



LESSONS FROM A DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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Lessons From a Dysfunctional Family

SERMON REFERENCE: Hebrews 11:20

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2395

Family was first established by God in the Garden of Eden. Knowing family is a gift of God, the enemy has waged a war against the home. Hebrews 11 reveals lessons from a dysfunctional family and offers hope for those who face unrest in the home.

“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come” (Hebrews 11:20).

This passage looks back to the story of twin brothers Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25. They were the sons of Isaac and Rebekah, and together, they were a family plagued by favoritism, deception, and betrayal.

Esau, the eldest, sold Jacob his birthright for a bowl of stew. This small act of foolishness propelled a lifetime of dysfunction.

Genesis 27 goes on to reveal the failure of a dysfunctional family.

Isaac, the sensual father on his deathbed, blessed the wrong son for the wrong reasons. He was a man who lived for the things of this world and ended his life in sorrow. He represents many fathers who live self-centered lives, giving in to their appetites.

There is also Rebekah, the scheming mother who, favoring Jacob, helped him take the birthright from Esau. As a result, she lost the son she was trying to bless. Then there's Jacob, the shady son, who connived his way to Esau's birthright.

Yet, God was at work in this family; there was still faith in the disciplined father. Shaken by what he had done, Isaac came to his senses and returned to the Word of God.

Finally, this family reflects the forecast of a determined future.

Having returned to his faith, Isaac blessed both sons in the name of God, on the authority of Scripture. Yet, he had the foresight to know the godly lineage would come from Jacob.

Adrian Rogers says, “It is God who is moving history to a conclusion, and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.”

Life Application

Remember these deeply convicting words from Adrian Rogers: “The best thing any father could do is give his heart to Jesus. The best thing any mother could do is trust her children to Jesus and quit scheming. The best thing any child could do is stand on the promises of God, our birthright—the One who has blessed us with all heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus.”



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Dysfunctional families are numerous.
 - i) The family is meant to be the seminary of Heaven.
 - (1) But for many it has become the incubator of Hell.
 - ii) There is a war on the family and Satan strives to dismantle families.
- b) The family is an important social institution.
- c) The family is an active participant in the creation, maintenance and perpetuation of society.
- d) But some people believe that the family had no origin in God.
 - i) The family is not the result of sociological causes.
 - ii) The family did not rise up from evolution.
 - iii) The family is not the product of sociology.
- e) The family is the first institution created by God.
 - i) Created in Garden of Eden.
 - ii) Created to meet mankind's deepest spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical needs.
 - iii) Created before government, education, or the church.
- f) Only twice in history has civilization abandoned the institution of the family:
 - i) The Greeks in 300 B.C.
 - ii) The Romans in 33 A.D.
 - iii) When the family left people's minds and hearts, the culture also disintegrated.
- g) Isaac and his descendants demonstrate the raging war against family and home, but there is also hope.
 - i) Hebrews 11:20 summarizes the drama in Isaac's family.
 - ii) Genesis 25:24-34
 - (1) Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau had an amazingly dysfunctional family.
 - (2) God also granted this family amazing grace.
 - (3) Trouble began the moment twins Jacob and Esau were born.
 - (a) Isaac favored Esau.
 - (b) Rebekah favored Isaac.
 - (4) The twins were opposites physically and in temperament and skills.
 - (a) Esau's instinct was to hunt and kill and he was a hairy man.
 - (b) Jacob's instinct was to preserve and protect and he was a smooth-skinned man.
 - (5) Esau came in from the field and asked Jacob for some stew to which Jacob asked for the birthright in return.
 - (a) Hebrews 11:20
- h) What is the birthright?
 - i) The birthright generally went to the oldest son.
 - (1) Esau was the older of the two.



- ii) But God had said that the younger son, in this case, would receive the birthright.
 - (1) According to God, the birthright already belonged to Jacob.
- iii) The birthright was the blessing of Abraham.
 - (1) God had promised Abraham he would be a blessing to all nations.
 - (2) The blessing would come through Abraham's descendants.
 - (a) Isaac was the first descendant to receive the blessing.
 - (b) Then it passed to Jacob.
 - (c) Then to his oldest, Judah, on down until Messiah.
 - (3) The blessing involved protection, prominence, and prophecy.

