

The Descendants

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[0:00] I think I need to pray before we jump into the word. Is that okay? Let's do that. God, we thank you. We thank you that we get together.

! We thank you that we are able to have so many different spaces together. But there really is only one purpose to our gathering, and that is to glorify and worship you. And so now we open up your word. We ask that you would speak.

May the words that we hear today come straight from your heart and cut straight into ours. Let's speak. We are listening. In your name we pray. Amen.

Can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord? Amen. These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son. We are in Genesis 25, verse 19.

Abraham fathered Isaac, and Isaac was 40 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.

[1:30] And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah, his wife, conceived. The children struggled together within her, and she said, If it is thus, why is this happening to me?

She went to inquire of the Lord. 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.

When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. Afterward, his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob.

Isaac was 60 years old when she bore them. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted. Therefore, his name was called Edom.

[2:33] Jacob said, Sell me your birthright now. Esau said, I am about to die. Of what use is a birthright to me? Jacob said, Swear to me now. So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob.

Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way.

Thus Esau despised his birthright. This is the word of the Lord.

Please take a seat. So we continue into the journey of Genesis, and Gabe last week spoke to us, and he really kind of spoke this one phrase over us that I think just perfectly sums up what the faith really is about, and that is God is sovereignly for you.

God is sovereign. He's in control. But it's even more than that. He's not just sovereign and in control of everything. He's not just got the whole world in his hands. He is for you. He cares for you.

And we were just presented with this truth, and we wondered whether we can even just sit in that truth and go, Wow, God is in control of my life. And not only that, he is for me.

[3:36] For God works for the good of those who love him. What the enemy sometimes means for evil always, God turns for good.

So he controls, he orchestrates everything so that I am loved and good and living in this favor, and that his promises will be carried out through me and my family and will continue.

Isn't that just a beautiful truth? But here's the problem with that truth. That's theology, and it's correct, and it's true, and it transforms lives.

But the reality often is it's really hard to live out. You hear that kind of promise spoken over you one day, and you're lifted, and you're inspired, and you're encouraged, and you're comforted, and then

you go home, and then you go to work, and suddenly you're just crushed with the reality. And so even though that promise still remains somewhere in our psyche, the moment we walk back into our broken workplaces, the moment we walk back into our broken families, suddenly we're like, Well, God, how are your promises even going to come about?

[4:40] Because my family, my life, my work is pretty messed up. And so you have this tension between theology and reality that actually is something that I want to talk about. And here's my line for today, which is God's perfect plan will be carried out, but it will be carried out through imperfect people.

It will be carried out through imperfect families that are broken. We all sit and go, Wow, we have problems in all of our lives. We all have different challenges and problems, and you often wonder, How is God going to fulfill those promises?

You see, even though there is this incredible scene where Isaac's waiting for a wife, and just magically at a well, prepared for him, this beautiful lady that he's been waiting for all these years. Boom. God's timing. It's perfect. He knows way more than we do. Sadly, Genesis doesn't just finish there, and then says, Isaac, Rebecca lived happily ever after, and God's promises were forever fulfilled in their lives.

What you see, the next chapter, is a broken family. If God's promises are going to actually pass on, you wonder, Oh, how is he going to pass that on?

[5:50] And what you wouldn't have guessed is that he passes that promise on through a family of four, filled with dysfunction, two brats of sons, who actually don't even really prioritize God at all.

And then you've got a father and a mother who, actually, they each choose their own favorite, and then it leads to dysfunction in the family. And you're like, wow, God's perfect plan gets carried out through imperfect people.

And we're going to unpack a little bit of that today because chapter 25, suddenly you see this plan, this promise played out, and it's filled with grief, it's filled with deceit, and it's filled with sin, and it's filled with pride.

And that's all pretty jarring, but I'm hoping as we get to the end of this, we will realize that actually that's encouraging as well. There's a group of guys, we've been reading 2 Peter, and 2 Peter chapter 1, I think, says this about, actually, what we believe aren't just cleverly devised, they're not just myths, they're not just things, they're not just fairy tales that we've tried to believe to help us feel better about our lives.

