

# (Genesis) Genesis 27-28:15

by Joe Focht

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*The sermon explores the complex dynamics of Isaac's blessing, highlighting themes of deception, favoritism, and God's sovereignty in the lives of Jacob and Esau.*

**Duration:** 50:15

**Scripture:** Genesis 28:15-49, Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5, 1 Peter 1:5, Jude 1:24

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of knowing Jesus Christ personally rather than just knowing about Him. He shares his own experience of growing up in the church and singing songs without truly understanding the significance of knowing Jesus. The speaker then references the story of Jacob in the Bible, highlighting how Jacob prophesied over his sons before his death, demonstrating the power and dignity of knowing God. The sermon also touches on the topic of witnessing and how mentioning the name of Jesus can bring light and conviction to people's hearts.

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## Transcript

We have come to chapter 27. We ended with a note there that Esau at 40 years old was married and took two wives that were Hittites that were a grief to Rebekah, his mother. We're not given the details but we can imagine if they're Hittites they probably brought back from the honeymoon their idols and their little gods that they wanted to stick around the house there that I'm sure Isaac and Rebekah were not happy about.

So Esau still showing that he has no regard for the birthright which was directly related to the one true living God, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and Jacob being the one still that has his heart set on, as it were, higher things. Now it begins in chapter 27 by saying it came to pass that when Isaac was old his eyes were dim so that he could not see. He called Esau, his eldest son, and said unto him, my son, and he said unto him behold here am I. He said behold now I am old.

I know not the day of my death. Now therefore take I pray thee thy weapons thy quiver thy bow go out to the field and take me some venison and make me savory meat such as I love and bring it to me that I may eat and that my soul may bless thee before I die. Now Isaac is a hundred and thirty-seven years old at this point.

That is the same age that Ishmael, his brother, died at fourteen years earlier. So he's feeling the progress of age in his body. He is blind.

He is a hundred and thirty-seven years old. He will live for forty-three more years, by the way, but he's saying now he's got the feeling he's going to die. And with that in mind he wants to bless or pass the blessing upon Esau.

Now again we don't understand because certainly Rebekah had told him that the Lord spoke to her and said the elder would serve the younger. He already knows that Jacob has the birthright and you can't have the blessing without the birthright. They're intertwined.

They go together. And yet again for the wrong reason this man Isaac is desiring and maybe it's because Esau has two wives and children already. We don't know.

Jacob is somewhere between 70 and 77 and still is not married. And maybe because of that, maybe there's grandchildren involved that he wants to pass the blessing, but he wants to pronounce this blessing before he dies. Now we know from ancient inscriptions that date from this period that when a patriarch, the oldest member of the family, was passing, whatever blessing he pronounced before his death was considered binding.

And it was a capital crime to break that blessing that was pronounced. They held a lot of regard for it and believed whatever their gods were, of course this is a true and living God, that this blessing would become a reality. So he is now calling Esau to go get him some of this savory venison.

I can't believe after all these years he still got this thing for venison. And come and feed me and then I will bless you before I die. Now it says that Rebekah heard when Isaac spoke to Esau, verse 5, his son and Esau went to the field to hunt for venison and to bring it.

Rebekah spoke unto Jacob her son. Now notice this, in verse 5 it says Rebekah heard when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. So Esau is Isaac's son.

In verse 6 it says Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son. So somehow these guys are twins, but Esau is Isaac's son and Jacob is Rebekah's son. And this never bears good fruit in a family, you know.

You know the interesting thing as I study these guys, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you can really see the bent of the parents being passed, where Abraham favored a particular son over another. We see Isaac favoring a son in a wrong way. We see ultimately as it comes Jacob favors a son and the other brothers end up hating Joseph.

And it's interesting to see the sins passed. We see Jacob putting hair on his hands to deceive his father. We see then Jacob's own sons bringing a bloody garment unto his father, Joseph's garment, saying a beast devoured your son.

I mean it's interesting to see the sins of the parents being passed on here. And the Bible portrays them as all too human, you know, it's interesting. And now in this family Esau is Isaac's son and Jacob is Rebekah's son.

So she says to her son, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother saying, bring me venison and make me savory meat that I may eat and bless thee before the Lord before my death. Now my son obey my

voice. My son, 70-year-old son, you know you think your mom would let you alone by the time you're that old.

Now my son obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock and fetch me from there two good kids of the goats and I will make them savory meat for thy father such as he loveth. Now evidently not only his eyes are bad but his taste buds are going bad too because he can't tell the difference between goat and venison anymore.

And thou shalt bring it to thy father that he may eat and that he may bless thee before his death. And Jacob said to Rebekah's mother, behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man. I'm a smooth man.

Conjures up pictures, doesn't it? My father perhaps will feel me and I shall seem to him as a deceiver or more properly a mocker. You know he says, dad's blind. You want me to come in and act like Esau.

He's hairy. I'm not. Dad's going to feel me and immediately he's going to think I'm mocking him and he says and I shall bring a curse upon me which he was afraid that would be binding instead of a blessing.

And his mother said unto him let the curse be on me. You can hear this is my mom, you know. Upon me be thy curse my son.

Only obey my voice. Go fetch me them. And he went and he fetched and brought them to his mother.

And his mother made savory meat such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau which were with her in the house and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands.

Now the Hebrew word means up to the elbows. It's hands, wrists and forearms up to the elbows. And upon the smooth part of his neck, goat skin.

And she gave the savory meat and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob. And he came in unto his father and said my father. And he said here am I. Who art thou my son? And Jacob said unto his blind father I am Esau thy first born.

I have done according as thou bidest me. Arise I pray thee. Sit and eat of my venison that thy soul may bless me.

And Isaac said unto his son how is it that thou hast found it so quickly my son? And he's a little suspicious. How did you get the deer that fast? He says, now he's dragging the Lord into it. Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.

Now you know this is intrigue I'll tell you. This is like one of those novels you know. You know these brothers don't get along.

The family split. There's the split with favoritism one towards another. Now the mom's saying to the 70 year old son go on in and do this and pretend your brother gave the blessing.

Deceive your blind father. And he's saying well mom he can pronounce a curse on me. And then the mom's saying oh you're 70 years old.

Grow up. I'll take the curse you know. Just go listen to me.

So he goes now and covers his hands and his forearms with the skin of a goat and his neck and goes into his father. And then the father says Isaac says how did you get the deer so fast? He said oh the God gave it to me. So now he's taking the name of the Lord in vain.

He's dragging the Lord in. And Isaac said to Jacob come near. Well he's suspicious.

Maybe because Esau never mentioned the Lord before. Now all of a sudden he's saying the Lord gave me the deer. Isaac said unto Jacob come near I pray thee that I may feel thee my son whether thou be my very son Esau or not.

And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father and he felt him. And he said, now he's confused, the voice is Jacob's voice but the hands are the hands of Harry. That's what Esau means.

Now this guy you know I mean I'm a little troubled as I read through this because this guy now has covered his hands with goat skin. Now you've seen a goat before. I mean you know it's one thing for a man to be hairy.

But this is like capital H Harry. You know this guy's got he's covered with goat skin and Isaac's going sounds like Jacob but that's Esau nobody else is that hairy. Amazing.

I wonder if the Hittite woman he married were hairy. Imagine what their kids look like. Maybe that's why they were a grief to Rebecca.

We're not sure. So he says the voice is Jacob's but the hands are Harry's. And he discerned him not because his hands were hairy.

As his brother Esau's hands. So Esau's as hairy as a goat. So he blessed him.

And he said art thou my very son Esau? And he said I am. And he said well bring it near to me and I will eat of my son's venison that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him and he did eat.

And he brought him wine and he drank. And his father Isaac said unto him come near now and kiss me my son. I think he's still suspicious.

And he came near and he kissed him. And the smell he smelled the smell of his rain in his clothing and blessed him and said see the smell of my son is as the smell of a field. So his son is hairy and smells like a field.

That's quite a man. See my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed. That's good I guess.

