# Blueprint for Blessing — Delivery Transcript

**Genesis 35–36 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, September 15, 2024** · *The Patriarchs*

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The great three monotheistic religions, whether it's Islam, Judaism, or Christianity, they all kind of find their founding fathers right there in the Old Testament book of Genesis with Abraham. Isaac and Jacob. And we've been looking most recently at Jacob and we come to the tail end of his life with a pretty tragic Note followed by Esau, his brother's genealogy. And on the surface it may not look like much, but what I think it's doing is it's creating a contrast. Between Jacob's life and Esau's life. So the way I want us to look at the passage this morning is through the lens of a single word or a big idea.

A lot of people do this when it comes to the Bible and theologians call it biblical theology where they'll take a central theme. And trace that theme throughout Old and New Testaments. Some people use the word kingdom and trace the idea of kingdom from Genesis to Revelation. And if you do that, you'll notice it's it kind of progresses. And it's really crazy. How it progresses given the fact that the Bible is 66 books, 50 some odd authors, and yet it has this cohesive feel to it. You could use the word covenant You could use a lot of different words.

But the word that we're going to use today is the word blessing. Blessing. And the idea of blessing is all over the place in the book of Genesis, particularly in the lives of these three patriarchs. We saw a blessing show up in Genesis 1 when God created everything. He created mankind on the sixth day. And he, what did he do? He blessed them. Remember? Remember how he blessed them? He blessed them with a thing called S-E-X for the kids in the room. Don't spell that out. He said, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it.

He blessed the people in that way. He blessed the Sabbath He made it holy. He in Genesis 3 doesn't bless, but he curses. You remember who God curses in Genesis 3? A lot of people think he cursed Adam and Eve. He didn't curse Adam and Eve. God never curses a human being ever. He cursed the serpent and he cursed the ground You get to Genesis 4, you got a curse and a blessing on Cain and Abel. Cain murders Abel. Abel's blessed because of his offering. Abel is cursed You get to Noah's life.

Noah is blessed of God. Noah's sons are blessed of God, except for one son named Ham, who in Noah had a little bit too much fermented grape juice, got a little indisposed in his tent. Ham came in there, dishonored his dad, so Noah cursed his grandson, Canaan. Blessing and cursing, blessing and cursing. On and on we could go. Abraham was blessed of God. Lot was not Isaac was blessed of God, Ishmael was not. Jacob was blessed of God, Esau was not. And that's really what we've been tracking over the last couple of months, Jacob and Esau.

Why is it though that Jacob was blessed and not Esau? Have you ever have you ever wondered that question? Why did God pick Abraham of all the people in the world? Why Noah? He wasn't all that special. He wasn't a super good dude. And Abraham certainly wasn't a good person. Isaac and Jacob, we've all seen how they've had seasons of their life where they were just scoundrels and super bad people. So why does he bless some people and not other people? Has anybody ever asked that question before? Why does God bless some and not others?

And in some ways I guess I can't say because I'm not God and ultimately I guess you'll have to ask him when you get to heaven. I can't speak for God in that respect, but as I look at the scriptures and as I kind of think about my own life and as a pastor watching people and their lives. One common denominator I've noticed between a life of blessing and a life of cursing could be summed up in a one one word and that's the word design. Those who embrace God's design for life experience, generally speaking, a life of blessing.

And those who reject God's design and embrace a counterfeit design end up finding a life Separated from God's blessing, or you could call that a life of cursing. And it really it's common sense if you think about it, if there is a God and He created everything. That is, he's the kind of the owner of the machine. He designed the machine to operate according to certain laws and procedures and when you take that design that God has made and you tear up the owner's man, you don't say, I'm going to do it a totally different way, you're going to break the machine.

Because machines were built to work a certain kind of way, and just like the world was built to run a certain way, and when you operate in God's world according to his blueprint design, then things are just going to work. You know, you're going to get a lot more mileage out of your vehicle because you did it the right way, whereas if you don't, you won't. And it's not because God is mean and bad, it's just because he's the creator, he had a design, said do it this way. When you don't, it won't work embrace God's design, you'll find blessing.

