

Jacob & Esau

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[0 : 0 0] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Genesis chapter 27. By way of introduction, if you are writing the Christmas story, the last people you would include are the Herdmans.

The well-known Christmas book, The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, begins, The Herdmans were absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world.

They lied and stole and smoked cigars, even the girls, and talked dirty and hit little kids and cussed their teachers and took the name of the Lord in vain.

They burned down an old man's tool shed in town. They mocked fat kids. They stole lunches at school. One time they brought their mean old cat to show and tell.

[1 : 1 6] The cat got loose, turned the room upside down. Before they could catch the cat, the cat ate two of the class's goldfish and ate Ramona Billion's two pet mice that she had brought for show and tell.

But that type of trouble was just a day in the life for the Herdmans. The author continues, They were just so all-around awful you could hardly believe they were real, but real they were.

Ralph, Imogene, Leroy, Claude, Ollie, and Gladys. So when it came time to recruit for the church's annual Christmas pageant, everyone in town was shocked when all six of the Herdmans showed up for the meeting.

They quickly announced that they would be taking all the lead roles. Mary, Joseph, Gabriel, the wise men, and the shepherds, they threatened to pounce on anybody that raised their hands to try to take the role from them.

Of course, no one else volunteered, lest they get a beating. After determining the cast, which included each of the Herdmans, the moms in town, the mom squad went nuts.

[2 : 3 5] The Herdmans are going to ruin the pageant. They're too rowdy. They're too unruly. They don't even go to our church. It's unfair that they have the lead roles. What are you thinking?

Again, the Herdmans don't belong in the Christmas story. Well, if you were writing the story of God's chosen people, the last people you would include was the family of Isaac.

Last week, we saw how Isaac's family began the wrestling of Esau and Jacob in the womb, the conflict between the parents and then between the boys that dominated their young years.

Today, we see how the story of Isaac's family continues. The will of God for this family is known. Isaac and Rebekah received the word of the Lord that the younger will serve the older, that Jacob will be the son of the promise, not Esau, his older brother.

Esau and Jacob also know the will of the Lord through the promise that Esau made to give up his birthright to Jacob. But everyone in our story this morning is opposing the will of God in one way or another.

- [3 : 47] Isaac sets out to use his power as the head of the family in his dying days to thwart the word of the Lord. Esau breaks the oath he made with Jacob and agrees to Isaac's plan. Rebekah refuses to rest in the sovereign will of God and takes matters into her own hands. And Jacob lies, cheats, and steals his way into the blessing. Not exactly the chosen family we would imagine. The story is carefully told through a series of scenes. That's why I didn't read this up front. We're going to read it gradually this morning. Each of the scene includes two characters. So it revolves around two characters. Isaac and Esau. Rebekah and Jacob. Isaac and Jacob. Isaac and Esau. Rebekah and Jacob. And finally Isaac and Jacob. Throughout this story, fascinatingly, the boys never meet.
- [4 : 47] They never interact with one another. And also Isaac and Rebekah, the husband and his wife, never meet each other either. Each scene adds to the tension and conflict. And yet each scene underlines one major point. In a word, nothing, not even the sins of his people, will stop the will of God from bringing blessing to the undeserving. Nothing, not even the sins of his people, will stop the will of God from bringing blessing to the undeserving. All the cheating, lying, stealing, and scheming only do, as Acts 4 said, whatever God's hand and plan had predestined to take place. That's what holds this passage together. So we're going to look first at the plots. The plots. I'm going to read now these plots that comprise the plots of Isaac and Rebekah, 1 to 17 of chapter 27. 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.
- [6 : 00] He said, Behold, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now then, take your weapons and your quiver and your bow. Go out in the field and hunt game for me. Prepare for me delicious food such as I love. And bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die. Verse 5. Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, Rebekah 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 young goats so that I may prepare for them delicious food from 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. Jacob said to Rebekah, his mother, Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man and I am a smooth man.
- [7 : 12] Perhaps my father will feel me and I shall seem 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. Go and bring them to me. So he went and took them and brought them to his mother. And his mother prepared delicious food such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the garments of Esau, her older brother, 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 on 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. Now you see, this is probably a story you're familiar with, but you see these two plots emerging in this story.

