

(Genesis) - Part 23

by Zac Poonen

Isaac's story teaches us the importance of spiritual qualifications in marriage, the dangers of choosing a partner based on earthly qualifications, and the need to go through struggles and trials to know God.

Duration: 59:36

Topics: "Genesis"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of taking the teachings of the church seriously. He warns that many people will regret not heeding the message when they stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The speaker observes a decline in spiritual-mindedness among young people and questions why they are becoming more worldly instead of growing in zeal and godliness. He highlights the sad example of Isaac, who started well but ended up being defeated by sin and losing his spiritual vision. The sermon urges listeners to learn from these examples and not to trade their spiritual birthright for earthly ambitions.

Transcript

Genesis, in chapter twenty-six. Genesis twenty-six. In our last study, we were at the section beginning at verse eighteen.

Then Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham. But the Philistines had stopped him up after the death of Abraham, and he gave them the same names which his father had given them. And we saw that this is a picture of how, through the centuries after the days of the apostles, the wells that were dug by the apostles, the teaching of the New Covenant, had been buried by the Philistines, by the traditions of men.

And Isaac's servants, it says here, Isaac dug again those wells. And that's what has happened through the years, and particularly in the last few hundred years, there's been a recovery of these truths that were hidden. And whenever there was a recovery like that, there was always contention.

That's just the spiritual application of that, but the type of it. But we can also see here something of Isaac's good-heartedness and graciousness. An example for us to follow, that when there was a contention, verse twenty, the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, The water is ours.

So he named the well Isaac, because they contended for it. And he just moved on. He didn't fight.

He didn't say that, My father dug this well, and you buried it, and I've opened it up again. It's doubly mine. He could have said that, but he didn't fight.

We saw earlier how he had imitated his father in telling a lie concerning his wife, saying, She's my sister, in verse nine. We also see here how he imitated his father in something good. So we know that when Abraham's servants and lost servants had a fight about property, that though Isaac was not born, I'm sure he'd heard about it, and how Abraham had graciously given Lot the choice to choose whatever he wanted.

And Isaac follows the example of his father, and he doesn't fight. He just moves on and digs another well, verse twenty-one, and they quarreled over that also. So he named it Sitna, and he moved again from there, dug another well, and I think they must have been ashamed by now that this man was not going to fight with them.

And so he named it Rehoboth. He said, At last the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. And he went up from there to Beersheba.

And if you turn to verse thirty-two, you read there, it came about the same day that Isaac's servants came in and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, We have found water. So he called it Sheba, and therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day. So you find that the Lord gave him two wells, and when there is a contention for something earthly, and we give up our rights, we're not going to starve, our flocks are not going to starve.

God has always got not only one well, but two wells. Because we see here that when he moved away, the Lord appeared to him, verse twenty-four. God had been watching.

If you remember, we saw that in Genesis fourteen, that when Lot moved away from Abraham after Abraham said, You can have what you like. It says immediately after that, Abraham, God met with Abraham and said, I'll give you all this land. Everything is yours.

We must remember this. God is always on the side of the man who does not fight for earthly things. That's why Jesus told that man who said, Lord, tell my brother to divide the property with me.

He hadn't understood the way of the cross. That which was his right. Abraham had a right.

He didn't claim it. Isaac had a right to this well, but he didn't claim it. And that brother was asking for his right.

You see, this is where, where you find the difference between just an ordinary believer and a disciple. An ordinary believer may not do anything wrong, but he will fight for his right. He'll say, my brother has got to divide the property with me.

But a disciple will give up his right. And that's why we see that most believers are just believers. They're not disciples.

When it comes to these material things, they do not know how to give up their right. So there's something we can see here that, and that's perhaps the reason why the Lord doesn't appear to them either, because when Isaac gave up his right, the Lord appeared to him the same night, that very same night, and God had been watching him moving on and on and on and on. And He appeared to him, and He says, don't fear, I'm the God of your father Abraham, for I am with you.

I will bless you and multiply your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham. And we read here that Isaac built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent there, and there Isaac's servants dug a well. Those two words, the altar and the tent, are words that have a spiritual application for us.

We find this in the life of Abraham and Isaac. They pitched an altar, they built an altar, and they pitched a tent. An altar in their relationship with God, and a tent describing their relation to this earth.

And that's what we always need in our life, an altar, where we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God, and our attitude to earthly things, always a tent. Not that we don't have anything, we have a tent, but we don't think of this earth as a permanent dwelling place. A tent is a symbol of a temporary dwelling place, a symbol of a pilgrim, just like the altar is a picture of a worshipper.

