

A Much Hated Doctrine

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[0 : 00] This morning's scripture is taken from Genesis chapter 25 verses 19 to 34.! Genesis chapter 25 verses 19 to 34.

! The birth of Esau and Jacob.! These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son.

! Abraham, father of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham fathered Isaac, and Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the Aramean from Paddan Aram, the sister of Laban, the Aramean, to be his wife.

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?

[1 : 05] So 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, and the older shall serve the younger. When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb.

So they called his name Esau. No, sorry. 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.

[2 : 19] Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebecca 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. 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 nantle stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way.

Thus Esau despised his birthright. Thank you very much, Faye.

[3 : 41] Well, this morning, as we continue our sermon series in the book of Genesis, we come to a passage of Scripture that brings us face to face with a much hated doctrine.

And it's the doctrine of election. And the doctrine is a teaching of Scripture, and so we could call it the teaching of election, but I'll be referring to it as the doctrine of election.

And we've already encountered this doctrine throughout the book of Genesis. We've seen it on numerous occasions. But this morning, we come to it in a very pronounced way.

We come to it in a way that brings it into sharp focus. And this morning, I pray that as we consider this doctrine of election, that there would be none of us whether gathered here or watching by livestream who hate this doctrine.

The truth is that properly understood for the believer, this is the doctrine of great comfort. And I pray that if you know Christ this morning, that that would be your experience.

[5 : 06] Whether you're hearing this for the first time, whether you're hearing it, having heard it before, I pray that to some degree or another, we will all draw comfort from this doctrine.

Let me pray for us before we look more closely at the text. Lord, the song we just sang is the cry of our hearts.

We need you. And would you come, Lord, in all the ways that we need you, especially as we sit under the proclamation of your word this morning.

Would you grant us illumination? Would you open our eyes and our hearts to the truth of your word and help us to say amen to the truth?

Lord, would you enable me to be faithful to proclaim your word as I should for the profit of all those who are here and most of all, Lord, for the glory of your great name.

[6 : 20] As in Christ's name we pray. Amen. The book of Genesis, if you want to summarize it, the book of Genesis teaches three big truths.

First, the book of Genesis teaches us about the origin of creation, that God is the creator of everyone and everything, and his creation was perfect. perfect. And then second, the book of Genesis teaches us that sin and brokenness came into the world because of the disobedience of Adam.

And this disobedience and the result of it is called the fall. And when Adam disobeyed, when Adam sinned, everyone and everything fell with Adam, all of humanity, the entire creation fell in Adam's sin because he was God's representative.

He was the vice regent. He was the one created in God's image and likeness and God gave him responsibility. And so, everything fell with Adam.

We fell with Adam. And then third, the book of Genesis teaches us about God's plan of redemption. And so, we can summarize the book of Genesis in three words.

[7 : 44] Number one, creation. We see that in Genesis 1 and 2. Fall. We see that in Genesis 3. And then redemption. We see that in Genesis 3 as well.

And really, the summary of the whole Bible, we can just add one word to that summary that we find in Genesis and the, well, not one word, but two words, and it'll be new creation.

So, it's creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. That's from Genesis to Revelation. That is the whole summarized revelation of Scripture.

But in Genesis chapter 3, verse 15, we find God's seed form promise of redemption in the words that he spoke to Satan who was the serpent in the garden.

And this is what it says, Genesis 3, 15. I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

[9 : 00] And this is, in a nutshell, what happened on Calvary's cross. And so, when you think about it, from Genesis 3, 16, onward up through to the end of the book of Revelation, we have this unfolding of redemption and then we see the new creation in the book of Revelation.

Now, when we think about this unfolding of God's plan of redemption that we see here in Genesis, the first main character is Abraham.

There are a lot of characters that we see, but when we see how this unfolds, the starting point is with Abraham. He is the one that God promised to bless all the nations through.

And then, it continues through his offspring, through his son, Isaac. Isaac. He had one son. He had, obviously, we know he had his first son, Ishmael, didn't count.

He had six other sons with Keturah, didn't count. As far as God was concerned, he had only one son. And so, this promise that God gave to Abraham, you would notice that it takes up a big part of the book of Genesis.

[10 : 21] From Genesis 12 to 25 is all about Abraham. He is the main character in those chapters. Last Sunday, we considered the death of Abraham in the opening part of Genesis 25.

And this one, we come to the section of Genesis that brings Isaac into view. He is Abraham's son through whom the promise of blessing and salvation to the nations continued.

