

Bless Me Father

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Date: 11 February 2024

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[0 : 00] 7. It was only tonight I remembered actually the whole chapter, but I'll read it tonight. But if you want to read the scriptures, just say to me, John, I wouldn't mind reading the scriptures. And certainly Genesis, you can come up and read the scriptures. That would be great.

But if you let me know, it saves me chasing you. That would be nice. First 29 verses, and then we'll read the second half after we sing. But Genesis 6 and the last verse, Genesis 26, verse 34. You last time Esau and Jacob, and this is what happened afterwards. 26 was just these, but we pick up Esau and Isaac and Jacob again at this part. So let's read from 34.

He married Judith, daughter of Bere the Hittite, and also Basimath, daughter of source of grief, to Isaac and Rebekah. When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could know the elder son Esau and said to him, my son. Here I am, he answered. Isaac said, my death. Now then, get your equipment, your quiver and bow, and go out into the open country to prepare me the tasty food, the kind of tasty food I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give. Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. Then Esau came and bring it back. Rebekah said to her son Jacob, I like the way there's his son and my son. It's just son Jacob. Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat of the Lord before I die. Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you. Go out to the flock that I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. Then take it to your father to eat before he dies. Jacob said to Rebekah, his mother, but my brother Esau is a hairy man. My father touches me. I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself. I said to him, my son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say. Go and get them for me. And she prepared some tasty food just the way his father liked it. Then Rebekah took the best clothes I had in the house and put them on her younger son Jacob. She also covered his hands and the smooth part. When she handed her son

Jacob, then she handed her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. My father. Yes, my son, he answered. Who is it? Jacob said to his father, I am Esau, your firstborn, and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing. Isaac asked his son, the Lord, your God gave me success, he replied. Then Isaac said to Jacob, come near so whether you really are my son Esau or not. Jacob went close to his father who touched him and said, but the hands are the hands of Esau. He did not recognize him for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau.

Are you really my son Esau? He asked. I am, he replied. Bring me some of your game to eat so that I may give you my blessing. Jacob brought it to him and drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, come here, my son, and kiss me. So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of it, ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. And earth's richness, riches, richness, and abundance of grain and new wine. Those bow down to you. Be Lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you, and those who bless you be blessed.

[3 : 48] We'll end our reading at the end of verse 29. Before we turn to God, I'm impressed the fact that they were able to play that song at communion. So thanks for those who found the music for that. to finish that song. Let's finish your reading. Let's go back to Genesis chapter 27, and we'll read the end of that chapter from verse 30 through to Genesis 27, verse 30. After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob, his brother Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said, and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing.

His father Isaac asked him, he answered, your firstborn Esau. Isaac trembled violently and said, who was it then? I ate it just before you came, and I blessed him, and indeed he will be blessed.

When Isaac hit with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, bless me, me too, my father, came deceitfully and took your blessing. Esau said, isn't he rightly named Jacob? This is the advantage of me. He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing. Then he asked, haven't you?

Isaac answered Esau, I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives, sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son? Esau said to him, one blessing, my father.

Bless me too, my father. Then Esau wept aloud. His father's dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above. You will live by the sword, and you grow restless. You will throw his yoke from off your neck. Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blood to himself.