And Abraham and Isaac had an altar and a tent, they were worshippers and pilgrims, and that's what we need to be also. Verse 26, Then Abimelech came to him. Abimelech was the king of the Philistines, as we read in verse 1. These very Philistines who had been fighting for these wells.

And now Abimelech comes from Gerar with his advisor Ahuzab and Phaikol, the commander of his army. And Isaac said to them, Why have you come to me, since you hate me, and you have sent me away from you? He says, You kept chasing me away every time I dug a well. Your people chased me off, and Abimelech, the king, no doubt knew about it.

He was probably a bit jealous of Isaac. And Isaac says, Why have you come to me now? You hate me, and you've chased me away. And they said, We see plainly that the Lord has been with you.

Of course, God said that to him in verse 24, I am with you. But here was a heathen person recognizing that God was with Isaac. And that's a tremendous thing when a heathen person recognizes the presence of God with us, by our behavior.

You remember that heathen centurion who looked at Jesus being crucified and said, Really? This is a righteous man. This is the son of God. Because he had never seen in his whole life anyone being crucified who reacted like Jesus reacted to the crucifixion.

There was no resistance. There was no fighting, cursing, swearing, nothing. And that's what this man, Abimelech, also saw in Isaac.

I mean, he had no doubt had dealings with other people in the world where if there was some fight for property, they would fight tooth and nail for it. And particularly when a well was so desperately needed for the flock. But here he saw in Isaac the gracious attitude of giving up another well, and he gave up again and again.

And that's the thing that made that man finally come and say, We saw that God was with you. And he had a fear of that. He felt that he was fighting with a man on whose side God was.

And he was scared. He was scared that if he continued like that, he'd be fighting against God. And so he said, Let's make an oath between you and us.

Let's make a covenant with you that you will do us no harm. Now remember, Isaac has got no army. Abimelech, it says here in verse 26 about Phicol being the commander of his army.

Imagine a man with a massive army coming to a man like Isaac who's got no army and saying, Don't harm me. There was a recognition in some deep mysterious way that this heathen man had, that God was with this man, and that all my army will be powerless against this man if God is with him. And that's something that should challenge us, brothers and sisters, that as we live in the world, that other people recognize that God is with us by our humility, by our lack of resistance, that we yield when they take advantage of us, that we don't fight.

We don't fight for earthly things. Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world, otherwise my servants would fight. That was a good confession that he made before Pontius Pilate, which Paul reminds Timothy of in 1 Timothy 6. A good confession that my kingdom is not of this world, otherwise my servants would fight.

And whenever we fight for earthly things with anybody, we can be sure that that proves that our kingdom is of this world. That is the clearest proof. Whatever we may believe in our heads, the proof that our kingdom belongs to this world is when we fight with any human being for earthly things.

And then of course, people can't see that the presence of God is with us. And that's where we are to have a testimony. It says in Proverbs 16 and verse 7, a very wonderful verse, which is fulfilled here, and before that was written, was fulfilled in Isaac's life.

Proverbs 16 verse 7 says, When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. It's not easy for enemies to be at peace with us, but God can make even our enemies to be at peace with us, if he sees that our ways are pleasing to the Lord. And Abimelech says, now let's make a covenant, Genesis 26.9, that he'll do us no harm.

Just as we have not touched you and done to you nothing but good and sent you away in peace, you are now the blessed of the Lord. Then Isaac made them a feast. You see his large-heartedness to make a feast for a man who had just a few days ago chased him out and stolen his property.

Those wells were his property. He doesn't even ask for it back. He's so large-hearted to forgive, makes a feast, and they ate and drank.

And in the morning they arose early and exchanged oaths. Then Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. And the same day Isaac's servants came in and told him about the well which they dug, and said, We found water.

He called it Sheba. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day. God always provides another well.

When we've lost something earthly because we did not want to fight, because we wanted to be a testimony for Christ, you can be sure that God is silently planning for us in love. All these things written in the Old Testament are for our encouragement, that God is watching. That's the thing we must remember.

At that moment when you are fighting for some earthly thing, God is watching. At that moment when you give up your right and do not fight, God is watching. And when He sees that you don't fight, He'll always provide another well.

Verse thirty-four. Here we see about how Esau drifts further away from God. We saw how he despised his birthright.

That's the last time we saw Esau. And now you find that drift has taken him away so far that he gets married to one of those heathen Canaanites, and not just to one of them. He marries two.

Verse thirty-four. And Esau is forty years old. He marries Judith, the daughter of Lerhi the Hittite, and Bethlehemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite.

And they made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah. Yeah, when a person begins to drift away from God, it's not immediately that everything develops into evil. It's a slow slide away.

But gradually, gradually, he comes to the place where he begins to act almost in defiance of God. But we can also say that Isaac was not very particular there to find a good partner for his son, like Abraham had been careful for Isaac. And that is also responsibility of parents, to guide their children, to be concerned about them, and to guide them not to worldly partners but to spiritually minded partners.

Isaac had a good father who guided him and was concerned for him and looked out for a really fine sister for his son. But when it came to Isaac's son, Esau, he didn't do that. He had spoiled Esau through the years by his favoritism.

And finally, the man got two wives that made life miserable for the parents. You find that that favorite son of yours, whom you keep spoiling, is the one who's going to make life miserable for you later on. That's what we see here.

This favorite son of Isaac finally ended up making life miserable for him. What Esau needed was some discipline, which Isaac never gave him. Think of a word that we studied in Genesis 18, which God said concerning Abraham.

Genesis 18, verse 19. It says there about Abraham, For I have chosen him, Abraham, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what he has spoken about him. The Lord couldn't say that about Isaac.

The Lord couldn't say that Isaac commanded his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness. And that's a sad thing. A good example in Abraham as a father, a bad example as a father in Isaac.

We've seen Isaac as a good example in the way he was gracious to not fight for earthly things, but as a father, he was a failure. Quite a contrast to Abraham, because he spoils his son by partiality, by not choosing a God-fearing sister for her. And that's a warning for us to see this contrast between Abraham and Isaac in this area, because parents, when they think of a marriage partner for their sons or daughters, it's very easy for them to have in the back of their minds some earthly qualifications.

Of course, he must be born again, but he must be born again plus, or she must be born again plus. He must be a graduate, or must be this, or must be this color, or the other thing. There's always a born again plus something else.

And I'll tell you something that I have observed through the years as a Christian, that wherever a person in choosing a marriage partner has said to the Lord, Lord, I want a person who is born again plus, dash, dash, dash. This may be one thing more or two things more. Always, always they have suffered in their marriage, and always they've not been able to fulfill God's highest purposes for them, because they said, I

want someone who is born again plus beauty, plus color, plus education, must be a graduate, all these things.

We have to be very careful. We have to say to the Lord, Lord, I want the one you have chosen. I couldn't care less what that person's earthly qualifications are.

Look around and see the failures and learn from the failures of others that you don't make the same blunders yourself in marriage, and don't make the same blunders for your own children. When you say to God, Lord, I want someone who is as wholehearted for you as I am, don't say plus something else also, and don't let your eye be on a person's salary and education and job and all these things. That wasn't what Abraham was looking for.

I tell you, it's a tremendous warning, but there are very few who really take these things seriously. It's easy to take these things seriously when our children are young, but the time comes when the children are grown up and come to the time of marriage, they look for these earthly things. Very rare, very rare to find a father like Abraham, who's only interested in the spiritual.

Very rare. So, is it a challenge to us to be like that? First chapter 27, Now it came about when Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see that he called his son Esau and said to him, my son. And he said to him, here I am.

And Isaac said, behold, now I'm old and I don't know the day of my death. Now then please take your gear, your quiver and your bow and go out to the field and hunt game for me. Prepare a savory dish for me such as I love.

And bring it to me that I may eat so that my soul may bless you before I die. He was going to give him the birthright. He knew what God had spoken at the time of, before the birth of Esau and Isaac.

The older shall serve the younger. And he's trying to bypass that. Because this is his favorite son.

He's determined to give him the birthright. And there we see the sad thing that we have seen before about Isaac. That it was not only as it says in verse 1 that his physical eyes were dim.

Spiritually also, his eyes were dim. He couldn't see clearly like he could see in his younger days when he lay, lay down on Mount Moriah and said, yes, I'm ready to be killed. Or when he went out to pray and meditate when he, when Rebecca was coming.

That time his vision was clear. But time had gone on. And that's something we see again and again also in the church, which is a tremendous warning for us.

Abraham came from a heathen background. All his knowledge of God came through a struggle, through a battle. Isaac, there was no battle.

He received everything freely from his father. His father got the revelation, passed it on to his son. We see that in David and Solomon.

David went through struggle, learned to know God in difficulties, trials, testing, experienced God. Solomon received everything from the day he was born. He was a prince, received everything freely.

