

God's Promised Blessing Despite Sin

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Preacher: Andrew Price

[0 : 00] I'm going to be reading from Genesis 26, verse 34, starting at verse 34 of Genesis 26. And that's almost the end of Genesis 26.

So you can just find that. This is a very dramatic reading, so follow along carefully. It's a great story. When Esau was 40 years old, he married Judith, daughter of Biri, the Hittite.

And also Basimath, daughter of Elon, the Hittite. They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah. 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 equipment, 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.

[1 : 24] 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 your 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 that 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, his mother, But my brother Esau is a hairy man, while I have 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.

[2 : 49] 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 goat skins.

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.

Isaac asked his son, How did you find it so quickly, my son? The Lord your God gave me success, he replied. Then Isaac said to Jacob, Come near, so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.

Hmm. Will he be discovered? Verse 22. Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

- [4 : 15] He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau. So he proceeded to bless him. Are you really my son Esau?
- He asked. I am, he replied. Then he said, My son, bring me some of the game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing.
- Jacob brought it to him, and he ate, and he brought some wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, Come here, my son, and kiss me.
- So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of the field that the Lord has blessed.
- May God give you heaven's dew and earth's richness, an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you.
- [5 : 23] Be Lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed, and those who bless you be blessed.
- After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father.
- Then he said to him, My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing. His father Isaac answered, asked him, Who are you?
- I am your son, he answered, your firstborn, Esau. Isaac trembled violently and said, Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me?
- I ate it just before you came and I blessed him, and indeed he will be blessed. When Esau heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, Bless me, me too, my father.
- [6 : 41] But he said, Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing. Esau said, Isn't he rightly named Jacob?
- This is the second time he has taken advantage of me. He took my birthright and now he has taken my blessing. Then he asked, Haven't you reserved any blessing for me?
- Isaac answered Esau, I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants and I have sustained him with grain and new wine.
- So what can I possibly do for you, my son? Esau said to his father, Do you only have one blessing, my father?
- Bless me too, my father. Then Esau wept aloud. His father Isaac answered him, Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above.
- [7 : 49] You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck. 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. Then I will kill my brother Jacob. When Rebekah was told what her oldest son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, Your brother Esau is planning to avenge himself by killing you.
- Now then, my son, do what I say. flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran. Stay with him for a little while until your brother's fury subsides.
- When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I'll send for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?
- Then Rebekah said to Isaac, I am disgusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living.

- [9 : 12] So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him, Do not marry a Canaanite woman.
- Go at once to Paddan Aram, to the house of your mother's father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.
- May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples.
- May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.
- Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way. And he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban, son of Bethuel, the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, who was the mother of Jacob and Esau.
- [10 : 25] Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there and that where he blessed him, he commanded him.
- that when he blessed him, he commanded him, do not marry a Canaanite woman and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram.
- Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac. So he went to Ishmael and married Mehalath, the sister of Neboeth and daughter of Ishmael, son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had.
- This is the word of the Lord. Well, what a story. It's a drama Hollywood would love.
- There's intrigue and deception as both parents concoct their plans. There's suspense and tension as Jacob is questioned by his father.
- [11 : 34] Will he get the blessing before he's busted? There's also plans of murder as Esau plots to kill his brother. There's even some humour.
- I mean, how hairy must Esau be that Jacob has to wear goatskin to pass for him? There's irony. Isaac wants to give his favourite son everything and ends up giving him nothing.
- And there's even an opening for a sequel. We're left wondering whether Jacob will ever return home and be reunited. It's a great story which is why I thought it would be worth reading in one hit but it is long, isn't it?
- I was always wondering at this point whether we should all get up and kind of do some stretches or anything. So what we're going to have to do this morning is not what we normally do which is where I take you through each paragraph or verse so you can see for yourselves what God's word says rather than my word.
- That's still the best way I think but today I'll have to summarise some things for you and show you the big picture before drawing some application for us. So we're going to start with point one on the outlines how God's promised blessings are kept despite this dysfunctional family and we're going to look through each character in this family starting with Esau at the beginning of our reading.
- [12 : 53] So we're at chapter 26 verse 34 and 35. If you look there in your Bibles we're told that Esau is 40 years old when he gets married. And that's the same age his father Isaac was when he got married which is not old at all by the way is it?
- 40 is still young right? But unlike his father Isaac Esau does not marry from within Abraham's extended family you know the family who knew about the real God.
- Rather he marries a Hittite woman from Canaan who worshipped other gods. It seems Esau doesn't care about staying within God's chosen people Abraham's extended family.

