

The Blessing

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[0:00] Thank you, Alex. We continue in the book of Genesis. Last week we were Genesis 26. And we got a glimpse into the life of Isaac, the only chapter about Isaac. Remember, he had a great father, he had a great son, and he was stuck in the middle with just one chapter. But we did get to see something pretty cool. We got to see him go on this journey of choosing faith over fear. He started not very well. He started by lying about his wife, just like his dad. And we talked a little bit about the generational sins that we pass on to our kids. Even though he didn't witness his dad lying, you can bet that around the dinner table, that's what he absorbed. That's what he caught. Choose fear.

Choose to protect yourself as opposed to entrust yourself to God. But encouragingly, we started to see him grow. We started to see him decide, you know what? I can trust God. And so whilst the Philistines were looking at him constantly getting richer and richer and getting envious and trying to sabotage his wealth, he was like, take the wealth. I don't need the wealth. You can have it. Take this wealth. You can have it. I don't need it. My God will be the one that provides for me. And so there's this exciting or encouraging journey we got to see of Isaac getting better and better, growing.

I wish that could be the end of his story. I wish that's how we all go about. Maybe it's not a perfect rocket ship to heaven where we go from A to Z and we become perfect, but maybe through the oscillating, through the ups and downs, we eventually get better and better. I wish I could tell you that.

And yet that is far from the case. This week, we're looking at God's promise, continually working through his people, but his people continually being dysfunctional to the point where this Isaac, who was growing and getting better and better, doesn't finish well at all. And as I was reading this, I was like, this is another bad example, another messed up case. And I started feeling a little bit hopeless. But hopefully as we go through this journey, we will see there is much more to the dysfunction than meets the eye. And God somehow still works through all of it. We have people from all over the world in this room. And when possible, I like to introduce and expose us to different accents from around the world. And today we have a treat. We have one of the university students who's joined us and sadly only for a year, but he's going to introduce to us the word of God through the Scottish accent. And can we invite Benny up to come and read for us? And can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord? Wow. An applause for the Scotsman. There we go. Okay. Because of that, I'm going to have to pray for us just to repent of anything that we have. Lord, we focus fully on your word. We thank you for this brother that you've brought him into our midst. Hong Kong is the opposite of Scotland in many regards, but we thank you that through you, your son, what you did on the cross for us, we are family. And so we lean into your word this morning now and ask that you would speak.

Okay. So I'll be reading from Genesis 27, 1 to 13. 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. He said, behold, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now then take your weapons, your quiver and your bow and go out to the field and hunt game for me 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. Now, Rebecca was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau.

[3:53] So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, Rebecca said to her son Jacob, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau. Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food that I may eat it and bless you before the Lord before I die. Now, therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats so that I may prepare for them delicious food for your father such as he loves. And you shall bring it to your father to eat

so that he may bless you before he dies. But Jacob said to Rebecca, his mother, behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me and I shall see to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing. His mother said to him, let your curse be on me, my son. Only obey my voice and go bring them to me.

This is the word of the Lord. Please take a seat. Thank you, Benny. Actually, as far as Scottish accents go, that's pretty easy to listen to. If you've actually been to Scotland and some of the people that you speak to, you have no idea what they're saying. You just nod and it's kind of like when I go to Shenzhen. Doi, doi. Doi, doi. And Benny's actually here. He's fairly new and he's only here for a year in Hong Kong and he's one of the university students. So if you want to hang out with him, then come and let us know. Isn't this sad? You see Isaac kind of growing up. Now we see him getting a little bit old. Just one second here though. When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim, so he's actually getting blind. Ironically, it's not just physically blind. He's actually spiritually blind. He could not see. He called his son. He says, I don't know when I'm going to die. Ironically, we think that this is actually him on his deathbed. It is not. He actually lives for another 43 years after this. So it just tells you, actually, you don't know when you're going to die. But sadly, what we can tell is that he doesn't really finish well. And it really got me thinking. If you look at, actually, let's start with the Bible. If you look at the Bible, there are so many examples of people not finishing well. God's chosen man, Saul, to be a king. He doesn't finish well.