If you reject God's design, you'll find cursing. And in this case, in Esau and Jacob, one embraced God's design and the other. Did not. And that's why one experienced a life of blessing and one did not. So just to catch you up, Genesis 35, Jacob is like I said, not a super great person, but He was chosen by God to carry on the seed of promise that was first

mentioned in Genesis 3. 15. We saw Jacob deceive his dad, lie to his I'm sorry, deceive his brother and lie to his dad.

He had to leave his hometown for twenty plus years. He ended up meeting a uncle named Laban who wasn't a good dude, tricked him to marry his daughters. He ended up marrying the ugly daughter first and then got the pretty daughter after that it's like a Jerry Springer episode on steroids. Twenty years go by, a life filled with chaos and competition and brokenness, but God ends up working through the suffering. Develops Jacob into somewhat of a godly man, wrestles with him all night, changes his name. He confronts his brother Esau after twenty plus years.

They reconcile, but after reconciling, Jacob kind of goes back to his old ways backslides in his life and chaos erupts and his daughter is sexually assaulted, his sons end up committing all sorts of evil. Murder in a town that they had been staying in. And when we get to our passage in Genesis 35, God finally says to Jacob, Wake up. Go do what I told you to do. Have you had enough of this pain and misery? And Jacob says, yes, okay, I'm done. So God said to Jacob, this is chapter 35, verse 1, get up, go to Bethel and settle there, build an altar there.

To the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau. So Jacob said to his family and all who are with him, get rid of the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves and change your clothes. We must get up and go to Bethel. I'll build an altar there to the God who answered me in my day of distress. He's been with me everywhere that I've gone. So the family responds, they give Jacob all of their foreign gods and their earrings, and Jacob hid them under the oak near Shechem.

Shechem was the town that they were living in when they went vigilante justice and killed everybody. So when they set out, even though the townspeople should have come after them, it says a terror from God came over all the cities around them, and they did not pursue Jacob's sons. So Jacob and all who were with him came to Luz, that is Bethel. Remember that's where God initially wanted him to go, in the land of Canaan. And Jacob built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, the God of the house of God, because it was there.

That God had revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother. Now, one of the things that just stands out to me as I think about a life of blessing Juxtaposed with the life of cursing, Jacob contrasted with Esau, just reading these eight verses alone, is that Jacob experienced a life of blessing even though he didn't deserve it. Jacob was a scoundrel. He was a bad dude. He was deceptive. He was a trickster. He tricked his brother. He lied to his dad. Even when God works in his life and he kind of becomes more godly.

More prayerful, more dependent on God. Even then he kind of slips back into his old ways. And yet still he ends up experiencing the blessing of God. And as I thought about that, I thought to myself it's really interesting that when God chooses who to bless and who not to

bless, it's not a matter of who is sinless or who isn't. Who is perfect and who is not perfect, who's morally deserving and who is not morally deserving. When it comes to God's blessing. Personal perfection is not a consideration. And I think that's really important for us to remember if we want to live a blessed life, that God's inroad into the life of blessing is not some flawless moral record because there is no such thing, there is no such human.

Every human, post Adam and Eve Is born into a world of brokenness. They're born with an inclination to reject God's design, to go their own way, chart their own course, and that creates sin in their life. The thing that distinguished Jacob from Esau was not perfection or sinlessness, it was a spirit of repentance. Jacob repented. God said, I want you to quit worshiping idols. I want you to get rid of these things. And Jacob said, okay, that's what I'll do. And if you read on, after his repentance, God blesses him.

Deborah, the one who had nursed and raised Rebekah, she died, and was buried under the oak south of Bethel. If you don't know the background, Deborah was Jacob's mom's servant, maid, maidservant, someone that kind of helped with the chores in the house. So you might think of Deborah as Jacob's second mom, and Jacob was already a mama's boy, so I'm assuming he was pretty close to Deborah. This is the sad thing. She dies. Buried under the oak south of Bethel, and Jacob named it Allon-bacuth. And then God appeared to Jacob again after he returned from Paddan-aram, and he what.

