



## BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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# Jacob and Esau

## Genesis 25:19-34

~ Brent Russell ~

### Read Genesis 25:19-34

- This is a story that we all learned at **Sunday School** so many years ago
- And it has retained all of **it's aura of history**
- We know it so well and yet it is such a **rich story**
- **Multifaceted** and **complex** like real life normally is
- It's like a **great soap opera** really:
  - A tale of two brothers at odds, one defying the other
  - A saga of blood brothers in a web of revenge and hate
  - A legend of lies and deceit of blessing and curse
- It really is a great story these two men
- **And it is a complex story because it is really hard to decide who is right and who is wrong**
- They are **complex people** and have good and bad things that we can see in them
- **You recall that later on Jacob deceives his father into believing that he is Esau and so steals the blessing offered by Isaac**
- **It really is a intricate story of twisted morality, jealousy and greed**
- **But also one of priorities, of blessing and seeking things of value**

- **I always tell people there are two guidelines to reading the Old Testament**
- Two **rules of thumb** that will help you find application for the story in your own life
- **Firstly in the characters look for yourself**
  - These **characters are human** like us
  - They are all **tempted**, they all **sin**
  - **They are reflections of our own lives**
  - They are people **interacting with those around them and with God**
  - And so their stories often reflect our own **struggles with our faith**
  - Sometimes we draw **close to God** and how at other times we find ourselves **far from Him**
  - **And so we learn from their mistakes and their successes – just because something is in the Bible does not make it right**
  - But we really can learn from them
- **Secondly seek Christ**
  - **If you had to write a book your personality would be part of it**
  - You would find your **character reproduced** in the book
  - **Mannerisms, styles of language** that are common to you would somehow find themselves in the book
  - **And so too in the texts of the Bible – They contain the very fingerprints of Christ**
  - Every story of the Old testament contains the **mark of Jesus** and so you will often find stories reflect Jesus relationship with us
  - **The story of Christ is hidden behind the stories of the Old Testament**
- **In this story of Jacob and Esau the sons of Isaac who is the son of Abraham I hope you will see your own character reflected back to you in some way**
- Here are two young men
- **Vastly different to each other**
- Subject to human emotions in every way

### Esau

- Esau is a real **outdoorsy** type – a **jock**
- **Hairy, muscled and strong - good at sports**
- A mans kinda man I guess
- He liked **beer and braai**
- And you will see that he is a little stupid but perhaps a little more honest at times than His brother

### Jacob

- Jacob is a quiet **indoors type**
- A **nerd** I guess
- He prefers to stay at home
- And would probably prefer some good **wine and haut cuisine**
- And he is a little **softer in His physical appearance**
- **Jacob has a sharp mind but is certainly more than a little scheming – not always with much integrity**
- But he does understand one thing well and that is the value of certain things and you will see this as we explore his actions
- Esau comes back from hunting **famished**
- **He sees Jacob with some stew and in a moment of absolute stupidity sells his birthright to Jacob**
- **But Jacob I think has been scheming a bit here**
- He is **ready** to ask it of Esau- I believe this ties in with what Jacob does later and tells me that he is a **sneaky character**
- **Not lying but certainly being more than little manipulative**
- **But he does desire things of importance**
- He has the **ability to see things of value and to chase after them**
- **Jacob has the ability to look to the heart of the matter and so seeks things that will have greatest long term value for Him**
- **In this case the birthright belonging to Esau and blessing of His father Isaac**
- **For a young man in his day your inheritance was everything**
- It was your **name and your status** and the older brother would get **twice what the younger would get**
- Not only that but the **families blessing too would be passed through bloodlines** particularly through the older brother
- **And Jacob sensing the importance of these things desires them**
- And in a moment of **questionable action gets them from his brother**
- **In a moment of blindness, stupidity and perhaps even insanity Esau gives it all away**
- He sells that of incredible and irreplaceable value simply for some stew

- **As much as these two may have been antagonistic, Jacob I am sure would have given his brother food if he wanted**
- **And Esau being bigger could have simply taken it**
- But for some reason he reckons his rights as firstborn are of little value
- And so he **sells his birthright** to his brother
- Esau called Edom meaning Red whose ancestors become the **Edomites** fades into history almost unknown
- **If you read Matthews Gospel with the genealogy of Christ we see that the promise given to Abraham is passed on not through the eldest as it should have been**
- **But it is passed on through Jacob**
- Jacob seized these things due to the **predictable foolishness** of His brother **and his own scheming ways**
- Let me try to help you make this relevant for us today....
  
- **New Testament theology tells us that we are the children of God if we love Jesus**
- **Eph 1:4-5** *"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will"*
- **2 Co 6:18** *"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*
  
- **Literally as we come to Christ then we become children of God**
- He is no longer a antagonistic, judging God but becomes our **loving Daddy** - Abba
- **And as any good Daddy, God gives to us certain privileges**
- When you have a dad there are things that come with it
- You get his **name**
- You get his **love**
- You are **protected fiercely** by Him
- **Mt 7:11** *If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!*
  
- When we come to God we get great privilege
- **Eternal life, the gifts of spirit, love, kindness, compassion, mercy, a room in heaven, forgiveness of sins, peace, hope, joy, gentleness, self control, authority, power**
- All of these are part of our Eternal inheritance the Bible tells us
- **1 Peter 1:3-4** *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of*

*Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you"*

- We are given a **heavenly inheritance** that has been made by God to last an eternity
- In the same way that your earthly parents will leave you an inheritance
- As did Isaac left for Esau
- **So our heavenly father has adopted us as His children through faith in Jesus and He has given to us an eternal inheritance**
- **It is a birthright given to each and every person who has been born again by the Holy Spirit**
- **If you have not been born of the Spirit you are an illegitimate child**
- A person who has **no father, no inheritance, no birthright, no future**
- That is the **clear teaching of the Bible**
- **If you have not been born again you have no birthright and future in the wonder and beauty of eternity**
- **You are just a poor miserable ba... you know the word for someone who has no father**
- **Esau following the desires of the flesh**, quite literally and so is led to give up His birthright and inheritance
- And so too have many Christians done the same thing
- **They have listened to the call of their appetite for unholy or earthly things and have given up this eternal inheritance**
- **We all have an appetite for things against God**
- It is the **nature of the sin** in our lives that does this
- **Ro 7:17-25** As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I can't do it.

For what I do is not the good that I want to do; no, the evil things I don't want to do I keep on doing. Now if I do what I don't want to do, it is no longer I who does it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within body. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

- **We all have these appetites and desires for things other than God**
- You will know the **voice of temptation** in your life and you will know the things to which you are tempted
- **Some are tempted by money, some by power, some by sex, some by anger and all these other destructive forces**
- It is the **sin that lives in us** until we are made perfect when we go to heaven
  
- **But if listen to these voices – when we follow them and let them rule our lives –we become like Esau**
- And we **give up our inheritance** – literally selling our birthright for the desires of sin
  
- **There is a point where we follow the desires of our sinful nature to such an extent that like Esau we are prepared to give up everything of value**
- **Every good gift given to us by God**
- **Listen carefully here - when listen these desires within us rather than the Spirit of God we throw off our inheritance**
- Esau desired **instant gratification**
- **The desires of our sinful nature desire the same thing**
  - You can **make money** over time **honestly** – or with a little bit of creative accounting you can have it now
  - You can **wait till marriage for sex** – but really what's the harm of getting it now?
- But in doing so we are simply selling our birthright that has been given to us when we were adopted into the family of God
- **It is like a baby girl who is born and because of circumstance her mother gives her up for adoption**
- And so she lands up in an **orphanage** alone, parentless, nameless – no hope, no inheritance
- She is in **one sense a nobody** – our names gives us identity and with no family name she feels like a nothing
  
- But then a childless couple see her some time later and take her and make her theirs
- She is **adopted**
- She gets their **name**
- **She is made part of their inheritance**
- She carries all the **privilege** of being part of that family, giving and receiving love and affection
- **This child has a great home, a family who loves her cares for her every need**
- **And so she grows into a beautiful young woman**

- But as she gets older she discovers some of the **temptations of the world**
- Her parents try to stop her because she is **young and innocent** and they want to **save her and protect her in every way**
- As with all teenagers she gets a little **temperamental**
- **And at some point She turns and screams this at them: 'you are not my parents' and she then she left**
- **Leaving behind her inheritance, their love, their name, their affections**
- **Simply because she listened to the temptation and voice of desire rather than the voice of blessing**
- **Because she desired instant fulfilment and pleasure**
- **Not understanding the real value of what she had until it was far too late**
- Any able minded person listening to such a story would **tell this girl that she is crazy**
- **Go back home, they love you and all these blessings are yours**
  
- Any able minded person watching **Esau would tell him he is being stupid**
- **Your Dad loves you and these blessings are yours**
  
- **And I am saying to you if you have strayed from God**
- **Your heavenly Daddy loves you and His blessing are all yours**
- **And yet so many Christians follow the example of Esau**
- God has adopted them into His family
- He has called them and made them His own
- **He has given to them an eternal inheritance with all the privilege, honour and blessing that comes with it**
- **A birthright in every sense as they were given new birth in the Spirit**
- **And yet they follow their sin and they disown Him as their dad**
  
- So many Christians listen to the voices of their sinful nature within them
- So many Christians sell their birthright to satisfy a desire of the flesh
- **Literally turning to God and saying "you are not my father"**

## **Conclusion**

- **Jacob has understood what has value**
- He has **glimpsed the world through the eyes of God**
- He has **laid value on the things of God** – blessings and eternal inheritance
- And he has **craftily taken them**
- **The blessings of Jesus are offered freely to us**
- As they are every day
- We don't have to wheel and deal to get the inheritance of our heavenly father
- **It is ours because he desire to have us as His children**
- And he promises to us all of this enduring, everlasting hope and inheritance
- **My desire is that you would be Jacobs and not Esau's today**
- Please don't be like Esau who because of a **transient desire of the flesh gave his birthright away**
- **Only later to lament his mistake and his foolishness**
- **Be 'Jacobs' – clever with regards to the blessings of God**
- I want you to **understand the value of this inheritance** that God freely gives those who ask
- **Like Jacob you need to desire the blessings of God not the things of the world**
- You need to understand their great value
- **I want you to walk with heads held high I because you believe that you are children of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords**
- I want you to be **proud to belong to God**
- **Proud to share in the birthright** of all of those who have been reborn of the Spirit of God
- **Do not despise your birthright as Esau did**
- **Love it, treasure it, cherish it, respect it as did Jacob**
- It is the **greatest treasure** we will ever own
- **God's promises will not fade, they will not pass away they will never be withdrawn**
- **Be proud to be Children of God and part of His family and heirs to His blessings**