

In The Beginning...God: Jacob & Esau

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Biola University...

I'm about to be so smart you won't want to hang around me

You know how people

When they get their PhD

Their doctorate degree

You call them Doctor

So, I'm finishing up my master's degree

So...

Well, we'll cross that bridge when we get to it

So today, we're in week 3 of our series

In the Beginning God...

And the last two weeks

Barry and Keith have done a fantastic job kicking us off

And they have focused

On the calling of Abraham

And the covenant with Abraham

Fun fact:

Most people don't realize this

Did you know that not only do Jews and Christians

Honor Abraham as a prophet

But Muslims do too

In fact, Muslims acknowledge most of our Old Testament prophets

And they consider Jesus a prophet too

They believe Jesus was born to a virgin

That He lived a sinless life

They don't think He was God

But over half the world believes that Jesus was sinless

My family doesn't even think I'm sinless

If you're not a Christian, I don't know how you explain that

I mean, I know how you explain my family...

But the Muslims consider Abraham a father of their faith

Through his son Ishmael

Ishmael's mother was Hagar

An Egyptian

And then Ishmael married an Egyptian wife

We read that in Genesis 21 {Show Genesis 21:20b-21}

And so, he became the father of the Arab people

Fun fact

It was through Abraham's other son

Isaac

That the Jewish people have their heritage

And this conflict

This tribal conflict between half-brothers

Still smolders today

Now sometimes people say the Bible isn't funny

And I know – there are parts that are tough to read sometimes

But then there are other parts that are just funny

So, Isaac's wife Rebekah became pregnant

With twins

Long before the invention of epidurals

Or pain meds

I think the description of Rebekah's pregnancy

Is funny!

In Genesis 25, it says:

Genesis 25:22 - The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

I bet she did

Now that's funny

“Why is this happening to me?!?”

Genesis 25:24-25 - When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.

Now I'm not a prophet

But something tells me middle school was tough on Esau

His whole body was like a red, hairy garment

We actually found an ancient photograph of Esau {Show “Animal”}

Apparently, he liked to play drums

So, his brother Jacob

Is more prominent in our story

Genesis 25:26 - After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

I want you to notice two very specific points:

One – they lived a lot longer than we do

There're some scientific reasons to explain that

But for the message today – just know they lived about twice as long as we do

So, a 60-year-old first-time dad

Is about like a 30-year-old first time dad, today

Second – I want you to notice how often the text refers to ages

We'll get into that more later

People often say the Bible is not designed to be a scientific book

And that's true

But it is a historical book

Ages and genealogies

Were very important to the ancient Jewish people

So, pay attention to that

Genesis 25:27 - The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents.

Esau was a man's man

Jacob liked to play video games

It says:

Genesis 25:28 - Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Notice: The Bible never shies away

From portraying people as they *really* were

These are real people

God is not saying playing favorites with your kids is good

Just that it happened

If you've ever been on the receiving end of

Nonsense like that

You know how painful it is

And it was painful here too

Decades of rebuilding

Were required

Because parents

Couldn't get their junk in order

You'll see that as you read through

By the way

We're just hitting the highlights of Genesis this summer

I really encourage you

Over the next few weeks

To read along with us

Start in Genesis 12

We're going to go to Genesis 50

Over the next few weeks

I want you to notice how

Dad & Mom's disfunction

Lead to disfunction with the boys

Genesis 25:29-34 - Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.) Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

This is not normal behavior

The birthright was a very important part of their culture

It marked you as the firstborn

The oldest

You would take over the leadership of the family

When your dad died

And you would receive a double portion

Of his estate

In honor of that custom

Lauren's going to inherit

Twice as many bills as the others

When I go

She'll be excited

"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?" But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

Now the Bible tells us that Isaac was

A wealthy, wealthy man

Genesis 12 says - The LORD blessed him. (Isaac) became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. (Genesis 12:12b-14)

Isaac was

A wealthy, wealthy man

And Esau traded a double portion of that inheritance

For a bowl of soup

It's crazy

On top of that, Esau caused enormous relational damage

With his father

Rejecting the plan

They had worked through together

For the pleasure of a moment

For a bowl of soup

It's crazy

We'd never do that

Hold on to that thought a second

Hebrews 12:16-17 - See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau,

Now hold on a second

Nothing was mentioned in Genesis about sexual immorality

Esau seems to have a dark side

But nothing in Genesis compares it to sexual immorality

But let's read on:

Hebrews 12:16-17 - See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.

Scripture says that when we trade temporary pleasure

Literally... satisfying an appetite

And we're willing to trade a grand inheritance

For that moment

It's Godlessness

It's like Esau

Notice how the passage in Genesis ends:

Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright. – Genesis 25:34

After the moment

Esau despised his birthright

That's pretty powerful

What Esau wanted so desperately

Filled him with contempt

Moments later

That's powerful

Listen to me a minute

I heard someone say this week

If you ran up on the scene of an automobile accident

And it was... bad

And you stuck your head in the window

And said to the wounded driver

"That's what you get for driving fast."

You'd be correct

And a jerk

At the very same time

Our culture is driving fast

Sexually

And the church

Far too often

Has been all too eager to shake the Bible at wounded people

And say, "That's what you get... for driving too fast"

Jesus was never that guy

Jesus stood for truth

But He was filled with compassion

He hurt... for those who were hurting

So many in this room

Have been in an accident

Sometimes where they were driving too fast

Metaphorically

But as a church

We're not a museum for perfect people

We're a hospital for the broken

And if you've been wounded

Sexually

I am so sorry

God offers forgiveness

God offers healing

And God offers a safe community

To support you while you heal

Psalms 100:5 – For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.