2) THE FAILURE OF A DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

- a) At center stage are four incredibly unspiritual individuals forming this dysfunctional family's core.
- b) Isaac, the sensual father.
 - i) He is about to bless the wrong son for the wrong reason.
 - ii) Savory, meat and venison are repeated often in Genesis 27.
 - iii) Isaac was given over to his appetites and senses.
 - (1) His eyes are not on God.
 - (2) Isaac serves as a warning today for all fathers:
 - (a) They care not for the things of God.
 - (b) They have their own plan for their children.
 - (c) They have never sought the will of God for their children.
 - (d) They are controlled by appetites for alcohol, sports, business, pleasure, sex.
 - (e) They are bringing many kinds of damage to the family.
 - iv) Isaac, who had been a spiritual man, in his old age became a carnal man.
 - (1) He represents the flesh, the old sensual nature in each of us.
 - v) If you live for the things of this world, one day those things you thought were important may not seem important.
 - (1) You may come to the place where you'd give all you own to have your children sober and your marriage resurrected.
- c) Rebekah, the scheming mother.
 - i) Rebekah decides to contravene what Isaac desires.
 - ii) She is not submissive to her husband.
 - iii) She is outside the will of God because she is trying to do a right thing in the wrong way.
 - (1) Genesis 27:6-13
 - (a) She will prepare the meal to trick Isaac into believing Esau brought it.
 - iv) If the devil cannot keep you from doing a wrong thing, he will try to get you to do a right thing the wrong way.
 - v) She tries to protect her favored son, but as a result, she loses her son.
 - (1) Esau will soon be trying to kill Jacob.
 - (2) Jacob will soon be driven from his parents' home and sent far away.
 - (3) Rebekah will never see Jacob again in her lifetime.



- (4) By scheming, Rebekah loses the very thing she wants to keep and protect.
- vi) The best way mothers can keep a child is to trust that child to God.
- d) Jacob, the shady son.
 - i) Jacob wanted the right thing; he had a heart for God.
 - ii) But he couldn't trust God to bring it to pass.
 - iii) The blessing was already his, but by trying, rather than trusting, he entangles himself in shady deals.
 - (1) Many Christians today are scheming rather than trusting God.
 - iv) In Christ, we Christians have a birthright.
 - (1) Ephesians 1:3
 - (2) The birthright is already ours.
 - (3) We fight a battle already lost, rather than enjoying a victory already won.
 - (4) God has given us victory in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (5) Jacob deceives his elderly father.
 - (6) Jacob schemes, rather than putting everything into the hands of God.
 - (7) Yet we scheme and try when we should be trusting God.
- e) Esau, the sorry brother.
 - i) Genesis 27:30-38
 - (1) The name Jacob means "deceiver," "supplanter," "conniver."
 - ii) Esau lived for the things of this world.
 - iii) He didn't care about the treasured birthright.
 - iv) Jacob had a heart for spiritual things; he wanted the birthright.
 - v) Esau despised the birthright.
 - vi) Esau is not weeping because he lost the birthright.
 - (1) He weeps because he lost the influence, possessions and power which accompany the birthright.
 - (2) Esau's sorrow is remorse, not true repentance.
- f) What a dysfunctional family, yet God was at work in this family.
 - i) Yet God did something for this family.
 - ii) God can do something for you and your family.

3) THE FAITH OF A DISCIPLINED FATHER

- a) If the family is wrong, most likely the father is wrong.
- b) Isaac realizes he has been wrong.
 - i) He allowed himself to be deceived.
 - ii) His senses of touch, taste and smell deceived him.
 - iii) He has blessed Jacob when he intended, wrongly, to bless Esau.
 - iv) Isaac "trembles exceedingly."
 - (1) Genesis 27:33
 - (a) He is shaken to the core.
 - (2) God has shown him now what a fool he has been.
 - (3) Isaac is under heavy conviction because God has chastised him.



- v) Isaac now realizes how carnally, willfully, deliberately he tried to override God's will, and for his own selfish reasons bless the wrong son.
- vi) God brings him to repentance and faith.
- c) Isaac in his heart really loved the Lord.
 - i) Ultimately, he was a great man, one who typified Christ.
 - ii) When he was young, Isaac allowed his hands and feet to be bound and laid on an altar in obedience to Abraham.
 - (1) Genesis 22
 - iii) But in his old age, he has gotten away from God.
- d) Some of us used to love God with a flaming passion, but now we are old and carnal.
 - i) Thinking about ourselves.
 - ii) Trying to have as much fun as we can.
 - iii) We've forgotten the things of God.
 - iv) We must go out with torch blazing and a burst at the finish, not old and carnal, away from God.
- e) Thank God, He brought Isaac back.
 - i) Do not mistake the moment for the man.
 - (1) This sad episode, trying to bless the wrong son, was only one incident.
 - ii) Having been disciplined, he learns his senses deceived him.
 - iii) If you want to know the will of God, you must walk in the Spirit, or your senses will deceive you.
 - (1) Isaac was deceived by thinking he was about to die when he lived 40 more years.
 - (2) He thought goat meat was venison.
 - (3) He thought Jacob's hands were Esau's hands.
 - (4) His sense of smell deceived him.
 - iv) But God had not stopped working; "Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound."
 - (1) Romans 5:20
- f) Thank God, He is the God of a second chance.
 - i) God disciplined the father in this family.
 - ii) He may be ready to discipline you.
 - iii) God loves you too much to let you go on ruining your family.
 - iv) 1 Corinthians 11:31-32
 - v) When we're chastened, we're chastened of the Lord, as He did Isaac.

4) THE FORECAST OF A DETERMINED FUTURE

- a) Isaac looked ahead to the future. "By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come."
 - i) Hebrews 11:20
- b) Genesis 28:1-4
- c) God is never out of business.
 - i) In spite of all Jacob and Esau could do, Jacob still received the blessing.
 - ii) In spite of all Isaac and Rebekah could do, Jacob still received the blessing.