Isaac is now old. He has lost his sight and as we'll see, is bedridden. Not knowing when he will die, he decides it's time to bless his oldest son.

[8 : 21] Now while Isaac has a sincere faith, as we learn from Genesis chapter 26, Isaac continues to oppose the will of God for his sons.

The word of the Lord said the younger son Jacob would be the heir and receive the blessing. But Isaac sets out and plots to thwart the word of God. He tells Esau to get his quivering bow to hunt game, to bring for him delicious game to eat so that he might bless him, the oldest son.

So his ungodly intentions are very obvious. He's physically blind, but as we'll see, his blindness likely points to more than loss of sight, but loss of discernment, spiritual discernment.

He wants more delicious game. Eight times in this passage, delicious game is underlined. That's what we learned also, chapter 25, that he loved his game.

Well, what we're supposed to see is that Isaac is a sensualist. He's into satisfying himself. In a lot of ways, he's not interested in pleasing God, but in satisfying his cravings.

[9 : 34] Also, we see that he plans to bless Isaac in private. Come to me and I will bless you. Bring this to me. I will bless you. Why would he bless him when they're all alone?

Why not gather his whole family as Jacob does in his life unless he was seeking to secretly subvert the will of God? It's a sobering warning that not all those who begin well end well.

Years ago, the Browns left tackle Joe Thomas retired. Thomas never went to the Super Bowl. In fact, the Browns finished last in the AFC nine times over his 11-year career.

They were outscored by a total of 1,000 points throughout his career of 20 mediocre quarterbacks. But Thomas stayed devoted to his job.

From 2007 to 2017, he played 10,363 consecutive snaps. In 11 seasons on...

[10 : 42] Now, this is just fascinating to the guys, so maybe not to the girls. In 11 seasons, on 6,680 pass-blocking snaps, he surrendered 30 sacks.

One sack every 223rd snap. That's incredible. He was never arrested or caught up in any controversy.

All along, he had one wife and added four children. But he walked off the field to very little applause. Not all who begin like Joe Thomas and like him.

In fact, you could say most don't. Not all who begin the Christian life end well. Judas, in love with money, betrayed Jesus. Demas, in love with the world, betrayed Paul.

Think of the beginning of Isaac's life. I mean, there could not be a more storybook beginning than the birth of this promised son waited 25 years for him to arrive.

[11 : 42] All the rejoicing, all the celebration that we did. And we weren't there, but we were there by faith looking in. But look at the end. Look how far he's fallen.

He's plotting and scheming against to undermine the word of the Lord. This is a wonderful warning. Perseverance is hugely important for the Christian life. Don't assume you'll be here in 20 years.

If that's your swing thought, if that's your assumption, don't assume it. Scripture would warn you, warn me. Not all who begin well end well.

But while Isaac is plotting with Esau, Rebecca is listening in. The walls of tents are only so thick. She hears everything.

When Esau goes hunting, she begins plotting as well. She tells Jacob, what's going on? Your dad's about to bless your older brother Esau. Whether or not she knows about the transaction they had as young boys, we don't know.

[12 : 52] But she clearly alerts him to what's going on. She says, I'm going to prepare some delicious game. Go get two young goats. And then you will take it in to your old man.

Now, Jacob has no trouble with deceiving his father. But he has a few pragmatic questions. Esau's hairy and he is not.

Look down at verse 10. But we might expect him to say, no way, mom, I'm not doing that. But Jacob said to his mother, behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man and I am a smooth man.

He continues talking. What if my father feels me? He will curse me for taking advantage of his blindness. That's a curse in the Old Testament.