[5 : 37] The days of mourning for my father are near. Then I will... Esau was... and Rebecca was told what her elder son Esau had said. She sent for her younger son Jacob, planning to avenge himself by killing you. Now then, my son, do what I say. Flee at once to my... with him for a while until your brother's fury subsides. When your brother is no longer angry with you, I'll send word for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day? Then rusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, my life will not be worth living. This is the... the... of them just now. Let's ask for the Lord's help now as we come to his word. Father, speak to us now from your word. Lord, is there anything here to teach us about yourself, about ourself? Lord, open the scriptures to us now, we pray. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. I wonder what your family is like, your immediate family, your wider family. Is it... is it quite an... big... I remember growing up and most of my mates were... well, they'd roughly the same, maybe another brother or sister. He came from a big family, loads of brothers. I think about four or five brothers and about three or four sisters and the Taylor family. And I used to think, it must be great. Coming from a big, impressive fandom. They were all quite gifted in some area. The girls looked attractive and so forth. And I used to think, wow, that's quite an impressive family. Perhaps your family was like that. Perhaps well thought of, very impressive. Folks spoke highly of your family through life. Nobody really noticed your family. You just got on with it. Here is a family that's very popular. Probably one of the most well-known families in... in the world. It's one of the... it's the longest TV. It's watched by millions. Every week, they watch The Simpsons. The show is set in the fictional town of Springfield and parodies American culture and society. Human condition. It looks at the human condition and it shows what it's like through this family. They are The Simpsons. And I think that's probably why they're popular, because they're ordinary. They're not great. The father is, in some ways, maybe a typical male. He's insensitive. And he's friends and TV doing whatever it takes just to get ahead. He's a guy.

His son's not much better, but he has no desire to better himself whatsoever. Always getting in. Teenage delinquent. Marge, the mother, she tries her best to keep some reason. She's a moral compass in the family. When Homer's away getting up to mischief, she is... The daughter, Lisa, she's gifted.

[8 : 32] She's very perceptive, very sensitive, plays the saxophone and so forth. Trying to keep the two guys in place. And the baby, well, she just sucks on her dummy. She never really... never really says anything. Relate to... there's maybe qualities or characteristics that they're doing. And every episode features some family disaster. And they're popular because we live in a fallen world. None of our families are perfect. None of us, to this point, hasn't been perfect. And you've had peaks and troughs and so forth. And the truth, we are fallen creatures, sinful creatures. And when you put all these sinful creatures together in one family, it's often the case. This evening, we're looking at the life of Jacob once again. And the main... Encourage yourself in a God who's sovereign. That despite the knocks of life, the difficulties of life, the ordinance of and over our life, He loves us, He leads us and guides us, and He continues to bless us. And really, that's what I'll also even in the other sermons that we'll look at in this. Last week, we... I gave you an overview of what's to come about the life of Jacob and his family. And we looked at a few things. We were reminded of the providence of lead him and guide him, care for him, despite his failures and so forth. God is providential. And God's... that's the same with us. The grace of God. If God is to bless Jacob and his family, and ultimately to bless the... we can never earn this. It will always be by grace. And then we looked at conflict between Esau and Jacob, between

God's people. And then we looked at the very end, briefly, of Jacob's life. All's well, ends well. He leans on his staff. He's looking back. His years have been few and difficult, he says. But God has been with him. And that's what we're going to look at. And I want to flesh this out a wee bit more in chapter 27, in the moments that remain. I'm going to try and go through this quickly.

25. The two boys are born into this family, Esau and Jacob. And in chapter 26 is about Isaac. Just... it's just a wee side thing, just a wee bit more about him, but not a lot more about him. And then when you... we left off in the birth of Esau and Jacob. And that's what we're going to look at. Look at God's plan. Remember this... what's happening here is not just what's happening to this family, but his plan of salvation eventually, and he'll do that through Jacob. But through that nation, all the nations of the earth will... and really, this is what's happening here. The development... it's a bigger thing than just a family. The development of God's plan of how he works. And he begins by choosing Abraham, then Isaac, and then...

27. By all the planning and scheming here, you're left wondering, who's going to be next in line? Is it going to be Esau? And we've read this so many times, it's just lost on us.

But if you've never read this before, the prophecy, the older will serve the younger, and then you see what Isaac's up to, you're thinking, who's going to actually fold? You could make a good West End play of this. And really, that's the way... to almost see it as a play, and see... see how things unfold, and look at this... this real-life drama. As I said, you could put this on the TV, and it would make good watching. First of all, then, in this story, none of the characters in this story are pleasant. None of them. They're all unsavory. There's none of them innocent. They're villains.

[12:03] There's no heroes in this story between the Philip Isaac. Isaac, like Esau, really, you get the impression he's not really taking the... and God's Word really seriously. He's no doubt heard about the prophecy about the older servant. He said, what's happening to me? And he says, two nations are in your womb, two peoples within you. The elder will serve the younger.