But what you'll notice is that Isaac occupies a very small space in the pages of Scripture and in particular here in Genesis in the unfolding plan of the Lord.

Isaac is briefly mentioned here in Genesis 25. And then the focus turns to his twin boys, Jacob and Esau. chapter 26, he's exclusively talked about.

And then the narrative turns back to him in chapter 27 when really the focus still is his boys and really not him.

[11 : 35] And then the rest of Genesis up through chapter 28, sorry, the rest of Genesis from 28 to 50, it really covers one of Isaac's sons.

And that's Jacob. Esau is really just a very small blip in the middle of it. And I share this this morning because I hope that it helps you to see more closely the doctrine of election and how it unfolds in Scripture.

Scripture. And I want to alert you this morning that there's a lot of ground to cover and if you're hearing this for the first time, it may seem a bit like a mountain or as some people say drinking from a fire hose.

But here's what I want to say to us right up front. If you forget everything that I say this morning, if you don't understand anything that I say this morning, here's what I pray that you will leave echo, having this thought to echo in your heart.

This is what I pray all of us would leave with this thought echoing in our heart. And it is this, the doctrine of election teaches us that salvation is by divine grace, not by human effort.

[12:58] That is the bottom line truth of the doctrine of election. And when we understand that, and when we realize that we become a recipient of the grace and mercy of God, the only proper response is the fall to our knees and worship.

A sovereign God who gave us salvation by divine grace that cannot be obtained by the best human effort.

And so this morning I've organized a sermon under three headings. And the first one is Rebecca's conception. Rebecca's conception.

Look again at Genesis 25 verses 19 to 21. These are the generations of Isaac, Abram's son, Abram's father, Isaac.

And Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebecca to be his wife, the daughter of Bethuel, the Aramean, of Paddanaram, the sister of Laban, the Aramean.

[14:10] And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer and Rebecca, his wife, conceived. So here we are being introduced to the generations of Isaac and soon we're going to see Esau and Jacob come into view.

we're told that Isaac was 40 years old when he got married to Rebecca. And then in verse 21 we're told that Rebecca was unable to have children.

And Isaac prayed to the Lord for her. And if you're remembering, this is a very similar circumstance. This was not unique to Isaac.

Abraham and Sarah faced a very similar situation. But here Isaac is, he is the heir to this promise that was given to Abraham. First he is promised that he is going to have a multitude of offspring, so many that it'll be like trying to count the stars of the sky.

And concerning Isaac, the promise was that his offspring will be as many as the sand of the seashore. And so here he has this amazing promise of children, innumerable children, and his wife is not able to have children.

[15:42] And Isaac prayed to God for her, and the Lord answered his prayer, and she conceived. Now if you're tracking, you'd be able to determine that Isaac and Rebekah waited 20 years before they had children.

In the case of Abraham and Sarah, they waited 25 years before they had children. But Isaac and Rebekah waited 20 years because he was 60 when the twins were born, and he got married at age 40.

And here's what we can be sure of. There were no birth control in those days, so that wasn't the reason that she wasn't getting pregnant. It would have been a short period of time before Isaac and Rebekah would have understood something's going on, Rebekah is not getting pregnant.

And I believe that Isaac began to pray and prayed to the Lord. And it seems reasonable that Isaac would have prayed to the Lord for some 20 years for Rebekah to have children.

And no doubt for Isaac, he was encouraged by the fact of his own birth. His mother could not have children, and she conceived him when she was very old, and his father also when his father was very old.

[17:07] And so no doubt he was encouraged by all of this. God was now to be the Lord chose Rebekah to be Isaac's wife, knowing that she could not have children.

And knowing that he had given Isaac this promise of offspring, a multitude of offspring, why would God do this?

Why did he call Abraham an old man, and Sarah his wife who could not have children, and promised them that they would have offspring that was too many to count, as many as the stars of the heavens?

Why did God do this to both of these couples? And he did this knowingly. He didn't do this accidentally. He did this knowingly, and he did it by design, by divine design, rather than by

happenstance and chance.

God made promises of offspring to Abraham and Isaac, men who could not have children with their wives, because he wanted to show them that his promise of offspring was a gift of God's grace.

[18 : 32] and based on God's sovereign choice. And God had to allow them to go on long enough, in the case of Abraham, 25 years, in the case of Isaac, 20 years, to be convinced that the only reason you have a child is because of the sovereign grace of God.