- d) Man may rule, but God will overrule.
 - i) The sovereignty of God will prevail.
 - (1) Proverbs 19:21
 - (2) Psalm 33:10
 - (3) The people mentioned in these verses chose to do wrong things.
 - (4) Likewise, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau had chosen to do wrong things.
 - (5) But over it all, God is sovereign, bringing about His will.
 - (6) God promised Abraham, "In you all nations of the world will be blessed."
 - (a) Genesis 22:18
 - (b) What God has said, all Hell cannot annul.
 - ii) God gave the blessing to Abraham.
 - (1) Abraham gave the blessing to Isaac.
 - (2) Isaac is giving the blessing to Jacob.
 - (3) Jacob will give the blessing to his son Judah.
 - (4) Out of Judah comes the house of Jesse.
 - (5) Out of Jesse, king David will come.
 - (6) From the lineage of David comes both Mary and Joseph.
 - (7) From their lineage comes the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - iii) God is at work, and all Hell cannot stop it.
- e) God has set history moving toward one goal: He will crown the Lord Jesus, who will reign from shore to shore.

5) FIVE LESSONS FROM A DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

- a) Dysfunctional families produce dysfunctional kids.
- b) A father's priorities will determine the family's function.
 - i) If a family is wrong, most likely the father is wrong.
 - ii) When, from the beginning, the husband loves and serves God, most often the wife and children will follow along.
- c) Parents have great power to bless or to curse.
 - i) You have incredible power to bless your children.
 - ii) Do not let a day go by without blessing your children in prayer.
 - iii) There is power in speaking a blessing over your children.
- d) We cannot choose for our children.
 - i) We wish we could but we cannot.
 - ii) God has given our children a will.
 - iii) Sometimes parents take credit for good children when they shouldn't.
 - iv) Sometimes parents take the blame for bad children when they shouldn't.
 - v) People have questions about this verse, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
 - (1) Proverbs 22:6
 - (2) This is a proverb, not a promise.
 - vi) If you take a proverb and try to turn it into a promise, you'll lose your faith.



- (1) A proverb is a principle, which, if generally applied, brings a general result.
 - (2) If a child goes wrong, parents mistakenly ask, "What did I do?"
 - (a) Jacob and Esau turned out as different as night and day,
 - (b) Cain and Abel, same parents, but one turned out to be a murderer.
 - (c) God Himself had two children, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden. The problem wasn't the environment or their Father.
 - (3) God gave your child a will; you can't take credit if they serve God, or take the blame if they don't.
 - (4) There comes a time when you must understand God allows children to have a will of their own.
 - (a) If God hadn't given our children a will, we could not have fellowship with them.
 - (5) God did not make us robots but people with a will.
 - (6) We must love our children, pray for our children, and thank God when they turn out well.
- e) Man's failure cannot nullify God's sovereignty.
- i) Hebrews 11:20
 - ii) What are those things to come?
 - (1) Jesus is going to reign here on this earth.
 - (2) Isaac prophesied of the coming Messiah.
 - (3) Isaac prophesied the godly line to come.
 - (4) Isaac prophesied about the birthright.

6) CONCLUSION

- a) We are divided from God by a chasm of sin.
- b) The Lord Jesus Christ hung on a cross to bring together our sin-sick souls in fellowship with the Father.
- c) On His cross Jesus reconciled God and man.
- d) Are you willing by faith to receive by faith what Isaac saw by faith?
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Now the title of the message today is “Lessons from a Dysfunctional Family.” You say, “Pastor, how did you know about my family?” Well, there are a lot of dysfunctional families. The family is meant to be the seminary of Heaven, but I’m afraid for many it is an incubator of Hell. There is a war on the family, and Satan is systemically trying to dismantle the family.

A student handed me some notes that were handed out in a sociology class by the professor, and I want you to listen to what was printed on this piece of material. It concerns the family. Here’s what this material said in part, “The basic thesis for these two sheets is that that family is an important social institution.” Well, I would say Amen to that. “And it is an active participant in the creation, maintenance, and perpetuation of society.” I would say Amen to that. But now listen to the next paragraph, “Equally important, however,” that is, important to the last statement, “is the realization that the family is also a product of any given society at a particular time in history,” that is, the family had no origin in God. It has just grown out of history, out of the matrix of history. It has come up from sociological circumstances. And then it goes on to say, “As the social structure of society changes, so to must the form or structure of families and the function and role that families play in society.” Now the import of all of that is just simply this: that the family happened to be, the families we have today are the result of sociological influences, and one day it may migrate into something else, and we adapt to that. That is, the family is not an institution whose source is fixed in God; it came up out the primordial ooze of evolution and is itself evolving. Now I want to say, with all respect to the professor, whomever he or she may have been, what you’ve written is absolutely false. False.