Therefore God give thee now here he begins to pronounce a blessing upon Jacob. The blessing would have been Jacob's. How would it have worked out we will never know.

Because Rebekah and Jacob connived their way into the blessing. The blessing would have been his. And now Isaac pronouncing the blessing believing it to be Esau.

When Esau comes in we'll see that Isaac begins to tremble and he realizes what's happened. But at that point no doubt under conviction because he will say to Esau and indeed your brother will be blessed because he must have known all along that God had spoken that Jacob would be the one that would carry on the birthright and the blessing. And he must have come under conviction then that he had gone against

the will of God.

So now verse 28 he pronounces his blessing. Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and of wine. Let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee.

Be Lord over thy brethren and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be everyone that curseth thee and blessed be he that blesseth thee. And it came to pass as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

This would make a great movie wouldn't it? Now the book is better than the movie obviously but it would make a good movie. And he also had made savory meat and he brought it unto his father and said unto his father let my father arise. Now he comes in all happy he's done hunting, cleaning the deer, cooking it.

Let my father arise and eat his son's venison that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac his father said unto him who are you? And he said I'm your son your first born Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly and said who? Where is he that hath taken venison and brought it to me and I have eaten of all before thou came and have blessed him yea and he shall be blessed.

No doubt Isaac sensed the spirit of God as he had pronounced the blessing on Jacob. And when Esau heard the words of his father now Esau doesn't have to wonder at all who it was that came in dressed like him hairy and with venison he knows exactly who it was. Esau heard the words of his father he cried with a great exceeding bitter cry and said unto his father bless me even me also my father and he said thy brother came with subtlety and hath taken away thy blessing.

That's wrong it was not Esau's blessing it was his own blessing that he took and Isaac should have been yielded to that.

You know it's interesting and maybe before we get through Genesis we'll just take on Sunday morning one snapshot of Isaac because Isaac is an interesting man in that when we observe him again seven times we find him by a well and he seems to be a man who enjoys the quietness of the desert the southern part of the country and is always seated by a well we hear of him meditating but twice now as we study onward instead of God God is called the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac and it seems that the first experience that Isaac had with the living God was on Moriah whereas God had appeared to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees before he ever came into the land God had appeared to Abraham a number of times seven times it seems Abraham had a genuine experience with the living God and it seems the

first time Isaac experienced the presence of God was when his father's hand was raised with a knife in it and the angel of the Lord there came and stopped his father and it seems you know first impressions are lasting and I wonder if Isaac often thought man if God hadn't stopped him I wonder if he'd have brought that knife that you know dad would you have done that and Abraham saying oh sure you know God told me if necessary he'd even raise you from the dead and from the ashes because I'd have burned you after I stabbed you you know we're laughing about it but I think the impression made upon Isaac and the impression that stayed with Isaac in one way you know Abraham is called the friend of God and in one sense there is a familiarity and a depth of relationship that seems to be more

grounded in grace and in blessing and in friendship and yet there seems to be on the part of Isaac a genuine belief and a genuine man of integrity but there seems to be a lacking in the communion that his

father Abraham had enjoyed with the living God and Isaac in this circumstance is for as remarkable of a man as he is seems not to have been yielding to what he knew in his heart was God's design for these two boys verse 36 he said it is is you know let me back up to 35 it seems Isaac saying thy brother came with subtlety hath taken away thy blessing and then Esau says is not he rightly named Jacob for he has supplanted me these two times he took away my birthright which is not true because Esau despised that birthright and gave it away for a pot of lentils behold now he hath taken away

my blessing it wasn't his blessing either and he said hast thou not reserved a blessing for me now this is the verse that takes us to Hebrews 12 and in fact you don't have to go there let me read it it warns us that none of us would be a profane person such as Esau who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright that's when he traded the birthright away for the lentils for you know how that afterwards after that incident when he would have inherited the blessing which was a separate thing from the birthright he was rejected for he found no place of repentance though he sought it that is the blessing carefully with tears it doesn't say again that Esau could not have repented of his sin before God because any man can do that what it says is Esau the carnal man that he was is now repenting