God is good

He's been faithful for MANY generations

You're not the first person He's helped lead

And you can trust Him

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (NLT) - And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? He requires only that you fear the Lord your God, and live in a way that pleases Him,

and love Him and serve Him with all your heart and soul. And you must always obey the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good.

God's commands

Are for our own good

God knows what's best for us

He created us

He created sex

And He knows how powerful it can be

And how damaging it can be when it's not handled carefully

I said a moment ago

You're not the first person He's lead

You're also not the first person He's consoled

The Bible says that God keeps the tears we cry in a bottle

He's with us in every sleepless night

And He has comforted men & women for thousands of years

When they tearfully cry out to Him

Sometimes... because they stepped outside of His good commands

Psalms 19:7-8 (NLT) - The instructions of the Lord are *perfect*, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are *trustworthy*, making wise the simple. The commandments of the Lord are *right*, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are *clear*, giving insight for living.

God's word is... (look at screen)

And you can trust Him

Jesus was asked about all of this one day

And look at He says

Matthew 19:4-5 – At the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'.

This one verse from Jesus

Answers a lot of the questions that our society is asking today

A man and a woman

Are united in marriage

And then they enter into a sexual relationship

According to Jesus – the correct model is this:

Sex is reserved for one man and one woman within the context of marriage

I know some of you question the letters in that equation

Does it have to be a man and a woman

Some in our culture question the numbers

Can it be more than two people

Some question the context

Why is sex only reserved for marriage?

But I would say to you

You can trust the character and good commands of God

Over the years as a pastor

I've counseled with lots & lots of people

People who are struggling

People who are grieving

People in a lot of pain

And the number one issue

Number one issue that causes all of this pain

Is someone stepping outside of this equation:

One man and one woman inside the covenant of marriage

There's 1,189 chapters in the Bible

31,102 verses

66 books

By 35 different authors

And we never read one time

Where God diverts from this original intent

There's never one exclusion

God's plan is so different

Than our current cultural reality

But what would it look like if everyone followed God on this point?

Look at this screen:

No rape

No need for #MeToo

No STD's

No pregnancy outside of marriage

No abortions

No prostitution

No adultery

No sexual abuse

No sex trafficking

No sexual abuse

How much pain would be zapped out of our world

 If that was true

How much pain would be zapped out of this room

 If that was true

God's ways are best – and you can trust Him

OK – I got a little side tracked on Jacob and Esau

 Let's wrap up this message with a couple takeaways:

1. You Matter

Don't be like Esau

 Don't trade something of immense value

 For the satisfaction of a moment

You're worth more than that

You matter

2. Kids Matters

So much of the Old Testament

So much of this story

Is good people

Trying to overcome their childhood

And the disfunction of their parents

Isaac loved Esau more than Jacob

Rebekah loved Jacob more than Esau

The secrets and the drama

Caused those boys

And their families

Decades of problems

Truett Cathy said, "It's better to build boys than mend men."

And that's the truth!

And Jacob & Esau's life

Teaches us

Screams to us

That kids matter

I would encourage you

Inside & outside this church

To place more emphasis

On our next generation

Dads – can I beg you on Father’s Day

Place more emphasis

On our next generation

3. Perspective Matters

Right after the account we studied

We read this account:

Genesis 27:1-2 - When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him... “I am now an old man and don’t know the day of my death.”

Now this is funny

He’s saying he’s an old man

And doesn’t know the day of his death

But Isaac lived another 44 years

Isaac is Fred Sanford here

Now, they lived about twice as long in those days

So, let’s cut Isaac’s life in half

It would be like a 68-year-old man

Saying he was on the verge of death

But then living till he’s 90

What gives?

We don't know

We know he'd lost a lot of eyesight

Glasses obviously hadn't been invented yet

So that would freak you out

But it seems like something more

And then it hit me

Ishmael – Isaac's older brother

Fact check me on this

Ishmael was 14 years older than Isaac

And Ishmael died... 13 years... before this interaction

Isaac here was 1 year younger than his older brother had been

When he died

And that'll mess with you

Isaac's perspective was changing

He realized he wasn't going to live forever

And he began to think about what was next

Can I let you in on a not-so-little secret?

You're not going to live forever

Neither am I

And we need to begin to think about what's next

When our life is over

And those in our lives continue on without us

What matters?

If we could live our life with that perspective

It would change everything for us

It would change how we spend our time

How we spend our money

What we fight about

And get worked up over

4. Identity matters

Esau's nickname – if you study Genesis

Is Edom

It means red

I think I always assumed it was

Because he looked like a red, hairy garment

But that's not what Scripture says

We read a verse a minute ago

You may not have caught it

Genesis 25:29-30 - Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

His nickname

Came

From his worst moment

His biggest mistake

They nicknamed him red

Because he traded his inheritance for some red stew

His identity

Was based on his failure

Identity matters

But our identity is not based on our worst day

Our identity rests

In the God of the Universe who loves us

God would rather be destroyed for our sin

Than have our sin destroy us

And when you understand that

When you accept the reality that He gave everything for you

It changes your identity

Your identity is not in your politics

Republican or Democrat

It's not in your pocketbook

Rich or poor

It's not in your sexuality

Gay or straight

It's not in your generation

Young or old

Your identity... is a cherished... son or daughter... of the King of Kings

He gave everything for you

Put it all on the line

And now He offers you a trade

Swap lives

With Jesus Christ of Nazareth

And one day

When your life is over

You'll stand before God

And He won't judge you based on your life

But based on His

And Jesus will usher you in

To a paradise prepared for you