

Jacob Stealing the Birthright

by Chuck Smith

The sermon highlights the importance of faith and obedience, using the stories of Esau and Isaac to illustrate the consequences of disobedience and the power of covenant and oath.

Duration: 25:06

Topics: "Jacob"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the story of Esau and Jacob from the book of Genesis. He highlights the stark differences between the two brothers and how their parents favored them differently. Pastor Chuck emphasizes the importance of staying in the place of blessing and not straying from God's presence. He also shares how God appeared to Isaac and reassured him of His presence and blessings. The sermon concludes with a reminder to celebrate Christmas by giving gifts that reflect the true meaning of Christ's birth.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life and make you whole
So let's follow along as we pick up with Jacob bartering for his brother's birthright. Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field. But Jacob was a mild man dwelling in tents.

And so, though they are twins, yet they are extremely diverse. And Isaac loved Esau. But Rebecca loved Jacob.

And so, Jacob cooked a stew. So he was a gourmet. He was a man around the tent.

And Esau came in from the field and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, Please feed me with some of that red stew, for I am weary. Therefore they called his name Edom, which means red, because he desired the red stew.

And later, the nation that came from him were known as the Edomites. And it all goes back to this red stew. But Jacob said, Sell me your birthright as of this day.

And Esau said, Look, I'm about to die. So what profit would this birthright be to me? Then Jacob said, Swear to me, as of this day. Now, he was a man that was ready to take advantage of a situation.

And Jacob, seizing on the opportunity, said, Swear to me that you will. So he swore to him. Took an oath. Sure. Trade you the birthright for the stew. So Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils.

Then he ate and drank and arose and went his way. And thus Esau despised his birthright. He just ate, drank, went on his way.

Didn't care anything about his birthright. He didn't really consider it anything of any worth to him. Later on, he regretted it.

Now, it is interesting that many of those in the lineage of Christ were not the firstborn. Seth was not the firstborn. Jacob was not the firstborn.

Isaac wasn't the firstborn. David wasn't the firstborn. It always didn't follow with the birthright, which usually went to the eldest son.

Now, there was a famine in the land. And besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. So this is about 100 years after Abraham had experienced a famine in the land.

Now, another famine comes. This is maybe one of those 100-year floods that they talk about here in California. Only on the reverse, the 100-year famine.

And Isaac went to Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, in Gerar. The same thing that Abraham, his father, did 100 years earlier. And so as he was on his way to Gerar, the area of the Philistines.

The Lord appeared to him and said, Do not go down to Egypt. Dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Now, we find that Abraham, when the famine came in the land first time.

That Abraham went down into Egypt. Because of the famine in the land. It could be that Isaac was on his way to Egypt.

But God stopped him. And God tells him definitely, do not go down to Egypt. Dwell in the land which I shall tell you.

But sojourn in this land. Now, you're dealing with a couple of Hebrew words. One translated dwell, which means to settle down, make yourself at home.

The other is to sojourn, which is to just stay temporarily. Just sort of stop over here. So, don't go down to Egypt.

Dwell in the land that I will tell you. I'll tell you where you're to dwell. But you're to sojourn.

You're to just stay temporarily in this land. And I will be with you and bless you. Now, interestingly enough, this is the first time the Lord spoke to Isaac.

And when God spoke to Isaac first, it was on his way probably to Egypt. When he came into the land of the Philistines, the land of Gerar. And so, this is the first time God spoke to Isaac.

And when he speaks to him, he reiterates to him the promises and the covenant that he made with his father Abraham. So, dwell temporarily in this land. I will be with you.

I will bless you. For to you and your descendants, I give all these lands. And I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham, your father.

And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven. I will give to your descendants all these lands. And in your seed, all of the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

In your seed, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. And so, the repeated promises of blessings to Isaac that were given to his father Abraham by God, and now passed on, and God affirms to Isaac the same promises that he had made to his father. And why did he do it? Verse 5, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Because Abraham was obedient to God. He kept the charge. He kept the commandments.

He kept the statutes. He kept the laws of God. And, of course, you have to remember that this was 400 years before the law was given.