We have to feel sorry for those who have no struggle, because they don't have any knowledge of God. I always say, for those who are newly married, the best thing I can wish them is at least four or five years of struggle, financial struggle, all types of struggles and difficulties. That's almost the best foundation for a good marriage.

I feel sorry for those who begin married life with abundance of everything. It's not going to be very good. Don't think abundance is the answer.

If we have never gone through struggles, we're probably like Isaac. If all through our Christian life we have never experienced trial or difficulty, we can magnify mosquito bites that we have had and call them trial. But that's very often the reason why there's lack of revelation, that we may have carefully steered clear of difficulties and trials, and chosen the pathway of ease.

And then what happens? The eyes are dim, can't see clearly, no revelation, no vision. It's good to go through struggles like Abraham. Abraham had to break with his father, mother, relatives.

What a painful thing that was. Isaac didn't have to break with his father or mother. It was all offered to him on a plate.

It was so easy. And that's what I think of young people in the church growing up. I pray that they will lay hold of God and realize that they are in danger of becoming like Isaac.

Their fathers may have had vision because of struggles they've gone through and battles, but they themselves must be maybe like Isaac, having received everything on a platter from childhood. No difficulty, no trial, everything has been easy. And then the eyes are dim.

Think of the contrast of a man like Moses. It says about him in Deuteronomy chapter 34, verse 7. Although Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated. He was not an impotent man.

He was powerful. His eye was not dim. Spiritually, his eye was not dim.

And Isaac, at about the same age, his eye was dim. Very sad, because he loved food more than the will of God. He showed favoritism to his son to try and bypass what God had spoken clearly.

It's a serious thing when we place our children above God, when our children are more important to us than God. It's a serious thing, even though God had spoken. What a contrast to the time when he went out into the fields to meditate and pray.

If he had at least sought God here, if he felt that the time had come for him to die, he'd say, well, I need to go out into the fields a bit and pray and find out, should I really give the birthright to Jacob? It would have been clear, but he didn't need to. And that's how it is, my brothers. It need not be our children.

It can be we ourselves also. We can start like Abraham and end up like Isaac. Or we can start like Isaac and end up like Isaac.

Think of this area. There may have been a time when we sought God about little things, when we used to pray about little things, when financial needs and struggles drove us to God in prayer. But maybe now, abundance has come.

We don't need to pray so much, we don't need to seek God's will anymore, because we have an abundance. And that abundance has made us a little strong in ourselves. I tell you, there's almost nothing like abundance of money to make a man strong in himself.

Some of the strongest people I have seen in the world are those who have an abundance of money. And they were not like that when they didn't have abundance. And for God's sake and this kingdom's sake, sometimes I wish it would go back to the days when there was no abundance.

They had more spiritually then. It's dangerous. It's dangerous that we have no time for God and prayer and all that now, because now it's this... We have an abundance.

I am rich and increased with goods, and I have need of nothing. Well, these things are written for our warnings. And he, instead of going from strength to strength, goes from strength to weakness, and sends out his son Esau.

Even though it's very significant to see that this is immediately after what we read in chapter 26, verse 34 and 35, that Esau had just married two heathen women who had made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah. One would think at least that would have opened Isaac's eyes to see that my older son is rebelling against God. No, but his older son is such a favorite to him, that even when his son goes and marries two heathen women, his eyes are still dimmed that he can't see that rebellion.

It's amazing. But I've seen parents like that. I've seen parents who can never see a fault in their favorite children.

Their children are always right. If their children were involved in a fight somewhere, the problem, the cause, must have been the other child. Not mine.

My darling children will never do my darling Esau. You think he gets into fights with anybody? No. My darling Esau is a precious little boy.

Most parents have. My children? Must be the other fellow did something. To rise up in justification for your children is the surest way to turn them into Esaus.

The surest way. And yet it is the rare parents... I'll tell you, in my lifetime I've seen very few parents, even in the Church, who do not justify their children. Almost all of them justify their children.

Who will say, yeah, that may be right. My son may have been wrong. Sure.

Quite likely it was his fault. Quite likely he was the cause of the trouble. Abraham would have said that, but not Isaac.

There's the difference. There's the difference. And we can choose which way we go.

But when we justify our children, we can be pretty sure that our eyes are dimmed. We love our children more than we love the truth. How many times I've seen that.

It's sad. It's sad. It's sad.

People loving their children more than they love their truth, and therefore missing out on what God could have done for them and through them. My brothers and sisters, let's never make that mistake. Let's love

the truth more than we love our own children.