And he blessed him. He blessed him. And God said, Your name is Jacob, but you'll no longer be called Jacob. Your name will be Israel, which means your name goes from trickster, supplanter to one who wrestles with God and prevails. He named him Israel. And God also said to him, I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply. A nation, indeed, an assembly of nations will come from you. Kings will descend from you. You might underline that phrase. That's the same thing that God said to Abraham. And to Isaac. I will give you the land that I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, and I will give the land to your future descendants.

And then God withdrew from him at the place where he had spoken to him, and Jacob set up a marker at the place where he had spoken to him a stone marker, poured a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it, and Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel. So even though Jacob was a scoundrel, even though he's right on the heels, of moral corruption, his son and daughters, his daughter being sexually compromised and molested, his sons turning into you know some evil form of Batman vigilante justice when he repents and he says, God, you're right, I was wrong.

I should have been in Bethel the whole time. I should have been committed to a life of worship. I should have been committed to walking in the will of God all the way, not just 50% or 40% upon Jacob's repentance, the Lord blesses him. And so for those of you here this morning who think to yourself, I can never be blessed of God. Because of what I've done. I, you know, God doesn't want me, I'm spoiled goods. I am irredeemable. If you knew the

people I've hurt, if you knew the things that I've done, you wouldn't even want me in your church building.

And I think what the Lord would say to you is you are a sinner just like every other person in this room is a sinner and your past sins don't have to be a forever prison. Your past sins don't have to undermine undermine God's plans for your life. God may have plans of blessing and a hope and a future for your life, and all that is required of you is what was required of Jacob, which was a spirit of humility spirit of repentance that says, God, you're right, I was wrong.

I'm not saying that's easy to do, but that's what is required for a life of blessing, agreeing with God about the facts. That you embrace the counterfeit instead of his design, and that's why your life is a wreck. But when you embrace his design, he is a kind of God that says, I want to bless you. I want to give you a hope in a future. I just need you to do this my way instead of your way. So he gets a blessing because he repents. He also recommits himself to a life of worship.

And a life of walking in the will of God. Notice he goes to Bethel, which was God's will for his life, but he doesn't stay in Bethel. When God tells him to leave Bethel, he leaves Bethel. And he does what God wants him to do. If you're especially if you're a dad, I think one of the best things you can leave for your children is not a legacy of moral perfection. No dad's ever going to be a perfect example of godliness, but you can leave them a living example of a commitment to worship and walking in the will of God.

Not a perfect example, but a but a regular committed example of we're going to be people who worship the Lord. And we're going to be people who do what he asks us to do, even when it's hard. And that's Jacob modeling this for his family, giving them a life of blessing instead of cursing. You know, I used to when I was growing up we would go to youth camp and you guys just got back from youth camp, right? One of the things that people do at youth camp is they recommit their life to the Lord.

Some of you some of you guys might have made that decision. When I was going to seminary, people would mock that. You don't recommit your life to the Lord. If you commit to Jesus, you stay committed to Jesus. You never have to recommit your life to Jesus. And I think where they're coming from is I guess I can understand where they're coming from that once you really make a decision to trust Jesus, those who believe persevere in their faith. But the reality is people do recommit their life to Jesus. Is that not right?

When I was growing up and I was a student at youth camp, I actually didn't go to youth camp except for the very last year of my senior year, and I was wrestling with God because I sensed him calling me to ministry. And I was trying to disqualify myself from ministry by doing all sorts of bad, bad things that I hope no one ever finds out about. And I remember at

that youth camp, I was actually serving as a volunteer, not a student, I recommitted my life to the Lord And I said, I quit running.