The family is not the product of sociology. The first institution that God ever created was the family and He did that in the Garden of Eden to meet the deepest spiritual, psychological, emotion, and physical needs of mankind. It is an institution of God, and God formed family before God formed the government, before God formed education, before God formed the church or anything else. The basic unit of society is the family. And it is little wonder that there is a war on the family. And today, friend, there are so many dysfunctional families.

Twice in history has civilization come to the place where the idea of the family totally disintegrated. One of those times was 300 years before Christ with the Greek civilization, and the second was in 33 A.D. with the Romans. Both times when the family disintegrated, the institution of family was done away with in the hearts and minds of people, both times the community, the culture disintegrated because the family itself disintegrated. Now, there are some wars against the family. And you say, ‘Yes, tell me about it. I know because it is against our family.’

How many of you know who Murphy was? Murphy was a man, I think he was the quintessential pessimist. Murphy had some laws called Murphy’s laws. Let me mention Murphy’s laws to you. Here are some of them. Number one: if anything can go wrong, it will. Nothing is ever as simple as it seems. Everything takes longer than you expect. If there’s a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will go



wrong first is the one that will do the most damage. Well, those are Murphy's laws, and I believe that the devil uses Murphy's laws against the family, don't you, it just seems that there is a war on the home. But there is hope.

Now look here, if you will, in chapter 11 and verse 20, and our Hebrews verse is only one verse today, Hebrews 11 verse 20, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." Now that's just one verse in the New Testament, but it relates back to an incredible amount of material in the Old Testament. So put your bookmark there in Hebrews chapter 11 and go backward with me to Genesis chapter 25. Now Genesis, the first book in the Bible, that's easy to find. And when you found it, we're going to find an amazing story of a dysfunctional family, but we're going to see that there was amazing grace for this family, and there can be for yours.

Genesis 25, I want to begin reading in verse 24 and I want to read 10 verses to you. It's a background for all that we're going to say. Now, there was a man named Isaac who was miraculously born. Isaac had a precious wife named Rebekah. And Rebekah prayed and Isaac prayed that they might have children. God answered the prayer and opened Rebekah's womb and she had twins. And now we're going to break in in Genesis 25 verse 24 through 34, "And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment." That's an amazing thing that, for a child to have red hair. In many places, babies don't have hair. "And they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel." Now twins are being born. The first one is red and hairy. The second one comes out and we're going to find out later he's very smooth skinned, but the little guy's holding on to his twin's heel, and his name was called Jacob. "And Isaac was threescore years old when she bear them," Isaac, now 60, is having his twins, "and the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man," that literally means a smooth man, a smooth skinned man, "dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison: and Rebekah loved Jacob." Two boys, twins, but, friend, I'm here to tell you they were not identical twins, and already we're going to find out there there's trouble brewing in the family because there is preferential treatment and favorites. The father has for his favorite of these twins, Esau. The father looks to Esau. And the mother has for her favorite, Jacob, and Jacob became mother's pet. Now notice in verse 29, "And Jacob sod pottage," plain English, he cooked a stew, "and Esau came from the field, and was faint. And Esau said to Jacob, 'Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint:' therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, 'Sell me this day thy birthright.' And Esau said, 'Behold, I'm at the point to die: what profit shall this birthright do to me?' And Jacob said, 'Swear to me this day;' and he swear unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: and Esau despised his birthright."

Now you've got to get the picture. Jacob, a homebody, a mother's pet, he learns to cook. Esau, a hairy, red hunter. He was a man's man with hair on his chest. He loved to go out and shoot things. One man's instinct was to kill; the other man's instinct was to protect. And these brothers are going divergent ways. And Esau has been out in the field; he's been hunting. And he comes home, he is bone weary and he is hungry. To say he's hungry is an understatement. He's worse than hungry; he's hongry. Have you ever been hongry? He's hongry and he wants something to eat. And about that time, something comes to his nostrils, the whiff of a glorious stew. And old Jacob has cooked that stew. Whether he did it on purpose to



entice Esau, I don't know, but I can imagine it has a base of lentils, but doubtless, there's some potatoes and there's some onions and there's some garlic and there's some oregano in this, and it's just simmering there on the pot. And Esau says, "Jake, hey, buddy, share your stew with me, will you please. I'm hungry." He says, "No, this is not for you; this is for me." "Hey, look, man, I am about to die. I want some of that," he called it red. That's what he called it, red, "some of that stew." Evidently it looked red. It was red. He said, "No, this is not for you; this is for me." He said, "Look, guy, you don't understand. I am hungry and I want that stew." He said, "Oh, you really do, huh? All right. I'll tell you what, tell you what. You just give me your birthright and you can have the stew." The Bible says that Esau traded that over in the book of Hebrews chapter 12 verse 16, "For one morsel of meat he despised his birthright."

