

INTRODUCTION

Today we are talking about “Jacob the Grabber.” I am preaching through the Great Events of the Old Testament. This is the first message on Jacob. We all understand what proverbs or mottos are. If I were to give you the first line of a proverb or a motto, you could probably fill in the blank like for instance “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” A first grade teacher gave some of her first grade students the first part of a motto and got them to fill in the rest. Their answers were pretty interesting.

1. Better safe than punch a fifth grader.
2. Strike while the bug is close.
3. It’s always darkest before Daylight Savings Time.
4. Don’t bite the hand that looks dirty.
5. A miss is as good as a mister.
6. You can’t teach an old dog new math
7. An idle mind is the best way to relax.
8. A penny saved is not much money.
9. Laugh and the whole world laughs with you. Cry and you have to blow your nose a lot.
10. There are none so blind as Helen Keller.
11. If at first you don’t succeed get new batteries.

There are a lot of ways to end proverbs. Let me give you a principle from the word of God and see if you can complete it.

I. THE SURRENDERED BIRTHRIGHT

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows [fill it in] that shall he also reap.” We’re going to see that in two big events in the life of “Jacob the Grabber.” The first event is the surrendered birthright, because we’re going to see the birth of twins occurred to Rebekah and a feud developed from the very beginning.

Genesis 25:20-34. “And Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, ‘Why is this happening to me?’ So she went to inquire of the Lord. The Lord said to her, ‘Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.’ 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. 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. The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob. 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!’ (That is why he

was also called Edom.) [Edom means “opposition”] Jacob replied, ‘First sell me your birthright.’ ‘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, then got up and left. So, Esau despised his birthright.”

Why “stolen birthright?” Deuteronomy 21:17 tells us that in a family of boys the firstborn always received a double portion of all the assets of the father and he’s the one who received the family blessing to continue on the heritage and the name of that family. At the very first, that it was not really possible for Esau to sell a birthright, because a birthright was something that occurred because he was born first. Perhaps he could have sold some of the benefits of his birthright, but you can’t sell a birthright. Just as some of you who have a younger sibling, brother or sister there’s no way you can go back into the womb and be born after them. You’re always born first. You always have a birthright because of your birth order. So, that was the beginning of the whole problem.

1. The promise of God

There are a couple of significant things here. First was the promise of God; He made an amazing promise to Rebekah. He said, “Rebekah, you are going to have sons. They are going to be two nations. They are going fight against each other and Rebekah, the amazing thing about your boys is the older is going to serve the younger.” But God promised, “Rebekah, don’t you worry because I assure you that in my time and in my way the younger is going to be more prominent than the older one.” And of course they were born. Esau was all red and hairy and Jacob is holding his heel and they were born together. They grew up knowing Esau was the older, Jacob was the younger although by just a few minutes, seconds, who knows? But because he beat Jacob into the world by a few moments, he was the recipient of all of these blessings and that drove Jacob crazy. Because Jacob was a grabber, he figured out a way he could grab the benefit of the birthright.

2. The problem of greed

Esau comes in and he is hungry. Jacob says, “I’ll give you this food if you will give me your birthright.” Esau says, “You can have it. I don’t want it anyway. It’s yours. I’m going to die.” and he takes it. Number two we see the problem of greed. You may be thinking, “Well, that’s right. Jacob sure was greedy.” Esau was too. Esau was so interested in his physical appetites he was willing to surrender something very precious to him and God-given. Jacob was so greedy, for the benefits of the birthright that he negotiates for it.

II. THE STOLEN BLESSING

That’s just the beginning of the problems that are going to occur for many, many years. I want to move on and leave this point because really I’m heading toward the application at the end. Second is the stolen blessing, because not only did Esau despise his birthright, Jacob grabbed the blessing. Turn to chapter 27. Isaac was sixty when Jacob was born. It was traditional to receive the blessing when you are about 40, so I want you to remember Isaac here is about 100 years old

when all this is taking place. I wanted to introduce that because it is going to be important later.

Genesis 27:1-19. “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, ‘My son.’ ‘Here I am,’ he answered. Isaac said, ‘I am now an old man and don’t know the day of my death. Now then, get your weapons—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.’ Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, ‘Look, I overheard your father say to the brother Esau, ‘Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.’ Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies. Jacob said to Rebekah, ‘But my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I’m a man with smooth skin. What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing.’ His mother said to him, ‘My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; Go and get them for me.’ So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. He went to his father and said, ‘My father.’ ‘Yes, my son,’ he answered. ‘Who is it?’ Jacob said to his father, ‘I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing.’”

