

Genesis Ch27v1-45 - Blessing in the Mess

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[0:00] Thank you.

Well, if we could turn in our Bibles, please, to Genesis chapter 27. Genesis chapter 27, which is right at the beginning of the Bible.

We've been looking at the life of Abraham, his family, and we've been looking in particular at his son Isaac and his sons, Isaac and Jacob.

Or Jacob and Esau, rather. So we've got a long reading today. It's chapter 27, but it's very hard to just pick little bits out. It's something we've got to read together.

So I've got a few helpers this morning. So if they could come up ready to jump in as we need to, that'll be great. So Genesis chapter 27, starting in verse 1 through to verse 45.

[1:28] So Genesis 27, starting at verse 1. When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for his elder son Esau and said to him, My son, here I am, he answered.

Isaac said, I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death. Now then get your equipment, your quiver and bow, and go out into the open country to hunt some wild game for me.

Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die. Now Rebecca was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau.

When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, Rebecca said to her son Jacob, Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.

Now my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you. Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so that I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it.

[2:59] Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies. Jacob said to Rebecca, his mother, But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin.

What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing. His mother said to him, My son, let the curse fall on me.

Just do what I say, go and get them for me. So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food just the way his father liked it.

Then Rebecca took the best clothes of her elder son Esau, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goat skins.

Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. He went to his father and said, My father. Yes, my son, he answered.

[4:03] Who is it? Jacob said to his father, I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing.

Isaac asked his son, How did you find it so quickly, my son? The Lord your God gave me success, he replied. Then Isaac said to Jacob, Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.

Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau, so he proceeded to bless him.

Are you really my son Esau? he asked. I am, he replied. Then he said, My son, bring me some of your game to eat so that I may give you my blessing.

Jacob brought it to him and he ate, and he brought some wine and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, Come here, my son, and kiss me.

[5:14] So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed.

May God give you heaven's dew and earth's richness, an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you.

Be Lord over your brothers and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed. After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting.

He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, My father, please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing.

His father Isaac asked him, Who are you? I am your son, he answered, your firstborn, Esau. Isaac trembled violently and said, Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me?

[6:29] I ate it just before you came and I blessed him and indeed he will be blessed. When Esau heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, Bless me, me too, my father.

But he said, Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing. Esau said, Isn't he rightly named Jacob? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me.

He took my birthright and now he has taken my blessing. Then he asked, Haven't you reserved any blessing for me? Isaac answered Esau, I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants and I have sustained him with grain and new wine.

So what can I possibly do for you, my son? Esau said to his father, Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father.

Then Esau wept aloud. His father Isaac answered him, Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above.

[7:39] You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck. Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him.

He said to himself, The days of mourning for my father are near. Then I will kill my brother Jacob. When Rebecca was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, Your brother Esau is planning to avenge himself by killing you.

Now then, my son, do what I say. Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran. Stay with him for a while until your brother's fury subsides. When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I'll send word for you to come back from there.

Why should I lose both of you in one day? Thank you, Chris and Kirsty.

Keep your Bibles open there at chapter 27. We're going to pray and ask for God's help. Father, teach us wonderful things in your word.

[9:08] Teach us so that our lives are changed and transformed. Teach us today by your spirit that it may be for our good, for our blessing.

We need you. So please help in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we've been looking together, haven't we, at the family of Abraham.

You may say, well, is there not a better family we could study together? Well, the reason is God has a plan to redeem the world, to undo the curse and bring blessing, to bring humanity back into relationship with God.

Now, this big plan of redemption is all being worked out through the chosen family of Abraham.

God's big plan, but it's being enacted through the family of Abraham. From this family, God promised that a son was going to come, a son who would restore our disordered lives and renew this broken world.

[10:28] through this family, all the nations of the world were going to be blessed. So according to God's plan and promise, the blessing was passed from Abraham down to his son Isaac.

And now Isaac, as we've just been reading, is getting old and must pass the blessing on to his son. You see, the family of Abraham are important.

They're central to God's plan of redemption for the whole world. But what happens when this special chosen family don't want to play ball?

What happens when this chosen family, instead of going with God's plan, actually start opposing God's plan?

What's going to happen then? Well, that's what chapter 27 is all about. Three things we're going to see from the text.

[11:35] Here's the first big one. God's plan is always opposed. God's plan is always opposed. His plan is to redeem the world, to bring humanity back into relationship with God.

But it seems that humanity don't want to go along with it. People are opposed to God's plan. And we see this in the family of Isaac and Rebecca and their two sons, Jacob and Esau.

We can see their opposition to God's plan in the deadly D's. D's. Here's four deadly D's. Here's the first one.

Isaac disobeys God's word. He's getting old, he's nearing death, and he's getting ready to pass the blessing on to his son.