These are real stories about real people. Why? Because it's just so messed up. It's just so messed up. If you were going to make something up, you wouldn't make it up like this. And yet, here you see a family that is completely broken, that is used by God.

[7:11] So, unfortunately, this is going to be the last time we hear of Abraham because we are seeing here, chapter 25, you can just follow along with me. So, after Sarah dies, Abraham actually takes another wife, and actually, she bears lots of children for him.

Verse 5, Abraham still, though, gives all that he has to Isaac because he knows the covenant is going to go through this one boy. He's going to go through Isaac. All these other concubines and their children, he actually still gives gifts, but then he actually sends them away.

So, he's still focusing. God's going to fulfill his promise through the covenant that is going to go through this one boy, Isaac. So, verse 6, But to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts, and while he was still living, he sent them away from his son Isaac eastward to the east country. These are the days of the years of Abraham's life, 175, and then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people. I was just stuck there for a little bit as I was preparing this week and go, wow, Abraham, the founder of the faith, he dies.

And this week, for whatever reason, I've been surrounded by death myself. I went to a funeral yesterday. Joe and I have a beloved aunt who's getting very, very close to the end, and she was a superhero to us growing up, and we saw her this last week, and we were like, oh, this is the end.

[8:31] And it makes you think, especially if you're young, maybe you don't think about death. I can tell you I think about death all the time, because it will happen to every single person in this room. So even though there are promises that God gives us, isn't that reality just sobering?

That all of us, at some point, will die. Genesis 5 has this list of people who will die, almost just to repeat that there are consequences to our actions, and death was the thing that was introduced into

creation.

And now you see Abraham, Abraham, still dies. It makes you think about what this life really is about, but then even though you see Abraham dies, the God of Abraham continues to live on. It's not just about Abraham either. In fact, the Bible kind of gives him his credit and says he dies at a good old age, and then he gets buried, and actually at that moment, Isaac and Ishmael get back together to bury their dad.

They bury dad in the same place where mom is, and verse 11, it just almost casually says, after the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac, his son. So the legacy continues, and it goes into this next passage about Isaac.

[9:43] Isaac's a really interesting character. Dad Abraham, son Jacob, both guys get a lot of time, get a lot of time in this book. Isaac himself doesn't really get that much time. We don't know that much about Isaac, but we get a little bit here.

But before I talk about Isaac, verse 12 to 18 tells you a little bit about Ishmael. Ishmael was the son who came from Hagar, the Egyptian, remember that, and he was sent away. It's really interesting because actually he didn't treat Isaac very well, and he wasn't part of the covenant, he wasn't part of the promise, he wasn't going to be part of God's plan, so he gets sent away, but it's interesting because the writer here kind of gives you a little bit of an update about how Ishmael's doing. And Ishmael has these sons, and actually these sons, in verse 16, these are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names by their villages and by their encampments, 12 princes. So Ishmael has 12 sons, but they're not just sons, they're princes.

They're actually wealthy. And it's really interesting because even though he's not part of God's plan, even though he doesn't fear God, even though he doesn't love God or follow God, yet God is still good for his promise.

Because remember what we said? That he will still look after Ishmael. He's not going to be part of the plan, but he's still going to look after him. Even though Ishmael was mistreating Isaac, yet God still was good for his promise.

[10:58] It makes me think, well, I don't know where you guys are in your faith, but for those of you who are like, I don't know if God loves me, I don't know if God, actually if God knows everything that I do, then actually I wouldn't be part of this promise. Isn't it interesting that even Ishmael still gets the blessing, still gets looked after, and if God is going to care for Ishmael, he's going to care for you.

He's going to care for me still. But that's not going to be the main part of our story because after that, he gives an update on Ishmael. We then move into the part that I just read, which is here.

These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son.