I quit. I'm done. I'm tired. I don't like the person I am anymore. And I recommitted my life to Jesus. Now, whether you call that recommitment or repentance or Surrender, I don't care what you call it, but that is a characteristic of a blessed life. It is someone who on a regular basis, as needed says to themselves, I've drifted, I've gotten into a bad place, and I don't care if I'm 55 years old, I don't care if I'm a deacon in the church, I don't care if I'm the pastor of the church, I need to recommit myself to the ways of God.

And that invites God's blessing into your life. Rejecting that invites God's discipline into your life or a life of curse, a life of cursing. So you got to it's not about sinless perfection, it's about repentance and recommitment, recommitting to a life of worship walking in the will of God, whatever that may look like. But when you do that, as you do that, you need to also know that a life of blessing can include some some unpleasant things. And that's what happens with Jacob and chapter 35, verse 16, they set out from Bethel.

Ephrath, Rachel, who was his true love, she was the pretty wife, she began to give birth, and her labor was difficult. Remember, Rachel could not have any children. And till the very end she had a child named Joseph. And then she basically gave up and said, if God wants to give me another child, let it be. So this is her second born. It's a big deal, but it was a difficult labor. The midwife said to her, don't be afraid, for you have another son. And it was with her last breath, for she was dying, that she named him Benoni, which means son of my suffering or son of sorrow.

But Jacob, his father, called him Benjamin, which means son of my right hand or son of favor. So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem, that's right outside of where Jesus was born. Jacob set up a marker on her grave, it is still the marker at Rachel's grave today. So he's lost Deborah, his kind of motherly figure. Now he's lost the love of his wife, Rachel. He has a new child, he names it Son of my right hand. So there is a silver lining. But then he sets out again in verse twenty one.

He pitches his tent beyond the Tower of Eder. And while Israel or Jacob was living in that region, Reuben, who's his firstborn son with Leah, the wife he didn't want, He went in and slept with his father's concubine, Bilhah, which I mean was Rachel's maidservant, which might have been Jacob's second favorite, not wife, but baby mama, sounds like Jerry Springer, because it is, you know, the Bible's not a perfect example of being perfect people. Reuben is firstborn goes in and basically spoils the goods and says to Jacob, I know you don't like my mom, Leah.

You've made her life miserable. You've always chosen Rachel. But now that Rachel's dead and you might have a temptation to go to Bilhah and make her the favorite, I'm going to

make it so you can't. So he sleeps with her. Now whether it was consensual, we don't know. But it was a bad, bad thing. He went in, he slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard about it. I think it's interesting. He heard about it. What did he do after that? We don't know. He just heard about it. Jacob had twelve sons.

Here's the end of his story. Leah's sons were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun. She had all the kids. Rachel's sons were Joseph and Benjamin. The sons of Rachel's slave Bilhah were Dan and Naphtali. The sons of Leah's slave Zilpah were Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram. Those are the twelve tribes of Israel, those twelve boys right there, coming out of chaos and madness. Jacob came to his father, Isaac, at Mamre and Kiriath Arba, that is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had stayed.

Isaac lived 180 years, he took his last breath and died, and was gathered to his people, old and full of days, his sons Esau and Jacob, buried him. Now you talk about a bad ending. That's worse than that's worse than Endgame, right? Wait, not Endgame. Infinity War. That's worse than Infinity War where all the Avengers die and they float away into little particles and you're like, I paid $15 to be sad? What? That's what it feels like with Jacob here. He's He lost his motherly figure. He lost the love of his life.

His firstborn son you know did a very bad thing. Wouldn't call it incest because technically they weren't related, but it was not right. And then his dad dies while he's walking in the will of God, while he's committed to a life of worship, while he's doing everything that he's supposed to do, his life is full of problems and pain and suffering. And I think that Moses says this intentionally as he contrasts a life of blessing with a life of cursing. Jacob and Esau. Jacob is chosen, Jacob is blessed. Esau rejected the blessing and he's not chosen.

