

How Can A Lying Cheat Be Blessed?

Wrestling with God: The Stories of Isaac & Jacob, Part 3

Genesis 27

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It's not hard to imagine that this ancient, tragic story in Genesis 27 might be similarly taking place in the 21st century. In fact, let's imagine that Isaac has a Facebook account. As you scroll back on his timeline, looking at the major events in his life, you'll eventually get to a place called Mt. Moriah. The picture there will show Isaac, his father Abraham, and an altar with a slaughtered ram on it. If you look into Isaac's eyes and Abraham's eyes, you will see the relief that can only exist in the eyes of someone who has just had a close encounter with death—and survived.

Underneath that picture is a caption: “The Lord will provide.” Along with that picture we see the God Who promised Abraham, in Genesis 15, that he would be given a land and a people. God also promised to bless him so that he would be a blessing to all the nations. In the next generation, that blessing is being carried forth through his son Isaac.

Fast forward in Isaac's Facebook page and the next thing you see is a very happy picture: his wedding day. It's a stunning picture of his bride, Rebekah, and you see the radiant joy in Isaac's face, who, at age 40, has been given this provision by God. The caption under that picture reads: “Drop-dead gorgeous. Isn't she beautiful, my stunning bride?” Or maybe more theologically—as Dan Leeper put it—“Trust God's covenant faithfulness. He will provide.” God's carrying His promise forward.

Then you go to Genesis 25, and you see another post on Isaac's Facebook page. This time it's a prayer request. “Would you pray for my wife Rebekah and me? We would really love to have children, but so far we've been prevented.” Then you see the answer to the prayers and you're reminded that it wasn't an easy pregnancy. In fact, Scripture tells us that as Rebekah carried those two sons in her womb, they struggled with each other. She inquired of the Lord—maybe by speaking to one of the Lord's prophets—“What's going on inside my womb?”

God's word came to Rebekah in Genesis 25:23—and this is really important for us to understand for the scene we're studying today: *“Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older*

shall serve the younger.” So Rebekah knew that God would bring forth His promised blessings through these sons in her womb, and that it would be the younger who would be predominant. The younger would be the carrier of the blessing. : *“The older shall serve the younger.”*

So as the babies are born, Isaac takes a picture, so to speak, of the nursery in his home. You see the picture of these two little baby boys, Esau and Jacob. The caption underneath reads something like this: “The red and hairy one—he’s my firstborn, Esau. The other one came grasping Esau’s heel as he came out of the womb. That’s Jacob.” And so the story of their lives goes forth.

If you’re following Isaac’s timeline, you may notice something kind of ominous, something troubling that’s starting to emerge. As these boys grow up, you’re starting to see a lot of hunting pictures—several of Esau; very few of Jacob. In fact, over time Rebekah never shows up on Isaac’s Facebook page anymore, and Jacob? Well, he’s gone. Where has he gone?

From here on you keep seeing posts about Esau. Just Esau, all the time. “Esau did this. Esau did that. Esau is such a great hunter. Esau makes the best meals.”

But if you want to learn how Jacob’s doing, you’ll have to go over to Rebekah’s Facebook page. She’s started her own—and there he is! All the time, “Jacob...Jacob...Jacob.” He’s at home, dwelling near his mother’s tent. And there’s one picture on Rebekah’s page that really stands out. Here you see Jacob serving Esau a meal of bread and lentil stew. And Jacob has a look of triumph on his face in this picture. But that’s the last time you ever see Jacob and Esau in a picture together. It ends there.

That brings us to Genesis 27, a story that is thick with tension. Every character in this story is deeply flawed. There are no heroes in this story. If you include the beginning of chapter 28, there are six scenes in the story—and in all six scenes you never see the family together again.

- In scene one you see Isaac and Esau.
- Scene two, Rebekah and Jacob.
- Scene three, Isaac and Jacob.
- Scene four, Isaac and Esau.
- Scene five is the first time you ever see Rebekah and Jacob actually talking together with one another. Isn’t that interesting? You have to wait until the end of the chapter before husband and wife come together for an actual conversation about this.
- Then in scene six, at the beginning of chapter 28, it’s Isaac and Jacob again.