So Isaac is 40 years old when he took Rebecca and they married. And that's where you think, oh, God blesses Isaac. God blesses Isaac. And of course, Isaac's like, look, I remember that there was this traumatic incident where dad walked me up the mountain and he tied me up.

But actually, God then replaced me and so I got to continue living. So God's going to carry out his promises through me. So what's the next thing that you expect to happen? Isaac's living his life, growing up, finds a wonderful wife, gets married, and he's like, well, my baby's coming soon.

Because that's got to be the way because that's what God promised. And what happens here?

Because she was barren. Wow. Almost just again.

[12:06] Just like his dad and just like his mom. Rebecca is barren. And so what does he do as a 40-year-old man who's just married his wife, waiting for God's promises to come? He waits.

He waits. And he waits. And how does he wait? He waits through prayer. You can see what he does here. Whereas dad did not do this. Dad waited and then decided to take matters into his own hands.

Or rather, mom then offered a bit of a dodgy plan to do it. Whereas Isaac here actually prays. So his default when he's waiting is to pray. And I asked a few months ago how well do we wait?

And so I'm not going to labor on that topic because what we see here is, again, God's chosen one, the one that God blesses, still has to wait. It makes me think as I struggle with waiting, and again, it's in the 2 Peter passage and in the book of James, where we've been reading about just patience. We think that when God blesses us, when we follow God, then everything will happen immediately, instantly. Yet that is never the case. Rarely ever the case. There is beauty in the waiting. God uses the waiting.

[13:08] God sees whether we're waiting well and through the waiting, and that's when he's really molding us, molding our desires. And so you see Isaac here waiting, and how long does he wait for? God's chosen one who God blessed waits for 20 years for a baby.

The Bible almost says it casually. If we just take a peek later on, same chapter, verse 26, Isaac was 60 years old when she bore them. Just casually. They got married at 40, they had their first baby at 60.

20 years of waiting. So quick question here, what are we waiting for? How well are we waiting? And in our waiting, do we go to God? Do we pray?

God doesn't answer always with yes, immediately, now. And we have to be prepared that sometimes God's answer is not what we want. That's when you go back to that truth.

But God is sovereignly for me, sovereignly for me. So I wait with that kind of trust. So he waits, and it's waiting, and it's forcing him to surrender.

[14:07] And finally, as if this is just such a casual bit, verse 21, he's praying, and the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebecca, his wife, conceived. So God is sovereign, he's completely in control.

But yet he still ordains the means, which is prayer. He ordains the means, which is prayer, and also the ends, which is the final conception. So you see, even though we are waiting and God is in control, he still hears, he still listens, and he still wants this communication, he still wants this relationship with us.

And so, of course, it says it casually here in one sentence, we now know that that's 20 years of waiting and praying. And I hope that's of comfort to someone who has been waiting for a loved one to come to Christ, waiting for the job, waiting for the spouse, whatever it may be, wait well, and pray whilst you wait.

And of course, they have the baby, they conceive, the children struggle together within her, and she said, if it is this, why is this happening to me? So, I've never bought twins before, personally, but she wouldn't have known that because there were no ultrasounds at that moment in time.

So she finally gets pregnant, and she's getting pretty big, much quicker than she expected. And actually, I'm guessing she's in a lot of pain. Why? Because the twins are wrestling inside her.

[15:21] And so she's like, God, why is this happening to me? I'm guessing she's also thinking, maybe it's because I'm too old, maybe it's because I'm 60, maybe it's because I'm past the age, maybe this isn't going to go well.

And so she's waiting and she's wrestling, and what does she do? She does the same thing that her husband does. She goes to the Lord. So she went to inquire of the Lord, and the Lord actually responds to her. Wouldn't that be just amazing when we go and inquire of the Lord, and we hear just clearly what the Lord says to her.

And here we go. 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. So her first point of contact is to pray as well.