Taking advantage of someone's blindness. Selling them something that's not true. I immediately thought of Dumb and Dumber. Selling the dead bird. It's the only blind thing I got in my head right now.

[13 : 55] But, you know, Rebecca then says, let the curse fall on me. Only obey my voice. And she does what he says. She pairs the delicious game just the way Isaac loved it.

She put him in Esau's best clothes. She put skins of young goats on his hands and neck. Then she places the delicious game and the bread into his hands. Now, Rebecca's ungodly intentions are clear as well.

Notice the obvious conflict between Isaac and Rebecca and the different sons they love. The favoritism continues.

Look in verse 1. Isaac addresses Esau, my son. Look down in verse 6. Rebecca said to her son.

Verse 8. Now, therefore, my son. Again, verse 13. His mother said, let your curse be on me, my son.

[14 : 55] Verse 17. Closes this scene. And she put the delicious food and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of her son, Jacob. We're meant to see this favoritism is continuing. My son.

Her son. My son. My son. And so, when her favorite son is about to be cheated out of the inheritance, she seeks to guarantee that what is supposed to happen does happen.

Now, she's right to be alarmed that Isaac is seeking to thwart the word of God. This is a moment where you should correct your husband if he's leading you into sin or sinning in any way.

But it's wrong for her to take matters into her own hands. It's wrong for her to take control. It's wrong for her to take over.

Now, what is driving her actions and what she believes is absurd. She believes the will of the Lord will not come to pass without her help.

[16 : 02] That's it. Now, sometimes we parents have that similar temptation. Want to be the Holy Spirit in our young lad's life.

She believes the will of God is uncertain. The will of God is in peril. And what she believes, and she believes what she and Jacob are doing in plotting, scheming, and deceiving is right.

Because what Isaac is doing is so wrong. Notice twice she says. She says it again in the end of the chapter. Only obey me.

She knew the oracle of God. The word of God. And yet she's telling her son, never mind the word of God. Never mind your conscience.

Never mind what you know to be good and right. Only obey me. Because we're protecting the will of God.

[17 : 07] Huh. We make the same mistakes when we live as if the ends justify the means. You know, we believe it's okay to intentionally mislead, deceive.

Here's another word for mislead, biblically. It's okay to intentionally deceive a client as long as we're seeking to provide for our family. Yes, this policy is the one that's perfect for your family.

Said many an insurance agent. This home is perfect for you. It's okay to slander as long as we're seeking to protect.

One thing you've got to know about that church or that business or that guy, that family, is such and such.

It's okay to get angry as long as we're seeking to train our children. That's right. But the ends don't justify it. Biblically, they never justify it. It's always wrong to hold to that.

[18 : 10] The will of God does not need you to abandon the word of God to uphold it. That's just playing God. It's the sin of seeking to take control. Two, the climax.

So we saw the plots. Now we're going to look at the climax. Both of these plots climax together. Look in verse 18. So when Jacob went into his father and said, My father.

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

But Jacob said to his son, How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son? He answered, Because the Lord your God granted me success.

Then Isaac said to Jacob, Please come near that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not. So Jacob went near to Isaac, his father, who felt him and said, The voice is Jacob's voice.

[19 : 22] Notice the doubt. But the hands are the hands of Esau. And he did not recognize him. But his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands, so he blessed him.

He said, Are you really my son Esau? He answered, I am. Third time. Then he said, Bring it near to me that I may eat of my son's game and bless you.

So he brought it near to him and he ate. He brought him wine and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, Come near and kiss me, my son. So he came near and kissed him.

And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed.

May God give you the dew of heaven and 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.

[20 : 21] And may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you and blessed be everyone who blesses you. As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac, his father, Esau, his brother, came in from hunting.

He 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 said to him, Who are you?

He answered, I am your son, your firstborn, Esau. Then Isaac trembled 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. Yes. And he shall be blessed. As soon 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. But he said, Your brother came deceitfully and he's taken away your blessing. Esau said, Is he not rightly named Jacob?