1. Isaac: A declining leader

A great deception is being forced upon old Isaac. There are four characters in this scenario and we can learn something from each one of them. Number one there is Isaac, a declining leader. When you read chapter 27, do you get the idea Isaac is on his deathbed? The signs point to it: He’s feeble. He can hardly see. He thinks he’s eating his last meal. Read chapter 35 sometime and you’ll discover Isaac lives to be 180 years old. He’s going to live 80 years after this! So what you is a man who is almost giving up being the leader of his family. It’s amazing as you study biblical history Abraham is a strong character! Jacob in his own way is a strong character and we talk about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Actually, Isaac plays a minor role in the whole scenario, because—sad as it may seem—it looks like when Isaac reached middle age, he decided he had done about all he could do and was ready to give up then. He lived 80 more years! He was deceived!

2. Rebekah: The doubting manipulator

Well the second character I want us to look at is Rebekah. What we have in Rebekah is a doubting manipulator. She is a fixer. She is going to make it happen the way *she* wants it to happen. This is not Jacob’s idea. This is Rebekah’s idea. She hears what Isaac says to Esau and

she’s the one that plants the seeds of deception in Jacob’s mind. It took a long time to prepare that goat meat and make it taste like deer meat and then it took some time to skin those goats and somehow make that goat hair adhere to Jacob’s arms and to his neck. She even took some of Esau’s old clothes that smelled like Esau and put them on Jacob and pushed him into the room. Have you ever known a mother who pushes her children? Rebekah is the patron saint of all the mothers who have ever tried to push their children. She pushes him into Isaac’s presence. “Who is it?” “I am Esau” don’t you know he said, “Well, you don’t really sound like Esau!” “I am Esau, father.” “Come over here.” Jacob comes over there and Isaac sniffs him. “You don’t sound like Esau, but you do smell like Esau.” I was working one time on one of these volunteer Christian building jobs real close with a man and we were hot and sweaty. I said, “You know what? One of us has a deodorant that isn’t working.” He said, “It must be you because, I didn’t wear any.” They didn’t have any deodorant back then. Most countries of the world do not have deodorant. All you have to do is travel around the world to discover that! Esau had a particular smell. The word we would assign to that smell is “gamey.” You could tell when Esau was coming. Because he had on Esau’s clothes, he smelled like Esau. “All right, I’m going to let my sense of smell tell me,” because he couldn’t see. Then, he said “Wait a minute. Let me feel of you.” The Bible says Isaac took his hand and put it on the back of Jacob’s neck and he thought, “That’s old, hairy Esau all right!” He felt of his arms. “Yeah, that’s Esau all right.” So Isaac pronounces the blessing.

3. Jacob: A deceiving son

That leads us to Jacob. We’re going to talk a lot more about Jacob especially next week as we see how God changes him. We see a deceiving son in Jacob. Although it might not have been his idea, he’s the one who was so ambitious he was willing to negotiate with his brother, to try to buy something that was rightfully Esau’s. What Jacob really tried to do was buy something that really wasn’t for sale and Jacob represents everybody in all time that try to buy God or tries to buy blessings. It’s so sad when Jesus comes to the door of somebody’s heart and he knocks on the door, there are some people today who slide a twenty dollar bill under the door and say, “There, Jesus. Take that.” You cannot buy salvation. You cannot buy forgiveness. You cannot deceive your way into the family of God. Jacob is the one who follows Rebekah’s leadership but he is every bit as guilty, because he is the one who speaks the lie. “I am Esau,” a lie and Isaac says, “You’re the blessed!” and he gave him the family blessing to carry on the name and the heritage of that family.

4. Esau: A despising brother

Let’s look at the final character, Esau—old Red—a despising brother. Esau wasn’t that great a guy anyway. Look at Genesis 26:34, before this deception took place. “When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. These were pagan women. How many of you parents have experienced verse 35? “They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.” Have your kids ever married and because of who they married it caused you a lot of grief? Well that’s nothing new.

Esau comes in and says to Isaac, “Here I am, Dad. I brought you your deer meat. I’m ready to take my blessing. Isaac says, “Wait a minute. You were just in here, weren’t you?” “No...” Then

Isaac realized what had happened and he got angry. “Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, ‘The days of mourning for my father are near.’” He even thought Isaac was dying. “‘Then I will kill my brother Jacob.’ When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, ‘Your brother, Esau, is consoling himself with the thought of killing you. Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran.’” (Genesis 27:41-43) Esau holds a bitter grudge against his younger brother.

Esau represents everybody in this room who has been done dirty by somebody else; maybe in a business deal, maybe in a family transaction, maybe when your parent’s will was settled, maybe when something was done that you just felt like you got the short end of the stick and you are forever bitter about it. Esau represents those kinds of people. Esau spent the next few years of his life getting more and more bitter and angrier. He was already red. I think he got redder and redder and redder the older he got as he got angrier and angrier.