Did you notice that in the whole reading of this story, Jacob and Esau—the twin brothers—never actually meet each other? And Rebekah never meets her son Esau in this story. Another thing: did you notice that throughout this story, Esau is called “his son,” and Jacob is

called “her son”? Isaac calls Esau “my son,” and Rebekah calls Jacob “my son.” Where are the plural pronouns? Whatever happened to “our sons”? Where are parents who can see the unique character of each child, loving and affirming each of them individually, yet equally?

Where is the sense of partnership in this marriage? It started with Isaac getting this wonderfully beautiful wife, Rebekah, and the delight they had at the beginning. But how did what started out as a match made in heaven disintegrate into such a painfully dysfunctional family, characterized by deceit, manipulation, selfish ambition, strife and malice? In Genesis 27, we don’t see a family that trusts and honors one another anymore. We do not see sons who are secure in the love of their father and mother. This is not a healthy, God-centered home that we’re looking at in this chapter. In fact, D.A. Carson calls this “a pathetic, grubby account.”

Yet, would you know that the word that is most frequently repeated in this chapter is the word “blessing” or “bless”? The root word, *barak*, is there 22 times—17 times as a verb, five times as a noun. This is a chapter about blessing. And it raises the question: How can a lying cheat be blessed? How can grubby, pathetic, deceptive, manipulative, lying cheaters like these be blessed? These are vital questions for us to ask, because we are desperate for blessing in our lives. This is true of you. It’s true of me. It’s true of every single human being that you’ll ever encounter.

We are desperate for blessing

We are hungry for blessing—desperate for blessing. The main point of this passage is that nothing is going to be able to derail God’s sovereign plan to extend His blessing to all the nations—not even our pathetic, grubby, lying, cheating ways—. That’s the good news of this passage. God’s going to continue to make His blessings flow as far as the curse is found. Thank God for that.

We are people who desperately need blessing. I think it’s important for us to define that word a bit, because we can use it in kind of a wimpy, shallow, sentimental way. “Bless your heart” is a very common phrase in the South, and from what people tell me, it’s usually not a nice thing when someone says that to you. It’s usually the veil with the dagger that comes to stab you in the back. We can use “blessing” in very superficial ways.

Sometimes we use it to refer to good circumstances. If something good happens, we say, “I was blessed.” But what happens when things aren’t going so well in our lives? Are we not blessed then?

In the Bible, blessing is not something that comes and goes. It’s not something that God gives and then takes back. In the Bible, blessing actually carries the power of God’s Word with it. When a blessing is pronounced in Scripture, it penetrates into the heart of the person who’s

receiving it. Often what you'll notice when you read the biblical blessings is that they are accurately what's going on in a person's life: how God created that person, how God gifted that person, what God's purposes are for that person. And the blessing comes like a living word. It's like God is saying, "This is who you are. This is how I made you. This is what your destiny is. This is what I am going to do in your life." When someone receives a blessing from God, it is life-giving. It is hope-inducing. A blessing is something we all desperately need, yet something we can't do for ourselves. We cannot speak blessing upon ourselves. We need someone greater than us to pronounce blessing on our lives.

So it's more than sentimental. It's an act that accomplishes something in your life. It communicates gospel truth and goodness from God. Chris Castaldo, our friend and Bixby's son-in-law, wrote a great article about blessing. Look at what he said:

"Blessing is more than a polite wish... Its articulation shaped the trajectories of lives and nations." That's what we see in the Bible. Blessing shaped the trajectory of individual lives and of nations. "[Blessings] illustrate the effective movement of sovereign grace from heaven to earth." It's like God's Word is communicating grace from heaven down to earth when the blessing is spoken. Chris also wrote, "Without a faithful pronouncement of God's blessing, we are surely doomed." What's the alternative? Curse. Friends, without a faithful pronouncement of God's blessing on our lives, we're doomed. We're hungry for this. We crave this.

I want us to look at this story with that in mind—this need, this craving we have for God's blessing on our lives. I want us to draw out two main lessons—and the first is going to be by far the main lesson. Maybe you're wondering, "How did he take that long on point one? Are we going to be here until the evening service for point number two?" Don't worry.

**Point One: No amount of manipulation or scheming on our part
can secure the blessing of God on our lives.**

We need God's blessing. We can't make it happen. We cannot manipulate or scheme our way into the blessing of God. The good news is we don't even have to try to do so. But look at what happens when we try to manipulate and scheme our way into the blessing of God. Look at Isaac in Genesis 27:1-4:

When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." ² He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. ³ Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, ⁴ and

prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”

Isaac is now an old man. He’s got dim eyes. He thinks he’s about to die. The reality is, Isaac is going to live a long time after this. Sometimes when you think you’re about to die, you’re really not. So don’t worry. You might just live another 30 years. So get over it, right? That’s what’s going on with Isaac here. He thinks he’s about to die, and he is desperate to pass on the blessing that came from his father Abraham to the son of his choice. He wants to pass on the blessing in a way that satisfies his own desires.

Isaac, we see, has a real taste for delicious gourmet food—and he favors Esau, which is a real downfall for both of these parents. This is not the main point of the chapter, but I hope that as you read this story, if there’s any inkling of favoritism cropping up in your household—one parent to one child—that you will repent of that today and ask God to root that out of your family. Their favoritism is a poison that destroys everyone in this story.

We see in verse four that Isaac desires with his heart and soul to bless Esau. He wants to give his older son this blessing and he is furtive in trying to accomplish this. Notice, he only calls Esau to the ceremony, deliberately excluding Jacob. He tries to keep the whole thing a secret. Instead of it being a public act that’s observed by legal witnesses, he wants it done covertly, off to the side.

He overlooks and ignores the prophecy that was given to his wife when these two boys were still in her womb—an oracle from God that made it very clear: *“The older shall serve the younger”* (Genesis 25:23). Now someone might ask, “Did Rebekah ever tell Isaac that oracle?” We don’t know for sure. But if she didn’t, what’s wrong in their marriage? That’s pretty important. My assumption is that Isaac was aware of that. But Isaac is attempting to circumvent God’s Word here.

He’s got a good intention. He believes that God is going to extend His blessing to the nations. He believes the blessing God put on his father Abraham is now on him and will be passed on. That’s faith. But he is wanting in his own way to transfer that blessing to the son of his choice. And Rebekah is eavesdropping behind the curtain.

⁵ Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, ⁶ Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, ⁷ ‘Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the Lord before I die.’ ⁸ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. ⁹ Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare

from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. ¹⁰ And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies.”

I don't know if she had to put her ear up really close, or if Isaac—who's eyes were dim—was also growing hard of hearing. You know what happens when people are hard of hearing. Kate and I were at a Mendelssohn concert at Wheaton College on Friday night, and there was an elderly couple in front of us. I think they thought they were whispering to one another, but we all knew they weren't. Isaac may have been speaking pretty loudly in this whole episode, and Rebekah hears what her husband is about to do.

Think about it. Rebekah knows the oracle from God, and she has favored Jacob all these years. She's thinking, “My husband is about to thwart God's sovereign purposes. What can I do?”

The key question for us, if we're in Rebekah's position, is, “Does God ever need our help to bring His blessing to pass? Can God fulfill His promises without any help from us?”

Rebekah could have gone to her husband and pleaded with him. She could have prayed. But instead, she kicks it into high gear. Even though Jacob is now a grown man—we know from the historical narrative that he's now over 40—Rebekah is still the kind of mother who does not hesitate to boss her adult son around and tell him what he's going to do. So she starts giving him instructions. But Jacob hesitates.

¹¹ But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. ¹² Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing.”

Jacob hesitates—not because he has moral qualms about deceiving his father. I love how he says it. “Perhaps it will seem to my father that I'm trying to mock or deceive him.” Ah, seem like it, Jacob? That's exactly what you're trying to do. It's not moral qualms—Jacob is afraid the ruse won't work. But Rebekah is adamant, and she's not going to put up with any time being wasted. She knows time is of the essence, so she says something very, very ominous in verse 13. It's important that we tuck this away in our minds, because this is part of the answer to, “How can a lying cheat be blessed?” Listen to what she says to her son:

¹³ His mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me.” ¹⁴ So he went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved. ¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the

best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. ¹⁶ And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. ¹⁷ And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

So Jacob promptly begins obeying the voice of his mother. He begins gathering everything necessary to carry out this plan. We find him in verse 18 going into his father's presence, dressed in his brother's clothes so that he would smell like Esau, covered in the skins of the young goat so that he would feel like Esau, and carrying in his hands this delicious meal that he has prepared so that his father would get the taste of Esau.

¹⁸ So he went in to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" ¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." ²⁰ But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the Lord your God granted me success."

I wonder—as Jacob went into his father's presence, as he entered the room—did he clear his throat? Did he try to lower his voice an octave so he sounded a little more rugged, like a hunter, when he said, "My father"? Jacob cannot clearly distinguish the voice that's speaking to him, so he says, "Who are you, my son?" And this is where we get the first lie in verse 19: "*I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.*"

But Isaac still isn't sure of this. "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son? How did you put together this meal of game so quickly?" This is where the second lie comes in—verse 20. Jacob answered, "*Because the Lord your God granted me success.*" Now Jacob has added blasphemy to his deception. And notice, he says, "The Lord your God." It's going to be a long time before Jacob starts saying, "The Lord my God."

²¹ Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." ²² So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." ²³ And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands.

Isaac is still uncertain. He asks for his son to come near so that he might feel him. "Let me touch you, son." I love how Martin Luther comments on verse 21: "At this point, I would

have let the dish fall and would have run as though my head were on fire.” I’m not going to ask for a show of hands, but how many of you know what it’s like to try to pull off a lie? And it’s an extended lie, and there’s a whole script you’ve got to get through, and you can feel the shame. If you’ve got an ounce of reverence in you, if you’ve got an ounce of decency, there comes a point when you say, “I’ve got to get out of here! I can’t take this any longer.” But Jacob doesn’t show even a hint of flinching. Just like his skin is smooth, he’s a smooth liar.

So he blessed him. ²⁴ He said, “Are you really my son Esau?” He answered, “I am.” ²⁵ Then he said, “Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son’s game and bless you.” So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. ²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near and kiss me, my son.” ²⁷ So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him.

So in verse 23, Isaac starts to bless Jacob. But he’s still unsure—until he eats and drinks and is satisfied. That brings us to verse 26, the kiss. When Isaac smells his garments and is persuaded, yes, this is Esau, he pronounces the blessing:

*“See, the smell of my son
is as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed!
²⁸ May God give you of the dew of heaven
and of the fatness of the earth
and plenty of grain and wine.
²⁹ Let peoples serve you,
and nations bow down to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and may your mother’s sons bow down to you.
Cursed be everyone who curses you,
and blessed be everyone who blesses you!”*

It’s a blessing that consists of all the promises that God first made to Abraham in Genesis 12, promises that were reaffirmed throughout the life of Abraham. They were blessings of material prosperity, political dominion and supremacy within the family. It’s the Abrahamic blessing. Isaac is saying to Jacob—but thinking he’s saying it to Esau—“My son, you are the one who’s going to carry this blessing forward. You are the one who is the promised seed. In you all the nations of the earth will be blessed.”

So Jacob gets what he wants in verse 29. But does he really? That’s the question. Did Jacob really get anything other than what God had already promised to give him at his birth by grace? Did Jacob succeed through his lying and manipulation in achieving anything other than

what God would have done for him anyway—if he would have just trusted and obeyed? And was it ultimately satisfying?

Have you ever been in a situation where you desperately wanted someone to bless you, but you felt like you had to fake who you really were in order to get them to favor you? So you acted all cool. You pretended to be someone you were not. You might have even dressed differently or tried to change your appearance, just so you could get them to look favorably upon you. I mean, like Tim said last week, in middle school all of us probably did something like that. And many of us, as adults, are still trying to do that—pretending we’re someone we’re not in order to get people’s favor.

Sometimes we even try this with God. We are afraid to come to Him just as we are, because we’re afraid there’s no way He would bless us if we came to Him “just as I am.” I listened to a sermon by Tim Keller, in which he was pondering, “What was it really like for Jacob when he kissed his father? What was that kiss like? What was it like for Jacob to kiss his father and to receive his father’s blessing, and to see the radiance in his father’s eyes, and to hear the pleasure in his father’s voice—and to know all the while that in his father’s heart, it was not Jacob that Isaac was blessing?”

Isaac thought he was blessing Esau. Jacob was just a fraud. Was this satisfying for Jacob?

Now we’ve got to take a look at Esau:

³⁰ As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. ³¹ He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game, that you may bless me.” ³² His father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?” He answered, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.” ³³ Then Isaac trembled very violently and said, “Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.”

