

Genesis 27C (2011)

- Chapter 27 is an awesome display of God's sovereignty working through the sin of men
 - Four actors, each absorbed in their own desires and motivations
 - All guilty of sin to some degree
 - But each moving in relationship to one another, with the sin of the father Isaac at the center of it all
 - And above it all, the Lord God working to bring about His desires in keeping with His promises and eternal purposes
 - Everyone will pay a price for their sin
 - Yet no one's sin will stand in the way of God and His plan
- Last week we saw the conspiracy between Rebekah and Jacob as they try to stop Isaac from giving the birthright blessing to the wrong son
 - But their solution is a classic example of two wrongs don't make a right
 - Esau hasn't returned to the tent yet, so the time has come for Jacob to make his move

Gen. 27:18 Then he came to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?"

Gen. 27:19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done as you told me. Get up, please, sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me."

Gen. 27:20 Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God caused it to happen to me."

Gen. 27:21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come close, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not."

Gen. 27:22 So Jacob came close to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

Gen. 27:23 He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

Gen. 27:24 And he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" And he said, "I am."

Gen. 27:25 So he said, "Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son's game, that I may bless you." And he brought it to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine and he drank.

Gen. 27:26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Please come close and kiss me, my son."

Gen. 27:27 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;

- At the moment the meal is ready and Jacob is wearing the goat skins and Esau's clothing, Rebecca sends him into the tent to his father Isaac
 - As we watch this scene play out, let's remember that Jacob is the rightful owner of this birthright
 - He is acting in desperation out of a need to protect what is rightly his
 - But Isaac's refusal to listen to his wife or the Lord or even to honor the lawful sale leaves Jacob with few options, or so it seems
 - So Jacob enters the tent
 - Jacob initiates the conversation calling to Isaac
 - Isaac replies by asking which son was approaching
 - Isaac's question confirms that Isaac is essentially blind at this point
 - He may detect light and dark but he can't identify a person
 - Jacob responds with his first lie
 - He declares that he is Esau, the firstborn, and he has done as Isaac instructed
 - Jacob's phrase reminds us of why this moment has even been made necessary
 - Isaac has stubbornly determined to show a preference to the firstborn son, against God's desires
 - Isaac immediately shows some suspicion because Jacob couldn't muster a convincing imitation of Esau's voice
 - Plus, I think Isaac had a guilty conscience knowing he was doing the wrong thing in his conspiracy with Esau
 - His first question is how did you get here so quickly?

- Jacob lies a second time, saying the Lord caused it to happen
- This is certainly a lie, but it is also a true statement
- Jacob was standing in this moment because the Lord had given Rebekah the insight to know about Isaac's plan
- Therefore, it is true to say that the Lord God had caused this to happen to Jacob
 - But the Lord is not causing Jacob to lie, and the sin he and Rebekah are perpetrating are not according to God's heart
 - Even worse, Jacob is invoking the Lord's name in this lie
- At this point, Isaac is confused by what's happening
 - As far as Isaac knew, only Esau knew to meet him here with a bowl of stew
 - Yet the voice of this son was Jacob
 - Perhaps under other circumstances Isaac would have simply concluded that his ears were playing tricks on him and never thought more about it
 - But this was no ordinary moment
 - Isaac was engaged in an underhanded sidestepping of one son in favor of another, and Isaac knew that Jacob would try to stop him
 - Since he hears Jacob's voice, he's cautious and wants more proof
 - He calls Jacob over and asks to touch him
 - Notice in v.21 Isaac calls Jacob over so he can see if this is really Esau
 - Isaac is stating plainly that he suspects a trick
 - You can't have a better measure of Isaac's guilty conscience than his caution in this moment
 - He reacts like someone who is scheming and doesn't want someone to double-cross him

