

Discussion January 29 and 31:

1. Read Genesis 25.19-34 and Genesis 27.

Re-read our definition for Grace:

Grace can be seen when God moves towards the sinner-saint; actions that manifests as unmerited kindness\* towards the sinner-saint. Grace can also be seen when God moves towards the sinner-saint to accomplish His will or His pleasure in their life.

(\*Remember\* Kindness plays out more specifically than favor; kindness is specific blessings pertaining to the individual and the specific season they're in.)

Keeping this definition in mind, are you seeing any instances of Grace that you hadn't seen before?

2. Read the following verses:

Genesis 12.2, 13.16, 15.4-5, 17.4, 17.16, 17.19, 18.14, 22.17

What common theme do you see in these verses?

But there is a problem...what is it? (HINT: Genesis 11.30)

Read Genesis 21.1-7 and rewrite it in your own words here:

3. According to Genesis 25.20, how old was Isaac when he married Rebekah?

What familiar problem to Isaac and Rebekah face in Genesis 25.21?

What is Isaac's solution?

Why do you think Isaac turned to prayer? Do you think the promises that God made to his father, Abraham, stirred him to pray for his wife to conceive? Why or why not?

How does this impact your thoughts on prayer?

4. Write Genesis 25.23 here:

Who ordained the birthright by making this announcement?

Read Genesis 25.31-33. In your own words, what is happening in these verses?

If God already ordained the birthright, did Jacob have the right to buy the birthright?

If God already ordained the birthright, did Esau have the right to sell his birthright?

The birthright came with material and spiritual blessings; if Esau was willing to sell it for the price of stew, how do you think he viewed the birthright?

5. Read Genesis 27.5-13 and rewrite what is happening in these verses in your own words here:

Write Romans 14.23 here:

According to Romans 14.23, what exactly about Rebekah and Jacob's plan is a sin?

6. Isaac blesses Jacob in Genesis 27.27-29; part of the blessing is power, plenty, and a promise that God will be on Jacob's side. Which verse blesses Jacob with power? Which verse blesses Jacob with plenty? Which verse promises that God will be on Jacob's side?

*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!*

*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!"*

In verse 28, what is the first blessing given? Who gives it? Why do you think this is what's listed first?

7. Isaac blesses Esau in Genesis 27.39-40. What are some differences you notice from the blessing given to Jacob?

What is the first thing listed in the blessing given to Esau? Why do you think this is what's listed first?

8. According to Genesis 27.34, what was Esau's response when he learned that Jacob had received the blessing?

Write Hebrews 12.15-17 here:

Read Genesis 27.41-42; what is Esau's plan? How does he comfort himself? Does this sound like someone willing to repent?

9. Did you incorporate Psalm 119.132 into your prayer time during the break from the Grace Bible study? How did the Lord lavish Grace on you in response to this Psalm and your prayer time?

Continue to incorporate Psalm 119.132 into your prayer time:

Psalm 119.132:

*Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.*

January 30 and 31, 2024: God's Grace to Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau

### I. The Legacy of Abraham:

A. Abraham's faith grows throughout his lifetime:

- In the beginning Abram couldn't make himself obey the call on his life.
- As Abram's/Abraham's faith grows, he's often tempted to turn to the work of his own hands.
- There are moments of trust where Abram/Abraham draws near to God to have his fears addressed.

### II. The Legacy of Isaac:

A. Isaac's faith starts big and bold on Moriah:

- Isaac understands and cooperates with everything that transpires on Moriah.
- Moriah isn't just about Abraham's faith, Isaac also demonstrates trust in the Promise-Maker.

B. Isaac goes on to pray for his wife when she is barren.

C. But then it appears his faith begins to wane as he stumbles as he ages.

**25.19** *These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac, 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife.*

Laban is important because of what the Lord will allow him to do in the life of Jacob; we've met Laban already:

Genesis 24.28-31:

**28** *Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things. 29 Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man, to the spring. 30 As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, "Thus the man spoke to me," he went to the man. And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. 31 He said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels."*

Moses seems to paint this picture of Laban hanging back as Rebekah interacts with this stranger and tirelessly works to serve him. But when she returns to the house gifted with jewelry, then Laban was interested in being hospitable to the stranger.

*21 And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 The children struggled together within her, and she said, "If it is thus, why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. 23 And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger." 24 When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. 26 Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.*

The twins in Rebekah's womb are diametrically opposed to one another from the very start, nonetheless there remains a promise of a Savior coming from this lineage; only one of these children will get to carry on the lineage that will bring about the Savior.

Romans 9.6-13:

*6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, 7 and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." 8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. 9 For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son." 10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac. 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— 12 she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."*

Paul clearly says: That these 2 "*had done nothing either good or bad.*"

It would be in error to think that this choice was made for a capricious or arbitrary reason; God had a beautiful reason for choosing Jacob over Esau and it was secret to His holy mind and will.

**25** *The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau.*  
**26** *Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.*

The birth of the twins is going to typify their relationship: Jacob trying to reach over Esau for what God already ordained for him.