It’s like Jacob can almost smell Esau coming home from the hunt. Jacob can’t wait to get out of the door. There’s not a whole lot of deep fellowship here with his dad in what should be a very deep and meaningful occasion. “I’ve got to get out of here! See ya, Dad.” He takes that blessing and runs.

Can you picture verses 32 and 33? Isaac’s on his bed, he trembling violently because now he realizes, “That was not Esau I just blessed. That was Jacob. I’ve been mocked. I’ve been

deceived.” Isaac, that old man, is on his bed shaking like a leaf. Oh, that he would have trembled at the word of the Lord earlier, and waited upon the Lord, and done as God had decreed. But now he knows there’s nothing he can do to overturn what has just been done.

It’s just like when you buy a house and you sign the title deed on the purchase of that house. You cannot turn around two hours later—after you’ve gone into the new home and seen that the sump pump needs to be repaired—then say, “I’m giving the house back.” No. It’s yours now. And that blessing has been transferred to Jacob. God’s Word has been fulfilled through Isaac, even though Isaac was fighting against it.

Isaac said, *“Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him?”* It’s like there’s a pregnant pause here as Isaac is coming to terms with the fact that God is sovereignly carrying out the purpose that He decreed from the beginning. He says, *“Yes, and he shall be blessed.”* Jacob shall be blessed.

³⁴ As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!” ³⁵ But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.” ³⁶ Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.”

Now, stand in Esau’s shoes for a moment. Esau has already given up his birthright for a pot of stew—and now, his blessing has been cheated out of him with another pot of stew. Esau has already shown that he has no regard for the Abrahamic blessing, because he has disregarded the express will of his grandfather Abraham and gone out and married Hittite women. Esau is not spiritually in tune with what this blessing signifies.

Then he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” ³⁷ Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?” ³⁸ Esau said to his father, “Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

But, oh, the bitterness of gaining the whole world—and losing your soul. Can you hear Esau? Can you feel for Esau, as he realizes he’s been defrauded? Realizing he’s been cheated, he cries out with an exceedingly bitter cry, “AHHHH! It’s all been taken from me! Father...bless

me! Bless me, Father. Is there nothing left for me?” Tears of worldly regret. Hebrews 12:17 says he could find no place for repentance, even though he sought it with tears.

Friends, I want you to know there was a way forward for Esau here that would have involved repentance, that would have involved a change of heart. We see this hinted at in verse 29. What were the last words in the blessing to Jacob? *“Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you.”* How could Esau have entered into God’s blessing? He could have entered into God’s blessing by going to his brother Jacob, humbling himself, and saying, “Jacob, I bless you. I want to serve you. I want to connect my life to you. I want to give you my heart.”

Had Esau done that, he would have been blessed. He would have tasted of God’s blessing in his life too. But Esau could not, would not, humble himself, repent and bless his brother Jacob. Esau will live and die as a stranger to the spiritual blessings that are only found in faithfulness to God.

³⁹ *Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:*

*“Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be,
and away from the dew of heaven on high.*

⁴⁰ *By your sword you shall live,
and you shall serve your brother;
but when you grow restless
you shall break his yoke from your neck.”*

The blessing Esau ends up getting in verse 39 sounds more like an anti-blessing. It sounds like a lot of strife and difficulty. Friends, what did Rebekah and Jacob gain from all their manipulation and scheming? They gained nothing that they would not have already received from God’s gracious hand. All their manipulation, all their scheming, did not get them a thing—and they lost an awful lot in the process.

⁴¹ *Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”* ⁴² *But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, “Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you.”* ⁴³ *Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran* ⁴⁴ *and stay with him a while, until your brother’s fury turns away—* ⁴⁵ *until your brother’s anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?”*

Iain Duguid (Professor of Old Testament, Grove City College in Pennsylvania) says this: “Sin doesn’t pay, even when it gives you what you wanted.” That’s so important. Jacob and Rebekah get what they wanted—but through the ways of sin, they lose so much. Jacob’s brother is now plotting to kill him, so Jacob has to wander as a fugitive. Rebekah has alienated herself from both sons. I don’t think Esau has anything to do with his mother, now that she’s done this to him. And there’s no indication in the biblical text that Rebekah will ever see her son Jacob again.

