



JACOB—FROM BROKENNESS TO BLESSING PART 1, THE BOWL AND THE BIRTHRIGHT

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BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

TEXT(S):

"The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:1-3)

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis 1:27-28)

"Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God." (Exodus 3:6)

"This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac.

Abraham became the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord.

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."

When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left." (Genesis 25:19-34)

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for the immediate."*

-Pastor Randy

"Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau, who traded his birthright as the firstborn son for a single meal. You know that afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears." (Hebrews 12:16-17)

"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff." (Hebrews 11:21)

MESSAGE SUMMARY

God wants to bless His creation and His children. That's mirrored by His creatures who want to do the same with their offspring. Blessings in the Bible involved a meaningful, appropriate touch, and a spoken message. It is designed to confer a special future for him or her and an endowment of purpose. A high value was attached to one being blessed, and there was an active commitment to fulfill the blessing. God's blessing is at the center of His covenants. Israel's heritage would be remembered by God's relationship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When it seems that the blessing is not being realized, their tension, and ours too, is "will you trust God?" or will you take matters into your own hands?

In the ancient Near East, a birthright was a summary statement of everything a person could be. It meant three things. A birthright child would receive a double portion of the material inheritance. They would also be next in line to lead the family. And they would be guaranteed a place of honor as the one who carries on the family name. While Jacob valued the birthright, or the potentiality of inheritance and honor, Esau was willing to give it up for a bowl of stew. The bowl represents sacrificing your future for the pleasure of the moment. God created appetites and sin distorted them. However, appetites are never fully and finally satisfied. So when we live by our appetites, we will be tempted to trade the ultimate for the immediate. Beware of the temptation to give up what you want most for what you want now. Beware of unsatisfied appetites that become exaggerated emotions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What stood out to you in Sunday's sermon? Why was it significant to you?
2. What was your high/low for this past week (or since group last met)? What was the best thing that happened and the worst thing that happened?
3. Last time we met, we talked about [whatever you talked about]. Has anyone had a chance to put that lesson into practice? Has it had an impact on your life in anyway?
4. What is one thing that you're looking forward to this week?
What's one that you are dreading?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Read Genesis 25:19-34. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. What does this story tell us about God?
3. Why did Esau sell his birthright?
4. What decision making criteria was Esau using that he would give up his inheritance for a bowl of soup?
5. What was at stake? For whom?

Cont.,

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CONT.

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Why does the New Testament condemn Esau for selling his birthright? (Hebrews 12:16-17) What did selling the birthright represent? What does this interaction tell us about Esau's character and values?
2. The birthright at that time meant a double portion inheritance. What has been promised to you as an inheritance from following Jesus?
3. While Esau's appetite was literal hunger, what other appetites of the flesh pose a temptation to sacrifice a promised inheritance?
4. In the ancient Near East, the birthright meant honor, material gain, and power. We may not live in a birthright culture, however, human nature still satisfies the need of the moment at the cost of the ultimate. What are the ways in which people today choose short-term gains over long-term profit?
5. Jacob didn't often have something that Esau would want. So when Esau seems desperate, Jacob has power over Esau. What do you think about that?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Where are you in the story? Who are you?
2. If you didn't reply Esau to #1, what areas of your life can you see a bit of him in you?
3. What "birthright" have you sold?
4. How do you battle desires of the flesh?
5. Just as Esau rhetorically asked, "What good is the birthright to me?", how might losing sight of your inheritance make you more susceptible to temptation in a time of testing?
6. Where are you tempted to trade the ultimate for the immediate?
7. Do you feel a pressure to go out and "make it happen" rather than wait for God to fulfill his promises? How did this work out? What were the results (spiritually, relationally, physically, etc.)?

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. How can we avoid the snares of unwise and impulsive behavior?
2. How do we gain a right view of our appetites?
3. How do we train our appetites? Are their good appetites (for God, his Presence, the good gifts of the Spirit) that have the power to displace disaffected desires?
4. Confess and repent of times when you have caved to the pressure of making your promised birthright happen and manipulated or forced or grasped for something.
5. How might you pass on a blessing you have been given? Or what might you speak into the life of another and so bring into being something now latent?