Otherwise, even when they marry heathen women, we will say, oh, but she's a nice girl, and I'm sure she's got some faith, and probably she's born again. This daughter of Bereza Hittite, maybe she's born again. Maybe she's trusted the Lord somewhere.

And this other girl also, maybe she's trusted the Lord. It's amazing how people can, the extent to which people can go to justify what their children do. Oh, my daughter-in-law, she's quite spiritual.

Rubbish. Other people can see through the hollowness of them. And that is an indication that our eyes are dim.

My brothers and sisters, be without partiality here. If you want to have clear vision, don't be partial towards your sons and daughters and sons-in-laws and daughters-in-law. You lose your spiritual vision because of that, your calling.

Keep it clear, and see clearly. Anyway, it says here in verse 5, and Rebecca was listening while Isaac spoke to his son. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home, Rebecca said to her son Jacob, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, bring me some game and prepare a savory dish for me that I made.

Bless you in the presence of the Lord. Now, therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you. Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids, and I'll prepare them a savory dish for your father, such as he loves.

Then you bring it to your father that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death. There is a mother who is advising her son to deceive his father. Rebecca was not the same old Rebecca, the same young Rebecca that she was at the well in Mesopotamia.

She has also changed. She has also lost that spiritual outlook she had at the beginning. Now she has become shrewd and clever to help Jacob.

What should she have done? What should a wife do in such a situation? She should go to her husband and talk to him and say, remember what God told us, that the older shall serve the younger. That's what Rebecca should have done. There she would have been a help to Isaac, instead of all this scheming and manipulating behind your husband's back.

Why not go straight up to him and talk to him face to face in a loving, humble way? And there she becomes an agent in the hands of Satan. Of course it was God's will to give the birthright to Jacob, but what Rebecca could have done is said, Lord, it's wonderful that we are in a tight spot now. It looks as if the blessing is going to go to Jesus, but he'll have to do some wonderful miracle now.

That would have been faith, but she doesn't have that. You read about Sarah as an example in 1 Peter 3, but you don't read about Rebecca as an example. Sarah called her husband Lord, but not Rebecca.

Sad that she's not given as an example. You read about Sarah in Hebrews 11, by faith Sarah, but you never read about Rebecca. Think of a sister who can start out well as a humble, simple, God-fearing sister, but gradually begins to think, oh, I'm married to an important man, Isaac, to whom all the promises have descended from my father-in-law Abraham.

It's amazing how women can begin to think, I'm married to one of the important brothers in the church. I'm not just an ordinary sister. Garbage.

Garbage. When such thoughts, think that people can store such garbage in their minds. That I'm married to somebody important, and to be pretty proud of one's husband's position or ministry.

I'm the wife of Isaac, not just any ordinary person. And to store such garbage in the mind is what makes Rebecca finally into a person who cannot be held out as an example for anybody. But Sarah, she also was married to a very important person.

She was married to the first person whom God chose, but she remained humble right till the very end. There are two contrasting examples of women. Sarah and Rebecca.

And the New Testament exhorts us to follow Sarah, who submitted to her husband. I wasn't sure there were a lot of things Abraham did that Sarah couldn't understand. She submitted.

No doubt she advised Abraham now and then. But Rebecca schemed behind her husband's back. None of them were perfect.

Sarah was not perfect, but she didn't scheme and manipulate things behind her husband's back. A warning for wives. And Jacob also, he could have stood up against his mother.

He was not a little kid. He was also forty years old, more than forty. He's not already married at forty.

Here's a fifty-year-old man still clinging on to his mother's apron string. Mummy says, go and bring this. And the fifty-year-old man obeys mummy, when he knows it's completely contrary to God's will.

I've seen people like that. Grown-up people, still clinging on to daddy's coattails and mummy's apron string. Don't know how to stand for God.

Neatly does it, what his mother says. He's only concerned about whether he'd get caught. Supposing my father feels my hand and discovers that I'm smooth, he'll curse me when I'm discovered to be a deceiver.

That's all he's thinking about. He's a schemer. He's got his hand on his brother's leg.

From birth, and he's still got his hand on his brother's leg. So he went. Mother said, don't worry about that.

Your curse be on me, verse thirteen. Just obey my voice. There are times when a son needs to stand up against his parents and say, I'm sorry, I can't do that.

That's wrong. That's unrighteous. I can't put my signature to that statement.

It's a lie. It's false. I can't do it.

But my son, we'll get into difficulty. Never mind, we'll trust God. He'll help us out of the difficulty.

That's the thing that makes a man of God. And that's why there are so few men of God. How many people, when it comes to their own parents, they never want to displease them.