Abraham kept the laws, the statutes, the commandments, the charge of God. So, Isaac dwelt in Gerar. Wait a minute, Isaac.

God said, sojourn here. So, this is an act of disobedience on Isaac's part. Rather than just temporarily stopping there, he settled down to dwell there.

And in the very next verse we read, And the men of the place asked him about his wife. And he said, She is my sister. For he was afraid to say, She is my wife.

Because he thought, lest the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold. So, he disobeyed God in settling down in the area. And the next thing we find him doing is lying.

Sinning. But the sin was actually provoked by the disobedience. The fact that he started to dwell in the land instead of just staying there temporarily.

Starting to dwell there, it led him to the sin of denying his wife. There are places where you, as a child of God, have no business going. If you go there, you're only exposing yourself to temptation.

There are places where, as a child of God, I have no business being. He had no business dwelling in Gerar. And as a result of his trying to dwell there, the men of the area began to ask about his wife.

And he said, Well, she's my sister. Because he was afraid. Fear is a sign of lack of faith.

He had the same lapse of faith as his father Abraham. Fearing that they might kill him in order to get his wife. The fear of man brings a snare.

Whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe. The fear of man was a trap. He fell in it.

He was caught by it. Led him to lie concerning his wife. But in reality, he was only following an established pattern that had been set by his father a hundred years earlier.

In the same place, in the same conditions, with the same lapse of faith, Abraham did exactly the same thing. And the sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons. And here is the son committing the very same sin as his father.

Like father, like son. Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, you see, he didn't just sojourn. He was dwelling.

That Abimelech, the king of the Philistines. Now this isn't the same Abimelech that Abraham met over a hundred years earlier. Abimelech is the title for the kings of the Philistines.

Like the Pharaoh. Pharaoh is just the title of the ruler. And so Abimelech is the title for the ruler over the Philistines.

And so Abimelech, who was the present ruler of the Philistines, looked through a window and saw Isaac showing endearment to Rebekah, his wife. Actually saw him caressing Rebekah. And Abimelech called Isaac and said, Quite obviously she is your wife.

So how could you say she is my sister? And Isaac said to him, Because I said lest I die on account of her. And Abimelech said, What is this that you have done to us? One of the people might soon have laid with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us. Now the story of Abraham a hundred years earlier had no doubt passed down to the people.

And no doubt knowing of that previous incidents, Abimelech rebukes Isaac, What have you done to us? Don't you realize that one of the men might have just taken your wife? It is tragic when a man of God is rebuked by the world. When his standards are beneath those of the world around him. It should be the opposite always.

Our standards should be higher than those of the world. But tragically, the standards were less. And he is rebuked by this pagan king Abimelech.

So Abimelech charged all of his people saying, Whoever touches this man or his wife will be put to death. He made it a capital offense. Then Isaac sowed in the land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold, and the Lord blessed him.

So he is settling down a little bit more. He probably leased some land, planted it, and God gave him a bumper crop. He reaped a hundredfold.

And the man began to prosper and continued prospering until he became very prosperous. For he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him.

Now the Philistines had stopped all of the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. And Abimelech said to Isaac, Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we. So he is asked to leave, to get out of there.

The men were envious of him. And so Isaac departed from there, and he pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and he dwelt there. And so he dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham.

And he called them by the names which his father had called them. So he began redigging the wells and naming them after the historic names given to them by his father Abraham. And Isaac's servant dug in the valley and found a well of running water there.

But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, The water is ours. So he called the name of the well Isaac, which is literally quarrel, because they quarreled with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also.

So he called its name Sitna, which means hatred or enmity. And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, which means spaciousness.

I've finally gotten far enough away. And there's enough space for all of us here. Because he said, For now the Lord has made room for us.

So spaciousness, room for us. And we shall be fruitful in the land. Then he went up from there to Beersheba.

And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, I am the God of your father Abraham. Now again God appears to him. God appeared to him when he started in the land, told him to just dwell there temporarily.

He disobeyed God, got into problems. Now he comes back to the area of Beersheba where God had really told him to dwell. And so once again God speaks to him when he comes back to Beersheba.

And the Lord appeared to him in the same night that he came back. As though God were waiting for him to get back on track. The silence of God when he's off track.