The wisest man of all time, Solomon, does not finish well. Gideon does not finish well.

Elvis Presley did not finish well. Christina and I, we watched the movie Michael this last week. Good film, good songs. Did not finish well. Whitney Houston does not finish well. It makes me think, what's the problem here? We can oscillate and hopefully trend upwards, but that isn't always the case. What are some of the pitfalls that these people fall into that cause them to not finish well? [7:04] Have a think about that. I might even ask someone, what do you think is the reason why people don't finish well? Matthew, what do you think? Pride. Pride comes before the fall and you start making decisions where you feel as though you are the center and that's how you fall. Beth, any thoughts?

Pride. Yeah, pride as well. Tim Keller has a description of pride, which is you take credit where it isn't deserved. We think that we, everything that we have, everything that we have achieved is because of what we've done. Well, it is far from the truth. What else is there? What is the reason why there are people, so many people who don't finish well? Caleb, what do you think?

Complacency. That's such a big one. So the fellowship is the discipleship cohort we've been doing. As Alex mentioned, we've been going through Hebrews this last week. And chapter two, it's stay, listen carefully, study carefully the word, the truth, lest you drift away from it. Drift. That song that we are prone to wander. Like we start off well. Often January 1st, we start off well, but it takes us till what? January 6th when we start to drift. The scripture says, cling on closely. You fast forward into Hebrews 12, you see the same thing. And I've been asking that question, God, how do we finish well? How do I finish well? Only recently in these last five, six years, pastors that I grew up watching, listening to, reading their books, one by one, falling like flies. And I find myself asking the same question to brothers who I'm walking with, who are walking with me, how do you finish well? It seems like it's way easier to go the other way. What's the big source of this? I think it's pride. I think another source of this is deceit. We lie to ourselves. We lie to those around us. You talk to the pastors who were fallen. You talk to the leaders who have fallen from grace.

They just fall into this cycle of deceit. You look at this chapter that we're going to go through, this family, this covenant family that God chose to bless the nations through. It's just filled with deceit. [9:32] It's filled with them lying to one another. And we're going to unpack that a little bit because I think you can trace this all the way back to the original sin. When the enemy says, did God really say that? Oh, I'm not sure that's true. I was talking to a dear brother in our congregation this last week. And he says, whenever he's struggling through anxiety or kind of stress that he's going through, he goes back to books about trust in God because he knows the remedy to all that anxiety, to all that fear, to all that pride, is to going back to trusting in God, in the truth of who he is.

Because when you know who he is, and you know he is the promise keeper, you know he is the light in the darkness, you know he will make a way, then that fear will subside, that anxiety will pass. Deceit is what we see here in probably the most famous dysfunctional family we see here in the Bible. And it starts with desire. It makes me think about Jeremiah 17 9. The heart is deceitful above all things. It is sick. How many times have we said that about someone else? Oh, he's got a good

heart.

Oh, she's... Oh, trust in your gut. Trust in your heart. Whenever someone tells me that, I'm like, I can't. I trust in my heart, I'll be in a very bad place. Because my heart is deceitful above all things. And you think, oh, I'm pretty okay now. Well, just look back on our own lives five years ago, ten years ago, some of the silly mistakes that we made. In fact, it's Keller who also said, every time you look back five years and you see your old self, you're like, oh, that old self was pretty silly, was pretty stupid. And guess what? You, yourself, five years from now, will look at you right now in the same way. Surely that just instills humility in you, that right now I do not know everything. Right now I can be deceived. Because the whole definition of being deceived, you don't know that you are being deceived. So what we see here is a family of deceit that we're going to go through. This covenant family ends up turning into a corrupt and compromised family. And we start here. Isaac, he is getting old, 137, I believe. His eyes were dimmed, so he couldn't see. His mind was probably dimmed. Spiritually, he was blind. He calls his older son, Esau. Remember, that's his favorite. We talked last week about the dangers of favoritism. And so he calls his older son. He says to him, my son, here I am. Behold, I'm old. I don't know when I'm going to die.