It couldn't have been more clear. But yet, it has to happen. He's determined to bless Esau, that Jacob will serve Esau. That's what his plan is. God. And yet, he doesn't seem to worry whether Esau is spiritual or not. We're in verse 6. That Esau just did his own thing. When he was 40 years old, he married the constant, a source of grief. So, even Esau wasn't out to please mum and dad. He's married his mum and dad's heart. And it appears, unlike Isaac, doesn't seem to put much effort into finding a wife for his sons. The way they say, don't marry somebody here, and he finds Rachel. It's quite a different source of grief, these women. And he doesn't seem to put much effort in. You get the impression he's quite... he's more into them. It's interesting, the tasty food thing that keeps getting mentioned. It's not just any food. He really likes his meat and two veg or whatever it is. Make me this tasty dish. And his wife knows that he really likes a stomach than by the covenant promises that were given to his father, Abraham. So, he comes across as not very spiritual. He's a bit like Homer Simpson, truth be told. You can't help you on trying to do what he's doing. Not a great husband, as we'll see in a minute. Him and his wife seem to be not a good patriarch, the father of the nation. He's trying to overturn God's Word. And regarding when he's blessing Jacob, he thinks he's blessing Esau, when he says, may the sons of you. In other words, Esau, may Jacob bow down to you when he knows that it's to be the other way around. He wants to do it his way. So, that is Isaac. Not impressive. He has his own, perhaps, very sensual things.

Rebecca. Now, Rebecca, probably at one time, could have been a model. Maybe when Isaac met her, the woman was very beautiful. And she was once loved by her husband at Genesis 24. Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother. He married Rebecca. She became his wife. He loved, he specifically says, I love her. She's beautiful. But now their love appears to each other, each doing their own thing. Her beauty is maybe not as it was. She's probably about 80 or 90 at this point in this relationship. You can see she's the brains behind the operation, a bit like Marge. She's the one that is the family together. And compared to passive Isaac, her character is very strong. Margaret Thatcher, the Iron Lady, she knows what she wants, and she's going to go for this. Strong-willed, whether it's for the prophecy that the older will serve, the younger will serve, the older will serve the younger, looking after her son, her favorite son. She has this elaborate plan, this wealth. Instead of being blessed, he could have been cursed. And she says, let the curse fall on me. She's, she rake it reckoned. So, she's very driven. Esau, as we saw, is not a spiritual. He sells his birthright, doesn't mean much to him. He marries Hittite women. He's described in Hebrews, no one is sexually immoral or godless, like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance son. He lives for the moment, a bit like Isaac, a bit like his dad. No wonder the two of them pees from the same pod. And

he's going, what good is the birthright to me, and so forth. But he resorts to murder, to murder his son.

[16 : 22] I don't know about your family. I don't think you've had a member of your family wanting to murder you, but that I will kill my brother Jacob. He's a bit of a loose cannon, not very spiritual. Jacob, another for him a wee bit. But he is the product of a dysfunctional family in many ways. Jim, in his wee book, he's written a good book on, on one chapter on Jacob called Imperfect People.

And a sober dictum, which seems to me has to be written over the whole life of Jacob's story, to adversarial affection produces adversarial ambition. In other words, ambition was rubbing off on him. And he says this, when a mother brings up, you're my favorite. This has a massive impact on that child. They grow up thinking, well, mum best, and I'm entitled to whatever, whatever privileges, you just, you can get best. When I grew up, my brother, younger brother and sister, my older sister, never really did well at school. I did quite, or John, or John's doing well, or John will do this.

And my older sister actually had to say, say her too. And it does have an effect on you. You think, well, I'm doing okay. Mum said, I'm okay. And you came, and I preached here on the life of Caleb, when I said I had a reputation for being ambitious. Your background, how you're brought up. If your mum and dad think you're a waster, you'll go through life feeling you're a waster. If your mum and dad say you are the best thing since sliced bread, that, what a difference that makes to your life.