And we find that so often true in our own lives. We get off track and suddenly we don't hear the voice of God. Suddenly it is as though the Lord is far from us.

We don't feel the presence of God or the power of God upon our lives. And it isn't that God has moved. It's we have moved from the place of blessing.

And the moment he came back to Beersheba, the very same night he came back, the Lord appeared to him and said, I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not fear for I am with you. Hey, that's always the answer that dispels fear.

The presence of God with me. Oh, what words of strength, comfort. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for my servant Abraham's sake.

Now Isaac probably starting to get a complex by now. God's not doing anything for him or for his sake. It's all for Abraham's sake that God is doing these things.

So he built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord and he pitched his tent there and there Isaac's servants dug a well at Beersheba. Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahazath, one of his friends, and Phicol, the commander of his army. And Isaac said to them, Why have you come to me since you hate me and you've sent me away from you? So he doesn't greet them too cordially.

Just with a question. Why have you come here? You guys hate me. Sent me away.

What are you doing? But they said, We have certainly seen that the Lord is with you. So we said, Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you that you will do us no harm since we have not touched you and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord.

So we want to make a treaty. We want to make a covenant. We won't hurt you.

We don't want you to hurt us. Obviously you've been blessed of the Lord and we don't want any trouble with you. So he made a feast, a covenant feast, and they ate and they drank.

Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another and Isaac sent them away and they departed from him in peace. Now earlier a similar thing happened to Abraham after he left and was so blessed of God. The king came and said, We want to make a treaty with you and all.

Obviously you're being blessed of God. And it was at Beersheba, interestingly enough. And there Abraham said, Well now look, I dug some wells and your servants tried to claim them and he rebuked Abimelech and Abimelech said, I'm sorry, I didn't know anything about this.

And Abraham said, Okay, I want to make this covenant. I'm going to give you these lambs and they are proof to you that I'm the one that dug the well. And he faced the issue.

Isaac was just sort of a mild mannered guy. He's the kind of a guy that didn't want any confrontation. He didn't bring up the wells that they had claimed that he had dug and so forth.

Just let it go. Sent them away in peace. Not really a confronting kind of an individual.

Came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug and they said to him, We have found water. And of course in an area like Beersheba that's an important thing. It's really on the edge of the desert.

And so it's really exciting news. We have found water. So he called it Sheba.

And the name of the city to this day is Beersheba. And of course Genesis was written so many years ago. But even to the present day it's still called Beersheba.

And so the name is passed on down and you can go to Beersheba today there on the edge of the Negev desert. The word Sheba means an oath. And so they had just made this oath and then the servants come and they say we have found water.

And so he called it the well of the oath. Or Sheba can also mean seven. And so there are some who translate that the well of seven.

But the fact that it is related to the oath the swearing the well of the oath is probably the more correct interpretation or translation. When Esau was 40 years old he took his wives Judith the daughter of Biri the Hittite and Bazimath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. So Esau 40 years old married a couple of gals among the people in which they dwelt the Hittites.

And they were a grief to the mind of Isaac and Rebecca. So these daughter-in-laws that Esau had taken were just a real problem a real grief to Rebecca and Isaac. We'll be taking a brief break from our study of Genesis for the remainder of this week to share with you a very special Christmas series.

And we do hope you'll join us. But right now I'd like to remind you that if you missed any part of today's message or perhaps you'd like to order a copy for that special friend or loved one you can do so by simply contacting one of our customer service representatives and they'd be more than happy to assist you with the ordering details. Simply call 1-800-272-WORD and phone orders can be taken Monday through Friday

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And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck Smith begins his narrative of The Greatest Story Ever Told. That's right here on the next edition of The Word for Today. And now once again here's Pastor Chuck Smith.

May the Lord be with you now and bless you and keep you in His love and fill you with His Spirit and may you walk in the conscious presence and fellowship of God through this week. May it be a beautiful, fabulous week as you become aware of God's presence with you. In Jesus' name.

In the light of God's special gift to us why not celebrate this Christmas with a gift that acknowledges our Lord's birth. When thinking of gifts this year consider The Word for Today's selection of resources. This season, give the gift of God's Word.

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