He's not getting what he thinks he wants or needs. He goes to pray. She gets it, but it's not quite what she's expecting, and it's confusing. It's scary. So what does she do? She goes to pray, and the Lord responds and says, what's actually happening is the curse from Genesis 3 where we said that there will be two groups of people.

One will trust in God, and one will follow, and one will not. Now they're happening in your womb, that these two people in your womb are going to represent two nations, and it's going to be a little bit different to what you think because the one shall be stronger than the other.

[16:35] The older shall serve the younger, which goes completely against the ancient tradition. Actually, this is not hard for us Chinese people to understand because the firstborn was the one who gets the double blessing, and the others just get whatever's left, and so this would have been the same here, but God's saying, hey, I'm going to change human tradition upside down.

It's not going to be what you think. It never is what you think when it comes to the kingdom of God. You think one way, the world thinks one way, and that's just foolishness to the kingdom of God, and it's going to be this other way, and this time you see it's going to be the younger one that actually comes out with the blessing, but of course, how it all happens is very interesting.

When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body, like a hairy cloak, so they called him Esau, and then his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was Jacob, and the boys grew up, and then they have

two very different boys.

One's a jock, and one's a nerd. One's a jock. He likes to go out and hunt. A man of the field, skillful hunter, and while Jacob liked to sit at home in quiet, in solitude, and read, and game, and one actually goes out to cause destruction, and the other just simply just stays at home, and here comes that special line that maybe some of us in our families have also experienced.

Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebecca loves Jacob. Oh, the destructive outcomes that come with favoritism. When a parent favors one child over the other, and the emotional and mental and sometimes physical trauma that comes with that, God's perfect plan happens through an imperfect family that is dysfunctional, and what you see of Isaac and Rebecca are not quite these godly founding father, mother material.

[18:29] You see just a dad who starts to lose his way and who prefers the son who will actually bring him back that Wagyu steak just the way he likes it, and you see this other son who is favored by mom because he likes to stay at home with her to talk and to hang out and listen, and yet God's perfect plan continues through this.

The interesting thing is Jacob, we always think is just this, again, this patriarch, this guy who is holy and perfect, but no, what we actually see if you look into his story is he's a scheming, manipulative man.

Of course, Esau just seems dumb, but Jacob kind of knows exactly what he's doing. And then we head into a really interesting passage, which I think is where we'll probably just spend a little bit of time just to focus on, which is this little, little passage from verse 29 to 34.

So, you know, these five verses here actually gets quoted later in scripture, which we're going to go on a little bit of a journey in a bit, so bear with us for now. So, Esau goes out to hunt.

He hunts, and he hunts a lot, and he's very good at it, and he's exhausted from it. Meanwhile, Jacob has just finished the book that he's reading, and so he's like, I'm going to start cooking some food. And so he's cooking this stew, and then Esau comes in from the field, and he was exhausted, and Esau said to Jacob, let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted.

[19:55] Therefore, his name was called Eden, which means red. Imagine this, you make one mistake in your life, one little mistake, because you were hungry that time, and then for the rest of your life, you are named and mocked because of that one mistake.

So that's exactly what it says here. And Jacob said, he's probably planning this already, because this happens every day. Esau with all his muscle and all his masculinity, goes out and hunts this beef for us, and it's great, but he comes home, and he's exhausted, and he's grumpy, and he's hungry.

Meanwhile, Jacob is at home reading novels, and he's seen this before in a book, and he realizes this is the moment where you get to the heart of a man through his stomach, and he wants the birthright.

And remember, mom's probably whispering to him, hey, do you know when I was pregnant with the two of you, God actually spoke to me. He told me that you're actually going to be better than your brother.

You're actually going to rule over your brother. So you see, Rebecca, this image that we had at the beginning where she was so kind and hospitable at the well in the last chapter, you see her turning a little bit, and no doubt, that would have been part of maybe why Jacob was the way he was.

[21:05] So anyway, Esau comes charging in, he throws his axe on the side, and then he comes in, he says, oh, that smells so good. And we find out later that it's actually lentil. Does anyone like lentil? Yeah, lentil.