Well, what was the birthright? In these days, there was something called the birthright, and it normally belonged to the elder son, and Esau was the elder son because he was born before his twin. But God had said the birthright was to be to the younger son in this instance, because God is overruling that tradition, and the birthright was going to be to the younger son. So the birthright was already Jacob's, but Esau evidently thinks it is his. And so Jacob says to Esau, "Esau, you want some of my stew? Then we'll make a deal. We're going to shake. I get the birthright; you get the stew. We both get what we want." And Esau, he would have given almost anything for that stew, so he just says, "Yes, fine," and he sat down and ate and drank the stew and some bread and that was the deal.

Now what was the birthright? The birthright was the blessing of Abraham. Remember that God called Abraham, and God said, "Abraham, I'm going to make you a blessing to all the nations of the world, and that blessing is going to come through your descendants." And so, the first descendant was Isaac. And now the next descendant is going to be Jacob. And then from Jacob is going to come his sons, the twelve tribes of Israel, and on and on until you come to Messiah. This is the blessing of Abraham. It involved protection. It involved prominence. It involved prophecy. It involved all of the things that were wrapped up in this blessing called the birthright. Now here the stage is set, and so these two brothers have gone through this deal. Now the irony of this thing, the irony of this whole deal is the birthright already belonged to Jacob. But Jacob, by nature, as we're going to see and learn again next week, is what we would call a schemer, a con artist. Now the stage is set for our story today, as we're going to be talking about lessons from a dysfunctional family. Are you ready?

The first thing I want you to see is what I'm going to call the **failure of a dysfunctional family**. If there was ever a family that could be described as a dysfunctional family, it had to be this family. Now begin reading in Genesis 27 verse 1 this time through verse 5, "And it came to pass that, when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau, his eldest son, and said unto him, 'My son,' and he said unto him, 'Behold, here am I.' And he said, 'Behold now, I am old, and I know not the day of my death. Now therefore take I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison,'" that is, "Esau, son, go out and kill a deer for me," "and make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau, his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it." Now a drama is about to unfold. The stage is set. And on center stage are four of the most incredibly unspiritual individuals you've ever seen. They make the corps of this dysfunctional family. I want you to look at them.

First of all, enter **the sensual father**. The sensual father is Isaac. Isaac says, "Esau, go and kill some venison and bring it to me, savory meat, that I may eat and then I'm going to bless you." Now he's going to



bless the wrong son and he's going to bless the wrong son for the wrong reason. And if you read this passage of Scripture, the words savory, or meat, or venison appear about 20 times. Here was a man given over to his appetite, to his senses, he is what we would call a sensual man. And he does not have his eyes on the things of God. As a matter of fact, he's trying to override the things of God to satisfy his own appetite. Now you, father, listen to me. This is not just history. Here's a lesson for you. There are so many fathers today in America who are doing exactly the same thing. They care not for the things of God. And they have a plan for their children, but they've never sought the will of God for their children. And these men are mastered by their appetites, by alcohol, by sports, by business, by pleasure, by sex or whatever it is. These are sensual fathers who are heading up dysfunctional families and they're bringing all kinds of damage to the family. It may be you. Here was Isaac, a man who had been a spiritual man, who in his old age became a carnal man. What a warning that ought to be. He represents the flesh, that old, sensual nature that's in us, a sensual father. Now if you are a sensual father, if you're living for the things of this world, and many dads, you know sir who you are, the day may come when all of those things that you thought were so important will not seem important. You would give this world, if you had it, to have your son sober again, to have your daughter come back home again, to have your marriage resurrected from the dead. But here is Isaac. He is a sensual father. That's the first person in this drama.

Now enter the second person, and that is not the sensual father, but **the scheming mother**. Rebekah now has been eavesdropping. She's in on the deal and so she decides that she's going to contravene what Isaac has done. She's not submissive to her husband and she's outside of the will of God because she's trying this time to do a right thing the wrong way. Genesis 27 now, begin in verse 6 to verse 9, "And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son," now remember, Jacob was her pet, "saying, 'Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother saying, 'Bring me venison, and make me savory meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death.' Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats,'" that is, "You go get two real tender little goats," "and I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth." She's saying, "Look, son, go out there and get two little goats. We'll kill them. I know how to fix them. I can fool your father. He will think it is venison when I get finished with it. I know how to do it." Evidently, she was quite a culinary expert. And she could take those tender little goats and mix them with some carrots and some onions and potatoes and, and some oregano and some spices and some garlic and some cloves, and stew all of that together and serve it to him and he would think it's the best venison he ever had. And so Genesis 27, "'Thou shalt bring it,'" verse 10 through 13, "'to thy father, that he may eat, and he may bless thee before his death.' And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, 'Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: my father peradventure will feel me and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me and not a blessing.' And his mother said unto him, 'Upon me be thy curse. And, my son, only obey my voice, and go fetch them.'" Now Jacob was not the last son to ever be hurt by a scheming mother.