[11:59] Now take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me and prepare for me delicious food such as I love and bring it to me so that I may eat, that I may, my soul may bless you before I die. This seems innocent on the surface, but it is far from it.

Remember, what happened to Esau? Why did he trade away his birthright? Because he was hungry. So he traded it for a bowl of soup. Because why? Because his God was his belly. Philippians 3 talks about this. Their end is destruction. Their God is their belly. Their glory and their shame. They set their minds on earthly things. So Esau had an appetite. Guess where he got that from? We can see here. He got it from dad. The apple never falls too far from the tree. Esau is his favorite son. Why? Because Esau was a strong man. Because Esau would go out and hunt wild game and cook delicious food for his dad.

And his dad would be satisfied. His belly would be satisfied. So that's why he was his favorite. And then he does something really sneaky. He does something very deceitful. He speaks to Esau and says, son, come here. Go out and hunt for me and cook that delicious food. Do you remember that Wagy A5 that you did last time?

Do the same. Come. Don't tell mom. Don't tell your brother. I'm going to eat it. It's going to be delicious. It's going to be yummy. Then I'm going to bless you. Isaac knows. He's known from the beginning, even when his wife was pregnant, that it was going to be the other way around. It was going to be Jacob over Esau. He knew that. He knew he would have known about the swapping for the bowl of soup for the birthright. And yet here, despite knowing all that, he still tries to be sneaky. He still tries to be deceptive and say, hey, I know all that happened. I know there's prophecies about that.

But tell you what, go and cook me a delicious meal. I think I can, I've got a way around this, is what he's saying. You see deceit starts from the very beginning and you see that it passes down from father to son. But just when you think, oh, that's their fault, actually on the other side, you can just favoritism. It's so destructive here because on the other side, guess who's listening in just on the outside of the door? His wife, Rebecca. So you can see, actually, if this was a proper blessing, it would have been the whole family occasion. Yeah. He's saying, hey, come here. I can give you this blessing myself. So not only is he trying to deceive his wife and his youngest son, he's also trying to deceive God because God's already told them it'll be Jacob, but he's like, I can do this. Let's figure it out this way. And so then he goes, but his wife is actually listening. And so this is what happens. Verse five. Now, Rebecca was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, Rebecca said to her son, Jacob, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, bring me game and prepare for me delicious food that I may eat it and bless you before Lord, before I die. Now, therefore my son, obey my voice as I command you, 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.

[15:01] Just as the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree from Isaac down to Esau, Rebecca is the same. She hears this and goes, well, that's not right. Jacob is the chosen one. My favorite is the chosen one. But instead of trusting in God and saying, look, God, you said that it will be Jacob. I'm going to trust you and leave you to do it. She decides to take matters into her own hands. How often have we done that? It's almost out of good intention, but we do it in this manipulative way. And so

she says, hey, we can deal with this. Can you see the, just the destructive and disgusting nature of deceit that's happening? So she tells him, you go, actually you can beat Esau to dad. Why? Because Esau's got to go out and hunt. We're going to take a shortcut. You go out to the garden, find two young goats that we've domesticated. It'll taste different, but don't worry. I know exactly how your dad likes the food.

So I will cook. What does Jacob say? The apple doesn't fall too far from the tree. He says, verse 11, but Jacob said to Rebecca, his mother, behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man and I am a smooth criminal. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Perhaps my father will fill me and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing. It's interesting. The moment mom tells him, hey, why don't you go and lie and do this? We can, we can, we can out scheme your dad and your brother. Instead of saying, hey, that's not right. God already blessed us and it will happen regardless.

