Bible Stories for Adults

Jacob and Esau
Genesis 25, 27

Opening

Gathering: Tell of a time you had things planned out, but God had better plans.

Today’s Focus: To recognize that times when things work out differently than what we planned may be because we were not following God’s plan.

Key Verses:

- It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. Romans 9:16

- By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. Hebrews 11:20

- May God Almighty bless you and … may He give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham. Genesis 28:3-4

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Abraham Dies (Genesis 25:1-8)

1. What happened when Isaac was 37 years old?
   - Genesis 23:1-2 = His mother, Sarah, died at age of 127
2. How much longer did Abraham live?
   - Genesis 25:7-8 = Died at 175, 100 years after he left Haran
3. How did Abraham deal with his loneliness during his last 38 years without Sarah?
   - Genesis 25:1 (1-4) = He married his concubine (1 Chronicles 1:32) Keturah, had 6 other sons

My Eight Sons (Genesis 25:5-18)

1. Were all of Abraham’s sons to divide his wealth and blessing after he died?
   - Genesis 17:18-19 = No, only Isaac was the chosen heir - other sons threatened inheritance
2. How did Abraham handle the tradition that the birthright belonged to the first-born (Ishmael)?
   - Genesis 21:10, 14, 20 = He sent Ishmael away with his mother, God protected him
3. How did Abraham handle claims his other sons would likely place on Isaac’s inheritance?
   - Genesis 25:5-6 = Gave gifts to them and sent them far away
4. Did any of Abraham’s sons maintain any contacts with the family?
   - Genesis 25:9-12 (9-18) = Ishmael was close enough to join in burying Abraham

The Next Generation - Miracle Birth (Genesis 25:19-21)

1. Who does the writer of Genesis focus on now that Abraham has died?
   - Genesis 25:19-20 = The story of Isaac, the next generation
2. How was God involved in making this generation possible?
   - Genesis 18:11-14 = Miraculous birth of Isaac, God’s chosen covenant child
3. How was God involved in enabling the next generation?
   - Waited 20 yrs (married at 40, father at 60)
   - Genesis 25:21, 26b = Rebekah was barren, she became pregnant through prayer
4. How was God involved in enabling the next generation?
   - More beyond this (next week’s lesson)
5. Genesis 29:31; 30:22 = Opened Leah’s womb, Rachel was barren; Opened Rachel for Joseph
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The Next Generation - Younger / Older (Genesis 25:22-23)

How were Rebekah's troubles in pregnancy a sign of things to come?
   Genesis 25:22-23 = Two nations, one stronger, older to serve younger
   How was this similar to the previous generation?
   Genesis 17:20-21 = Ishmael & Isaac would become nations, covenant to younger
   How was this repeated in the next generation? = Reuben, Simeon, Levi, then Judah
   Genesis 49:3-4, 10 = Reuben was firstborn, no longer excel, covenant through Judah (4th born)
   How was this repeated in the following generation? = Both to become great
   Genesis 48:17-20 = Jacob blessed Ephraim over Manasseh, younger / greater

The Birthright (Romans 9:10-16)

The birthright belonged to the firstborn. It conveyed:
   Genesis 27:4 = Blessings of the father
   Genesis 27:29 = Leadership of the tribe and family
   Deuteronomy 21:17 = Double share of the inheritance
   What did the fathers want in each circumstance?
   Genesis 17:18 = If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!
   Genesis 25:28, 27:32-33 = Isaac loved Esau, Very upset when learned he blessed Jacob
   Genesis 49:3 = Reuben, my firstborn, my might, strength, honor, power
   Genesis 48:17-18 = Joseph corrected Jacob in blessing Manasseh over Ephraim
   What is God's message to us through these changes in birthright?
   Romans 9:10-16 = Does not depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy

The Sons (Genesis 25:24-26)

What was the birth-order of Jacob and Esau?
   Genesis 25:24-26 = Esau first, then Jacob
What were the meanings behind the names given to the sons?
   Esau = Means hairy - implies ruggedness and wildness
   Edom = red – red body, reddish hair, red stew
   Jacob = he grasps the heel - means he deceives (you're pulling my leg)
   Israel = he struggles with God (Genesis 32:28)

Expensive Stew (Genesis 25:27-34)

How well did Esau's name fit him?
   Genesis 25:27-28 = Esau was a man of the open country, skillful hunter
How well did his nickname, Edom, fit him?
   Genesis 25:29-30 = Esau also called Edom because of red stew
How well did Jacob's name fit him?
   Genesis 25:31-33 = He deceived Esau out of his birthright for stew
   Genesis 27:36 = Jacob rightly named, deceived Esau twice - Also deceived for blessing

How upset was Esau that he had lost his birthright?
   Genesis 25:34 = Wasn't at this time, he despised his birthright
What does this say about Esau's discernment and faith?
   Hebrews 12:16 = Esau was godless, sold his birthright for a meal
Isaac's Last Responsibility  \textit{(Genesis 27:1-4)}

What did Isaac need to take care of before he died?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:1-4  =  Pass on God's blessing to the next generation
\end{itemize}

How was this repeated in other generations?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 24:1-4  =  Abraham sent servant to get covenant wife for Isaac
\item Genesis 48:21-49:1  =  Jacob about to die, blessed his sons
\item Genesis 50:24  =  Joseph about to die, gave promise to brothers (tribes)
\end{itemize}

How old were Isaac's sons at this time?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 26:34  =  Over 40, full adults, not kids as might appear
\end{itemize}