They just do what will please them. Yeah, there's a warning for it. So he went and got them, verse fourteen, and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food such as his father loved, and

Rebecca took the best garments that he saw her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob, her younger son.

Both of them are to blame. You know, there was a time when Rebecca prayed. We saw that in our last study.

Notice that again, Genesis twenty-five, twenty-two. There was a time when Isaac prayed. Isaac prayed for twenty years.

But after he got his son, he stopped praying so much. And that's why his eyes became dim. It says in verse twenty-one of Genesis twenty-five, Isaac prayed, and he saw that in our last study, he got his son after twenty years.

And the children struggled together within Rebecca's womb, verse twenty-two, and she also prayed. She went to the Lord and prayed. They began their life in prayer, in their early married life, sought God, because they were in trial, they were in difficulty, they had no children, they sought God.

But now, it was all ease and comfortable and pleasant, and even a heathen king comes and tells you, that God is with me. Isaac could have pulled up his collars and said, I'm pretty important now. This big king has also testified that God is with me.

Like the way some Christians get excited when the chief minister will come and attend their meeting, or sit on the platform. It's amazing how stupid Christians can get. And the eyes became dim.

It happened to Christendom. The eyes have become dim because worldly people have said good things. Worldly people have said good things, and the spiritual eyes have become dim.

And Rebecca, no longer seeking God, like she did at the time when the children were struggling in her womb, saying, Lord, why is this? Why is my husband going to bless Esau now? She could have done that? No. She's keen. And we can see an example there for us, men and women, that when we are in difficulty, we begin to scheme, how shall we get out of this now, this tight spot, this difficult situation? How can we scheme, never mind if we do some few wrong things here and there, and cheat a little here and there, if we can get out of this difficulty? We say, we want to do something right.

You see, it's very easy when we have got a good end in view, to say, yeah, it doesn't matter if we do a few wrong things, because our ultimate goal is good. That if my ultimate goal is to get God's blessing on Jacob, never mind how I do it. That's the principle of the world, that the end justifies the means.

That means, provided I have a good end in view, it doesn't matter how I reach there. But Jesus has taught us, your yes must be yes, your no must be no. And the way you get to the goal is as important as the goal itself.

Sure. So we can learn a lesson from that. And then he came to his father, and he said, my father, and he said, here I am, who are you, my son? And Jacob said to his father, I am Esau, your firstborn.

And there was no trembling in his voice. He's an experienced deceiver, to say, I'm Esau, your son. I've done as you told me, get up, please, and eat of my game, that you may bless me.

And Isaac said to his son, how is it that you have got it so quickly? And he said, because the Lord, your God, caused it to happen to me. And we saw that, how he brings the name of the Lord into all this. There's

a spiritual language about this deception.

God help me. God help me. How did you have your needs met, brother? God help me, brother.

God help me. It's more spiritual than saying, brother, servants of God came and gave me some money. That's very down to earth.

Paul said that to the Corinthians. When I was in need, the brothers in Macedonia came and gave me some money, and my needs were met. But today, servants of God say, God help me.

What they mean is, I wrote a prayer letter to somebody in America, and I got some money. Deception. Counterfeit garbage, which millions of Christians are swallowing.

Sad. The Lord, your God. Amazing.

And then Isaac said to Jacob, please come close so that I can feel you, my son, whether you're really my son, Esau, or not. And Jacob came close to his father, and he felt him and said, the voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy, like his brother Esau's hands.

So he blessed him. And he said, are you really my son, Esau? And he said, I am. So he said, bring it to me, and I will eat of my son's gain, that I may bless you.

And he brought it to him, and he ate, and he brought him wine, and he drank, and his father Isaac said to him, please come close and kiss me, my son. So he came close and kissed him, and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, see, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed. How sad.

Think about ending our life like this, a man who started out as a man of God, to end his life loving food and wine, and going by the sense of his smell of clothes, rather than by any spiritual sense. And yet, Isaac is typical of so many people who have started out so well, who have come into a church where they have received so much from God, so much, and started out so well, but as time has gone on, their spiritual vision has become dim. They are defeated by sins that they had overcome ten years ago, back into the same old ruts.

They had revelation on the word ten years ago, but it's gone now, their eyes have become dim, they can't see. Sad, sad, sad. In contrast, see men like Abraham and Moses, who lived before God's faith, did not love food and drink, and be partial to their children, and ruin their lives.

Take these examples and warnings, brothers and sisters, so that we can walk on the right path. It's really sad to see this pathetic condition of this man, who was called with such a tremendous, tremendous privileges. He could have risen to such heights spiritually, and he ends like this.