What's he afraid of? He's not afraid of actually doing the deed. He's afraid of getting caught. Don't we have that too? We're not so afraid of doing the bad things, but actually we're afraid of getting caught, the consequences. And then you see favoritism continue. His mother then said to him, let your curse be on me, my son. Only obey my voice and go bring them to him. And so he went. Okay. So it's okay now because your mom's going to take the heat. If it happens, the curse will go on her. He goes out and actually he gets the goat and then his mom who prepares the food. So not only is he willing to let the curse go on to mom, he's willing to take the credit for it. If it goes well, if it goes well, it's me. If it goes badly, it's you. The deceit begins, the dysfunction begins. And you're like, this is one messed up family. But before we point our fingers over there, we must wonder, are there moments of deceit in our lives? Whether it's completely bad intention, knowing exactly what God wants and still going around it, or knowing that actually God will provide, but still deciding to take matter into our own hands. And as we see deceit here, I wonder whether we see deceit in our own hearts too. So he goes out and he gets it. Of course, these are young goats. These are not the wild game, the venison that maybe Isaac was especially hoping for. But then Rebecca knows this and she says, this scheme, we have to dress it up even more because just the food isn't going to be enough.

Let's go and get some of Esau's clothes. So then verse 15, then Rebecca took the garments of Esau, her older son, which were with her in the house and put them on Jacob, her younger son, and the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and the smooth part of his neck. And she put the delicious food and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob. Can you just imagine that scene, Rebecca dressing Jacob, putting the goat skin on the back of his neck?

[18:22] No doubt, Esau was probably a bigger man. He would have just looked ridiculous. And then I think, oh, don't we sometimes do that? Reminds me of the fall in Genesis where Adam and Eve hide themselves with fig leaves from God. And we think, that just looks so ridiculous. He sees you.

You're hiding behind a bush, hiding from the creator of the universe. You look ridiculous. And then I think, some of us hide behind our CVs. Some of us hide behind our bank accounts. Some behind our accomplishments. And often it looks just as silly. But here we have the deceiver continues the plot. And there has to be a whole elaborate thing. It's funny because truth is simple.

When you're living by the truth, you don't have to worry. But when you're living a deceitful life, you have to cover it up with so many other things. St. Augustine was the one that says, truth is like a lion. You don't need to defend the truth. Just let it loose and it will defend itself.

But when it comes to lies, they get complex. You have to hide a lie with a lie, with a lie, and with a lie, and it never ends. So anyway, he does it and he turns up and what happens?

Verse 18. So he went into his father and said, my father. And he said, here I am. Who are you, my son? Jacob said to his father, I am Esau, your firstborn. I mean, I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done as you have told me. Now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.

[19:46] But Isaac said to his son, well, this is a little bit strange. Why? How is it that you found it so quickly? My son. He answered, because the Lord your God granted me success. The audacity.

It's called blasphemy, brothers and sisters. When you say that this is God, when it really isn't. Interestingly, he says, because the Lord your God has blessed me. It's a level of mocking and ridicule in it and definitely deception. This tells me something else. Right now, you can be growing up in a covenant family with Isaac and Rebecca and Abraham and Sarah as your grandparents. You can grow up in a covenant family, but just like Esau, you can actually be left out of the

covenant.

Just like Jacob, you can still make bad choices and you can still ridicule God. And you can still have no relationship with God. Because he didn't say the Lord our God. He didn't say the Lord my God. He said the Lord your God. God, Dad, you've got this because your God helped me.

It's interesting because we know Jacob's story as it continues to go. He is going to meet God and it's not going to be pretty. He's going to end up with a limp for the rest of his life. He's going to wrestle with God and only, and then he's going to have his name changed. And then, and only then, once his identity's changed, once he's gone through the fight, then he will start to say, this is the Lord my God. This has now become the God of Jacob. Until then, it's my dad's God.

Some of us have to, and we'll go through wrestling ourselves. Some of us wrongly attribute things to God when they really are not, only to help fulfill our own selfish desires. And those selfish desires lead to deceit and those deceitful thoughts lead to actions. And we'll see the consequences that happen after that. A covenant family ends up being a corrupted one, but he gets the blessing anyway. So he continues to lie. The voice of Jacob's voice, verse 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. And he did not recognize him because his hands were hairy like his brother's hands. So he blessed him. And he said, are you, he checks again. Often when we are lying, we actually do have chances to come clean. God in his grace gives us opportunities to come clean and say, Hey, that's just not right here. But yet he continues to double down and go further and further into the lie. And he did not recognize him because his hands were hairy.