Was Isaac on his deathbed?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 25:26; 35:28  =  Isaac was over 100, under 130 (no older than 130 per other verses)
\end{itemize}

Was Isaac's plan in line with God's plan?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 25:23  =  No, God had planned for the covenant to go through Jacob
\end{itemize}

Rebekah's Plan  \textit{(Genesis 27:5-17)}

How righteous was Rebekah's plan after eavesdropping in on Isaac's plan?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:5-10  =  It wasn't, she planned to deceive Isaac for God's blessing
\end{itemize}

Was Jacob reluctant to sinning by deceit?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:11-12  =  No, he was only afraid of getting caught
\end{itemize}

How did Rebekah ease Jacob's concern?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:13  =  \textit{Let the curse fall on me} (Not afraid of God's curse)
\end{itemize}

What details did Rebekah consider in her plan of deceit?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:14-17  =  Cooked to Isaac's liking, Esau's best clothes, goatskins on hand & neck
\end{itemize}

Jacob's Blessing  \textit{(Genesis 27:18-29)}

How hard did Jacob work to deceive his father?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:18-19  =  Said he was Esau
\item Genesis 27:20  =  Included God in his lie
\item Genesis 27:21-23  =  Goatskins over hands to make hairy
\item Genesis 27:24  =  Again claimed to be Esau
\item Genesis 27:25  =  Gave food & wine as Isaac had asked Esau
\item Genesis 27:26-27  =  Wore Esau's clothes for his smell, betrayed with a kiss
\end{itemize}

What was the blessing that Isaac gave Jacob?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:28-29  =  God bless you, others serve you & be blessed by you
\end{itemize}

Esau's Blessing  \textit{(Genesis 27:30-40)}

Did Esau know what had just happened?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:30-31  =  No, Jacob had just left, Esau prepared food unaware
\end{itemize}

How did Isaac and Esau react when they learned what had happened?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:32-34  =  They were very upset; Isaac trembled, Esau screamed
\item Note: Isaac recognized that God's blessing had been given as God desired, it would happen
\end{itemize}

Why didn't Isaac just give Esau the same blessing?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:35-37  =  Oral statements were legally binding and irrevocable
\end{itemize}

What was the blessing that Isaac gave Esau?

\begin{itemize}
\item Genesis 27:38-40  =  Live away from God's blessings, live by sword, serve your brother
\end{itemize}
Jacob Flees  (Genesis 27:41-28:9)

How upset was Esau with Jacob?
- Genesis 27:41 = Planned to kill him as soon as Isaac died

What did Rebekah plan to protect Jacob?
- Genesis 27:42-45 = Sent him to brother Laban until Esau's anger subsided

How did Rebekah again use deceit to accomplish her plan?
- Genesis 27:46-28:2 = Had Isaac send Jacob away to find a wife from the family

Did Isaac do this to get rid of his less favorite and deceiving son?
- Genesis 28:3-5 = No, he saw God's hand in blessing Jacob, remembered call to keep separate

What Hittite women was Rebekah referring to?
- Genesis 26:34-35 = Esau had married two Hittites earlier

How did Esau mistakenly try to please his parents and try to get a blessing also?
- Genesis 28:6-9 = He married a daughter of Ishmael

Examples of Faith (?)

How did Isaac's faith, or lack of faith, reveal itself?
- Genesis 25:28 = Isaac loved Esau more than Jacob
- Genesis 27:1,4 = Planned to give God's blessing to favorite son, Esau

How did Rebekah's faith, or lack of faith, reveal itself?
- Genesis 25:28 = Rebekah loved Jacob more than Esau
- Genesis 27:6-10 = Planned & helped Jacob deceive Isaac for blessing
- Genesis 27:46 = Deceived Isaac to send Jacob away for protection

How did Jacob's faith, or lack of faith, reveal itself?
- Genesis 25:31 = Deceived Esau for his birthright
- Genesis 27:11-12 = Not afraid of sinning, only of getting caught
- Genesis 27:19-27 = Deceived Isaac for God's blessing

How did Esau's faith, or lack of faith, reveal itself?
- Genesis 25:33-34 = Despised his birthright, sold it for stew
- Genesis 26:34-35, 28:6-9 = Married outside the covenant family
- Genesis 27:38 = Pushed for blessing although God's blessing was given
- Genesis 27:41 = Held a grudge and planned to kill Jacob

Why did God continue to bless and protect this family?
- Genesis 22:17-18 = This was the family of His covenant, God is faithful to His promises

Response

1. Do I do things out of my own desire without considering if they are within God's plan?
   (Genesis 25:1-6; 27:1-4; Joshua 9:3-6, 14-16; Prov 16:3; 19:21; Isaiah 30:1; Acts 5:33-39; 26:14)

2. How have I despised the birthright I have as God's child?
   (Genesis 25:29-34; 26:34-35; 1 Chron. 5:1-2; 2 Chron. 10:16-17; Romans 8:12-17; Gal. 3:26-4:7)

3. Have I deceived others today trying to what I wanted? Have I deceived myself?
   (Genesis 25:29-34; 27:1-36; Acts 8:9-24; 13:6-12; Galatians 6:3-5, 12-14; 2 John 7; James 1:21-26)

4. Am I more concerned with doing what God wants, or with getting caught?
   (Genesis 27:11-13; Joshua 7:10-11, 19-25; 1 Sam. 13:8-14; 15:17-30; John 3:19-21; Eph. 5:8-17)

5. Do I add wrong to wrong hoping to make a right?
   (Genesis 28:6-9; 2 Samuel 11; Matthew 5:38-42)