It was a miraculous intervention. none of them could get up and boast about their virility, how fertile their wives were, and that that's why they had children.

They knew we have children for one reason, by the grace of God. That's what God did with Abraham and Sarah, and that's what we see him doing right here with Isaac and Rebecca.

He's teaching them the same lesson. The promised offspring is a gift of God's grace. I think it's important for us to remember that we're not just reading some obscure historical account of people in the nation of Israel.

We're not reading obscure accounts of the life of Abraham and of Isaac, Sarah, and Rebecca. No, what we're reading is we're reading about God's unfolding plan of redemption.

[20 : 04] This is the way God is unfolding his plan to teach us about how he redeems. And the overarching theme is that God graciously does for his people what his people cannot do for themselves.

That is what he's teaching as he's teaching this plan of redemption. He's teaching that he graciously does for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Brothers and sisters, this is not about biology. This is about redemption. This is about salvation. And that is why God has orchestrated the way he's orchestrated things with Abraham and Sarah and now Isaac and Rebecca.

This is what he was teaching the nation of Israel and by extension this is what he's teaching us in his word. And so again, these two accounts are not about two couples who struggle to have children.

These two accounts are about two couples for whom it was impossible to have children except for God's gracious intervention to do for them what they could not do for themselves.

[21 : 25] And in one word, we can summarize all that as grace. God gave them grace. He did for them what they didn't deserve. He did for them what they could not earn.

And brothers and sisters, the same is true about our salvation. This is what God is teaching us! And you know what? As impossible as it was biologically for Sarah and Rebecca to have children, they wanted children.

They desired children. Our condition was worse. When it comes to salvation, none of us desired salvation. When it comes to salvation, none of us long for salvation because none of us were capable of even longing for salvation.

Our condition was we were lost. Our condition was that we hated God. Our condition was we were running from God. And the only reason that we are saved, those of us who are saved, is the fact that God saved us.

He sought us and he brought us to himself. Had he not, none of us would have sought him out. And we'd all be eternally lost.

[22 : 41] lost. We would not have sought him because we could not seek him. And we had no desire to seek him.

So that's the point behind Rebecca's inability to conceive. We're told in verse 22, the children struggled together within her and she said, if it is thus, why is this happening to me?

So she went to inquire of the Lord. So Rebecca is having a brutally difficult pregnancy. And we have to remember now, Rebecca was no little woman.

Remember, she was the one who watered those ten camels. Hard work did not deter her. So she was a strong woman. And yet, she is pregnant, and this pregnancy is so hard.

She has so much physical activity going on, and she realizes this is not normal, and it drives her to pray. It drives her to her knees. She recognizes something is wrong, something is not right.

[23 : 53] She cries out to God. And theologians who are smarter than I am, she's saying something like, if this is what pregnancy is, I don't want to be pregnant. That's how bad it was, as much as she wanted to be pregnant.

And so she cries out to God, prays to him, and God answers her prayer. And this brings me to my second point, Jacob's election.

Like Rebecca's conception, Jacob's election was an act of divine grace. Look at the Lord's answer to Rebecca in verse 23.

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 other shall serve the younger.

So the Lord revealed to Rebecca, first of all, that she was having twins. There's no ultrasound in those days, so she really didn't know what she was having. So the Lord told her, there are two nations within you, there are two babies within you, and the fact that they are referred to as nations would indicate that they were boys because it was considered then and still considered now that men fathered nation, and so we talk about the father of the nation and all that, so she would have understood that she was pregnant with two boys.

[25 : 22] and the Lord told her that these twin boys, although conceived together, would be divided and opposed to one another and the stronger, and one would be stronger than the other, the older would serve the younger.

So this, she's experiencing this reality in her womb as well. And here when we think about this, we must understand that God is not telling Rebecca this as some bystander who could tell the future, who knows the future, and says, you know, this is what I see down the road for them, this is why you're having, no, it's not that.

God is telling her this, not by some bystanding prophecy, but by his determination. God is telling her this as the sovereign Lord of the universe who ordains whatsoever comes to pass.

This is by his ordination. It's not by chance that they just couldn't get along and wouldn't get along and he's telling their mother, no. He is, again, this is the unfolding of God's revelation about redemption.

And he ordains the future, future. And so he obviously knows the future. So even before the twins in Rebekah's womb were born, the Lord told her that contrary to culture, the older son was going to serve the younger son.