It's great, it's cool, I'm good for you. It's got to be lentil and avocado. Avocado was definitely on the side there. And then so Esau says, oh, I'm so hungry.

Give me some of that stew. And then Jacob says, sure, you have to give me your birthright. Straight out of nowhere, you have to give me your birthright. And then Esau responds to him, I'm about to die.

What use is a birthright to me? Can you see just the melodramatic nature of this older brother here? But before we talk more about this, don't we all have that?

What we're talking about here is actually an idol. And what we're talking about here is actually when we put something that is supposed to be God, that isn't God, we all have this. When we don't have something that we really want, it almost messes up the way we approach life altogether.

[22:07] If I don't have that girl, my life is just not worth living. It's just, I'm just going to be living in black and white for the rest of my life. I won't see color until I'm in that relationship. Unless I get that job, my life is completely meaningless.

There's no point in living. If I don't have that soup, I'm about to die. That is the lie of idolatry, where you think that you really need something, and it affects the way you look at everything.

And I'm just going to pause there for a second, because I know for a fact that there are idols in this room. John Calvin says, the human heart is a factory of idols.

We all have them. What is the thing that you have, well, sorry, that you want, and that if you don't have, your life is just not perfect? Well, I'm here to tell you that even if you have it, it won't be perfect.

But actually, your very thirst for it, your very hunger for it, actually stops you from enjoying the goodness that God actually has for you. I had a little bit of this happened to me, and I have a few friends in this room who talked to me about tech.

[23:20] I like tech, and I like gadgets, and this week, there was the latest iPhone that was released. Of course, I have been waiting for many years for the new iPhone to come out. And so last Saturday, I think it was 8 p.m., was the day that pre-orders began.

Come on, any nerds, just nod with me, just tell me that I'm not alone in this. Okay, I am really alone. I'm the only one with this idol. All right, fine. 8 p.m. last Saturday, my kids were supposed to go to sleep, but I was like, Daddy's got something really important to do.

If I don't make this pre-order now, I won't get the phone next week. And it's funny, I made the order, and praise the Lord, it happened, internet connection and everything. And you know what?

Then I spent the last week waiting for it, and I was just looking at my old phone with more and more disdain. Just as it was going, I was like, you are so slow. You are so dumb.

And now you're overheating. I don't, like, you are affecting, you are just killing my vibes, and I'm not living my full life with you. Don't we have that? Oh, but then the moment the new phone came, it was fun for about 60 seconds, and I was like, I can't tell the difference between the cameras anyway, and I'm like, okay, here we are.

[24:29] And that's exactly what happens with an idol. You're just yearning for it. If only I get it. If only I get it, my life will be complete, and I'll be happy, and I won't be dying. But you get it? And it's really casual in the way he says it.

Verse 34, Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew. He ate and drank and rose and went his way.

And that was it. He pre-ordered, he ordered, he traded in, he collected, he activated, restored.

And that was it. I wonder how we are with our idols. The things that we're chasing and saying, God, please give me that. And I wonder whether actually we really in some ways are the same.

And it's this idea of just instant gratification that we all want. You see in scripture, eating is a problem. And it all started because there was a fruit that looked good.

Reminds me of Philippians where it says, their end is destruction, their God is their belly. They glory in their shame with minds set on earthy things. I wonder whether we have those things where our minds are set on earthy things, where we actually glory in our shame, where actually our God is our belly.

[25:45] That's why a spiritual discipline like fasting is so good because you're actually telling God actually, all I need is you. All I want is you. This hunger that I feel, this hunger strike that I have, this hunger that I feel, I want to direct all of that hunger and thirst for you because blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

It's funny, the moment we get that job, get that person, get that phone, get that thing, it's good for a little bit and then suddenly, it's gone. That satisfaction is gone and that yearning then goes somewhere else.