1. Life application: A divided family produces misery

That’s the story. You’ve heard it from the time you were in Sunday School. There are some life lessons in this story and I think it really does apply to us. Lesson number one: A divided family produces misery. You say, “Wait a minute! Rebekah and Isaac didn’t divorce.” They didn’t divorce but what we see is a mother who showed affection toward one son and a father who showed affection to another and everybody knew it. You had a daddy’s boy and a momma’s boy. Families can be divided even if there is not a divorce. Satan wants to come into your marriage and put a wedge between you and he’ll use anything he can, even children. I suspect that when Jacob left and Esau left, I suspect Isaac and Rebekah didn’t have much of a relationship. Remember last week’s love story? Something happened and the devil successfully divided that marriage and that family. Guard against the division of the devil. Husbands and wives, hang on to each other. Love one another not because of your children, love one another because God wants you to love one another. Love each other, husbands and wives, so deeply and dearly that when those kids do grow up and leave, you still have each other. The sad thing is there are too many couples that have been married twenty, twenty-five, or thirty years and when all their kids are gone, they look at each other and they say, “Wait a minute! Who are you?” You need to let your children know, moms and dads, that you love them but you need to let them know you love your spouse in a special way and you have a special relationship. Parents need to be very careful that they never show any kind of favoritism toward one child or the other because you are just asking for the misery this family had.

2. Life application: You make a mess when you try to force God’s plans

Number two; you make a mess when you try to force God’s plans. If you had asked Rebekah why she did what she did, she probably would have said, “I did it because of what God said. God said that the older would serve the younger and I was just trying to make it happen.” Listen! You don’t have to make God’s will happen. When you try to force God’s will and manipulate it, all you do is make a mess of the whole thing. If this deception had never taken place, God in his providence and his sovereignty would have worked it out so Jacob still would have had prominence over Esau and it would have happened without a lot of division and without a lot of

hatred and without a lot of bitterness.

At the beginning of the message I quoted Galatians 6:7. “Do not be deceived. God is not mocked for whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap.” Rebekah reaped because of her deception. Her little boy Jacob left and as far as we know, Rebekah never laid eyes on him again. You talk about the pain of a mother who was so affectionate to that one son. You had better be careful. What you sow you are going to reap. You talk about Jacob planting seeds of deception. When you plant one seed do you know what comes back? A whole lot more seeds than you plant and it comes back a lot later. Jacob went to live with Uncle Laban. Uncle Laban was the chief of all liars and deceivers and grabbers. Jacob is going to go into the house of Uncle Laban and he is going to be the object of deception. He is going to be taken for a ride and there are other seeds he will reap. Fast-forward a few more years until Jacob has a big family himself. One day his own sons come in to him and they lie to him. They say, “Oh, Jacob your favorite son, Joseph, was working out in the fields when an animal came and killed him.” There is Jacob having done to him the same thing he did to his father years before. Be careful, because whatever you sow you’re going to reap!

3. Life application: You make mistakes when you trust your senses

Number three; you make mistakes when you trust your senses. Isaac’s problem was deep down inside he knew that wasn’t Esau, because that was his first reaction but he trusted his senses “You smell like Esau.” “You feel like Esau.” When are we going to learn that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink? As it says, it’s peace, love and joy in the Holy Ghost. It’s nothing physical. It’s not something you can figure out with your five senses. It is beyond and above all your senses. If you’re just trusting all of your five senses to show you what is real and what is not real, you’ll always get in trouble. Don’t trust what you can see. Don’t trust what you can feel. Trust the word of God.

4. Life application: Satan cannot steal your birthright, but he will try to steal your blessing

Number four and this is the most important thing I want to share with you tonight: Satan can’t steal your birthright, but he will try to steal your blessing. Everybody in this room who is in the family of God and has been born again is a child of God. You have a spiritual birthright! Satan cannot steal that birthright from you! You are a child of God and once you are in the family of God, God is your father you are a child of God and nothing the devil or all the legions of Hell can do can take you out of that family. He cannot steal your birthright but he CAN steal your blessing. In Psalm 51 David said, “Restore unto me the JOY of my salvation.” He didn’t say, “Restore my salvation.” The sad truth is multitudes of Christians are miserable and not experiencing the joy of the Lord, which is part of their spiritual heritage, because Satan has robbed their joy. He’s robbed your inner peace; he’s robbed the fruit of the Spirit; he’s robbed you of all the blessings that are yours, because you are a child of God. He cannot steal your birthright, but he will try to steal your blessing. Thank God greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world! If you are missing out on what is rightfully yours as a child of God, the joy of the Lord, the peace of God that passes all understanding, a sense of purpose and fulfillment. If you’re missing out on that say, “Satan. You’ve tried to steal that from me, but I’m not going to let you do it! God, restore unto me the blessings that are mine as your child!”

OUTLINE

I. THE SURRENDERED BIRTHRIGHT

1. The promise of God
2. The problem of greed

II. THE STOLEN BLESSING

1. Isaac: A declining leader
2. Rebekah: The doubting manipulator
3. Jacob: A deceiving son
4. Esau: A despising brother

LIFE APPLICATIONS:

1. A divided family produces misery
2. You make a mess when you try to force God's plans
3. You make mistakes when you trust your senses
4. Satan cannot steal your birthright, but he will try to steal your blessing



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes