

Discussion Guide

Week of August 31, 2014

Genesis 27

Passage Overview: In Genesis 23-27, the torch of God's promise is passed from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. In the closing days of Abraham's life, Sarah dies, and Abraham turns his attention to finding a wife for his son Isaac. The story of Abraham continues in the account of Isaac and the birth of his sons, Esau and Jacob. God's promises are reiterated to Isaac, just as they were previously given to Abraham. Isaac not only receives the promises of God to Abraham but also inherits some of the same sinful tendencies. The promises of God are then passed down *not* to Isaac's older son Esau—as expected—but to the younger son Jacob. The big idea of this section of Genesis is that God is preserving an offspring (Gen 3:15) by the promises to Abraham being passed down to the next generations.

Understanding the Text—Read Genesis 27

- Verse 1 begins, “When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see...” In the Bible, dim eyesight can refer not only to physical eyesight but also spiritual discernment (e.g., 1 Sam 3:1-2), while undimmed eyesight may symbolize physical and spiritual vigor (e.g., Deut 34:7). In light of these other passages, it seems that Isaac's dim eyes may be not only physical but also spiritual.
 - When “Abraham was old, well advanced in years” (Gen 24:1), his concern was singularly focused on providing a proper spouse for Isaac. What evidences are there for Isaac's lack of spiritual discernment in Genesis 26:34-27:4?
- Jacob and Rebekah deceive Isaac in order for Jacob to get his blessing instead of Esau. While the deception succeeds, by the end of the chapter it is clear that everyone loses. Isaac's spiritual blurriness leads to painful consequences for his entire family.
 - Note the painful consequences that are experienced by each person (Isaac, Esau, Jacob, and Rebekah).
 - Note how each person was in some way at fault.

Living and Applying God's Word

- There is nothing more admirable or better in Jacob that gives any moral basis for God's choosing and using him instead of Esau. **Read Romans 9:10-14.** What does this teach us about the nature and basis of divine election?
- Isaac and Esau are the more sympathetic characters in this story. We see Isaac trembling violently (v.33) with the recognition that his favorite son has lost the blessing and we hear Esau crying aloud in his pain (v.34). By contrast, Rebekah is resentful and calculating, while Jacob is an almost ‘slimy’ figure who doesn't want to be caught in his lie. And yet, Jacob is the chosen one.
 - What does this teach us about God's grace? How is such an understanding of divine grace “scandalous”?
 - How do we see this true in the life and ministry of Jesus? *Consider how Jesus was constantly offending people because he ate and associated with the “wrong” people, the people who led unrespectable lives (e.g., Luke 15:1-2; Matt 11:2-6).*

Prayer: Praise God that he uses the weak, foolish, and despised (1 Cor 1:27-29) to proclaim his gospel. Thank him that the “word of the cross . . . is the power of God” (1 Cor 1:18).

Announcements

- “One Another” Member Meeting (September 7, 6:00-7:30pm)
- Starting Pointe—September 12-14 (RSVP to robert@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Children's Ministry Basic Training (September 14, 9am; RSVP to nicole@insidecrosspointe.com)