And it's almost the last that you hear of Isaac after this chapter. You don't hear of him again till he's dead. Nothing more to be said about it.

Sad. But God is sovereign, and He, in a supernatural way, even through, we can ask, how did God prophesy through Isaac then? Because what He says is true. May God give you the view of heaven, verse 28, of the fatness of the earth, abundance of grain in you, wine may people serve you, nations bow down to you, be master of your brothers, may your mothers, sons bow down to you, cursed be those who curse

you, and blessed be those who bless you.

That's been absolutely true. It's amazing how God's word says that there are people who are ungodly can prophesy, and they can prophesy the truth. Turn for an example of that in John, chapter 11.

John, chapter 11, verse 51 and 52, 49 to 52. Caiaphas, who was the high priest in that year, said, in verse 50, You don't take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people. And he didn't realize what he was saying.

It says in verse 51, now this he did not say on his own initiative. But being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation. And not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one of the children of God who was scattered abroad.

Who made that prophecy? Caiaphas, who is in hell today. Lord, Lord, we prophesy in Your name. Yes, it was right.

But depart from me, you workers of iniquity. It's possible even to prophesy, and to prophesy the truth, like Balaam, who is in hell today, who prophesied the truth. So Isaac also prophesied.

Of course, he was not as bad as Balaam or Caiaphas, but it was not a result of his godliness. God in His sovereignty overruled Caiaphas and Balaam and Isaac. That they had to prophesy according to the will of God.

And as soon as Isaac had finished, Genesis 27, 30, Jacob had hardly gone out of his presence when Esau came. And he brought the savory food and said, Let my father rise, that you may bless me. And Isaac said, Who are you? He said, I am your firstborn, Esau.

Isaac trembled violently and said, Who is he then who hunted Gaman and brought him before? Yes, and he shall be blessed. And Esau heard these words. He cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.

Turn to the New Testament commentary on this verse. In Hebrews chapter 12, Hebrews chapter 12 we read, verse 17, 16 and 17, Let there be no godless person in your midst like Esau, who for one single meal sold his birthright. You know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected.

For he found no place for resentment, though he sought for it with tears. In other words, the decision that he had made, say, 25 years earlier, when he was a young man of 25, now he's reaping the consequence of it. And he's weeping before his father.

Oh, please give it to me. I'm sorry that I gave up my birthright 25 years ago, and it's, God says, it's too late. Now he says to us, be careful that you don't give up your spiritual birthright for some earthly thing.

Don't give up that divine nature that you can be a partaker of for some earthly thing you fight about, some deception, some telling lies, some earthly thing that we get, that we hanker after and fight for. And afterwards, 25 years later, when you realize, when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and you realize how you spent your life for some earthly ambition, some earthly goals, some greatness in the world, some professional goal and ambition, later on you realize that you heard and heard and heard and heard in the church, and you wouldn't take it seriously, you pursued, you thought you could make the best

of both worlds, and then you finally stand there, and there's tears of repentance. And the Lord says, oh, give me another chance, Lord, give me another chance to live my life again.

And the Lord says, no. My brothers and sisters, I believe there'll be many, many people like that at the judgment seat of Christ, who will weep because they never took seriously what they heard in the church. They never took it seriously.

Became worldly, worldly in their conversation, foolish, jesting and wasting their time gossiping. It's happening. It's happening.

I see before my eyes young people who were more spiritually minded a few years ago than they are today. Why is that? Why is that decline coming, when it should be more wholehearted, more zealous, more spiritual, more godly? Why is that? Take it seriously. Take it seriously.

There'll be no immoral or godless person among you. That's what it says. Among you.

Afterwards, he desired to inherit the blessing. He was rejected. There is a time in which God gives us opportunity to live for Him.

Once that time is over, there's no sacrifice and self-denial that you can make for the Lord today that you'll ever regret in eternity. But there are many ways in which you indulge yourself and seek your own interests and pursue your own goals in life, which you're going to regret and regret terribly in eternity. That's the warning.

It says, with a bitter cry, an exceedingly great and bitter cry, it says in Genesis 27, 34, it says, Bless me, O God! It's not possible. How can I? It's easy to say, Bless me, O God, now, but you were not willing to pay the price. You wanted your own way, all your life on earth.

Now you say, Bless me, O God. And he said, Your brother came deceitfully, and he's taken away your blessing. And he said, Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he supplanted me these two times.

He took away my birthright. Now he's taken away my blessing. He still doesn't seem to realize that God in His sovereignty made sure that he didn't get it because he despised it in his younger days.