[21 : 39] For he cheated me out two times, took my birthright, and behold, now he's taken away my blessing. Then he said, Have you not received a blessing? Have you not reserved a blessing for me?

Isaac answered and said to Esau, Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I've sustained him.

What then can I do for you, my son? Esau said to his father, Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, my father.

And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Then Isaac, his father, answered and said, Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, away from the dew of the 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.

[22 : 38] Quite a climax. Jacob goes into his father's tent, this first scene in the climax.

Jacob goes in with delicious game in hand. His mom had prepared. He greets his father Isaac saying, My father. And Isaac, he says, Here I am.

He says, Who are you? And Jacob leads with the lie. Sorry, lost my place. 19, verse 19, he leads with this lie.

He says, I am Esau, your firstborn. Isaac asks, How did you get back so quickly? How did this happen? How did you get game so, I thought you were hunting?

Well, he continues, By blaspheming God. By claiming that God has done something that he hasn't done. Because the Lord has, your God had granted me success.

[23 : 44] Isaac's still not so sure. So he says to Jacob, Come near me that I may feel you. Now, this scene, it gets claustrophobic really quick.

This is like being in a cave. Jacob gradually draws nearer and nearer to Isaac six times. And this scene, that word near is repeated. Like a deer walking near your stand.

The increasing nearness of Jacob to Isaac should increase the intensity of this scene. First, look in verse 21. Isaac says, Please come near.

Please come near that I may feel you. Now, then he becomes near enough to feel his hands. Look in verse 22. So Jacob went near to Isaac, his father, who felt him.

He said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And so here he is holding his father's hands. The man, he's in the act of deceiving.

[24 : 45] And then he said, Please come near and bring me the food that you brought. So Jacob walks a few steps closer and brings him food. And he eats and drinks.

How long, we don't know. But he sits there in his father's presence with his heartbeat, no doubt, waiting on the blessing.

And then the father, look in verse 27, calls him to come even nearer. Come near me. Verse 26, Come near me and kiss me, my son.

So he came near and kissed him. It's hard not to think of the other betrayal kiss in Scripture. But what we're meant to see is that Jacob, or Isaac, Jacob's getting nearer and nearer and nearer.

His father, Isaac, and Isaac can't discern what's going on. All of Isaac's senses are failing him in discerning the truth.

[25 : 52] His eyes fail him already at the beginning of the scene. He's old. He's dim in eyes. His ears fail to discern Jacob's voice. Right? He fails to gain certainty that this is an imposter.

His hands fail to discern the skins on Jacob's hands. His taste failed to discern a different chef. Perhaps Rebecca had been perfecting a recipe for some time to taste like Isaac's.

But he fails to discern that. And finally, his smell, his sense of smell fails to discern the imposter Jacob. What we're meant to see is that Isaac is spiritually blind.

As if his finish could not be poorer. We see it now. We're seeing how his spiritual taste buds, his physical senses are failing him, yes.

But they are alerting, they should be alerting us to the failure of his spiritual taste buds, if we could say it like that. Now, we're rightly taught, often taught, not to live by our emotions.

[27 : 04] Love is a feeling. Or love is not a feeling. It's a choice. I wouldn't write that in your Valentine's Day card. Not going to go over well. But love is not a feeling.

It's a choice. And that is generally right. But the gospel retrains our emotions to love what is good and to hate what is evil.

So the truly spiritual man is an emotionally healthy man. Truly spiritual man or woman. Emotionally healthy man or woman. Somebody who is instinctually loving what God loves.

Instinctually hating what he hates. We see this in a fascinating way in the Apostle Paul. One of the things repeated throughout Romans and other places is this phrase where he blurts out, by no means, certainly not.

Will you put it in our vernacular? No way, Jose. Anybody says that anymore? Are we to sin because we're not under the law but under grace? By no means.

[28 : 09] I think what we're finding right there is this immediate without thinking gut reaction to a healthy emotional life.