Now the birthright already belonged to Jacob. Rebekah was trying to do a right thing, but she's trying to do a right thing the wrong way. She's become dishonest. If the devil can't keep you from doing a wrong thing, he'll try to get you to do a right thing a wrong way. And here is this mother who is scheming. She's trying to protect her son. You listen to me. Listen, mom. She lost the very son that she was trying to protect. As you read this episode, it is not soon until Jacob is driven from home and Esau is on his trail, ready to kill him, ready to murder her pet son that she loved. And he is driven from her. She will never in this



lifetime see him again. She will never hold him. She'll never hug him. She'll never kiss her grandchildren. She loses, by scheming, the very thing that she is trying to get, the thing that she is trying to keep and protect. Mother, the best thing you can do to keep your child is to give him away to God and to trust him to God and not to your scheming.

So you have a sensual father. Now you have a scheming mother. Now here's the third participant who comes into this drama, and it's what I want to call **a shady son**. Now if there ever was a guy that was shady, it was old Jacob. Now was Jacob good or bad? Well, Esau despised his birthright; Jacob wanted it. Jacob wanted the right thing. He had a heart for God. But he couldn't trust God for it. The blessing was already his, and by trying rather than trusting, he begins to get into all of these deals where he trades stew for the birthright that was already his, and now he tries to deceive his old father to get what was already his. And he's like so many Christians today, who are scheming and trying when they ought to be trusting God and putting things into the hands of God. You see, God has blessed us. We have a birthright. Ephesians 1 and verse 3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." But there are many Christians today, who are very much like old Jacob, trying to get the right thing the wrong way. The birthright was his already. He was fighting a battle already lost, rather than enjoying a victory already won. Many don't understand the victory that God has given you in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now a sensual father, a scheming mother, a shady son, and now **a sorry brother**. Enter the last one and this is old Esau himself. Genesis 27 verse 30 through 38, "And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone from the presence of his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he also had made savory meat, and brought it unto his father, and said to his father, 'Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.' And Isaac his father said unto him, 'Who are you? Who art thou?' And he said, 'I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.' And Isaac," underscore this, "trembled very exceedingly, and said, 'Who? Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it to me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed.' And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry and he said unto his father, 'Bless me, even also, O my father.' And he said, 'Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing.' And he said, 'Is not he rightly named Jacob?'" The name Jacob literally means supplanter or conniver. "For he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, 'Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?' And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, 'Behold, I have made him thy lord and all of his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him. And what shall I do now unto thee, my son?' And Esau said unto his father, 'Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.' And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept."

Now here was a man who lived for the things of this world. He cared not for the birthright. Now, as I said, Jacob at least had a heart for spiritual things. At least he wanted the birthright. At least he cared for it. Esau despised it. Now he's weeping. He's not weeping because he lost the birthright; he's weeping because he lost the influence and the possessions and the power that might go with it. His sorrow is the sorrow of remorse, not true repentance. What a messed up family this family is, and yet God was at work in this family and God did something for this family, and I want you to see that God can do something for you.



So what we're talking about, first of all, is the failure of a dysfunctional family. Now look at **the faith of a disciplined father**. By the way, if the family is wrong, most likely the father is wrong. Now notice that when Isaac really realized what has happened. He comes in here. He eats the venison; he thinks it's wonderful. He smells the clothes that are on Jacob because Rebekah put Esau's coat on Jacob and Isaac holds him and says, "Yeah, there's the smell of the field. He's a man, the outdoors. There's a woodsy smell on his clothes." And then he feels Jacob's hands. And Rebekah had taken the goatskins of that goat and had put those goatskins on the back of Jacob's smooth hands and on the nape of his neck. And old Isaac now is listening and feeling and touching and smelling, and all of his senses are deceiving him, and he has blessed the wrong son. But then it dawns on him what he has done, and the Bible says in Genesis 27:33 that he trembles exceedingly. That is, he is shaken to the core. God now has shown him what a fool he has been. He is tremendously under conviction because God has chastised him and he realizes how carnally, willfully, deliberately he has tried to override the will of God, and for his own selfish, carnal reasons to bless the wrong son, and God brings him to repentance and faith.

Now that tells me something right now; that Isaac in his heart really loved the Lord. Isaac was a great man. Isaac was the one who typified Christ. Remember last week, Isaac was the one who allowed his hands and feet to be bound and laid on the altar in obedience to Abraham. He was the one who saw a ram slain in his stead. But now in his old age, in his dotage, he's getting away from God.

Some of you used to love God with a bright, burning, flaming passion, and now you're old and carnal. All you're doing is thinking about your retirement, thinking about your last days, trying to have as much fun as you can have, and you've forgotten the things of God. I tell you, my dear friend, you ought to go out with the torch blazing and with a burst at the finish and not get like old Isaac did here and become a carnal man and get away from God. But thank God, God brought Isaac brought back. Don't mistake the moment for the man, either. This episode, this terrible episode of trying to bless the wrong son was an incident. But Isaac comes back, he comes back to his senses, and now he has been disciplined and he realizes how his senses had deceived him. Now you listen. You want to know the will of God? You better walk in the Spirit, because if you don't, your senses will, indeed, deceive you.

Let me tell you how he was deceived, that he thought he was going to die; he lived for 40 more years. He thought that goat meat was venison. He thought that Jacob's hands were Esau's hands. Even a sense of smell had deceived him. But God has not stopped working, Romans 5:20, "And where sin has abounded, grace does much more abound." Now thank God that God is the God of a second chance.