Well, Jacob, you're my favorite. I'm going to look after you. You are the best. Your brother will serve you based on the prophet. That's the truth. We never start life with a blank slate. We're affected by your parents, by your upbringing, by your genetic work, other people, your experiences of life. They have molded you. We are all different. Every one of us are different here tonight. We have been molded. He's a product of his upbringing. But Jacob in this chapter is also quite weak. His only concern is not the prophecy that his brother will serve him and that the covenant will go on. His only concern is he's going to get cursed rather than blessed. And his mum steps in and says, I'll do this. So basically, unpleasant, unimpressive. And we too are all villains and sinners and so forth.

God can use us. And that's exactly what he does. We are not the best of material to work with. Abraham was quite impressive. Isaac less impressive. And when you come to Jacob, you think, wow, what has he saved? Can people in Scotland ever be saved if this is going to come through this family? So that is the character. You know the thing. There's four scenes here. Scene one, picture of you. You're in the theater. There's a stage. And Esau, the father prepares to bless his older son. Scene two, the mother, the younger son, act three, deceives the father. And scene four, the father grieves for his older son, determines to kill his brother. That is the play. Let's look at it. Scene one, the father prevents procedure. It's very unusual to bless one of your sons, especially if they're twins. So you can see he's planning and scheming here. He's not interested in the prophecies of God. He's interested in his own agenda. And because he makes him this tasty food, he's going to get the blessing. It's as simple as that. And this is what the Lord has to work with.

[19 : 56] He's making out that he's near death's door. He doesn't die for another 30 years after this. It's unsuitability, intermarriage, and so forth. And if you were watching the covenant, and you want a good patriarch, if you're sitting in the theater and you don't know the story, you'd do it. Isaac, not him. Definitely not him. God's plan is this other one. You'd be shouting, you'd be throwing, because it can't be. It's not part of God's plan. Scene two, the mother, like Isaac. Rebecca's eyes and ears are working well. She's listening, we're told. She's specifically listening at the door. Planning something. And she's going to make sure that her other son isn't overlooked. And she looks after the interest. She comes up with this elaborate plan.

You know what? Go and make the food. I'll get the food. I'll give it to you. And so forth. And Jacob realizes, yeah, because we're different. The race is on. When the curtain comes down and you get your quenchy cups and your ice cream, and then you're, is he going to go in there and get the blessing? Or is Esau going to come back quicker? And he's at stake. You'd be thinking, I can't wait till the curtain goes up and see what happens next. Well, the younger father, Jacob meets his father dressed up like Esau. The tension is quite, even the way it's, isn't he very good at this?

You can see that he's quite clumsy. He talks too much. Who is this? I am Esau, your first point I have done if you told me. Please sit up and eat of this tasty food. And so he asks him a question. How did you find it so quickly? And he's still not convinced. He wants to touch him. And then he's listening to you. Jacob eventually catches on and answers with as few words as possible. Are you really, really Esau? He goes, I am. It's as short an answer as he can give. He realizes the more he says and the more he does, he's just going to, as if those senses weren't enough, Jacob, sorry,

Isaac wants a good sniff. He goes, come here, I want to smell you as well. So all the sense he is going to pull this off. And Jacob even lies and says, God helped me. That's how I did it. He's, he's invoking God's success in this. And Jacob, despite all this, the clumsiness, the planning, the scheming, and so he is blessed by Isaac. It's a threefold blessing. The fertility of the field, the promised land, may God of earth's richness, the abundance of grain and new wine. Then political supremacy may need for you, and may your, the sons of your mother bow down to you, which was the fulfillment. And then cursings and blessings. Verse 29, may those who curse you be cursed, and those who bless you be blessed. To Abraham, the exact same thing. Through you all, the nations will be blessed. Whoever blesses you will be blessed. Of you all, the lands that I swore to your father, Abraham. It's that, so, Abraham, Isaac is now saying to, to Jacob, the covenant promises are blessings. He is now, you will now have the, the God of Abraham, Isaac. It would have been Esau, but it's Jacob. That wee phrase will be used throughout the rest of the Old Testament, and then through Israelite patriarch. In that line, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob is next.