[22:07] He said, are you really my son Esau? He answered, I am. Then he said, bring it near to me that I may eat at 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. And then he kisses him and then he blesses him. And here is the blessing. See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. Let people 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. What a blessing. Talks about the future. It's a spiritual realm that is going on. There's a social realm that's going on here. Remember, he already had the birthright when he swapped it for a bowl of soup in the greatest trade of all time.

And yet now he's taking matters into his own hands to try and get this blessing when he would have gotten it anyway, by the way. But he does get it. And here's the difference in the ancient world. Actually, when a father speaks a blessing over the son, it is binding and it is legal. It cannot be retracted. It cannot be taken back. And so he's got exactly what he wants. He gets the blessing that would have been his anyway. He's going to be prosperous. He's going to have authority, especially over his brothers. And his future is going to be secure.

Oh, what a great thing. Okay. Maybe a little bit of deception, maybe a little bit of white lying. Finally, I've got my blessing. Everything is going to be smooth sailing for me from now on, says Jacob. Quite the opposite.

[23:41] Because desire leads to deceit. Deceit leads to decisions. Decisions leads to actions. And actions lead to consequences. And so even though he does get the blessing, we'll find out now that there are consequences that come. And let's go to verse 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, comes in from his hunting. He's 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. His father, Isaac, said to him, who are you? He answered, I am your son, your firstborn, Esau. 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. Jacob manages to escape just in time. Esau comes back and is absolutely devastated because he, well actually Isaac is devastated too, because why? Their deceitful scheme didn't work. Because remember, they had a plot, but that didn't work. And they got tricked by Rebecca and Jacob. So this is a 2v2 situation and their team lost. Now they're very angry. And of course, so angry. Verse 34, 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. Oh, my father, your brother came deceitfully and he has taken away your blessing. 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. Wait a minute, Esau. Jacob didn't really cheat you. The trade was pretty clear. You would give him your birthright and he would give you a bowl of soup. Yeah, it's a terrible trade, but he didn't cheat you. You agreed to the terms. Isn't it interesting? When we fall into our own desires, not only do we deceive others, but we actually deceive ourselves too. His memory starts to twist. Like, I got cheated from all of this. Again, in the ancient world, the firstborn gets the birthright. And most often, the birthright then leads to the blessing.

Remember, the birthright is actually just the financial material stuff. You get the double portion of inheritance, the land, the people, the animals. But then the blessing that comes shortly after is the spiritual one. He was hoping that, okay, I gave away the birthright, but maybe I can still get this one. And then he's outraged because he realized he cannot. And he cries wolf and he says, this is not fair. Interestingly, he leaves and then, actually no, he actually begs his dad to give him a blessing. He says, please. Again, this tells you his heart, that he's not just there because he believes that this is God's sovereign plan for his family. Once he finds out what's happened, he gets on his knees and he begs and cries, dad, just give me a blessing, any kind of blessing. Just give him it to me, which again shows you his heart. So maybe not too much sympathy for Esau here because we know that he's not really interested in the giver. He only really wants the gift. He only really, doesn't that happen to us?

We do something bad. We're not really worried about doing bad. We're just worried about getting caught. And actually the main thing is that we just don't lose the things that we want. So you see the selfishness that still is just surrounding the heart of Esau. And so he begs dad, come on, you've got more in there, please. You must be the gift that keeps on giving.

Give me something. And so his dad actually does give him something, but it's not quite the blessing that he's after. We can only call this the Taobao version of the blessing. And this is what it is.

Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. 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. So it's not quite a blessing. It's not quite a curse. It's actually, you're going to go and live in a land that's going to be really tough. You are going to survive through your sword. But there will be one time where you will break away from the yoke of your brother. That's not a great blessing. But that's all he has. That's all he has.

Remember, scripture says Esau despised his birthright. Not in the sense he hated it. He just passed over. He just rejected it. He just chose something else. How often do we choose something else than come back crying when that thing doesn't work out? We lie to ourselves. We deceive ourselves.