- After taking hold of Jacob, Isaac concludes that the voice sounds like Jacob but the hands feel like Esau
 - If goat skin felt like Esau, then Esau must have been one hairy guy
- In v.23, it says that after Isaac felt Jacob's hairy hands, he blessed him
 - This reference to the blessing is not the moment when the blessing is pronounced
 - The statement is proleptic, which means a statement of what will happen before it actually takes place
 - Like saying "he was a dead man the moment he entered the room"
 - Moses is pointing out that these deceptions were working to eventually cause Isaac to pronounce the blessing
 - But even though Isaac is moving toward the blessing, he isn't fully convinced as yet
 - Isaac asks again, are you really Esau?
 - Obviously, Isaac had enough reason to doubt that he felt the need to continue seeking proof
 - In response, we have Jacob's third lie, when he says "I am"
 - At this point, Isaac decides he might as well try the stew
 - Isaac enjoys not only the stew but also wine
- Finally, Isaac asks Jacob to come close for a kiss
 - Isaac's request was actually a cover to gather more proof
 - He wants to smell Jacob
 - Once again, he smells the clothes of Esau, and declares they are like a field blessed by the Lord
 - This is one of my favorite verses for showing God's sovereignty and man's sin working side by side
 - First, we see Isaac's sin in his preference for the smell of Esau

- Esau is a worldly man, a man who does the exciting things Isaac never thought to do
- Esau hunted rather than shepherding
- Esau spent his days in the field rather than remaining in the tent community like Isaac
- Isaac seemed to live vicariously through this son, and Esau excited Isaac's flesh
 - Just the smell of that field gave Isaac comfort and helped seal the deception
- Isaac's carnal display may seem a bit strange to us, but if so that's only because we live in a different time and culture
 - Isaac's spirit was called to want the things of God
 - God calls us to turn our back on the world and set our hope on Him and His promises
 - While Isaac had certainly done those things, there was still a part of him that felt attracted to the world he was called to leave behind
 - He was called to shepherd and wander, but a part of him loved the thought of hunting game, perhaps living among other men in cities
 - We don't envy the world in the same way Isaac did, but we have our own ways
 - We have "safe" rebellion like Isaac's
 - Mostly living our Christian life with our Christian habits and Christian worldview
 - We understand the call to be in the world but not of the world
 - But the flesh we all carry hasn't given up on the world just yet
 - So we find ways to indulge that flesh without jumping in with both feet
 - I could list a million examples, but we all know the pattern

- Sometimes, we're like Isaac glorying in the sin of another, so that we might get a taste of it from a distance without feeling too dirty ourselves
 - Other times we mimic the world's sinful pattern but just moderate the dosage, so while the world engages in the x-rated sin, we settle for the R-rated or maybe PG-13 sin
 - Still other times, we simply redefine a sinful behavior or desire, give it a different name, and perhaps even find what seems to be Biblical support for our choice
 - Like the false prosperity gospel which gives some Christians a license to worship money the way the world does, but call it good instead of sin
- We all know what's driving Isaac's behavior here
 - He loves Esau's smell because it's the smell of adventure and human strength and fleshly rebellion
 - And so Isaac loves the son that fills his fleshly void in an otherwise godly life
 - It's a wise and mature Christian who can recognize this same pattern in their own life
 - Take an inventory in your own life...are you indulging in some sin because it satisfies your flesh's desire to rebel, while still feeling safe?
 - The safety is itself a lie, as evidenced by Isaac's situation
 - He never considered how his love for Esau's nature was causing him to rebel against God's will and bring near ruin to his family
 - What calamity will our little rebellions bring? Why find out? Let's put them aside
- I said this verse was so powerful because it combined Isaac's sin with God's sovereignty, and since we've seen Isaac's sin clearly, where is God's sovereignty?
 - Notice Isaac's concluding statement in v.27
 - The smell of this son was so pleasing to Isaac, it was the smell of a field that had been blessed by the Lord
 - But remember Isaac is speaking to Jacob, though he doesn't know it