Jacob's life is filled with problems because the blessed life on this side of heaven is often filled with problems. We live in a sinful, broken world, and just because you are walking in the will of God and chosen to be blessed of God doesn't mean your life will be pain-free. And you can't let the suffering of life or the sin in this world to blind you to the reality of hope and the reality of God's presence in your pain. It's just the it's just the consequence of living in a sinful broken world.

God does not always protect us from from pain and suffering. And s in fact sometimes it's by virtue of walking in God's will that more suffering is introduced into your life and you cannot take that as an indicator of whether God is for you or against you. Sometimes blessed people have lives full of pain and suffering and personal problems. And Jacob was one of those people. God's purposes are not nullified because of our of our pain and suffering. Just like your past sins don't nullify God's plans for your life. So also your suffering does not nullify God's purpose in your life.

He has a purpose to bless you, and that blessing can be irrespective of your sin and brokenness, and it can be irrespective of the suffering that you endure. And those are two of the things that keep most people away from the blessed life. People stay away from God because they feel like they're not worthy, or they stay away from God because they feel like he's not good. Because if God was so good, why would this world have so many problems? And the reality of Genesis, what he's trying to show is God is up to something way bigger than that and he has in orchestrating his plan, he has made it so that you don't need moral perfection to experience his blessing.

But by virtue of living in that sinful broken world where people are not perfect, you're going to have a little bit of pain and suffering. Hold fast. Don't take it personally. If those are true of a life of blessing, then what's true of a life of cursing? This is where things get interesting. The narrative shifts away from Jacob and gets to Esau. This is typical form of Genesis. It talks about the generations of. That's called a Toledot. It's the literary marker of the book of Genesis. Spends the most time on the seed of promise, like Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, but it does deal with the rest of them.

Whether it's Ishmael or Esau in this case or others down the road. So now we're going to get to Esau and his life not of blessing, but I'd say a life of cursing. And notice what it says. These are the family records of Esau. This is chapter 36, verse 1. That is Edom. Remember, Esau was an Edomite because he moved down to the mountains of Seir to live in Edom. Esau took his wives from the Canaanite women. Remember that was not good. Did not make mom and dad happy. He said it made their life miserable, because he married these unbelieving bad women.

Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah. I love that name. Oh, Oholibamah. Just fun to say. I'm pretty sure they didn't say it with an Indian accent, but there you go. That's what I'm doing. Oholibamah, daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite, and Basemath, daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, Basemath bore Reuel, and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These were Esau's sons who were born to him in the land of Canaan. Notice all this happens in the land of Canaan is the promised land, that's where God's blessing is.

But Esau took his wives, sons, daughters, all the people of his household, as well as his herds, and all of his livestock, and all of the property that he had acquired in Canaan. And he went to a land away from his brother Jacob. In other words, away from the blessing because God had chosen to bless the nations through Jacob. Esau saying, I don't want God's blessing. I want money. Why did he leave? For their possessions were too many for them to live together, and because of their herds the land where they stayed could not support them, so Esau, that is Edom.

Lived in the mountains of Seir. Now if you this is the throwback to Genesis 13 where the same thing happened to Abraham and lot. Remember Abraham was the chosen, he was going to bless the nations through Abraham. Lot and Abraham got so wealthy that they couldn't live together, so Abraham says, hey, pick whatever place you want to go. And lot chooses the Siddim Valley because it was well watered. Like the Lord's garden. And he thought to himself, Cha Ching, that's where I want to go, cause that's where blessing is, and I'm going to go get filthy rich, and he does.

But he lives in Sodom, which was morally corrupt, and he ends up suffering the consequences of rejecting God's will for his life. And now Esau is doing the same exact thing. He gets all of these blessings from living in Canaan. God blesses his life with prosperity, yet he's living with Jacob, who is the source of blessing. God's chosen his that's the design. Stay near Jacob. And he says, I can't do this and keep getting rich, and so I'm leaving Jacob to go to Edom. So he chooses prosperity. Now I'm not saying there's anything wrong with money, but there is something wrong with money when your pursuit of money causes you to sin against God.