with tears asking Isaac for a blessing now he had traded away the fullest blessing he gave away the birthright now when all that's over he's more concerned about the carnal part of all of that which was the blessing the double inheritance given to the first born the greater blessing and he's more concerned about the material part of that blessing than he was about the spiritual part of it which was the birthright and now he's seeking that blessing with tears it says he's weeping haven't you saved a blessing for me and it says he found it not that is the double portion though he sought it with tears it's not that he didn't find repentance any man can find repentance before God even Manasseh so he's seeking now haven't you saved a blessing for me verse 37 Isaac answered and said unto Esau

behold I have made him thy Lord and all his brethren have I given to him for servants and with grain and wine have I sustained him and what shall I do now unto thee my son and Esau said unto his father hast thou but one blessing my father bless me even me also oh my father and Esau lifted up his voice and wept and Isaac his father answered and said unto him behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth now there is a partial blessing that comes it tells us in Hebrews 11 20 that before Jacob died he blessed his sons plural Jacob and Esau so Esau does receive a blessing but not the blessing of the firstborn he says behold thy dwelling shall be in the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above and by thy sword shalt thou live and shalt serve thy brother and it shall

come to pass when thou shalt have dominion that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck there's a point coming when you be free from your brother Jacob and from this bitterness and so forth and Esau hated Jacob because of the blessings wherewith his father blessed him and Esau said in his heart the days of mourning for my father are at hand dad's ready to die then will I slay my brother Jacob and these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebecca so evidently one of the servants in the house heard Esau telling his servants or those that were close to him when dad dies I'm going to kill Jacob and she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said unto him behold thy brother Harry as touching thee doth comfort himself purposing to kill thee saying when dad dies I'm going to kill

Jacob and then I'll have a little bit of consolation here now therefore my son obey my voice arise flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran and tarry with him a few days twenty years until thy brother's fury be turned away now by the way Rebecca would never see Jacob again and she loved Jacob there are many difficult situations that arise out of the conniving in this situation God certainly redeems it all it's more than a few

days it will be twenty years she will die in his absence until thy brother's anger be turned away from thee and he forget that which thou has done unto him what do you mean mom you said you mean what I've done you told me to do it well you're seventy years old make your own choices you know now she's saying it's what you did to him then I will send and fetch thee from

there why should I be betrothed also of you both in one day so she's afraid that if Esau kills Jacob then she'll lose Esau and both sons and Rebecca said to Isaac I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth Esau's hit tight wives if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth such as these which are the daughters of the land what good shall my life do me I can't go on you know Jacob don't let I mean Isaac don't let Jacob marry one of these wenches and Isaac well that's what it seems to be saying and Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him and said unto him thou shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan now I think Isaac realizing that God has intervened as it were given the blessing to Jacob that he should have been in cooperation with that plan all along Isaac

now is remembering when Abraham his father took aside Eliezer and said Eliezer I do not want my son to marry one of the unbelievers of the land what every good parent desires I want my son to marry someone with integrity someone worthwhile I do not want my son to marry the unbelievers of Canaan one of the Canaanites and Isaac is remembering how that had played in his life and how Abraham had sent a servant and how God had worked and been supernaturally involved with Eliezer meeting Rebecca at the well and so forth and no doubt under conviction now Isaac involves himself and encourages Jacob now to go to Padinarum arise and go to Padinarum to the house of Bethuel which means the dweller of God or dweller with God thy mother's father and take thee away from thence of the daughters of Laban

thy mother's brother and God Almighty bless thee now he's pronouncing another blessing and make thee fruitful and multiply thee that thou mayest be a multitude of people and give thee the blessing of Abraham to thee and to thy seed with thee that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger which God gave unto Abraham the family legacy now and Isaac sent away Jacob and he went to Padinarum unto Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian the brother of Rebecca Jacob's and Esau's mother now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padinarum to take him a wife from there and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge saying thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and was gone to Padinarum and Esau seeing