Now here's the third and final thing I want you to see. First thing we saw was the failure of a family that was completely in ruins, a dysfunctional family. The second thing we saw was the faith of a disciplined man. God disciplined the father in this family, and thank God that He did. And God may be ready to discipline you. God loves you too much to let you go on, sir, ruining your family. The Bible says in First Corinthians chapter 11 verses 31 and 32, "If we judge ourselves, we'd not be judged, that we should be condemned with the world." But when we're chastened, we're chastened of the Lord. God chastened old Jacob. God chastened old Isaac, and He may chasten you.

Now here's the third and final thing. It's what I want to call **the forecast of a determined future**. Now remember our text? Remember our text back in Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 20? The Bible says, "By faith, by faith." Here was a man who blessed Jacob and Esau, "concerning things to come." A future here is forecast. Look, if you will, in Genesis 28 verses 1 through 4, "And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him,"



skip on down to verse 4, “I will give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave to Abraham.”

Now here's the point. Here's the point. God is never out of business. In spite of all that Jacob and Esau could do, Jacob got the blessing anyway. In spite of all that Isaac and Rebekah could do, Jacob got the blessing anyway. Now here's the point. Man may rule, but God will overrule. Here is the sovereignty of God. Let me give you two verses here. Proverbs 19 verse 21, “There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.” And then again in Psalm 33 and verse 10, “The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.” Now this is a strange thing. Were these people responsible for what they did? Absolutely! Were they culpable? Absolutely. Was Isaac wrong to be sensual? Yes. Was Rebekah wrong to scheme? Yes. Was Jacob wrong to connive? Yes. Was Esau wrong to despise the birthright? Yes. But yet over it all is Almighty God. God is working, and God is ruling. Now how does that apply to us? God made a promise to Abraham. God said to Abraham in Genesis 22 verse 18, “Abraham, in you all the nations of the world will be blessed.” And I'm telling you, what God has said all Hell cannot annul.

Now what is going to happen is this: God gave the blessing to Abraham. Abraham has given the blessing to Isaac. Isaac is giving the blessing to Jacob. Jacob is giving the blessing to his son Judah. Out of Judah is going to come the house of Jesse. Out of Jesse is going to come David. Out of David is going to come the lineage of Mary and Joseph. And out of the lineage of Mary and Joseph is going to come the Lord Jesus Christ. And God is at work and all Hell cannot stop it and will not stop it.

Have you ever gone on a giant airplane overseas, say a 747? You get on that airplane, and while you're on that airplane you can make all kinds of decisions. You can get up, you can sit down, you can recline, you can sleep, you can read, you can watch a movie, you can eat or not eat. She comes to you and says, “Would you like a meal?” You say, “What are my choices?” “Yes or no.” You can eat or not eat. You have all these choices. But while you are making all of your decisions internally in that airplane, that airplane is headed toward one goal.

Now, friend, God has history on one goal. God is going to crown the Lord Jesus Christ. And, “Jesus shall reign where the sun doeth his successive journeys run. His kingdoms spread from shore to shore till moons shall wax and wane no more.” All Hell cannot stop it. And what I see is this; the Bible said in Hebrews 11:20, “By faith, by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.” And those things are coming and they will come.

Now, I said there's some lessons from a dysfunctional family. I'm going to give you five lessons. I'm just going to tick them off and I want you to learn them, and I want you to learn them well. Number one: **dysfunctional families produce dysfunctional kids**. Number two: **a father's priorities often determine the family's function**. Sir, if your family is wrong, most likely you're wrong. I've been preaching long enough to see this. I have never yet known a family, when in the beginning the husband loved and served God whose wife and children did not come along and follow. Now there may be such. I have never known it. I will say this, that it is the father's priorities that determine the family's function.

Number three: **parents have great power to bless or to curse**. If you only understood the incredible power you have to bless your children. There's not a day that goes by that I know of that Joyce and I, when we're together, do not bless our children in prayer. I believe in the power of the blessing. Before I came,



Joyce came through the office. I bowed my head. She laid her hands on my head and said, “Adrian, I bless you in the name of Jesus Christ.” I can be blessed by my wife. She can be blessed by me. Our children can be blessed. We have great power to bless.

Next, **we cannot always choose for our children.** Don’t get the idea that you can determine which way your children are going to go. I wish you could, but you cannot, you cannot. God has given your children a will. Sometimes parents take credit for good children when they shouldn’t. Sometimes parents take blame for bad children when they should not. You say, “Well, Pastor, what about the proverb that says, ‘Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he’s old he’ll not depart from it.’” Friend, that’s a proverb, not a promise. If you’ll take the proverbs and try to turn them into promises, you’ll lose your faith. Just read the book of Proverbs and see some of the proverbs. The Bible says if a man till the ground, he’ll have plenty to eat. Well, what if there comes a flood? What if some other thing happen? No, that’s a proverb. A proverb is a principle generally applied brings a general result. We have proverbs: early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise. Well, that’s generally true unless he gets hit by a truck. It’s a proverb.