A proper instinct. And so the gospel, that's what it does. You know, in our world, we're encouraged to an unhealthy emotional life.

Take shame, for instance. The world in which we live says you should never be ashamed about anything. Like you're just called to express who you are and so you shouldn't be ashamed.

Well, that's not true biblically. Biblically, there is shame. It's an emotional response to doing things that are grieving to God. We could go on sorrow over different things.

Appropriate grief. Appropriate joy. I remember watching a different movie that I'd watched probably a hundred times before becoming a Christian. Knew every sentence in it.

[29 : 19] And there was an emotional response to watching it after I became a Christian. I can't watch this. I don't know why because it was so great back in those days.

I was trying to figure out which way was up. But one thing I knew, that didn't fit anymore. My conscience wouldn't let it work. And so what we're meant to see is there's no emotional, no healthy emotional life in Isaac.

All his senses fail him. Nevertheless, he's satisfied enough and he blesses his son. Perhaps inspired by the smell of the field of this poser Esau's clothing, Isaac blesses him with the dew of heaven.

Dew in an arid climate like the Mediterranean was a metaphor of God's goodness and blessing. He says, the fat of the earth shall be yours. Now our culture has a war on fat.

But fat's where the good stuff is, you know. The fat blessing of fatness on you and plenty of grain and wine. A feast shall be your light. Thinking he was blessing Esau, he says, you'll be Lord over your brothers.

[30 : 39] Even in the blessing, he's thwarting the word of the Lord in Genesis 25. And the blessing passes on to Esau. For so Isaac thought.

As soon as he finished, Esau enters with his own delicious game. Look at verse 30. And we're immediately alerted. As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac, his father, Esau, his brother, appeared.

Now time is vital, as we saw several weeks ago, for understanding the plan and purpose of God. The immediate arrival of Esau, not a minute early, signaled to Isaac that the overriding will of the Lord is going to triumph.

Isaac immediately knows he's been busted. His hand is caught in the cookie jar. And Esau says, let my father rise and eat. Isaac says, who are you?

He says, I'm your firstborn son. Esau, without warning, Isaac begins to tremble violently, showing a disordered emotional life because he trembled over what, not over what he's done because it's bad or wrong, but because he's not blessed Esau.

[31 : 58] He's not sad for what he's done before the Lord. He's sad because he's not blessed the son he wanted to. His favorite son, he trembles over what cannot be undone.

Jacob has been blessed. The word of the Lord has been upheld. There's nothing he can do now. Despite all their plotting and scheming, the will of the Lord has triumphed. Let God be true, though every man a liar.

Esau cries out in agony. It's an utterly distressing scene. You see the translation grappling with this.

An exceedingly great and bitter cry. It says, Jacob's rightly known heel. Not merely because he held on to my heel or because he's a protector or any of those things, but because heel sounds like the word for overreacher and cheat, deceiver.

He begs, pitifully begs Isaac to bless him. Lifts up his voice and weeps. Isaac doesn't so much curse him as much as he gives him an anti-blessing.

[33 : 09] So he said to Jacob, may God give you all these things, the dew of the heaven, the fatness of the earth.

To Esau he says, away from the fatness of the earth. Away from the dew of heaven. By your sword you shall live and you shall serve your brother.

Just as the oracle said. So if Isaac sought to thwart the will of God and failed, Rebecca sought to guarantee the will of God and failed, what are we to do?

I think, firstly, we're to obey the will of God where it's clear. The Westminster Confession says, what's the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy him together.

What's the only rule God hath given to teach us how we may glorify him and enjoy him? The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only rule to teach us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

[34 : 17] So what do you do? I would say, I think the most neglected book for discerning the will of God might be the Bible.

If you're a Christian, the will of God's quite clear. It's the will of God that you not lie, cheat, or steal. The will of God that you give thanks in all circumstances.

It's the will of God that you remain pure. If you're married, it's the will of God that you love your wife or respect your husband. If you're a child, it's the will of God that you honor your father and mother.