[28:14] Of course, he gets the Taobao blessing. Verse 41, he's not too happy. And now Esau hates Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him and said to himself, said to himself to the point where his mom actually hears him, the days of mourning for my father are approaching. Then I will kill my brother Jacob. Just you wait. I'm just going to let dad die, not knowing that it's going to be another 43 years. And then I'm going to kill him. Then we will know whether that blessing is real.

Mom hears though. And then mom does something really interesting. She goes to Jacob and says, hey, Esau's going to kill you. Run. Run and leave this place. But don't go too far. Go to Laban, my brother in Haran. This is verse 43. And stay with him. Actually, stay with him a while. So in another version, it's actually just stay with him a few days. Just, you know Esau. He's impulsive. He's arrogant. But he also forgets. And he's a little bit dumb. He'll forget after a while. Maybe after a couple of days, maybe after a couple of weeks, you can come back and it will all be okay.

So go. Run. And so then actually he does run. And here comes the consequence. The deceitfulness of Jacob, where he does end up getting the blessing, brackets, that would have been his anyway. He just took a shortcut. He does get the blessing, but the consequences are dire.

He ends up on the run. Not just for a few days or a few weeks. He ends up out there for 20 years.

Another consequence, he never actually gets to see his mom, Rebecca, from this moment.

That's a consequence for Rebecca as she schemes this. She, trying to get her favorites and the blessing, now will never see him again. In fact, we don't even hear much from Rebecca, actually.

We don't even hear the account of her death from here. This is just a sorry end to her life.

[30:04] Funnily enough, we'll find out in the next few weeks that Jacob himself, the one who deceived and got the blessing, he himself will be deceived too. And you see the consequences just

keep piling up and the fracture that has happened in the family now will be forever. She then says something very interesting at the end of this chapter.

Verse 46. Then Rebecca 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?

I was like, what does that mean? It's a bit of a random comment that comes from this whole scene. To find the answer, we have to go a little bit back, actually, to the end of chapter 26. Just have a look with me there.

So remember, last week was about Isaac growing in faith and not fear, getting very rich. And then so he gets to the point where King Abimelech is scared of him.

Verse 34 finishes this way, and I deliberately left this bit out last week. And it says this. When Esau was 40 years old, he took Judith, the daughter of Biri, the Hittite, to be his wife, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite.

[31:12] And they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebecca. Can you see the blind nature of favoritism that comes here? Isaac favors his son and spurs his son to the point where even though his son makes these terrible mistakes and actually makes him and his wife's life bitter, he still keeps choosing him.

What you see here, again, is an example of compromise. You see the slippery slope. C.S. Lewis in the Screwtape Letter says this, that the road to hell is a slippery one. It starts with small decisions that you make.

It's gradual. And you see this. And actually, the decisions that Esau makes, he takes multiple wives from a foreign nation, and you see the road of compromise that he heads down, and it actually causes life to be bitter for his parents.

Now you go back to the end of chapter seven, almost it kind of just bookends it. Why is she doing this? She goes to her husband and says, The last thing I want is for Jacob to do the same thing as Esau.

You know how Esau and his wives have just made our lives so bitter. Let's just send him away, back to my brother's land, and he'll hopefully find a wife there that matches with the values that we have.

[32:24] What's she doing? She's telling a half-truth. But she's telling a half-truth to cover a lie. You see that road of deceit. You need lies to tell more lies to tell more lies.

Because she needs to find a way to explain to Isaac why Jacob is going. She needs to explain to her husband that actually we're going to send Jacob back over there without telling him the whole story.

So she uses a lie to cover up a lie. And she makes it all dramatic. If I have this again, my life will be worth nothing.

There's no point in living. Let us send our son back so he will have a godly woman. The hypocrisy, the deceit is disgusting. And you use lies to cover lies.

So where do we finish from here? None of these people finish that well. You see Isaac who started well, but through deceit, he ends up trying to deceive his wife, his younger son, God.

[33:26] You see Rebecca trying to deceive her husband. In doing so, losing her son. You see Jacob trying to deceive his own brother. Gets the blessing, but then has to run for his life.