In fact the Bible says the love it's the love of money that's the root of all evil. Money itself is not evil, it's it can be a wonderful good, but the love of money is a root of evil. But Esau chooses it and he becomes filthy rich. Not only does he become filthy rich, but if you keep reading, I'm not going to read all these names because I'll butcher them and they're not nearly as fun to say as oh Alabama. But if you read in chapter 36, verse 15, do I have verse 15?

Notice this language here of chiefs. These are the chiefs among Esau's sons. Eliphaz, chief Teman, chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, all these people are powerful. Not only do they have chiefs, if you go a little bit later, I think it's verse 31, you see the kings of Edom, the kings that reigned in the land of Edom. Before, notice this phrase, this is important, before any king reigned over the Israelites. Remember in chapter 35 when he's blessing Jacob, what does he say? What's going to come from you?

You guys already forgot? He said, kings are going to come from you do you see any kings of it do you see any kings coming from Jacob? No. But you see like 500 bajillion kings coming from Esau. And Edom, chiefs and kings, reigning, reigning. Before they reigned over the Israelites, they reigned in Edom. Why mention this? By the way, when you're reading a genealogy, the names are important for historical purposes, but the commentary on the names is the theological insight. So Moses, who's the author of Genesis, he's saying there's a blessed life and there's a cursed life.

The blessed life is in Jacob. He wasn't sinless. God still blessed him. He was blessed, but he had a lot of problems. When it comes to Esau was cursed, but his life was marked by power and prosperity. Isn't that interesting? Now again, there's nothing wrong with power and

prosperity. God blesses Christians, many Christians, with great power and prosperity. So do not misunderstand me. What I'm saying is Esau chose those things over God's blessing because they thought he thought that would be the real blessed life. And what Moses is saying is you can have a life chock full of power and money and still be cursed.

And it's a little bit upside down and inside out from the way things are normally seen in our world today. And if you think about the Israelites who are receiving this word coming out of the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings. They're probably thinking to themselves, why are we so poor? Why do we have to get up and look for manna every day? Why do they have the kings and we don't have a king? Why do they have all the money and we left Egypt with barely. Well actually they left Egypt with quite a bit of stuff, but they were probably thinking to themselves, why do the w wicked prosper?

And what Moses is saying is here is that God's blessing isn't always what you think it is. And a cursed life isn't always what you think it is. You can live a cursed life full of prosperity and power. God's kingdom advances through faith and not force. Jesus talks about this in the Gospels. He says that my kingdom is not of this world. He's actually talking with a king. Or some kind of ruler and he says, I'm not about violence, I'm not about politics like you're about politics, my kingdom is not of this world.

If it was like that then my followers would use physical violence to entrust the kingdom to Israel instead of Rome. But we're not doing that. We're not trying to overthrow you by physical violence because that's not what my kingdom is Jesus in the Gospels, when he teaches about the kingdom of God, he says things like this: The kingdom of God is like yeast. It's invisible, you can't see it, but it permeates the dough. So thoroughly that when it's had its intended effect, it cannot be reversed. That's how the kingdom is.

The kingdom of God, Jesus says, is like a mustard seed, even though it's the tiniest of all the seeds. When it is fully grown, the tree goes so big that all of the birds of the air come and nestle in its branches. That's my kingdom. And so what we see even in the book of Genesis before all of that transpires is that God's way of blessing, God's kingdom, is not like the kingdoms of this world. It works silently, oftentimes. It advances through faith and not force. It's about conquering people, not places.

It's about persuasion. It's about and faith. And not violence and conquest. It's a kingdom that operates subversively under the hood. You don't always see it happening until it's already had its intended effect and it's too late that's how the kingdom of God advances. That's why the church in the early church, the first century, turned Rome upside down and the emperor, I think it was Caligula or no no started with the I can't remember the guy's name, but he tried to wipe out the church and he said I can't get this movement because these Christians are so generous.