I’ve seen parents put themselves under because they have a child that will go wrong, and they say, “What did I do?” I remind you that these two boys were born at the same time of the same parents, and they turned out as different as night and day, Jacob and Esau. Cain and Abel, same parents. One of the children turned out to be a murderer. God Almighty had some children in the Garden of Eden. They didn’t turn out too swift. Was the problem the environment, or the father? Of course not. They were in the Garden of Eden. God gave your child a will and you cannot take credit if your child turns out to serve God, and you can’t take blame if your child doesn’t. You do the best you can.

I’ve already said that dysfunctional families tend to produce dysfunctional children. I’ve already said that a father of faith can set the standard for the family. All of these things are true. I’m not giving you an excuse not to be a godly parent, but I’m saying there has to come a time when we understand that God allows children to have a will of their own. And I’m glad that He does, because had He not, I could have no more fellowship with my children than I could have with that pen. God did not make us robots. God gives us all a will. And we must love our children and pray for our children, and thank God when they turn out good. Yes, proverbs is true as a proverb, if you train up a child, when he’s old, he’ll not depart from it, but don’t try to turn that to an ironclad promise. If you do, you lose your faith. Just look at some of the rest of the proverbs and see what I’m talking about.

Now, friend, here’s the next lesson and the thing that I want you to learn. I want you to learn this: that no matter what happens in this world, no matter how society may disintegrate, no matter how families may fail and unravel, I am telling you, **man’s failure cannot nullify God’s sovereignty.** God is sovereign. And Hebrews 11:20, “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.” And what are those things to come? I’ll tell you what things to come are, that Jesus is going to reign here on this Earth, that Isaac prophesied of coming Messiah. Isaac prophesied the godly line. Isaac prophesied the birthright.

Years ago, men used to go out west on covered wagons. And men dreamt of a time when they would not have those Conestoga wagons to travel in, that they would be able to travel by train. And men thought that perhaps one day we could connect the east and the west by a railroad called The Transcontinental Railroad. And so they got a plan and they began to lay the tracks for that Transcontinental Railroad. And a ribbon of steel began in the east, and a ribbon of steel began in the west, and closer and closer they got.



Till out there in the west, when they were both about to meet, they brought locomotives from each side there, and the people were there, the governors of the states were there, and they were laying the last ties and the last rails and the last spikes were being driven. They had one final spike, a golden spike. It was to be driven in with a silver hammer. And this was to connect the east and the west. And there came a time when the governor took that silver hammer and that golden spike and drove it in, and those locomotives began to blow with the steam, and the people shouted and the people applauded because now east and west were brought together.

Friend, man has been divided from Almighty God, and there is a chasm of sin. But the Lord Jesus Christ hung on a cross. And when they drove that last spike, not a golden spike, but a rusty nail into His hand, that warm, red blood began to flow down and drip off his elbows, down across his ribcage, from his feet, and down to the ground, and Jesus said, "It is finished." Nobody cheered. The demons of Hell mocked. But Jesus brought together my sin-sick soul and the fellowship of the Father, and on His cross He reconciled God and man. Did you know that's what Hebrews 11 verse 20 is talking about? "By faith, by faith Isaac blessed these boys of things to come." The Bible is a wonderful book. Now, are you willing by faith to receive by faith what Isaac saw by faith? Are you?

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. I wonder how many could say to me, "Pastor Rogers, I know that I know that I know that my sin is forgiven. I know that I'm saved, not because of emotion, not because of my good deeds, but because I have repented of my sin, I have trusted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, God's Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am a child of God, and I have a transformed life that testifies that I have been saved. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, if you can give me that testimony?"

Now, if you could not, if you don't have the absolute assurance, I don't want you to leave this auditorium today without it; there is no reason that you should. You can be saved and certain today if you'll trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I want to pray for those of you who could not. And I want to guide you in a prayer. You say, "Well, Pastor Rogers, if a person can know it, I want to know it; well you can know it. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." Are you ready? You ready to pray that prayer? I want you to pray this way, "Dear God, I'm a helpless, hopeless sinner. There's no way I can save myself, I deserve to go to Hell, and I will go to Hell if I don't get saved. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. You shed Your blood to pay my sin debt. I believe that You're the Son of God. I receive You by faith into my heart and into my life right now. Forgive my sin; I'm sorry for my sin. Forgive me, cleanse me. Cleanse me from every sin; cleanse me. Come into my life now, take control of my life, begin now to make me the person You want to me to be. Save me, Jesus." Pray that friend and mean it. "Save me, Lord Jesus." Did you ask Him? Did you? Then by faith, thank Him. Just by a sheer act of faith, "Thank You, Jesus, for saving me. I believe that you have. I receive it by faith, I'm not asking for a strange feeling, I'm not looking for a sign, I'm standing on Your Word and You cannot lie. Now, Lord Jesus, because You died for me I will live for You and I will make it public this morning. I will not be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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