Not knowing that really that yearning points us to a place which is called eternity. Ecclesiastes 3.11 says that God has planted eternity in the heart of man and we just try and fill that gap that only eternity can fill with all the things of this world.

C.S. Lewis says that we are half-hearted creatures. We just fill ourselves with money, sex and power and whatever the latest, newest thing is and actually, what we deprive ourselves is infinite joy.

He talks about it in his book, The Weight of Glory where actually, that stops us from enjoying what we're supposed to enjoy because we are so, it's actually, we're not yearning for the right things.

[27:02] That's what we're supposed to be going for here. But then this comes a really harsh quote and this is where we'll kind of land and spend some time on before I finish. Thus, Esau despised his birthright.

I was like, whoa, that's a strong word. My man was hungry and he was exhausted because he was hunting for his family because he has a nerd of a brother who doesn't go out to feed the family. So, therefore, he's got to go out and get the food and he's exhausted and he chooses the soup and yet what we see here is he despised his birthright.

Worse still, this little interaction here ends up being recorded and retold through many places in scripture and this is what we're going to do today.

So, if you have your Bible, you can go with me to the final book of the Old Testament which is Malachi because we're going to look at that because it didn't make sense to me.

[28:06] He was hungry. Yes, I get it. His birthright was something that was very important but in that moment, his God was his belly and he gave it up and then from then on it was recorded that he despised his birthright and later it gets even worse.

Malachi, so the last chapter, the last book, sorry, before the New Testament, chapter one, the oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi, verse two, I have loved you, says the Lord, but you say, how have you loved us?

Is not Esau Jacob's brother, declares the Lord. Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated.

Whoa. Esau gave his birthright up for a bowl of soup, probably not the best idea or at the very least a very bad deal and yet you get to the point where now it's recorded that not only did he despise his birthright but then God hates him.

Is that confusing to you? It's a little bit overwhelming for me and let's just carry on a little bit and bear with me. We're going to keep going now towards the end of the New Testament in the book of Hebrews so see if you can find that.

Chapter 12. Bear in mind, Hebrews chapter 11 is the hall of faith, hall of fame. These people who were trusted, who weren't perfect either, who didn't really get what God promised them but they saw something, they saw a city much further, a country much further than they were yearning for and then the beginning of chapter 12 talks about Jesus and then with all these famous people in the Bible in Hebrews 11 and then talking about Jesus and guess who shows up in the middle of Hebrews chapter 12?

[29:50] Poor Esau. Redhead guy. The skillful hunter. And it says this. Hebrews chapter 12 verse 16.

That no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward when he desired to inherit the blessing he was rejected for he found no chance to repent though he sought it with tears.

Whew. Trust me, I didn't really want to kind of go into all this because it doesn't seem the most pleasing and doesn't seem the most kind of cushy and lovey-dovey but here we have someone who chose a bowl of soup an idol for instant gratification but then you end up in a place where it's recorded in scripture that not only does God love his brother but he actually hates Esau and then you see here in Hebrews 12 that he is not only just choosing a bowl of soup he's also sexually immoral or unholy like Esau.

And here we have again the slippery slope of sin because that was one isolated event of him deciding that actually actually so the word hated here the word despised here was actually a Hebrew idiom that I want to unpack a little bit and that word doesn't actually mean I hate you that it's not quite the modern interpretation what it really meant at that time the readers would have understood was actually he just passed over it he just didn't choose it he rejected it so in some ways when it says that thus Esau despised his birthright it actually just meant he just didn't choose it that's all it meant okay so it wasn't hate or despise he didn't grow up at school going man I hate the fact that I have this double portion inheritance I hate the fact that I'm going to get so much more money than the rest of my siblings it wasn't that it was simply he was saying actually I just don't choose it it's not important to me which in one hand if you say it like that doesn't sound as serious as despise or hate until you are talking about God think about us think about the times that we pass over