And so in preparation, at the beginning of 27, he calls in his eldest son, Esau, verse 4, prepare me the kind of tasty food I like, bring it in to me to eat, that I may give you my blessing before I die.

[12:48] Seems normal enough, doesn't it? Except for one glaring fact. Before Jacob and Esau were ever born, God had revealed to Isaac and Rebecca that the blessing wasn't going to go to the eldest son, Esau, but it was going to the youngest son, Jacob.

That would be like the crown bypassing William and going to Harry. Oh my goodness, you couldn't do that, could you? But this was God's choice.

God was clear. The elder is going to serve the younger. But Isaac, oh no, no, no. Isaac has his own plans.

He wants it to go to Esau, the son that he loved, the one who made special dinners and, well, he loved him. So secretly and without even telling his wife, he plans to give the blessing over to Esau.

He knows what God has said, but he just chooses to disobey what God says. So there's Isaac and his disobedience.

[14:04] And then we've got Rebecca and her distrust of God's promises. It seems that Isaac's secret wasn't really a secret at all, was it?

Look at verse 5. Because, well, just outside the bedroom, Rebecca was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. She too knows what God had said, that the blessing would be passed to Jacob.

But instead of dealing with it rightly, instead of trusting God with the way he would do things, she decides to take things into her own hands. She takes the place of God.

To Rebecca, it just seems, well, God is just incapable of fulfilling his promises. He needs help. So Rebecca plays God herself.

Her plan is to trick her husband and so she tells Jacob, look at verse 9, go out to the flock and bring me in two of your choice young goats so that I can prepare some tasty food for your father just the way he likes it.

[15:11] Then take it to your father to eat so that he may give you his blessing before he dies. She knows the promise. But she decides to distrust the promise.

And then we've got Jacob. Well, Jacob deceives God's people, doesn't he? Rebecca's plan might be good. It seems to be pretty well thought out but has she forgotten something?

Verse 11, Mum! Well, what about Esau? He's hairy. I've got smooth skin. What if my father touches me?

I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing. Don't worry, Jacob. I've got a plan for this one. You go off and dress in some of Esau's old smelly clothes.

I'm going to take some of that goat skin. We're going to put it on your arms and on your neck and he's going to think you're Esau. Anyway, he can hardly see so he's never going to know anyway.

[16:22] So, verse 22, Jacob went close to his father Isaac who touched him and said, the voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands they're hairy.

They're the hands of Esau. He did not recognize him for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau, so he proceeded to bless him.

Now, not for the first time, Isaac asks, are you really my son Esau? I am, he replied.

Lies and deceit just drip from his mouth. Jacob was prepared to say whatever and do whatever just to get that blessing.

He was a deceiver. And then we've got the other brother, Esau. Well, he despises God's blessing.

[17:29] It's quite the story, isn't it? No sooner has Jacob brought in his food and got the blessing and the dirty deed done, than he goes out and Esau arrives with his tasty food.

But it's all too late, isn't it? His shock of being done over by his younger brother was clear for all to see and hear. He shouts out with a loud and bitter cry.

He's distraught. Now, Esau might be angry, but let's not be fooled by Esau's tears.

Remember back when these brothers were younger, Esau was hungry, and he handed over his birthright to Jacob for just a bowl of stew. The author actually records for us and tells us what was going on inside Esau's heart at that time.

It tells us in 25 verse 34, Esau despised his birthright. He might have lots of regrets, but deep down in his heart, Esau was despising God's blessing.

[18:41] What a mess. This is the family chosen by God, a special family, to bring redemption and blessing to the whole world, but this family is riddled with disobedience, distrust, deception, and despising.

Rather than supporting the plan of God, they're opposing the plan of God. At least they're opposing the way God wants to do his work.

And the consequences are disastrous. Isaac ends up being distressed, Esau is plotting to kill his brother, Jacob runs away in fear, and Rebecca, if we read on in the story, never ever gets to see her son again.

What a mess. But let's not think we would do any better. The story of this family, well, it's like any Irish family, isn't it, really?

in fact, it's the story of humanity. You see, we might all want redemption. We may want this world to be sorted, and we want things to change in our lives.

[19:58] We long for restoration and renewal, but you know what? God's got his plan, but let him tell me my plan. I want to do things my way.

You see, this family, as disastrous as they are, are alive and well in each of our own hearts. Because don't we too, well, you know, I know what God's word says, but just sometimes I just choose to disobey what it says.

And I know God has given us promises in his word, and he's promised to be with me, and he's promised to do this for me, and, well, you know, think about it.

Sometimes he just doesn't quite deliver in the way I want him to, so I'll just do things my way. Or maybe we're just a bit like Jacob, and we think, well, maybe I can just kind of go in under the radar a little bit, and just give a little bit of pretense, and, well, God's not going to really know any difference, is he?

