women in Genesis 26:34-35 and Genesis 27:46.

I think the thing that bothers me most about Isaac is that he yielded to cultural expectations. Primogeniture is the right of the first-born. That's how the other families would do it. And he knew that God called them to be different. Listen, to value the cultural norm over our Bible standard – this happens with God's people. Parents who press kids to success while neglecting godliness, winning over worship and hobbies over

holiness, advancement over Christlike-ness. Isaac knew what God had said, but he had his own agenda and shows himself to be bullheaded. It's a sin to be bullheaded.

It's a sin to be manipulative. Rebekah. In the story, Isaac intends to bless Esau but Rebekah is not having it. Let's think about Rebekah a little bit. She's beautiful, she's confident and determined. She's strong resourceful, decisive and cunning. She's the prime mover in the family. Isaac may wear the pants, but Rebekah tells him which pair to put on.

Let's read the story and see if you see yourself. While Isaac was talking to Esau look at Rebekah in verse 5. *Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back,* Let's list the manipulation. She took advantage of the old man's blindness and his love for food. She comes up with the plan.

What happened to her and Isaac? They used to be on the same team. When she couldn't have kids, he prayed for her. Theirs was a storybook romance and now they are in separate beds and focusing on the kids. She's playing favorites with Jacob because he likes to cook and he's actually a lot like her, but Rebekah has some deeper issues. Her strong personality isn't the problem. Her confidence, work ethic, and ability to lead – those are not the problem. Her problem is that she lacks trust. She doesn't trust that God is going to do what God said He would do.

Remember when she was pregnant back in Genesis 25 and those twins were wrestling and she asked. God told her His plan and what He's going to do, that Jacob was going to be blessed, but she heard that Isaac was going to bless Esau so she has to "help" God because He isn't moving fast enough. She's a pragmatist. The ends justify the means. She's a "whatever it takes" kind of girl.

The problem is that, with God, you can't do the *right* things the *wrong* way. For instance, love is the right thing. God's love is right. To love people and to love someone romantically is a good thing. But if you do it the wrong way, it's a sin. You see, God ordains the means just like He ordains the end. Isaac was *bullheaded* – sin. Rebekah was *manipulative* – sin.

It's a sin to be rebellious. Esau. There's not much good to say about Esau. He was a brute of a man, rebelling against almost everything. He was a good hunter and evidently very hairy, since Jacob's trick involved being wrapped in goat hair.

Esau was famous for selling his birthright back in Genesis 25. He didn't care about family or church or traditions. He didn't mind flaunting his sin at the end of chapter 26 and chapter 37. His two pagan wives are mentioned, and that fact really upset his father Isaac, but he didn't care. He is ill-tempered, self-centered, reactionary and nothing is ever his fault.

At the end of the chapter when he finds out Jacob got the blessing, all he could think about was revenge. Esau is an emotional, volatile man. Hebrews 12 describes him as an unholy and confusing, as having an emotional experience without real repentance. Tears don't save you, grace does. Isaac was *bullheaded*. Rebekah was *manipulative*. And Esau is a tragic figure of *rebellion*.

It's a sin to be fake. Jacob. I think the person who is the most disappointing in the story is Jacob. Look at him in verse 18. He has Esau's clothing on and is covered in goat hair. He's carrying trick food his mom made and immediately starts lying. Let's read verses 18-27. *¹⁸ He went to his father and said, "My father."*

"Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?"

¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing."

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his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him. ²⁴ “Are you really my son Esau?” he asked.

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Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. ²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come here, my son, and kiss me.”

²⁷ So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said,

*“Ah, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a field
that the LORD has blessed.*

Lying, deceit, blasphemy, betrayal with a kiss. I know that he is the chosen one. I know that from him will come the Messiah. But here, he's a first-rate fake. It's not until chapter 32, when he wrestles with God and God hurts him and changes him that we see what God intended all along.

Isaiah is bullheaded.

Rebekah is manipulative.

Esau is rebellious.

And Isaac is a fake.

All of us are identifying with one of these people. Maybe you have all those qualities. I want to get your eyes off people for a minute and let's see God in the text and in our lives.

God's word is **infallible**. In Genesis 25 the Lord told Rebekah that Jacob would rule. And that's exactly what happened.

God's will is **unstoppable**. The whole point of the passage is that the sovereign will of God is done in spite of our or anyone else's opposition. What foolishness to think that I

could stop the purposes of God. God doesn't make a plan and then *hope* it turns out. Our plans may fail but God's purposes *never* fail. Think on the bigness of this God.

God's grace is **unthinkable**. That He would change, use, bless and choose Jacob. Jacob had no merits of his own to make God want to use him. That's grace and a picture of the Gospel. Jesus died and took the place of sinners.

God's perfect will is accomplished through **flawed** people. Isaac. Rebekah. Jacob. You when you are folded in Christ.

God's ways are not our ways. In the story, the older will serve the younger. The first is made last, the weak made strong, the poor are blessed, the perfect one— Jesus—dies in the place of sinners.

The Gospel of Jesus is the theme of the whole Bible. In this story, Jacob is portrayed as a schemer, but from this devil of a man, the promised redeemer would come. Jesus would take on the fullness of Man's wickedness by being born from a wretched line.

2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us, *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*. Ultimately, this passage points us to the true and better Jacob who doesn't deceive but is fully righteous. And who, with an earned righteousness, dies on the cross as the sin-bearer, taking the wrath and judgment of God. And it is only through faith in this work on the cross that you can become a child of God.

In Jesus, God's grace is greater than all our sin.

(Pastor prays)