They're so sacrificial. They've won the hearts of the people, and so if I try to wipe them out now, I'll be toast. Because that's how the kingdom of God works. That's where blessing lies. It doesn't lie just in prosperity and power, it lies in the king of the kingdom, and that king is Jesus. And so just because God's kingdom is advancing slowly doesn't mean progress isn't being made. God's slowness does not nullify the progress of Christ's kingdom. And again, if you think of the original audience hearing this, it had to have been somewhat of a comfort to realize even though these Edomites, which they did, when Israel was trying to get to the promised land, the Edomites turned them down.

They said, you can't come through here. Israelites and Edomites were always fighting against each other. And what the Lord is saying here, I know it looks like they're blessed, but they're not, you are. Because I'm doing something different. My kingdom operates in a different way. Throughout the Old Testament, the Edomites become a source of pain and suffering for the Israelites. There's all sorts of prophecies that are given against Edom. They were powerful, they were strong. They do you guys well I'll give you one example in the book of Obadiah, he offers a prophecy against Edom.

It's one of several that is in Amos and Micah and other other prophets. But I want you to read this language and think about where Edom was located there in the mountains of Seir. The Lord is warning them, even though they were super proud and arrogant, your arrogant heart has deceived you. You who live in the clefts of the rock, in your home on the heights, who say to yourself, who can bring me down to the ground? Though you seem to soar like an eagle and make your nest among the stars, even from there I will bring you down.

This is the Lord's declaration. Let me show you where this is in Edom. This is actually Petra. You guys heard of the city of Petra? Indiana Jones fans out there? You guys remember the Indiana Jones, Petra movie. Well it was a city carved into a rock. And the only way into the city was through this thing called a sick S-I-C. It was like you know how two mountains that create the valley and it's like a super narrow entryway between these two rock crevices. That was the only way into the city.

So basically if you were going to try to invade the city of Petra, you weren't going to survive because they would see you coming from a mile away and just pew pew knock you down from the from the tops of the mountains. But the Lord is giving this prophecy saying, You think you're big and bad, you think you're invincible, you're not, you're going down because of your pride and your arrogance that's how every city of man falls. And this is really the contrast. It's the contrast between the city of God and the blessed life.

And the city of man and the cursed life. And the city of man promises you power and prosperity and invincibility and it'll be good. And when you walk in the ways of God, you'll get mocked and scorned and persecuted and oftentimes is a very difficult life. But what the Lord is saying is, my kingdom operates in a different way. You'll have temporary pain and

suffering until I come and make it right, or you can take the broad row that Leads to destruction. It's a way this seems right, but in the end, it's not going to produce what you think it is.

The city of man or the city of God. The city of God endures forever. The city of man always falls. It fell in the Tower of Babel, it fell in Babylon, it fell in Edom. In Revelation 17, Babylon the great falls to because of its own pride and arrogance, I don't have time to get into all of it. Just because the kingdom is advancing slowly doesn't mean it's not advancing. It doesn't mean it's not making progress. God operates under the surface. He's patient. He's not willing that any would perish, but that everybody would come to repentance.

And so he tolerates a little bit of sin and brokenness and evil so that those who want the blessed life can repent, believe, turn towards Jesus and be saved. But those who walk in the kingdom of God, those who submit to Jesus as king. Will experience difficulties in this life. Now what's crazy is the way that the genealogy closes. Is with a reminder to God's people, if you're going to live a life of blessing and submit to the king of kings, you're going to live as an alien and sojourner in this world.

It doesn't quite get it right in the CSV, so I want to show you this in the ESV. It's the last verse of Genesis 36. Esau's descendants, he's the chief of Edom. Esau's the father of Edom according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession. I want you to circle this phrase possession. Is creating a contrast between possessing the land and Jacob's reality, which is not possessing it, but living in the land of his father's sojournings. In other words, he was a an alien. He was a sojourner. He never really owned it.