I can deceive my way along. Or maybe we're just thinking, you know, I've been told all these stories about God and Jesus, and I've heard it so often, and, well, I think I can just live without it, and we despise the blessings that have been given to us.

[21:35] You see, the reality is we are a broken mess, due to our sinful decisions and selfish choices. And there's never any winners when we go against God's plan, when we decide we know best for ourselves.

Going our way is only going to lead in one direction, more destruction, more disorder, more mess, and more chaos in the family. What's God going to do?

His plan seems in tatters. This is the chosen family to bring redemption to the whole world. They're meant to be blessing the nations, but instead they're bringing curses on themselves.

If God has a plan to redeem, well, he hasn't sought it out very well, because it's not going to plan, is it? What's God to do?

Well, God's plan will always be opposed, but second, God's plan is going to be accomplished.

[22:43] You see, despite the mess of Isaac and Rebecca and their family, God's plan actually remains on track. Despite all the opposition and the deadly deeds, God's plan is going just as he says it would.

Two big things we can learn here as we read between the lines of what's going on in this family. First, sin or rebellion can't frustrate God's plan.

It can't frustrate God's plan. In all the plotting and all the scheming, God's plan can't be derailed. Just as God had said at the very beginning, the younger or the elder will serve the younger and Jacob will be blessed.

And that's what happens. Look at verse 27. So when Jacob went to Isaac and kissed him, and Isaac caught the smell of his clothes and blessed him and said, Ah, the smell of my son.

It's like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. Isaac thought at that moment he was giving the blessing to Esau.

[24:01] But no, God's plan wasn't going to be frustrated, it was going to Jacob. And so, end of verse 29, the blessing came, may those who curse you be cursed, and may those who bless you be blessed.

And even when Esau pleads for his father, when he finds out about what's gone on, he goes to his father and pleads for somehow that he could get a blessing, that somehow things could be changed.

What does Isaac say, verse 37? I have made him Lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine, so what can I possibly do for you, my son?

You see, God's plan can't be frustrated. Sinful humanity can never halt or hinder the purposes of God.

Well, not only doesn't sin frustrate God's plan, something bigger happens. Sin only fulfills God's plan.

[25:17] God uses sinful behaviours to accomplish his plan. Now, this doesn't mean to say that God takes part in sin, or that God is turning a blind eye to sin.

No, God is pure and holy. He cannot tolerate it. In fact, he's going to hold the whole world to account. However, God is sovereign over sin.

He's sovereign over evil, and he works all of it for his good purposes. You see, Isaac and Esau disobey and despise God.

Rebecca and Jacob may distrust and seek to deceive God. They're all acting in selfish ways, but God uses their schemes to achieve his very purposes.

The promises of blessing are being passed down to Jacob, just as God had said, so that the nations of the world would be blessed. Christ. Now, this is true, not just in the grand redemption scale, but it's also true in each of our own individual lives.

[26:30] Maybe you've been involved in some sin, or you're just aware of it, and you think, that's it, end of story, that's put up a barrier, God can do no more work in my life.

Or maybe you've been on the receiving end of somebody's sin or behaviour towards you that's changed your life or your circumstances, and you think, the plan, God's plan, it's ruined.

They've wrecked it. Well, you know what, there's nothing we can say or do, and there's nothing that can ever happen to us by anybody else that will frustrate or derail God's purposes and plans for your life.

God is sovereign over every single detail. God doesn't do mistakes, as one writer put it.

Sorry, you'll just have to, whoops, just listen here, I don't have it there, but listen to this. God is not just sovereign over your best deeds, he is sovereign over the darkest, most selfish, and most destructive acts that you will ever commit or that others will ever commit against you and he will use these to accomplish his good and perfect will in your life.

[27 : 59] So God overrules our rebellion, he even uses our rebellion to accomplish his plan. Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, they may stand opposed to God's plan, they may stand opposed to how God works, but nothing and no one is going to hinder what God has said he is going to do.

His plan is going to be accomplished. Now that's good news for us. It's good news for our church, because people are opposed to God's plan, people are opposed to the gospel, but nothing is ever going to hinder what God has said he is going to do through his people and through his church.

He will build it and nothing will stand against it. This is good news, because we also are in need of redemption.

So God's plan is opposed, God's plan will be accomplished, and then third, God's plan achieves our redemption. You see, God doesn't give up on sinful humanity.

We look at a family like this and we go, right, that's it, write it all off, that's the end of humanity. In fact, God works in spite of our sin and through our sin to achieve what he wants to do.

[29 : 35] And we see this being worked out in God's ultimate promised son, who comes down through the family of Abraham, from Isaac to Jacob and so on, till we come to his ultimate son, Jesus Christ.