[27 : 08] In other words, the younger one is going to supplant the older one. God tells her this is what's going to happen. This is a reversal of roles. And again, not what God just saw in the future, this is what God determined that the future would be.

This was the Lord's doing. And he's able to do it because he is the sovereign Lord. And the term for what God did is election.

God elected Jacob over and above his brother Esau. Esau. Though from a cultural point of view, from a custom point of view, Esau was to be the older son.

But the Lord switched their roles. Then we're told that the boys were born. In verses 24 to 26, we're told that when the twins were born, the first one came out, he was hairy all over, and the hair was red, and so they gave him a name, Red.

I was thinking, in Bahamian culture, he would have been given the name, not just red, but reds.

They'd say, hey, reds, because I know a lot of people who they called reds. That's supposed to be funny.

[28 : 22] Okay, get back to preaching. So, that's the first son. He comes out, and then his brother comes out right after him, holding on to his heel, and so they call him Jacob, because he held on to the heel, and it really means, Jacob means, one who cheats, or one who takes by the heel.

And so we see even from in the womb, he's trying to bring the past in his own human strength, putting himself in front of his brother, and he's not able to do. His brother still comes out first.

Now, notice in verse 27 that the account jumps. It jumps forward many, many years. They moved from being born, and now they are grown men. Esau, we're told, is a skillful hunter, he's a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet, contemplative, thoughtful, homebody.

He loved to be at home. He preferred to be inside, in the tents, rather than outside. And then we're told in verse 28 that Isaac and Rebekah did a very foolish thing.

Isaac and Rebekah had favorites. Isaac loved Esau, and for a pretty sad reason, he enjoyed eating Esau's game that he hunted.

[29 : 47] And really, this points to a lack of character on behalf of Esau, that his appetite caused him to favor a son, not because anything in the son as much as that he enjoyed eating his food.

and what we'll see is that while we can be sure that Rebekah did not keep this word from the Lord to herself, you can be sure that she told Isaac what the Lord had told her.

But what we see is that Isaac persists up to the very end to ensure that Esau is still treated as the first son. and then for her part, Rebekah loved Jacob.

Maybe she loved Jacob because he was at home all around her all the time. He was a mummy's boy. or maybe she took to heart those words that the Lord spoke to her and she understood that God was doing something different than what custom dictated should happen.

And again, it is very reasonable to conclude that Rebekah spoke to her husband and told him what God had told her.

[31 : 19] But he was determined to bless Esau still. In verses 29 to 34, we have an account of something very significant that happened between these two brothers.

Esau sells his birthright to his brother Jacob. And he sells it for a bowl of lentil soup and a piece of bread. And he did this based on Jacob's initiative.

He did this based on Jacob offering him this trade. I'll give you some food. I'll give you a piece of bread and a bowl of lentil soup if you sell me your birthright.

Now, a couple of questions, three questions come up that we want to consider immediately. First, what is a birthright? A birthright was due to the firstborn son, and it was the primary right to the family's fortunes.

If you were the firstborn son, you got a double portion of what was the inheritance of all the children, the father's estate, you got a double portion.

[32 : 34] So, in the case of Jacob and Esau properly divided, Esau would have gotten two-thirds, Jacob would have gotten one-third. But it also included, in the covenant family, it also included this blessing that was given to Abraham that passed on to Isaac and that was supposed to come down the line.

It included that covenant blessing as well. And when you consider it, they would have both understood this.

I think Isaac was a faithful father, he would have taught them, but even if he did not teach them, they understood by culture that there was a birthright at stake. Esau would have understood that and Jacob would have understood that.

And so the birthright was a very special inheritance that fell to the firstborn. The second question is, why did Jacob desire the birthright?

Well, he desired it because he knew it was something special, he knew that it was something privileged. He knew he was not the firstborn, he knew that it wasn't legitimately his, and he clearly valued it, and he clearly desired it, and it was on his mind.

[33 : 58] It was clearly on his mind. So much so that when his brother comes in hungry from the field, and he wants something to eat, and he says, hey man, give me some of that red thing you're cooking. He says, yeah, I'll give it to you if you sell me your birthright.

So the four of his mind. I think also Jacob desired the birthright because he was able to observe his brother Esau.

And he saw Esau was a man who really could care less. He didn't value the birthright. He didn't see it as something important to position himself for.

I think Jacob was able to see that Esau lacked character, he lacked discipline, he was impetuous, he would make decisions on the fly without really giving it much thought.