God think about the times that we know that we want to spend time with God and read our Bible and do our prayers and be in devotion with God and then yet we choose to pass over him to do something else like what like scroll on Instagram instead in some ways it isn't that different this guy

who is hungry choosing a bowl of soup ends up being described as sexually immoral and unholy the word there another version would be he spoke profanity over this birthright what was he saying what does profanity mean we all know it's actually it just means it's the opposite of holy it's common it's so basically what it's saying is that Esau had something that was so holy so precious that represented God's covenant love and yet he just dismissed it and said whatever he treated it like a thumbs up like on Facebook with the added context that no one uses Facebook anymore that's what he treated it like he decided

[32 : 58] I don't want this unconditional covenantal love and promise fulfilled by God and I'm going to choose this thumbs up on a website that no one uses anymore that's why it was unholy that's he chose the other he chose to pass over was what he was saying and actually it's interesting he says sorry in Hebrews 12 17 for you know that afterward when he desired to inherit the blessing he was rejected for he found no chance to repent though he sought it with tears because there comes a moment where it's too late now scholars are here very clear here saying what he's doing he's not saying actually later we'll find in Genesis he gets very angry that he's lost his birthright because suddenly that bowl of soup wasn't worth it right and we've all had that before where we've given into some kind of temptation some kind of desire made a choice and chose to pass over God and then later we're like oh my goodness now I'm feeling the pain but what it's saying here isn't that he was repenting what he was sad about and what we know that he was sad about wasn't the fact that he lost his birthright or rather it wasn't the fact that actually he lost God it was simply the fact that he lost the riches that came with the birthright the blessings so he wasn't actually upset that he was distanced from God he was just simply upset that he didn't get the material things that he was supposed to have this tells me something else

Isaac and Rebecca were part of the covenant they had two boys twins Esau and Jacob this was a covenant family what does this tell me it's very possible for you to live and grow up in a covenant family and still lose your inheritance I don't know whether that sends chills down the spine of someone who has grown up in church who thinks well as long as I go to church because my parents went to church because my grandparents went to church I'm going to be okay I'm going to get to heaven well Esau was part of the covenant family that God was going to use to save mankind and yet he still lost it what that does I hope it doesn't fill you with fear but I hope that fills you with humility that oh gosh salvation belongs to God I'm only here I'm only here because of him and so let me not pass over him let me choose him because otherwise I choose all those other things it does when it comes to God it amounts to hate because God says I don't want to just be your first priority I want you to be your only priority I don't just want to be your number one on the top of your list and then have all your other things I want to be your only one I want to be your list and if you don't choose me essentially you are passing over me because the earthly things will pass away they are so small the joys that we think we have are so small as C.S. Lewis in that book Way of Glory continues it's like us playing with mud depriving ourselves of the true joy that we're going to get that is the problem of idolatry Jesus later says in Luke 14 hey if you don't hate if you don't despise your father, mother, brother and sister you can't follow me and those are strong words but now we know that that was a Hebrew idiom not necessarily for actual negative sentiment it was simply if you pass over me if you choose others if you choose other things before me then it's not going to work the only way it works is for people who not only believe in me but then choose to follow me one final passage and this is where we'll finish is Romans chapter 9 because poor guy gets another mention Hebrews 11 is pretty famous and he gets mentioned in Hebrews 12 poor guy Romans 8 is probably the most famous and Romans 9 he gets another mention so Romans 8 this is the most highlighted chapter of my Bible by the way just to show you just to have a look so if you're like oh what should I read today go to Romans 8 and if it's a little bit like kind of confusing to understand use the NLT use the message use whatever it is start there and this this is it okay but then after this because this is the big part and actually a lot of our worship songs come from this passage if God is for us who can be against us nothing can separate from the love of Christ for God works for the good of those who love him I am a new creation there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus Romans 8 has everything and Esau my man Esau shows up in Romans 9 verse 10 and not only so so actually just a bit of context here Paul's writing to the Jews who are saying well just because you're a Jew doesn't mean you actually get into the kingdom of heaven you can actually be a Jew and still miss out you can grow up in a covenant family but still miss out because it ultimately still comes down to what are you choosing and so he carries on and this is where he gives the example and not only so

but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man our forefather Isaac verse 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 she was told the older will serve the younger as it is written