The son who was unlike this family, who obeyed God's word and trusted God's word, the true son who came to bring blessing to all nations.

nations. Have a look with me, please, in Acts. Go to Acts chapter 2. Here the apostle Peter is preaching to a gathering that includes what, guess what, nations from all around the world.

People from all kinds of different countries have gathered, it's Pentecost, they've come into Jerusalem and Peter has an audience of all these different nationalities.

And his message is all about the redemption of Jesus Christ. Now look at what he says about Jesus' death.

[30 : 53] We're going to pick it up in verse 22. fellow Israelites, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did among you through him as you yourselves know.

This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge and you with the help of wicked men put him to death by nailing him to a cross.

But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. Now can you see the rebellion and the opposition and the sin of the people here in these verses?

Do you see it there? Wicked men put him to death. That's how the death of Jesus is described. Wicked men put him to death.

Disobedient, distrusting, deceiving, despising people, opposed God, turned against his son and they crucified him. But this was God's plan.

[32 : 15] verse 23. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge and you with the help of wicked men put him to death.

You see, God's plan can't be derailed. It was God's plan that his son would die, that Jesus would come to redeem us from the brokenness and disorder of our lives.

He comes to families like you and I. He becomes our sin. He's treated as disobedient, as distrusting, as deceiving and despising on the cross.

He's punished. The curse that should fall on us falls on him so that we might receive the promises of blessing. God overrules all the rebellion and uses all the rebellion to achieve our redemption.

You see, God is sovereign over the darkest, most selfish and most destructive acts that anyone could ever commit against God.

[33:27] He uses the betrayal and the hatred, the thorns and the crowns to do what he set out to do. God's plan cannot be frustrated by our sin.

In fact, it is being fulfilled through our sin. How are we to respond to such a good and gracious God as this?

Well, flick over the page, Acts chapter 2, verse 37. Verse 37, When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and they said to Peter and the other apostles, brothers, what shall we do?

What shall we do with all our mess and brokenness and our life of sin? Peter replied, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It's a command to repent. to turn and as a visible demonstration of your heart's response, be baptized.

[34:48] This is what God is saying to us. So how are you going to respond to what his word is saying? Well, maybe you just think, well, I know what it says, but I'm going to choose to disobey what it says.

Oh, I hear the promise that there will be forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but you know what, I think I can do things better my way.

Or maybe we think, you know, all this business of repenting and following God, I can just get in under the radar and just do what needs to be done and, well, people won't make any difference and maybe God won't see any difference either and I'll be okay.

Or maybe it's a case of just hearing the same message over and over and over again and go, no, not for me. I really think I can do it myself.

What's our response? Whether this is the first time we're ever confronted with repentance or there's stuff in our life personally or within our families that we're just ignoring and not dealing with, what's our response going to be?

[36:17] Well, go with me please to Hebrews chapter 12, because this family that we've been looking at is a warning to us.

Hebrews chapter 12. As we think about our response to God's gift of redemption, his call to repentance, to deal with things in our life that need to be dealt with or perhaps we're ignoring, let the weight of Esau's response be heard to us today.

Hebrews 12 verse 16. See that no one, not one of us is sexually or moral or is godless like Esau.

well, we've just been looking at him, haven't we, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest brother. Afterwards, as you know, and we do know because we've just read it, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected.

Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. You see, the time will come when the opportunity to change will have passed us by.

[38:02] And maybe you're here this morning and you've never done business with God, you've heard it, but you've never ever repented. you've never dealt with the issues.

Or maybe there's sinful behaviour and habits in your own life, stuff in my life I need to pay attention to, maybe things going on in your own family that's never been worked through.

Don't despise the blessing that God is giving you through forgiveness. and the gift of his spirit and the wonderful offer of redemption.

Time is short. Time might pass you by. Don't be like Esau. Turn to God in repentance and deal with what needs to be dealt with.

Jesus Let's pray. Want to know what a rebellious sinner looks like? Stand in front of the mirror. Father, your word has been a mirror to us today, helping us to see how we can so easily and subtly disobey, distrust, deceive others, despise the good gifts that you give us. We humbly come before you and say sorry. Sorry for our sin.

[40 : 14] Sorry for our failure. Please work in us what is good and right and help us that we may come running back to Jesus time and time again. Father, help us to deal with things in our own life, things within our families, sin between husband and wife, parents and children, that we would not let these things just drift by, but that we would take time to deal with it because we know that opposing your ways will only end in further mess, further destruction and chaos. We need your peace. We need your grace. And we thank you that that blessing is available to us today. Help us, Lord, we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. We're going to sing the wondrous mystery that God could work despite our sin and through our sin to achieve his purposes in our life, our redemption. Let's stand together as we sing with you to advance. Amen.

Amen. Amen.