

Genesis 27C (2011)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Gen. 27:24](#) And he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" And he said, "I am."

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

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

[Gen. 27:27](#) So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said,

I "See, the smell of my son
 Is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Finally, God will bless those who bless Jacob and curse those who curse him
 - That final statement is another reminder of the Abrahamic Covenant
 - But the entire prophetic blessing has been in keeping with that covenant
 - But again, these statements find their greatest fulfillment in Israel's future, and in particular in Christ Himself
 - Christ will be the ultimate fulfillment of this covenant and He will be the ruler that comes forth from Israel Who brings these promises about
- Isaac speaks all these statements with the power of God, and all these statements will come true...but they come true for Jacob
 - And yet Isaac is convinced in this moment that he is speaking them to Esau
 - In fact, take a second look at the blessing from Isaac's point of view
 - He is asking God to ensure that Esau is the most favored son, the one to gain the patriarchal authority in the family
 - Isaac wants God to give Esau all the things that God has already said Jacob will receive
 - And in this moment, the truth of Isaac's words are applied to the boy has chosen even as Isaac invoked God's name asking God to go against His own word
 - When you ask God to do something other than what God intends to do, what do you think will happen?
 - The answer is simple: God's will be done
 - In a sense, this blessing was a prayer, because it called upon God to act according to the words Isaac spoke
 - And Indeed God did, but yet not in the way Isaac expected
 - One more piece of evidence that God's sovereignty extends beyond anything we can even anticipate

- We remember God's own words

[Is. 55:8](#) "For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
I Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.

- As we end today, let's reflect on how flesh-driven this family has been so far
 - We mentioned last week that the entire narrative is driven by the senses of the flesh, with not a single person appealing to God
 - They are all talking about God, but no one takes time to talk to God
 - And instead they pay attention only to their human senses
 - The story begins with Isaac seeking Esau to feed him his favorite meal
 - Then we have Rebekah's ears hearing the exchange
 - Then she hatches a plan to fool her husband through his limited senses
 - Moving to Jacob, he listens to his mother's voice to lie and deceive his father
 - Finally, Isaac's own sense become his undoing, as they conspire against him
 - He can't see, but he uses his senses of hearing, and touch, and taste and smell to make his decisions
 - Taken together, he is flesh driven and not listening to the Lord
 - In the end, the Lord get's everything His way anyway
 - But because he follows his flesh, Isaac suffers great loss along the way
- Next week we finish the chapter