Jacob I loved but Esau I hated he was quoting Malachi which is where we just read and you're like oh that's really unfair that's really unfair that's really sad that this guy in that one moment of anger and hunger gives his birthright and now it's forever recorded that he is unholy sexually immoral and hated by God himself but what it means is that he was passed over by God that he wasn't chosen by God because he didn't choose God himself a lot of people look at the Jacob Benesau story and go that's harsh that's a little bit unfair but that's where the gospel comes in that's where we need to understand what the gospel is in some ways Paul here is being a pastor in that time as a scholar of that time and he's doing an exposition of Genesis chapter 25 and he's trying to explain to people what that whole interaction meant yes it looked like it was just about a bowl of soup but it was about so much more about that and what it really was about was this concept called unconditional election what it's really about is this topic called predestination what it's really about is this idea this concept called radical grace if you're here sat going that's unfair we all have different children they all make different mistakes why does he one gets recorded as loved and the other gets recorded as hated that just doesn't seem fair for Esau but here's the thing when we're talking about radical grace verse 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad it tells you salvation isn't based on what we do and this gets a little bit uncomfortable and churches don't often like to spend too much time on this but there's this concept that actually the very fact that we are saved is not by our own doing the very fact that we are saved is not by our own doing it is

[40:09] God who saves it is God who chooses it is God who is sovereignly for us this wasn't about a bowl of soup St. Augustine said this that actually if both Esau and Jacob got what they deserved neither would have the blessing both would be cast out Charles Spurgeon says the mystery isn't really why Esau got left out the mystery is why Jacob got chosen that's the mystery because you'll see that Jacob doesn't really have that much good about him and yet he still gets chosen why because God is sovereignly for us and he has chosen his way to save mankind and it's through people who are imperfect and you carry on in Romans 9 what shall we say then is there injustice on God's part by no means for he says to Moses I will have mercy on whom I have mercy I will have compassion on whom

I have compassion this speaks directly against this culture of meritocracy where you're saying I will get to heaven because of what I do because of how good I can be because of how much the Bible I read or how many sailors I can show up to how much serving I do in church this goes completely against that the gospel is saying that actually none of us deserve it none of us deserve it not even one Romans 3 says we all fall short of the glory of God all of us even the holy ones who know the Bible very well even the ones who are going out serving the poor that's a different thing do you ever worry when you get to heaven and you're like oh I wonder whether I've done enough or if you stand at heaven's gate and you imagine God the creator looking at you and saying why should I let you in do you ever look back and go oh did I do enough that time that I spent I did that reading plan and I finished it all the way to the end maybe that'll get me in well that time that I did kind of take a sabbatical and go to the Philippines and serve maybe that'll get me in we all are tempted by that we all are tempted by this idea that maybe

God will be pleased with what we do and what we see here in the story of Esau and Jacob is that it's nothing to do with what we do God has preordained God has chosen now that doesn't mean that we don't have our agency to do what we need to do God's sovereignty doesn't go against human freedom and Esau made his choice he chose to pass over the birthright he chose to pass over God and choose to live this way but what you see his grace when it comes to grace is God chooses himself and he will have mercy on whoever he has mercy and the very fact that we're sat here is actually a beautiful thing it actually strips you of pride because if you say oh I'm going to heaven why because I'm this good person no that's not what the gospel is and we all know we all met people who are religiously very prideful if we truly understood the gospel we would empty ourselves of that pride and we would be wow we are completely undeserving that is the gospel and this is where I'll finish you see here Esau whose God is his belly who doesn't deprive his body of the hungers that it wants this firstborn that loses everything and yet all of that is just a foreshadowing setting up for a later thing which is that because we all can't save ourselves the only one who can

