



BY FAITH

MAY 24 - AUG 2

(4) "Jacob and Esau"

HIGHLIGHT: *Hebrews 11:20-21; Genesis 27:1-10, 18-29; Genesis 48:20-22*

H

Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.

Hebrews 11:20-21 NLT

20 It was by faith that Isaac promised blessings for the future to his sons, Jacob and Esau.

21 It was by faith that Jacob, when he was old and dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons and bowed in worship as he leaned on his staff.

Genesis 27:1-10, 18-29 NLT

1 One day when Isaac was old and turning blind, he called for Esau, his older son, and said, "My son."
"Yes, Father?" Esau replied.

2 "I am an old man now," Isaac said, "and I don't know when I may die. **3** Take your bow and a quiver full of arrows, and go out into the open country to hunt some wild game for me. **4** Prepare my favorite dish, and bring it here for me to eat. Then I will pronounce the blessing that belongs to you, my firstborn son, before I die."

5 But Rebekah overheard what Isaac had said to his son Esau. So when Esau left to hunt for the wild game, **6** she said to her son Jacob, "Listen. I overheard your father say to Esau, **7** 'Bring me some wild game and prepare me a delicious meal. Then I will bless you in the Lord's presence before I die.' **8** Now, my son, listen to me. Do exactly as I tell you. **9** Go out to the flocks, and bring me two fine young goats. I'll use them to prepare your father's favorite dish. **10** Then take the food to your father so he can eat it and bless you before he dies."

18 So Jacob took the food to his father. "My father?" he said.
"Yes, my son," Isaac answered. "Who are you—Esau or Jacob?"

19 Jacob replied, "It's Esau, your firstborn son. I've done as you told me. Here is the wild game. Now sit up and eat it so you can give me your blessing."

20 Isaac asked, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?" "The Lord your God put it in my path!" Jacob replied.

21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come closer so I can touch you and make sure that you really are Esau."

22 So Jacob went closer to his father, and Isaac touched him. "The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's," Isaac said. **23** But he did not recognize Jacob, because Jacob's hands felt hairy just like Esau's. So Isaac prepared to bless Jacob. **24** "But are you really my son Esau?" he asked.

"Yes, I am," Jacob replied.

25 Then Isaac said, "Now, my son, bring me the wild game. Let me eat it, and then I will give you my blessing." So Jacob took the food to his father, and Isaac ate it. He also drank the wine that Jacob served him. **26** Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come a little closer and kiss me, my son."

27 So Jacob went over and kissed him. And when Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he was finally convinced, and he blessed his son. He said, "Ah! The smell of my son is like the smell of the outdoors, which the Lord has blessed!"

28

"From the dew of heaven
and the richness of the earth,
may God always give you abundant harvests of grain
and bountiful new wine.

29

May many nations become your servants,
and may they bow down to you.
May you be the master over your brothers,
and may your mother's sons bow down to you.
All who curse you will be cursed,
and all who bless you will be blessed."

Genesis 48:20-22 NLT

20 So Jacob blessed the boys that day with this blessing: "The people of Israel will use your names when they give a blessing. They will say, 'May God make you as prosperous as Ephraim and Manasseh.'" In this way, Jacob put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

21 Then Jacob said to Joseph, "Look, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will take you back to Canaan, the land of your ancestors. **22** And beyond what I have given your brothers, I am giving you an extra portion of the land that I took from the Amorites with my sword and bow."

EXPLAIN

The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.

Hebrews 11:20

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of nation whose people would be like “the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore—no way to count them” (v.12). To his credit Abraham (and **Isaac and Jacob**) overcame confounding situations, personal character traits, and dysfunctional families that could have made them say *it will never happen* had they not believed “what God had promised them” (see vv.13-16). The life of faith is not a *walk by sight* but rather a *walk of trust*. That’s what the “great cloud of witnesses” is in Heb. 12:1—the men and women who held God’s hand even when it was dark. Especially when it was dark. Trusting all the way that God would not leave them or forsake them. These are the ones whose “weakness was turned to strength, who became strong in battle and put armies to flight” (see Heb. 11:33-35a). Included in this great cloud are also the ones who “were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free—of whom the world was not worthy” (see vv.35b-40). They cry out to us, “ENDURE! You can do it. Strip off every weight that slows you down and the sins that so easily trip you up. And when you get tired and can’t see how God’s way can work, grab the grace of God to help you when you need it most” (see Heb. 12:1, 15; 4:14-16).

Isaac knew his own weaknesses of the flesh and those of his two sons. But **he promised blessings for the future to Jacob and Esau.**

Genesis 27:1-10, 18-29

James tells us that “disorder” is fueled by “selfish ambition” (see James 3:13-16). There is probably no worse display of selfish ambition than *saving one’s own neck at the expense of others*. Isaac did this (see Genesis 26:6-11). He learned well from his father, Abraham, who pulled the same stunt twice (see Genesis 12:10-20 and 20:1-18). Isaac was dealing with his own treachery and wondering how God could ever pass Abraham’s blessing to him. He was a broken vessel. But God did pass it along to him. God doesn’t need perfection; He needs our availability so that He can show the world what He can do by *His* great power (see 2 Corinthians 4:7). But to whom could he pass this great blessing? Esau, the son he loved, was “ungodly” (Hebrews 12:16). Jacob was a schemer (Max Lucado calls him the riverboat gambler of the patriarchs)—an opportunist who never missed a chance to get ahead (see Genesis 25:27-34). In Genesis 27 you can see how he, with the encouragement of his mother, “stole” Esau’s blessing (v.35). Again, God shows His grace and sovereignty by using Jacob to be the next link in the lineage of Messiah—Jesus (see Matthew 1:2). He is always willing to put His treasure in jars of clay. Even when they are broken, the light shines through.

Hebrews 11:21 and Genesis 48:20-22

Jacob continued the flawed nature of his father. He and Rachel added to the dysfunction of their family by playing favorites with their children. But God in His mercy and grace turned apparent disaster into blessing (see Genesis 48:11). And he **blesses each of Joseph’s sons and bows in worship**. Joseph, long thought to be dead, is rescued by God and put in the position of second commander in the Egyptian empire. And God continues the lineage of His Son—Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Some of the best gardens are grown with a healthy mixture of compost (decayed organic material). “What the

enemy intends for evil, God intends for good” (see Genesis 50:20). People of faith never doubt that the promises of God will come through.

A

APPLY

Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. How do the lives of Isaac and Jacob demonstrate faith?
3. Rebekah and Jacob deceive Isaac, even outright lying to him. Does this mean that it is okay to lie? Why or why not?
4. How can we see God's sovereignty on display in these texts? (See also Genesis 25:19-34)

R

RESPOND

The purpose of this section is to take action with the truths you're learning. Answer honestly. Find someone who will hold you accountable to living out your response to Scripture.

1. Read Hebrews 11 and notice all of the verbs. The author is showing us, through previously faithful saints, that true faith leads to action (see also Ephesians 2:10, James 2:18-19, Romans 12:1-2, etc). This is not to be confused with being saved by works (we are saved by grace, through faith in Christ, but our salvation leading to good works.) After you read these passages, pray that God would help you to trust Him more, and help you act on what He says in His word—especially when it's difficult.
2. God's sovereignty, the fact that He is control in all things and of all things, allowed for Isaac and Jacob to have faith God would fulfill his promises. How does the sovereignty of God help you put your faith in Him? How will you live this week because of His sovereignty?