that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father then went Esau unto Ishmael to the family of Ishmael and took unto the wives which he had now he added to his present wives the daughter of Ishmael Abram's son and the sister of Nabajoth to be his wife so he goes now to Ishmael's family thinking well this is part of the family mom and dad are not pleased with my wives interesting to see this side of Esau they've sent Jacob away to Padinarum to take a wife from there Jacob has obeyed they seem pleased they are agreed with my wives from Canaan now evidently in an attempt to please Isaac and Rebecca Esau goes and takes one of the wives of the family of Ishmael Isaac's brother hoping evidently that that would please his parents you know there's a spiritual bond it says in Proverbs that

the glory of children is their father and I believe by the way that's a spiritual bond we have had children come through the church from foster care systems where they've been abused by their fathers and still want to go back to those fathers be burned by cigarettes and not want to tell the case worker what was going on and who was doing it because I believe there is a spiritual bond and as crazy as it is you know when a family breaks up it's so difficult and here even Esau seeking to please Isaac and Rebecca very interesting to see that side of the situation now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went towards Haran

now Haran is about 500 between 460 miles and 500 miles depending which way he goes and he lighted upon a certain place and tarried there all night because the sun was set and

he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillows and lay down in that place to sleep now it's interesting Jacob will at the end of his life and one of my favorite passages in the Bible is Jacob at the end as he prophesies over his 12 sons I think what a way to die what dignity he props himself up on the edge of his bed filled with the Holy Ghost opens his mouth and prophesies over his 12 sons and then it says he lifted his legs up into the bed and gave up the ghost you know what a way to go what an amazing guy but at the end of his life he will talk about the Lord who led me all these years in hindsight and he uses the phrase there speaking of Jehovah Ra the Lord is my shepherd David will pick that up that idea and Jacob will realize at the end of his life in hindsight

that there were no pathways that I walked on that were happenstance that were by mistake even today the orthodox rabbis in Israel say coincidence is not a kosher word and the idea is Jacob in hindsight will realize you know here it says he happened upon a certain place he did not happen at all upon that place he was shepherded he was led and God will appear there to him and tell him that very thing he doesn't say behold I will be with you he says to Jacob behold I am with you and he didn't just happen upon this place to him he seemed that way he's running he's got fear in his heart in regards to Esau there are great uncertainties in his life not understanding what this birthright and blessing are all about at this time saying he's going to get wives in Padinarum but there's much more than

that involved because he's trying to save his own hide at the same time I am sure that he's under conviction imagine being alone out there and wondering what this is all about and sometimes you know when God gets us alone and I mean alone it's the only place that we can really see who we are you know it is interesting that God has this ability to get us alone even in the middle of a crowd maybe you have noticed that that sometimes depending on where your heart and your mind are you can be in the midst of a crowd of people and just feel like I do not fit in here you know every people are talking to you and there's lots of noise around and just in your heart you know I am alone I'm in the midst of all of this and I just I don't belong here I'm a stranger I just I don't fit in and you have

that sense that God has separated you even though you're in a midst and this is you know one of those places I think where Jacob will be ascertaining his own character now at the end of the 20 years and one of the guys mentioned to me this morning when he will wrestle with God, God will say to him what is your name and it's very similar to the expression that Isaac used when he said you know you smell like Esau and you're hairy like Esau but are you indeed you know who are you what is your name and he lied to his father but he will come to the place where he will own his name and he will say to God almighty my name is supplanter my name is conniver heel catcher and sometimes God takes us to those places alone now you know I think that a lot of good can come out of that because as we

reevaluate ourselves I think we weigh ourselves in light of his presence you know it tells us in Ephesians that anything that doth make manifest is light Jesus says that worldly people don't come to him because their deeds are evil and they don't want to bring them into the light in fact he says they love and it's very interesting they agape darkness more than light they have a dedication to the world and to things of the world whereas God is constantly trying to draw us into the light you can sit and tell people about all kinds of things music and martial arts and whatever anything that makes them something that you find when you're on the street if you go witnessing or you're sharing with people down the shores as soon as you talk about Jesus the crowd bleeds you know many times because

immediately there's light and when you mention the name Jesus you're mentioning the word savior when you're mentioning the word savior you're mentioning the word sin and all of a sudden there's a light there and it's funny how quickly people move away from that how adamant what is supposedly politically correct today is against the morality of biblical Christianity because it's light and it brings us into the light for what we are and when we come into the light and we see what we really are we can handle that if we have a savior because I find the more I go on with Christ the less I sin but the more I repent I find the longer I walk with him the more I understand my depravity and how I deserve hell I deserve nothing and the more I appreciate what a wonder it is that the blood of Jesus