If you're in conflict, it's the will of God that you put off anger, wrath, and slander, and that you leave payback to the Lord. It's the will of God that you die to yourself, put others first, and live for his kingdom.

So we rest in where the will of God's true. But what would God say to Rebecca in this moment where she's tempted to take the wheel? You know, Carrie Underwood said, Jesus, take the wheel.

[35 : 18] We like to take it back, actually. Most of the time, that's usually the exchange that's going on. Jesus, I'm taking the wheel because you are driving this thing into more madness. You know, life gets difficult.

And what do we do? Well, we rest in the will of God where it's unclear. Lamentations 3. So we assume, the operating assumption is when life gets difficult, that the will of God is going off the rails.

Because surely it's not the will of God that I would suffer. Lamentations 3. This is a good fight or promise.

Who has spoken and it has come to pass unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come? Life's difficult.

We must believe God is in control. If God is in control, we must not strive. We must not kick at the goads, so to speak. Kick against the goads. We must accept.

[36 : 17] We must rest. We must rest. What was it that made life difficult for Rebecca?

Was it this conflict? Or was it that she was trying to control the Lord? She's trying to control the uncontrollable.

Well, that's what your circumstances are. They're uncontrollable because they're in the hands of the Lord who has ultimate. Control. So much here.

But point 3, the resolution. The final two scenes lead to the resolution.

They'll bring us to the end of chapter 27 and end of chapter 28. Verse 41, Isaac, now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him. And Esau said to himself, the days of mourning for my father are approaching and then I'll kill my brother Jacob.

[37 : 23] But the words of Esau, his older brother, were told to Rebecca. So she sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and said to him, behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you.

Now, therefore, my son, obey. There's the third one. My voice, arise. Flee to Laban, my brother, and Haran. And stay with him a while until your brother's fury turns away.

Until your brother's anger turns away from you. And he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?

Then Rebecca said to Isaac, I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land.

What good will my life be? Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, saying, you must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. That's the Hittite women.

[38 : 23] Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father. And take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

God Almighty bless you. Make you fruitful and multiply you that you become a company of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you.

That you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham. Thus Isaac sent Jacob away and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban, to the son of Bethuel, the Aramean, the brother of Rebecca, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

So Rebecca's alone. One final time with Jacob. Rebecca's learned about Esau's plot to kill him.

I don't think in this moment Rebecca was so much eavesdropping as much as Esau could not keep his plan to himself. I'm going to kill that jerk as soon as I get a chance.

[39 : 29] Like many mothers, Rebecca fears her boys might kill each other. So she tells Jacob to flee. Now things change.

We don't know how long it's been, but things change. But Rebecca remains the same. She's taking matters into her own hands. If the promised son was to be Jacob, then Jacob's not going to die.

She is taking control. She deceives Isaac. She says, you know, I just can't deal with these Hittite women like Esau married. So she deceives Isaac into sending Jacob off.

And this is the last we hear of Rebecca. In Genesis 49, we learn that Rebecca was, or Isaac was buried where she was buried.

But she's given a funeral like Sarah. She cursed. I think Genesis is saying, let the reader understand.

[40 : 36] Isaac, this whole scene concludes with Isaac with Jacob one last time. Isaac knows what he's doing now. And you notice he passes on the blessing of Abraham.

The blessing here sounds like all the other blessings in the book of Genesis. Why? Because he realizes he was busted. And kind of with his dying breath, so to speak, he's blessing his son.

He's telling him to go. Just like Abraham sent the servant to get a wife for Isaac, so Isaac is sending Jacob to get a wife for himself. And then he blesses him to multiply and to be fruitful, a company of peoples.

He sends Jacob away. Nothing. Nothing, not even sins of his chosen people, can stop the will of God of bringing blessing to the undeserving.

Now, the most famous parable of Jesus Christ, the parable of the prodigal son, has numerous similarities with this story. When Jesus began to tell that story, he said, I have a story about a father and two sons.