And so in this moment of weakness, Jacob offers his brother some food and he in return took his birthright.

[35 : 06] Jacob valued it even though it wasn't his more than Esau to whom it actually belonged. And the third question is why did Esau sell his birthright?

We're told that he sold his birthright in verse 34 for one reason, he despised it. That's what it says right at the end of verse 34, he despised it, that's why he sold it.

He thought nothing of it. He thought the birthright really was at least equal to or less than in value a bowl of soup and a piece of bread.

And he didn't obviously care about inheriting this blessing that was going to pass down through him as the firstborn. And he'd be this steward as it were of this Abrahamic blessing of offspring and of land and of prosperity.

And you know, he seemed to live for the moment. If he was outdoors, he could hunt, he was happy and that's all he wanted.

[36 : 21] And sadly, so many children today in positions of responsibility have a similar don't care attitude. And so the reason that Esau sold his birthright is that he didn't see the value of the birthright as being of more benefit than a bowl of soup and a piece of bread.

for him, he probably saw it more as a burden than as a benefit. But it's quite interesting the way verse 34 ends. Verse 34 says, thus Esau despised his birthright.

It doesn't say, thus Jacob cheated his brother out of his birthright. Thus Jacob schemed his brother out of his birthright when his brother was hungry and famished and very weak.

Doesn't say that at all. Jacob refused to give his brother food out of a very unkind heart, an ungodly heart.

And it makes you wonder, why would God choose him over Esau? Why? The all-knowing God, the all-seeing God, the God who cannot be surprised by anything, why would he choose this guy over his brother who would do something as mean and as mean-spirited as that?

[38 : 03] Well, the truth is, neither Esau nor Jacob is portrayed in a positive light in this account.

Both of them are really very negative. Esau for despising his birthright and giving it away and Jacob for scheming against his brother in his hunger and his famished condition and cheating him out of his birthright.

And so what we see here in this account between these two brothers in this moment is that the very thing that God determined actually comes to pass as these boys grew up.

God determined it before birth, but they lived it out in their lives when they became grown men. And it brings us face to face with two realities that we must understand and accept.

And they are God's sovereignty in divine election and human responsibility in the choices we make. Both of those come into view. To put it another way, although God elected Jacob over Esau, Esau cannot blame God for not having his birthright, that God caused him to sell his birthright.

[39 : 31] You can't blame God for that. Esau sold his birthright because he wanted to sell his birthright. He wanted to sell it, he despised it, and so he sold it. And Jacob can't credit himself for getting Esau's birthright simply because he valued it more than Esau, he was more noble than Esau, and Esau despised it, but he didn't.

Jacob couldn't claim that God gave him Esau's birthright because he was more godly than Esau. He wasn't. This event of the birthright, how Jacob conducted himself, and when you look at the rest of Jacob's life, Jacob was no saint.

He was very, very far from him. As a matter of fact, if we were to do a drama with little kids, and they heard these stories, not many will be lined up to be Jacob, unless they have a pretty twisted mind.

But Kent Hughes, in his commentary, really puts it very well when he talks about Jacob and Esau. I want you to listen to this. He writes, Jacob and Esau together dramatize the human predicament. Both elect and non-elect are hopelessly self-centered and incapable by themselves of doing consistent good.

[41 : 04] Jacob is a scheming figure, and Esau is a free spirit who lives for his appetites. he is a Christian is a Christian!

!! doctrine of election.

And most people are okay with this account. Most people read this account and they have no problems with it. The problem arises when you connect this account to what the Apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 9, when he makes it very clear that this is about redemption, this is about salvation.

salvation. The Apostle Paul makes it very clear in Romans 9 that the doctrine of election is a fundamental part of our salvation.

And this brings me to my third and final point, which is everyone's salvation. And for this point, I'm going to ask you to turn to Romans 9.

[42 : 35] Romans 9. the Lord sent the Apostle Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles, and yet Paul carried a heavy burden for the salvation of his people, the Jews, the Israelites.

He had this burden for them because overwhelmingly the majority of them rejected salvation through Jesus Christ. in their minds, they were the people of God, and they were not in need of this salvation that Paul was preaching through Jesus Christ.

And so in this letter to the Romans, Paul has been proclaiming the gospel as the power of God to everyone who believes, the Jew first and also to the Gentiles.

And here in Romans 9, what Paul does is he makes the case as to why no one can claim salvation by circumstances of birth or by any human effort.