Christ is sufficient to wash us from all of our sins and the more we draw close to him and come into his presence the more apparent it is what he has provided for us to live eternally and that all the glory belongs to him and those times alone in his presence are necessary and Jacob is being drawn to that place because Jacob has known about the God of Abraham and he's known about the God of Isaac but that's not enough it's not enough you may know about Billy Graham and appreciate him and know all kinds of information but it's much different to be Billy Graham's daughter or son and know Billy Graham there's a big difference between knowing about somebody and knowing someone when Gigi Graham was here and we got to sit and talk with her a little bit it was you know you get to hear family

stories it just you know I'm mesmerized just to listen and to hear you know and and there's just such a difference between knowing someone and knowing about someone well Jacob is it knows about the God of Abraham and Isaac but does not yet know personally the God of Abraham and Isaac and he is being now drawn to that place and he's drawn to that place you know one of the one of the things that's necessary to come and know the true and living God is to know ourselves also when we come to Christ it's necessary for there to be repentance for us to see who we are and what our need is you know people come up sometimes and say pray for me my girlfriend's leaving me and I said well wait a minute are you here to get saved and they say yeah I want to ask Jesus into my heart because my girlfriend's

leaving me I used to say no no no no this is not a dating service God you know you need to come up here and ask Jesus in your heart because you're a sinner you're going to hell not because there's a hard thing in your life right now you know if you have a plumbing problem you get a plumber if you electrical problem you get an electrician if you have a sin problem you need a Savior and that's what Jesus is and I think when we first come to him and we're saved and he reveals himself to us and we didn't no longer at that point know about him we know him it's because we've seen ourselves and our great need and we see him that he is the Savior is the answer for all that and I think then there's a continual process of us seeing who we really are coming into the light measuring ourselves alone

in his presence and and of his glory and his majesty growing in our appreciation and our perception Jacob is about to enter into that experience he lighted upon a certain place he tarried there all night took stones and made a pillow I would not sleep too good on that I like the fluff mine up and he dreamed behold a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it and behold the Lord stood above it now it isn't a ladder it is a stairway it's the only time the words used in the in the Bible and it more indicates a broad passageway threshold a stairway not a ladder so Jacob sees the involvement of heaven with earth he's in this dream he looks up and he sees this scene and behold the Lord stood above it and said I am

the Lord God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac and the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it and to thy seed and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth thou shalt spread abroad to the west to the



Jacob, I wanted you to know that I'm with you. I'm going to keep you wherever you go. I'm going to bring you back to this land.

And I'm going to fulfill all the things that I've spoken to thee of. And you know, I think in my own life, isn't it God's love and God's grace that overwhelms us and wins our hearts? If we think that God is pleased by our performance in regards to earning his love and forgiveness, and we form a legalistic bond with him, we find that it's not very long before we have transgressed our own set of rules and we find ourselves more judgmental towards other people and legalistic. It's when we really discover that we are a Jacob and that God stands over us and pronounces his blessings fully upon us because of Christ, because of the seed, singular, that we begin to serve him out of gratitude, that we serve him because we love him, not because we have to be a Christian.

And if you're here this evening and you are compromising and griping with your friends or your parents because they're trying to encourage you to walk with Christ, and, oh, they're fanatics, and why do I have to do this, and, you know what I mean? I don't do that many bad things. If you're doing that, you have not seen him fully. You've not seen him fully enough to win your heart.

When you go to take drugs at that moment, you have to decide, do I love Jesus more or do I love drugs more? Or do I love Jesus more or do I love alcohol more? Do I love Jesus more or do I love sin more? At that moment, there's a choice to make, and if you're still choosing the world, he has not become, in your estimation, more attractive than the things of this world. Heaven has not yet become the place where you are anchored. And I think Jacob was ruined.