- And truly, Isaac's words are correct concerning Jacob
- Jacob was like a field that the Lord had blessed
 - Remember, Jacob is the man who will one day be called Israel
 - Israel is a field or a land that will be blessed
 - In fact, the Hebrew word for field is *sadeh*, which means country or territory
- The smell of this son, Israel, is in fact the smell of a country, a nation that will be blessed by the Lord
- This is the sovereign choice of the Lord
 - Jacob was the son to be blessed, as God directed
 - And even as Isaac operated in his sin and in his flesh, he was speaking and acting according to God's holy and eternal decree
 - Isaac would bless Jacob, because Jacob was the son to be blessed
- I find it helpful to remember Genesis 27:27 whenever I'm confronted with the tragedy and devastation in the world around us
 - There is so much sorrow and sin and evil in the world
 - And everyday, the enemy seems to find a new way to release his depravity among men
 - Yet through it all, we can rest in knowing that God's will is never challenged by any of it
 - Those God has declared will be blessed will indeed be blessed
 - And no amount of man's sin or the enemy's schemes will alter that plan
- Now that Jacob's three lies and deceptions have convinced Isaac that Esau has come into his tent, the time has come to pronounce the blessing

**Gen. 27:28 Now may God give you of the dew of heaven,
And of the fatness of the earth,
And an abundance of grain and new wine;**

**Gen. 27:29 May peoples serve you,
 And nations bow down to you;
 Be master of your brothers,
 And may your mother's sons bow down to you.
 Cursed be those who curse you,
 And blessed be those who bless you."**

- As we look over this blessing, notice right away that it invokes the name of the Lord
 - This is the main feature of the blessing that tells us it brings prophetic power
 - Isaac was speaking according to whatever thoughts entered his mind, but those thoughts and words were under the direction of the Holy Spirit
 - We see that clearly, because these words were indeed prophetic
 - What they say about Jacob do in fact come true
 - First, in v.28 Jacob is promised that God will give him great blessing in heaven and on earth
 - He will have the dew of Heaven, that is the favor of God
 - And he will have the fatness of the earth, that is the best portion
 - And along the way, Jacob will enjoy great provision
 - These are all accurate statements concerning Israel at various points in history
 - But it is primarily a statement of Israel in the kingdom, which is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant
 - In v.29 we see more of the near-term/far-term prophetic elements
 - People are to serve Jacob and nations will bow to him, and he will master his brothers
 - More specifically, his siblings will bow to him
- Isaac speaks all these statements with the power of God, and all these statements will come true...but they only come true for Jacob

- And yet Isaac is convinced in this moment that he is speaking them to Esau
 - In fact, take a second look at the blessing from Isaac's point of view
 - He is asking God to ensure that Esau is the most favored son, the one to gain the patriarchal authority in the family
 - Isaac wants God to give Esau all the things that God has already said Jacob will receive
- But the way in which Isaac says these blessings, it excludes any blessing for Esau
 - When the time finally comes for Esau to come to the tent and reveal the deception, there is nothing left for Isaac to give him
 - No loophole, no wiggle room
- As we end today, let's reflect on how flesh-driven this family has been so far
 - We mentioned last week that the entire narrative is driven by the senses of the flesh, with not a single person appealing to God
 - They are all talking about God, but no one takes time to talk to God
 - And instead they pay attention only to their human senses
 - The story begins with Isaac seeking Esau to feed him his favorite meal
 - Then we have Rebekah's ears hearing the exchange
 - Then she hatches a plan to fool her husband through his limited senses
 - Moving to Jacob, he listens to his mother's voice to lie and deceive his father
 - Finally, Isaac's own sense become his undoing, as they conspire against him
 - He can't see, but he uses his senses of hearing, and touch, and taste and smell to make his decisions
 - Taken together, he is flesh driven and not listening to the Lord
 - In the end, the Lord gets everything His way anyway

- But because he follows his flesh, Isaac suffers great loss along the way
- Just another reminder that sin has consequences
- Next week we finish the chapter