His point is that salvation is by God's sovereign choice in election. In other words, salvation is by divine grace and not by human effort.

[44 : 03] And so here in Romans 9, the Apostle Paul lays out a very careful argument to support this point of divine election in salvation.

And I want to walk us through it and help us to see Paul's argument. So please stay with me as I seek to do this and then I'll conclude with prayer.

So Paul writes, beginning in verse 1, I'm speaking the truth in Christ. I'm not lying. My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers and kinsmen according to the flesh.

Paul is essentially saying, I wish I were not saved so they could be saved. He recognizes that they're not saved. In verse 4, they are Israelites and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

[45 : 19] To them belong the patriarchs and from their race, according to the flesh, is Christ, who is God over all, blessed forevermore. Amen. Now notice the spiritual advantages that Paul lays out that his people, the Israelites, had.

He said they had it all. The adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises. They had the patriarchs.

They had it all. And yet, Paul is burdened for them. And why is he burdened for them? He's burdened for them because those things don't matter. Those things cannot guarantee salvation for you.

Those things are not an advantage towards salvation. And so Paul has a burden for them. In verse 6, but it is not as though the word of God had failed.

For not all who descended from Israel belong to Israel. And not all who are children of Abraham because they are his, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring.

[46 : 35] He's basically saying that biological connection to Abraham does not make you one of his children.

And we know that. We know that because the offspring was counted in Isaac. And we'll see that right here. So not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but through Isaac shall your offspring be named.

Not Ishmael, not Keturah's six sons, they were not considered offspring. The offspring would be named through Isaac, his one and only son.

This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said.

About this time next year I will return and Sarah will have a son. This was the reference to Isaac.

And not only so, we're moving now to Rebecca and Jacob and Esau, and not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were yet not, they were, 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, because of him who calls, she was told, the older will serve the younger.

[48 : 18] As it is written, Jacob I have loved and Esau I have hated. Paul makes it very clear that what we've read in Genesis 25 is not just a historical account telling us some history about Isaac's two sons.

He's saying this is about salvation. And this is why it burdens his soul that the Israelites wholesale almost, with a few exceptions, who would come to Christ.

They were rejecting salvation through Jesus Christ because they felt that salvation came to them by being the natural descendants of Abraham.

Paul says no. He says between these two twins, he says this is what God is showing. God shows the younger over the older so that his purpose in election might continue.

you. And we have this quotation from the book of Malachi in verse 13, Jacob I loved and Esau I hated. And it isn't emotional love and hate.

[49 : 27] This is saving love and saving hate. When you look at the way the Lord treated Esau, he provided for him, gave him land, blessed him in so many ways.

So there was no hostile hate towards him, but the hate speaks to that he did not elect him for his own sovereign reasons. Now Paul anticipates that when people listen to this, they have objections. And so he says in verse 14, what should 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 will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

So then it depends not on human will or exertion but on God who has mercy. Whenever we're talking about mercy and grace, we can never raise the issue of being unfair or unjust.

God is not unjust, God is not unfair because he's saying I give mercy to who I want to give mercy. I have compassion who I want to have compassion on. It is my mercy, it is my compassion, I'm obligated to give it to no one and if I give it to some, I'm not being unjust.

[50 : 53] It's like if somebody walks into this room right now and decides to give particular ones \$100, the rest of us who didn't get \$100 can't complain because we have no right to that.

that's a person walking in and simply giving mercy to those who received it. He goes on with his argument in verse 18, sorry, verse 17, for the scripture says to Pharaoh, for this very purpose I raised you up that I might show my power to you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

And Paul concludes and he says, so then he, God, has mercy on whom he wills and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then, why does he still find fault?

For who can resist his will? And Paul doesn't answer that question. But he raises another question in response to it.

He says, but who are you, oh man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, why have you made me thus? Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

[52 : 20] What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience, vessels of wrath prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory, even some whom he has called not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles.

this is the every nation group that God is determined to save that includes Jews and Gentiles from the nations.

In verse 25, as indeed he says in Hosea, those who were not my people, I will call my people, and her who was not beloved, I will call beloved, and in the very place where it is said to them, you are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God.

And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved. For the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.

And as Isaiah predicted, if the Lord had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.

[53 : 54] What should we say then? That the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it. That is, a righteousness that is by faith.

But Israel, who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness, did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as it were, based on works.