Have you not reserved a blessing for me? Isaac said, I've made him your master, and all his relatives I've given to him as servants. Grain and new wine I've sustained him. Now as for you, what can I do for you, my son? Isaac recognized that God in His sovereignty had overruled his partiality and allowed him to make a mistake so that he would bless the right person.

Isaac realized, I think that was the reason, also verse 33, why he trembled violently when he saw how God had made a fool of him by making him make a mistake so that, you know, God can make people make a mistake so that His purposes can be fulfilled. Because we need not fear. We don't have to scheme like Rebecca and Jacob.

What God has reserved for me will come to me. If God has reserved some property for you or a house for you, it will come to you, my brother. You don't have to scheme and manipulate and fight for it.

If God has reserved a girl or a boy for you, he or she will come to you. You don't have to scheme and manipulate and jump in before somebody else jumps in. And all these stupid earthly things that Rebecca and Jacob in the world are always scheming and manipulating.

How shall I act and what hairy dress shall I put on to impress her and impress him and all these things. No, there's no need for all that. Just trust God.

What is reserved for you will come to you. Do you have faith for that? And we don't have to scheme and manipulate and put on a special voice and put on a special dress to impress and to get something for ourselves. This tremendous scheming that there is in the world.

What God has reserved, He will give you. Sure, trust Him. Nobody can take it.

It's like these restaurants where you have reserved written on some table. And even if you go and sit there, the waiter will say, sir, please get up, that's not for you. And even if somebody else tries to grab that person, God will say, please get up, that one's not for you.

That's reserved. God has reserved the best for those who honor Him. Not for those who believe a certain doctrine and play the fool in their lives, but those who are wholehearted to seek His kingdom first, who really want to live for Him, whose whole mind and interest is to promotion of God's kingdom.

He's reserved the best in every area for them. And the Esau's? Yeah, there are Esau's also. They can be in the church.

You can't say God doesn't bless them. There is a second best or third best or tenth best. And Isaac had some type of tenth best blessing for Esau.

And it's a very sad thing if you were supposed to get God's best and you end up getting God's tenth best. Oh, God, isn't there something for me? I know I messed up my life. I did this, I did that.

Okay, God says, all right. I've got my tenth best for you. You could have got my best.

Your life would have been tremendous, but you've just played the fool. And He blesses him. He says, okay, don't you have at least one blessing, my father? Bless me.

Oh, my father was thirty-eight and Esau lifted his voice and wept. And his father gave him something. Away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, away from the dew of heaven.

In other words, you'll live out in the desert. By your sword you will live, your brother you will serve, and when you become restless, you'll break his yoke from your neck. He gave him something.

God is merciful. He gives the tenth best to those who will not choose his best. Very sad, very sad when I get God's tenth best, when I could have had God's best.

Think, you young people who are chasing the future in your life. You want God's best or his tenth best? His best is not reserved for everyone. It's reserved for those who are wholehearted towards Him.

The rest also get a blessing, but not the best. So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob. That's the problem.

Instead of judging ourselves, we bear a grudge against the other person. Because of the blessing which he got, instead of saying, why didn't I get it? Why is God blessing that brother and not me? Don't you think there's a reason? Why get jealous of him? Why get upset with him? Judge yourself. See why God can't do that for you? And Esau said, the day is the morning for my father, and the other night I'll kill my brother Jacob.

He's scheming now. Anger, just like Cain. Jealous that God is less able.

Another repetition of that story. Two brothers growing up in a home and one wants to kill the other. When the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent and called her younger son Jacob.

Said, your brother is planning to kill you. Now obey my voice and flee to Haran to my brother Laban. Stay with him a few days until your brother's fury subsides, until your brother's anger subsides and he forgets what you did to him.

Then I'll send and get you from there. She thought a few days, but it lasted twenty years. Twenty years.

She never saw her son because of her partiality. Because she is not a submissive wife. She thought, after a few days I'll bring you back.

But it was twenty years. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day? And Rebekah said to Isaac, I'm tired of living because of the daughters of Heth, as Jacob takes a wife from the land. Daughters of Heth, like these from the daughters of land, what good will my life be to me? Now there's a lot that we can learn from that section we have just studied.

Concerning our responsibility as parents towards our children. And also as brothers, as Esau and Jacob, that we don't despise what God gives to us. That we value what we have received so freely and treasure it.

And say, Lord, help me not to backslide. Despise all that you give, let me value it, so that I won't have any regrets in the final day.

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