It was never really fully his. So you can see a contrast between the city of man where you can own it and it's yours and you can build your kingdom and to heck with anybody who tries to take it from you or you can submit to the Lord Jesus who has you in the world but not of the world. You'll always be an alien and a sojourner until Jesus comes and establishes his kingdom. But if you can live in that way, you can receive a life of blessing. Jacob chooses to live in the land of his father's sojournings, and as a result, he experiences a lot of pain and suffering, but at the end of the day, his life is blessed.

Because blessing isn't a matter of how much money you have or how much power you have. Your blessing is determined by the power and presence of God in your life. And the way to experience God's power and presence in your life is to embrace his design. Not just his design for finances or you know, common sense, but his design for redemption, his design for how to take a sinful broken person and be rightly related to God. And it'll never be by trying harder or doing better. What you what do you do with your guilt?

God's design for you and your guilt is to let someone else pay the penalty for that guilt, for someone else to atone, to be an atoning sacrifice for you, not because you deserve it, but

because God is good. Because he's a God of mercy and grace who loves you and wants to bring you to himself. But the only way he can bring you to that place is if you humble yourself, repent of your sin, and recognize your need for Jesus. Is that going to take away all your problems? Probably not.

But it will be a life of blessing because you're near the source of blessing. And the source of blessing is Jesus. So I don't know what that looks like for you today. I know that some of you might be here this morning and you think you're irredeemable because of your past. And God's word to you this morning is there are no sinless people in heaven other than Jesus. And so you're welcome here if you'll repent. And believe. Some of you may be here this morning and you've been pursuing money and power and thinking to yourself, I know I'm blessed of God because I've got X, Y, and Z.

What does it profit a man if you gain the whole world and you lose your soul? If you lose your soul, you've lost everything. And the only way to find redemption and forgiveness of sin is not through money and power. It's through the king who had all power, who gave his power away and let himself be crucified on a Roman cross so that he could die for your sins and for my sins. And if you've not yet surrendered your life to him, and maybe you made a decision when you were young, but you would be kind of like Jacob in that it's been a long time since I've actually been obedient.

To the will of God for my life. I have hardened my heart. I have charted my own course, and this morning I sense the Lord saying to me, it's time to come home to Bethel It's time to bury the idols. It's time to purify yourself and change your clothes and get rid of this idolatry in your life. And if that's the case, I want to invite you to respond to the Lord. We're going to take the Lord's Supper, which is a way for us to reflect on and worship Jesus for his sacrifice.

His body broken for us, the bread, his blood shed for us, which is the cup. But don't take this Lord's Supper without first surrendering to the Lord afresh and anew. Recommitting your life to Jesus and his purposes for your life, a life of blessing, not of cursing, if you're willing to embrace it. If there's something I can pray with you about or for you about, I'll be happy to stand here at the front or we can sit here on the front row and I'll be happy to pray with you. If I get tied up, there'll be people in the back who'd be happy to pray with you.

But let's respond to the Lord before we take the Lord's Supper so that we can take it in a way that honors Jesus. For who he is and what he's done. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time. Together in your word, we thank you for Jacob. Man, what a what a scoundrel, but what a reminder of your amazing grace. Some people, when they think of the people of God, they think of holier than thou, self-righteous. Put together, no brokenness. But the reality is your people are the opposite of that.

They're people who recognize, oh God, oh God, I need you. I am not sufficient. I do not have my life put together. I don't know what to do with my guilt. There are things that I cannot atone for. And I need someone to pay that price for me. And so as we reflect on that gracious gift in our Lord Jesus, we pray that you would open our eyes to see ways in which we've rejected him. And your blessing on our life that is located in Him, and that we would repent of that sin and come home.

For those of us this morning, Lord, who find ourselves kind of stuck in the seduction of money and power and the kingdom of this world, would you remind us of the ultimate future? Of that world, that this world and the things of this world are passing away. Only one thing lives forever, and that is you and us and your kingdom. So that's where we want to put our chips, place our trust and our faith. And so where we have shifted in our affection, would you reorient us back towards the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.