Here is this God, comes to him without a word of rebuke, without a word of reproach, and pronounces the blessing of the covenant that he had made with Abraham of grace and of election upon his life to keep him and to bless him and to lead him. Now by the way, we have the same blessings pronounced upon us. Behold, I am with thee.

Jesus tells us in the end of Matthew, I am with you always, even until the end of the age. The Bible says to us that he will never leave us or forsake us. We have the same blessing pronounced upon us.

There are times we look in the mirror and we would forsake ourselves if we could, but he promises he'll never leave us or forsake us. He says, I will keep thee in all places. Jude, in the end of his short epistle, I think the 24th verse says, Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and present you to fall as before his throne with exceeding joy, to the only wise God be glory both now and forever.

Amen. We have the same promise made to us, that he will keep us. He will keep us.

When we enter heaven, it will be all to his glory. No flesh will glory in his presence. It won't be, you know, Jesus saved me and then I did pretty good after that.

I mean, he's a good Savior. You know, he's really a good Savior and really 99% of the things in my life he took care of. Between that and the 1% I contributed, we made it here to heaven.

No, that's not going to happen. He will keep you and present you faultless before his throne with exceeding joy. And he promises to bring us again to the place of blessing, not a word of rebuke.

I can't go on from there because I can't spend two minutes on the next part of it. We have to camp there as we move on. My encouragement to you is this.

If you don't know Jesus Christ personally, I hope in your heart you're hearing something and that you're stirred. Because we're not talking about religion. We're talking about knowing someone, not knowing about someone.

And again, I was raised in the church and when I was little I sang the songs, I will make you fishers of men. I did that. And yet as I got older, my parents forced me out the door to go to church on Sunday morning and usually I went to Horn and Heart Arch or somewhere.

I mean, you're cutting church, you know, playing hooky from church and hoping they don't find out. And that's because I heard the words, but never realized that he was risen from the dead and that I could know him, that he had died for me and that he was returning. And what we're talking about here this evening is that sin, the Bible says, has separated us from our God because he's holy and he dwells in unapproachable light.

And because we are in darkness and our sin is darkness, we don't have then any capacity to dwell in heaven in the same place with him. But the Bible says through Christ, who became our sin, you and I might be the very righteousness of God, but there's a swap. There is this plan where God provides the Savior and you provide the sinner.

Those are the two necessary things. He has provided the Savior, you provide the sinner. And what that means is, you're not providing someone whose girlfriend just left them or all these other issues.

You're providing the sinner. You're coming to him and saying, Lord, I realize. And maybe you feel alone right in the middle of this crowd right now that we're talking about and the Holy Spirit is touching your heart.

And you're realizing, Lord, I need to be saved. I need whatever it is. I don't understand it and I don't want church and I don't want religion.

But Lord, if this is all real, you're really there. You're the one touching my heart. I want to know you.

And what I want you to do is at the end of the service, and Rob, why don't you come? We're going to sing a song and we're going to worship. And at the end of the song, the pastors and the elders will be down the front. I want you to come down and pray with us and ask Christ to be your Savior and forgive your sins.

We'll give you a Bible. We'll give you some literature to read. And let him change your life and set you free.

Because he'll do that. And none of the other things you try to fill your life with will ever make a difference. The Latin, in the ancient church, in Latin, they spoke of the vacuum of the soul.

They say that every human has a Christ-shaped void. And you try to fill it with drugs or money or pleasure or whatever, there is no thing that will fill that spot but Jesus Christ. And it is God's mercy that he's left it in your life.

And if you're tired of trying to do it on your own and you're tired of your own sin, you're tired of the burden, and you're ready to be forgiven and to go to heaven and to know tonight that if you die tonight, you'll have eternal life, then at the end of the service I want you to come down and pray with us. And for the rest of us, how remarkable must stand together that he is with us, that he will keep us, that he will bring us to the place where his promises will be realized.

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