

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (May 28, 2023)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

This morning is the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. In our services we remember those who have paid an ultimate price on battle fields near and far. This weekend we also remember all of those we have loved who have passed this previous year. This is a weekend of tears, of gratitude, of laughter and memories, of the awareness of the blessings of God and the frailty of human life. In the Bible story for this morning's sermon we read about choices made that tore a family apart: deception, favoritism, theft, pride and power all converge in a moment in a family's life. Dad's eyesight was failing. He wanted to bless his oldest son. Mom had a plan for the younger of her two sons, her favorite one, to receive the blessing instead. Most could predict how that would play out. All of this, I believe, because those in the story failed to trust God. When we take matters into our own hands and try to instruct God, or force God to act in a certain way, chaos, division, heartache, sorrow, regret follow. May we trust God here at Grace, and in our own lives too.

### **Jacob's Deception** (Genesis 27:1-45. Selected Verses include below)

<sup>27:1</sup> "When Isaac was old (he would live to be 180) 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.' <sup>2</sup> He said, 'Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. <sup>3</sup> Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, <sup>4</sup> 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.' (verse 5 omitted here)

<sup>6</sup> Rebekah said to her son Jacob, 'I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, <sup>7</sup> "Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the Lord before I die" ... (verses 8-17 omitted here)

<sup>18</sup> So he went in to his father and said, 'My father.' And he said, 'Here I am. Who are you, my son?' <sup>19</sup> 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.' <sup>20</sup> 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.' <sup>21</sup> 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.' <sup>22</sup> 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.' (verses 23-25 omitted here)

<sup>26</sup> Then his father Isaac said to him, 'Come near and kiss me, my son.' <sup>27</sup> So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him ... (verses 28-29 omitted here)

<sup>30</sup> As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting ... (verses 31-33 omitted here) (Esau) "cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, 'Bless me, even me also, O my father!' <sup>35</sup> But he said, 'Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.' ... (verses 36-37 omitted here). <sup>38</sup> Esau said to his father, 'Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.' And Esau lifted up his voice and wept ... (verses 39-41 omitted here)

<sup>41</sup> Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, 'The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.'" (verses 42-45 omitted here)

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What does this passage tell us about the relationship between Jacob and Esau? Between the two boys and their parents?
2. What do we learn here about the importance of the "blessing"?
3. How would you describe Jacob? Esau? Rebekah? Isaac?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

4. What does "I am old and do not know the day of my death" mean? Is this a good perspective to have about life? Discuss.
5. What does "he has taken away your blessing" mean?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

6. Have you ever had, do you now have, a strained or broken relationship with someone close to you? What happened?
7. Was there ever, is there now, favoritism in your family?
8. If Jacob had been your brother, and he had done to you what he did to Esau, how would you have responded? Why?
9. How do you know if you've received the blessing of God? What is that blessing? Why is it important? Discuss.
10. Which of your relationships needs a new start? Forgiveness?
11. How can you trust God more and not try to force your plans?

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you trust Him more and let go of your plans. Pray for patience. Pray that you remember God's promises. He promises to be with you because He loves you.