She sends him away for a little while. I think verse 45 is very interesting, “...until your brother’s anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him.” “Are you serious, Mom? You set me up for this!” But she says, “It’s what you, Jacob, have done to Esau. Just go away for a while and we’ll get this patched up again.” But there’s no time in Rebekah’s life when she’s ever going to see a happy resolution of this conflict. And their marriage sure doesn’t look very sweet at the end of this chapter, does it? It’s a pathetic, grubby account.

⁴⁶ Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?”

Point Two: Even our manipulation and scheming cannot sabotage the blessing of God.

Friends, there is good news in this chapter. Even our manipulation and scheming cannot sabotage the blessing of God. We are liars. We are cheaters. We manipulate. We scheme. We gain nothing in the process. But here’s the good news: that cannot sabotage God’s blessing in the lives of His people, because God is faithful to keep His Word. Even though we oppose it, even though we try to get in the way of it, even though we manipulate, even though we are sometimes indifferent, God keeps His Word faithfully. God is going to bring about blessing to the nations.

God’s even going to commend Isaac for his faith in Hebrews 11—faith that was maybe as small as a grain of mustard seed—but Isaac did believe that God’s blessing was being carried forward. And even though he was mistaken in the way he tried to transfer it, God says, “Isaac had faith in Me.” I love how Tim Keller describes the moral of this story:

The moral of the story is that God brings his scandalous, intervening grace into the lives of people who don’t seek it, don’t deserve it, continually resist it, and don’t even appreciate it after they’ve been saved by it—over and over again!

Isn't that the truth? Through the deception of men, through our manipulation and scheming, through our lies, God's truth abounds to His glory. Praise the Lord! He brings salvation to people who don't seek it, don't deserve it, continually resist it and don't even appreciate it after we've been saved by it. He does it again and again and again.

Let's look at the trial of Jesus when they were looking for false testimony against Him so that they might put Him to death. Through deception Jesus was accused and declared guilty, when He was known to be innocent by even Pilate himself. But as He was nailed to the cross by the hands of lawless men, God was bringing about your salvation. God succeeds in bringing blessing even through all our manipulation and scheming. Praise God for that.

How you can experience the blessing of God, now and forever

So how do you enter in to that blessing? How do you connect with that blessing? You do so by getting connected to Jesus. Do what Esau failed to do—humble yourself and bless the One Whom God has blessed. Bless His Son, Jesus Christ, Who became a curse for you. Jesus is the true Rebekah. Jesus is the greater Jacob. Just like Jacob disguised himself in his brother's clothes, Jesus came and took on our clothing. He put on our frail humanity. But Jesus didn't do it like Jacob did, to try to steal a blessing from us. Jesus put on our humanity, our clothing, so that He might take our curse and so we can receive God's blessing.

Jesus is our true Rebekah. Rebekah could not have understood what she was really saying in verse 13: *"Let your curse be on me, my son."* But Jesus fully knew, when He came into the world to clothe Himself in our humanity and to take the curse of our sin by dying on the cross—He knew exactly what He would experience. He knew when He cried out on that cross He would experience the desolation of God. He knew that He would be bearing the curse—that He would be cut off—so that we could enter into His salvation.

When we hear Him screaming from the cross, "My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?" R.C. Sproul says, "His scream was the scream of the damned for us." For us. "Let your curse be on Me," Jesus said, clothed in our humanity, not to rob us of blessing, but to lavish us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. And Jesus is God's firstborn—not that He was ever created or made, but He has that status. He is the Father's only begotten Son, the Son of His love, His cherished Son.

But when you connect to Jesus through faith, when you fall before Jesus and say, "I bless You, my Savior," everything then that belongs to God's firstborn Son gets transferred over to you. You don't have to fake it to get the blessing. You don't have to pretend to be someone you're not.

You don't have to be Jacob dressing up like Esau. Just come to God, as you are, a guilty sinner—a pathetic, grubby, lying, cheating sinner—and say, “God, be merciful to me.” And He is.

God doesn't put you at the bottom of the totem pole. God doesn't treat you like you're anything less than His Son Jesus Himself. He loves you with the love that He has had for His Son for all eternity. And forever we will bask, we will hide away, in the love of Jesus, as God's chosen children. That's the blessing God holds out to you and me. You're hungry for it. I know you are. I know nothing in this world is ever going to satisfy you without that blessing from God. So come to Jesus and live.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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