

## 020920 Growth Group Study

### Family Dynamics and the Coveted Blessing

Gen 27:1-29



**Background:** In this week's text we are drawn into the intimacies of a sacred meal where the patriarchal blessing, with all its eternal promises, will be passed down from one generation to the next through the chosen son. Sadly however, the sanctity of the occasion is crushed by dysfunctional family dynamics, where each party serves their personal interests through deceit, blasphemy, manipulation, and a literal "coverup." How will God intervene to further his kingdom when the chosen family has all but denied God's presence? There is so much in this text that speaks to family dynamics, birth order, competition, favoritism and the "coveted blessing" we all long for. I wish I had three weeks to tease out all of its implications.

#### Sermon Text: Gen 25:19-34 (ESV)

##### I. Meal Preparations: Isaac and Esau Dynamics (1-4)

*1 When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. 3 Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, 4 and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."*

##### II. Meal Preparations: Rebekah and Jacob Dynamics (5-17)

###### A. Rebekah Intervenes (5-10)

*5 Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, 6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, 7 'Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the LORD before I die.' 8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. 9 Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. 10 And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies."*

## **B. Jacob's concerns overruled (11-14)**

11 But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. 12 Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing." 13 His mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me." 14 So he went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved.

## **C. Rebekah: Seamstress and cook (15-17)**

15 Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. 16 And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. 17 And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

## **III. The Meal: Jacob and Isaac Dynamics (18-29)**

### **A. The approach: Deceit and blasphemy (18-20)**

18 So he went in to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" 19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." 20 But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God granted me success."

### **B. Isaac groping in the dark (21-27)**

#### **Test #1 (21-23)**

21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." 22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." 23 And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed him.

#### **Test #2 (24-25)**

24 He said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He answered, "I am." 25 Then he said, "Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

#### **Test #3 (26-27)**

26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, my son." 27 So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said,  
"See, the smell of my son  
is as the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed!"

### **C. The blessing secured (28-29)**

28 May God give you of the dew of heaven  
and of the fatness of the earth  
and plenty of grain and wine.

29 Let peoples serve you,  
and nations bow down to you.

Be lord over your brothers,  
and may your mother's sons bow down to you.

*Cursed be everyone who curses you,  
and blessed be everyone who blesses you!"*

## **Discussion Questions**

### **1. Preparation**

- a. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
- b. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- c. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

### **2. Sermon questions: The Gift of Siblings**

- a. Use one word to describe each of your sibling(s) and one word to describe your relationship with each.
- b. What impact did your birth order have on you?
- c. Did your parents have favorites? Who and why?
- d. Has wrestling with sibling rivalry impacted your life?
- e. Have you ever felt that you had to be "someone else" to be praised? If so, what false self did you employ?
- f. How has your relationship with God changed the way you view your siblings?