They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, for as it is written, Behold, I am laying in Zion, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and we whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. That stone, that rock, notice he talks about the stone and the rock, but he uses the personal pronoun he. Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

This stone, this rock is the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is Paul's argument, and it is a salvation argument, brothers and sisters. and he tells us that salvation is not by human effort.

[55 : 04] It is not by human exertion. It is based on God who has mercy. There's much more that can be said about election in Romans 9.

And at some point in the future, the Lord willing, I hope that we will do an extended sermon series in Paul's letter to the Romans. While some people hate this doctrine, while some people hate that God will choose particular ones and not other ones, that is the clear revelation of Scripture.

we shouldn't hate it because it is the only basis upon which sinners like you and me can be saved. If God did nothing, if God elected no one, no one would be saved.

And that's because of the condition that sinners are in, that they are helpless and they are hopeless before God. Listen to how Paul describes the spiritual condition of the entirety of Adam's fallen race in Ephesians chapter 2 verses 1 to 3.

He writes, And you were dead in the trespasses of your sins in which you once walked. Following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of our body and mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

[56 : 54] This was our condition. If God folded his arms and elected no one and tell us to come to him, none of us could. We're all dead in sins and trespasses. We have no ability to approach God.

We have no desire to approach God. We are under the power of Satan when we are away from God. Spiritually dead people are helpless to do anything of value or worth to approach a holy God.

And I realize that for some their mind may be preoccupied on, well, what about those who God didn't elect? Brothers and sisters, Paul tells us, he says, who are you to pry into that?

Deuteronomy 29, 29 says, the secret things belong to the Lord, and the things he has revealed belong to us and our children. We're not called to understand this.

We're called to believe this because this is the revelation of Scripture. Believers who hate the doctrine of election, they do so because they wrongly believe that people can be saved without it.

[58 : 20] They believe that somehow we are good enough, if left to ourselves, that we would come to God and we would see God out with a clear teaching of Scripture that we can't.

The clear teaching of Scripture is that we have no ability or desire to come to God. So those of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ, those of us who know him in the pardon of our sins, know that that is because he divinely chose to save us.

And for a lot of us, myself included, certainly when I reflect on my own salvation experience as a 13-year-old boy, I was more mindful because I was taught to be that I was choosing Christ and I didn't realize that it was Christ who was choosing me.

It was him who had come to me, who was acting upon my heart, who was convicting me of my sin, helping me to see my need for a Savior. And if he didn't do that, I would be no different from all the others around me that night who were indifferent to all that was going on.

brothers and sisters, this is the way God has chosen to save sinners like you and me. And one of the things that we can hold on to it from this truth is that the same God who elected us, who comprehensively chose to save us, will never turn us away.

[59 : 57] And see, that's why God is able to love us. love us. He's able to set us love on someone like Jacob who doesn't deserve it. And in all of his sin and his bad character and bad behavior, God holds on to him.

And we'll see this as we work our way through the book of Genesis, and we'll see how God graciously stays with Jacob to the very end.

And so brothers and sisters, I pray that none of us this morning would fall into the category of hating this doctrine. Maybe you all fall in it the category of not understanding this because there is mystery involved here.

God doesn't tell us every reason that he makes the choices that he makes, but he does tell us that he makes these choices. And for those of us who have trusted Christ, let us not be preoccupied with anything other than the fact that God has been merciful to us.

He has saved us. If you're here this morning and you don't know Jesus, you're watching my live stream, and you do not know Jesus, I pray that your heart and your mind will be turned to your need to repent, your need to turn from sin and trust in Jesus, and to come to him and receive the forgiveness that only he can give it.

[61 : 27] If you do, you too will be a part of the family of God. But in many ways, if you don't know Christ this morning, you've been listening in on family business.

You've been listening in on how God tells his children what he has done to save them and how he's saved people. That's family business. You've been eavesdropping as it were, but I pray that you will come to Jesus, come to Christ, repent of your sins, and turn to him this morning.

Let's pray. Father, we are so grateful that in the unfolding of your plan of redemption, Lord, you did not leave us to ourselves and leave it up to us to come to you to do what we could never do.

I pray this morning that you would help us all who have trusted in Christ to realize that we are saved, not because of our own effort, not because of our own exertion, but because of a God who has chosen to have mercy on us and give us grace that we don't deserve.
Lord, I do pray once again for those who don't know Christ. Would you convict and open their eyes? Would you save them, I pray, in Jesus' name. who knew who Thank you.
[62 : 58]