[41 : 47] Any person that knows their scriptures really well would know that he's referring to Isaac and his sons Jacob and Esau. You remember that story, right?

He gives half the inheritance to his younger son. His younger son goes and squanders it away and then comes back home. The older son is angry. Like the story of Jacob and Esau, it's about a father and his two sons.

Like the story of Jacob and Esau, the younger brother wears the best clothes. Like the story of Jacob and Esau, young goats are prepared for a meal. Like the story of Jacob and Esau, the older brother is in the field when the younger brother came home.

Like the story of Jacob and Esau, the older brother comes in after this encounter is happening. Like the story of Jacob and Esau, the older brother becomes angry and fears that there's no inheritance for him.

Like the story of Jacob and Esau, the younger brother is the cheat. The one who cheats his father out of the inheritance. Yet, it's the younger brother who runs home and finds forgiveness.

[42 : 57] The one who's cheated. The one who's wasted it all. The one who's undeserving. That's the same thing going on here. And the younger brother will have to go a long way before he comes back home.

And that's what we're going to see. But what's the purpose? Why did Jesus tell this story? He's telling it so the scribes and Pharisees would see that the gospel is not for the well, but for the sick.

He's telling it to these scribes and Pharisees, retelling this story to announce to them that the one who's being welcomed home is the Jacob. When these tax collectors and sinners are being welcomed in.

And if you are writing a story of the Bible, the last people, we began by saying, If you're writing the story of the Bible, the last people you would include are the family of Isaac. But perhaps it would be more accurate to say, if you're writing the story of the Bible, the only people you would include are the folks like Isaac and his family.

Folks that are sick. Folks that sin and struggle. The liars, the cheats, the thieves, the undeserving. That's the point of the prodigal. And that's the point of this too.

[44 : 05] That's what we've been saying again and again as we've gone through Genesis. Yes, sin does not thwart the promise of God. God goes after the sinners, the moon worshipers, all these things. Why is that the story of Genesis? Because it's the story of the Bible.

It's the story of the Bible. The promise only comes to the undeserving. Good people don't go to heaven. They don't.

Not a single one. The only people that go to heaven are forgiven. People. The doctor, Martin Luther Jones, used to say, you cannot become a Christian until you've had your mouth shut.

Until you've stopped making excuses and stopped making defenses. And added your name to the list of rejects.

That God has welcomed home. God has welcomed home. God has welcomed him. in the end in the best Christmas pageant ever those rowdy unruly herdsmen didn't ruin the Christmas story they showed the church who Christmas was really for Gladys the angel Gabriel came down the aisle pushing people out of the way saying hey unto you a child is born she shouted it the writer says she shouted it out as if it was for sure the best news in the world the shepherds were a bit terrified by her but they sprung into action Leroy, Claude and Ollie the three wise men did not approach the baby with the normal props of gold frankincense and myrrh they went out back to their house took apart the free Christmas basket the charity Christmas basket they had gotten took the ham out to bring it to the baby while singing Silent Night

[46 : 15] Imogene playing Mother Mary began to cry as the meaning of Christmas settled in I think that's it the cast of Christmas is not a cast of folks who have it together but a cast of folks who look a lot like the Herdmen the book concludes saying when we came out of church that night it was cold and clear with crunchy snow underfoot and bright bright stars overhead and I thought about the angel of the Lord Gladys with her skinny little legs and her dirty sneakers sticking out from under a robe yelling at all of us everywhere unto you a child is born may God bless us help us to receive him Father in heaven we hide completely in you we thank you and praise you you didn't come for the well you came for the sick came for the center thank you God that there's no one in this room that's fallen too far for grace we thank you that there's no one who's carried along that hasn't been carried along by grace and so we do what we often do at the conclusion of the service we offer ourselves completely to you sincerely and completely we say that you are our Lord we are your servants we exist for your praise and your glory in Christ's name

[illegible]