His name means "heel-catcher;" "heel-catcher" had a reputation of:

Trickster

Con-man

Scoundrel

Rascal

**27** *When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. **28** Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

The sin of partiality (favoritism) starts with Isaac favoring Esau and Rebekah favoring Jacob; this persists to the next generation when Jacob favors Joseph, but God's sovereignty is big enough to use man's sinful efforts to still accomplish His holy will in the lives of Jacob and Joseph.

**29** *Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. **30** And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.) **31** Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." **32** Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" **33** Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. **34** Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*

Blessings of the Birthright:

-Double portion of the inheritance:

Deuteronomy 21.17:

*But he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the firstfruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his.*

-Status:



Authority and responsibility/head of household in father's absence or death

-Spiritual leadership of the family/tribe:

They communicated with God and acted out His will

Esau looks with contempt on the spiritual aspect on the birthright; this is why the author of Hebrews calls him "profane":

Hebrews 12.16

*"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."*

Lentil stew (pottage):

-Regarded as a comfort food

-Jewish tradition holds that it is a dish served to those in mourning (because it is a comfort food but also because the lentil is round, symbolizing death; as the lentil rolls, so does death and mourning always roll amongst humanity)

-The lentils\* were cooked in an earthen vessel suspended over a fire with:

Garlic

Onion, celery, and carrots

Cilantro, cumin, hyssop, parsley, sumac, and bay leaves

\*Sometimes barley would be added to the lentils making what is known in the Bible as "pottage"

-Served as is, or with fresh game or goat

This family had been materially blessed and Rebekah is a gregarious woman, so this stew was not the only food available to Esau within the encampment, but he's obsessing and fixated on that stew.

The problem with this entire story is: The birthright wasn't on the market. It wasn't Esau's to sell and Jacob couldn't buy something that already belonged to him. The Lord already ordained where the birthright rested.

Jacob knows an opportunity when he sees one, so without batting an eye he replies to his brother: *Sell me your birthright*. He turns to deceit to gain what God already promised. That is Jacob's nature: turn to deceit and trickery rather than trust on God's timing for his future.

This is a great portrait of the wily nature of Jacob but the greater blame is on Esau because he does indeed go on to sell his birthright then *eat, drink, rise, and go on his way*. Never once reconsidering his actions. And we are told that he thus *despised his birthright*.

**27.1** *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."*

Isaac and Rebekah are all over the birthright, each working to make sure their man gets it. Rebekah is obviously aware of the oracle concerning the birthright, but Isaac is also certainly aware of it.

*I do not know the day of my death...prepare for me delicious food, so that my soul may bless you before I die.*

Isaac is only 137 years old...but he's going to go on to live to be 180.

**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." 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. 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.*

A lot of commentaries want to defend the actions of Rebekah saying that, because she was given the oracle concerning Jacob, she was simply trying to ensure that Isaac's actions didn't interfere with God's will for Jacob, but God's will for Jacob was Sovereign and nothing was going to thwart the call on his life, especially the sinful actions of man.

**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." **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. **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.

The Lord has allowed within the canon of Scripture this vile picture of Jacob so His Grace is further magnified when we at least see him become Israel.

Spiritual blindness is far more debilitating than physical blindness. Isaac so desperately wanted to thwart the will of God that he's willing to believe this absurd plot all so he can pass the blessing onto Esau rather than Jacob, thus getting what he wants over God's will.

**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!"

**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!"*

These blessings were secured and granted outside of Isaac speaking them and in spite of Rebekah's conniving and Isaac's interference.

**30** *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. 31 He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me." 32 His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" He answered, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." 33 Then Isaac trembled very violently and said, "Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed." 34 As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" 35 But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing." 36 Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." Then he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" 37 Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?" 38 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. 39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:*  
*"Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be,  
and away from the dew of heaven on high.*

**40**  
*By your sword you shall live,  
and you shall serve your brother;  
but when you grow restless  
you shall break his yoke from your neck."*

Isaac comes to learn that he's been duped and that he gave a blessing intended for Esau to Jacob and we're told that his body physically responds by trembling very violently. The Hebrew for this phrase actually reads he *trembled with a great trembling greatly*.

This whole ordeal has seen Isaac dead set on thwarting God's will...he was bound and determined to give the birthright to his guy...to Esau. But now Isaac's he's confronting the fact that he has indeed pronounced a blessing on Jacob.

Esau's trying to rewrite history by acting as if he never sold his birthright for a bowl of stew, thus despising it.

This is quintessential worldly sorrow. Not an iota of Esau laments letting go of the spiritual blessings of the birthright...Esau is solely concerned with missing out on the financial and status side of the birthright.

Esau is also in error for concerning himself with securing a blessing at all rather than squaring himself with the Lord for all the wrong he has done to this point. Nonetheless, he does secure common grace as is extended to the entire World.

***41** 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." **42** But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. **43** Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran **44** and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away— **45** until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?"*

***46** Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?"*

Esau's heart is not broken for his sinful actions that contributed to this point. Esau is comforting himself with thoughts of murdering Jacob.