

Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

Can you believe it, the trickster (the meaning of Jacob's name) gets away with stealing the blessing from his older brother? Having received this blessing, we hear in a dream that God indeed will bless the nations through the descendants of Jacob. Here again, we see that God's ways are not our ways. Yet God will always work through imperfect people like you and me to push the world toward the restoration he desires.

Theology Connection:

This is not a morality story. This is a story of grace. Grace is always undeserved. Grace is always a gift. Jacob receives a gift that he certainly did not deserve, but nonetheless God is faithful to his promise and despite Jacob's character, God will use him as an instrument of his grace for the sake of the world. While we might judge others as being better equipped to be chosen by God, we are reminded if God can use Jacob, then God can use us.

Application:

Obviously, we are not being encouraged to deceive someone to get what we want. We are, however, being encouraged to do everything within our capabilities to accomplish God's purposes for our lives and the world. We are not to allow obstacles to stand in the way of faithfully following in the footsteps of Jesus our Lord. As with Jacob, God's promise is that we are not alone, God is with us. What is keeping you from stepping up and stepping out for the sake of the gospel?

The Text: Genesis 27: 1-4, 15-23; 28: 10-17

27 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. ²Isaac said, "I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death. ³Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴Prepare 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."

¹⁵Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob.

¹⁶She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. ¹⁷Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. ¹⁸He went to his father and said, "My father."

"Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?" ¹⁹Jacob 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."

²⁰Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?"
"The Lord your God gave me success," he replied. ²¹Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not."

²²Jacob 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."

²³He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so, he proceeded to bless him.

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¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. ¹¹When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep.

¹²He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.

¹⁴Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

¹⁶When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

ADULT

We hear in today's text about Jacob's ladder. How often have we seen faith as something like a ladder? How often have we found ourselves imagining that we are not good enough, that we are incapable of climbing up that ladder? The good news is that God descends down the ladder and promises to watch over us wherever we go, never to leave us until the promise has been fulfilled. Can faith be so simple as to trust that God is here, that God cares, that God is with us?

YOUTH

Please read Genesis 27:1-4, 15-23 and 28:10-17

My first thought is why did Rebekah and Jacob go to all the trouble to trick Esau out of Isaac's blessing? Why not just ask Isaac for a blessing? Why risk the wrath of Esau for a nice thought and a prayer?

Because God made a covenant with Abraham, which was then handed on to Isaac, then to be passed on to Esau. As we learned from past stories God's blessing comes with enormous weight of responsibility. Remember Abraham almost killed his own son to earn God's trust.

God's covenant was not to be taken lightly. Esau, the eldest, was next in line to bear the blessing and the responsibility, was likely to be groomed his entire life to carry it. Jacob, on the other hand, was not but he came up with this tricky plan. What do you think is the lesson behind Jacob and Esau?

Let us pray:

Dear God, thank you for loving us when we are being tricky. Please help guide us so we don't think we need to trick you. Thank you for your everlasting love and grace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

CHILDREN'S

Today's lesson is sort of an unusual story from the Bible. It is the story of two brothers, they were twins. Their father Isaac loved the older twin, Esau, and Mom loved the younger. God had told their mother Rebekah that the younger twin, Jacob, would be incredibly special! Rebekah knew that Jacob, not Esau, was the one God wanted to use to raise a mighty nation, but rather than let God work things out on His own, Rebekah decided to deceive her husband and get Jacob to go along with it. Rebekah made a bad choice. Jacob could have refused his mother's plan, but he went right along with it. He pretended to be Esau, he lied to his dad, and he stole the blessing that was meant for his big brother. Jacob made a bad choice. Esau was so angry with his mother and brother, he vowed to kill Jacob! Rebekah and Jacob's bad choices had split their family in two. Despite all the bad choices this family made, everything turned out okay.

What did you learn from this story?

What was confusing or hard to understand?

Remember:

The Bible tells us that mankind made a bad choice by rebelling against God. Adam and Eve sinned, and they put all of us on the wrong path, just as Jacob did when he deceived his father.

Pray:

Dear God,

Help us to get back on track when we take a wrong turn. Please forgive our mistakes and make us new.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.