Prophecy in the plan of God came true. Jacob is now the third patriarch. And then you have for his oldest son. The scene opens with his return, and it's very traumatic. When Isaac realizes, he trembles violently. He really is. I mean, he realizes what's happening. Say, well, the Lord gives and he takes away the Lord's will be done. And if he trembles, Esau, for he burst out with a loud and bitter cry, bless me, me too, my father. Verse 30, aloud. Really quite a sad blessing. And he's given a blessing, but it's a negative blessing. It's almost the, no fertility of the field. Verse 39, your dwelling will be away from earth's richness, away from the Jew of Hattie. You will serve your brother. There will be times of relief. Edom's history, that happened. Times of Yosha, he serves. And this family ends up divided, even more divided. Planning. Rebekah trying to save Jacob. Get him away before Esau killed.

[24 : 29] Let's close. What are we to make of this, this whole scenario? God is sovereign. If you were a Christian, how would you review that play morally? Spiritually. Spiritually, it's going to behave in a way that they should, from a human perspective, there are winners and losers. Rebekah and Jacob were losers in this. But from God's perspective, there's a wow factor in all of that. And prophecy fulfilled, despite the planning and scheming, stupidity and clumsiness of others, God is to be thwarted.

He said the elder will serve the younger, and that's exactly what happens. And God's will is done. All the peoples of the earth will be blessed through Jacob, through the end, and so forth. God's plan is achieved, not just despite human weakness. Do you believe the Lord can bless you and use you? Not just despite your weakness, but actually using your weakness. God to act. He's taken the restraints off them, just allowed them to act according to their sinful nature. And yet, biggest example of that is the death of Jesus. That Jesus, by God's set purpose and foreknowledge, you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to a cross. God's used the sinfulness of his people at that time, and the Romans. His will was still done. The world comes through the wickedness of sinful men and women. And he works in this way today. He's not floored by your sin. It's how God works today. He does this through our weakness, and even does it through trying to run away. Proverbs 16, 9. In his heart, a man plans his course, his footsteps. When the Lord determines to do something, it will surely come to pass. And yet, there are problems theologically and morally in this.

The whole episode's very unsavory. Everyone's a villain, theologically and morally. He wouldn't have turned around and said, they're great. Oh, they're great. None of them was reviewing this morally.

[26 : 40] It creates problems for us. Was this the right thing to do? Does the end justify the means? Is this the way God wanted it to happen? God has used his own goals. That should encourage us. It should encourage you, regardless of your weakness and your upbringing, think, Lord, I wish my family was better. Lord, what chance did I have growing up in my life up to this point? Can you really? The Lord can. It's also a sign that, despite the fact that the Lord's will is done, there are consequences for this family after this. God's will is done. But because of the way they went, Rebecca won the blessing for her favorite son, but she also lost her son. She says, she was never to see him again.

He doesn't return for 20 years, and by that time, his mom had died. So, all her planning and scheming, although God's will was done, it affected her. She lost, he lost, a mother. He never seen

her again.

Isaac lost a son. All his planning and scheming dismantled a blessing. Jacob would live a very difficult life. He would struggle in his relationship with God, more planning and scheming, a taste of his own medicine. His uncle would end up deceiving him and tricking him. He would struggle in the workplace.

He would struggle in his own personal family with his wife's bickering and sons and so forth, and he will end his day saying, man, difficult. Nevertheless, he acknowledges the sovereignty of God in every, he recognizes that the Lord is sovereign over every single area of our life, regardless, real life.

Everyone in this story sinned. No one looked good, not Israel, not Isaac, sorry, not Rebecca, not Isaac fought against God's word. The matriarch, Rebecca, through her favorite son, attempted to manipulate life. She and Jacob thought that indeed God needed their help, even if that help was dishonest. But even above this, he says, immense beauty and grandeur, the invincible determination of God to unbelief and unfaithfulness of his people.

[28 : 49] The Lord will bless you, the Lord is despite mine. Let's stand and we'll sing. God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to her father.