And then ends up getting deceived himself. You see Esau deceiving himself. The destruction that is led to from deceit.

These are bad examples. We don't need to follow these examples. But you might be sat here going, well, to be honest, James, if you look at my family, it's pretty dysfunctional. There's a lot of deceit going on.

There's a lot of desires of the flesh going on. And I'm here saying, yes, mine too. What wretched people we are. What dysfunctional families we come from.

What hopelessness we have. Yet then why is this story here? What is the point of leaving this account here, this covenant family for us to see here, is because we now know one thing that they did not.

[34:28] And that we don't have to go around cheating and stressing and chasing blessings anymore. Why? Because Jesus. And this is where I started to get more hope throughout this week.

And you're going to have to turn with me there. We go to the New Testament, which sadly this dysfunctional family does not have. You go to Ephesians. I've been reading with a few people this week through Ephesians and just so blessed by this verse in Ephesians 1, verse 3.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Are you kidding me? We are Esau. We are Jacob. We are Rebecca. We are Isaac. Yet now, because of Christ, we have received every spiritual blessing that we ever need.

They've been cheating and lying and scheming their way to these blessings. And yet, sat now, here are people who have all received this blessing because we've been chosen and we've been loved by our Most High God.

[35:46] So you don't have to scheme anymore. You don't have to lie anymore. No deceit needs to live inside you because you already have the blessing because I already have the blessing because of Jesus.

How often do you remind yourself of that truth? That I don't have to cheat my way through anything anymore. I don't have to be afraid of anything anymore. Because God who graciously gave me his son, will he not graciously give us all things now?

And hasn't he already given me every spiritual blessing that I need? I have all that I need because I have Jesus. How often do you tell that to yourself? And this isn't just like a positive self-taught life. This is truth that we need to speak over our lives. That's why Hebrew 2 says, listen carefully. Hold on to this truth. You are blessed because of Jesus. Full stop. Nothing else. And that changes the way you go to the office.

That changes the way you go to school. That changes the way you deal with deceit in your family. That changes the way of everything because you're like, take everything. Have the well. Have this. Have that. It doesn't matter.

[36:53] Guess what? Because I have Jesus. That's what it means. The firstborn who comes and gives us the blessing. Allows us to live in a way that is free from fear and anxiety and deceit.

Ironically, that ridiculous picture of Jacob wearing his brother's clothes, putting the goat skin on his neck.

What a just ridiculous story in the Old Testament showing the depravity and the deceit of man. Yet guess what the gospel is?

The gospel is that we have actually been given a robe that does not belong to us, that we did not deserve. Yet the prince of heaven took off his robe and put it on us so that when we walk up to the throne of grace and mercy, he will see that robe and he will count us as righteous.

Not because of what we've done. Not because of what we've done. Not because of that CV. Not because of that fig leaf. Not because of that skin that you're covering your neck with. We go to the throne because we have also borrowed garments.

[38:02] But we didn't have to lie and deceive and cheat to get them. We got them undeservedly while we were still sinners. Because Christ died for us and handed us his robe.

So we too actually need to see the ridiculousness of us in that robe. Because it doesn't really fit. Because we are not holy. We are not doing what we're supposed to be doing. We are deceitful above all things.

Yet isn't it crazy? Outrageous that we get to wear that robe and be presented as righteous.

Because there was one who took to the cross and took it all away.

That is the gospel message that we have. That we are now presented without blemish. You and I, we sit here with deceit in our track record.

If we had a CV of all the things that we've done in our lives. The things that we've said. The things that we've thought. The plans that we've schemed. That would be a very shameful, embarrassing CV that we have.

[39:07] Yet. All of that is wiped clean. And we approach the throne. With the robe of a king. Adopted into the family.

A co-heir with Christ. So despite our dysfunction. God still works. Despite our deceit. God still comes through in truth.

That's why he says I am the way. The truth and the life. Nothing that you can do will get to heaven. Other than through me. I'm here to reverse the curse of deceit.