He could have waited after all Jacob is the same age they're twins remember and Jacob is not yet married. So he could have waited to get married from amongst Abraham's extended family but it seems he not only doesn't care but is ruled by his earthly appetites like we saw a couple of weeks ago where he sold his birthright for a bowl of lentil stew if you remember.

Well here it's appetite again so much so that he's not content with one wife that marries two Canaanite wives. Of course Isaac is not innocent either he could have found a wife for his son just as Abraham did for him.

[14:17] What's more he showed favouritism towards Esau we saw this a couple of weeks ago on the next slide where we're told that Esau was loved by Isaac because Isaac loved his wild game his hunting and so on.

In fact we're told six times in our passage that Isaac had a taste for this tasty food he seems to be ruled by his earthly appetite too perhaps this is where Esau gets it from.

But now chapter 27 verse 1 Isaac is blind and in verses 2 to 4 he does not know when he will die but thinks it will be soon. In actual fact Isaac lives for another 80 years but anyway he thinks he's about to die and so he tells Esau to prepare some tasty food so he can give Esau his death bed blessing.

Now these death bed blessings seem to be a bit like a last will and testament and what the father says is what happens. It's hard to know why this or how this works perhaps it's because the blessing the father gives often came with the inheritance or the resources to make the blessings come true or more likely it's because these blessings are inspired by God and done in his presence so verse 7 tells us that he wants to bless Esau in the presence of the Lord and so God will make these blessings come true or perhaps both either way it was binding and prophetic and so it was the blessing you wanted to get and yet it was also customary for the father to call all his sons you see while the eldest son had the birthright and inheritance and would get the greatest blessing there would still be some blessings and gifts for the other children it's what

Abraham did with Isaac and Ishmael and the other kids he had and that's why later on Esau says on the next slide he says haven't you reserved any blessing for me because normally there would be some left over for the other sons but what does Isaac do at the beginning of our chapter 27 he calls Esau to secretly bless him with everything and we know it's secret because Jacob's not called and in verse 5 Rebecca only finds out because she's listening in so why does Isaac do this well remember what God promised before these two boys were born two weeks ago we saw it's on the next slide from Genesis 25 it was the promise that there would be twins and the older Esau would serve the younger Jacob which means Jacob would get all the blessings including being served by his brother but father

[17:13] Isaac didn't like that he wanted his favorite Esau to get the blessings and be served and so he calls Esau secretly to pronounce all these blessings in other words Isaac tries to outwit God he tries to go against God's promise some time ago I promised my kids they could have one chocolate biscuit but one of them tried to outwit me and secretly take two when I confronted them they asked how did you know I said I see all no I said I just counted how many were in the packet but God does see all so he's not going to be outwitted by this scheme is he his promise is not going to be thwarted by Isaac and in fact his promised blessing will still come even despite Rebecca and Jacob sin who don't deserve it so in verse 5 to 6 the author very cleverly reminds us as he moves on to Rebecca of both parents favoritism notice how the author says in verse 5 and 6 of chapter 27 there he says listening as

Isaac spoke to his son Esau and then verse 6 Rebecca said to her son Jacob we might do that with our kids you know if one of them is really naughty that's your son you deal with him but the point here is not that it's that Rebecca is just as guilty of favoritism as Isaac is and so rather than trusting God's promise that Esau would serve Jacob her favoritism drives her to deceive she comes up with an elaborate plan to cook some tasty food for Isaac and to dress her Jacob up as his Esau so she puts Esau's clothes on Jacob and puts some hairy goat skin over his smooth skin and as she acts as the head of the house in verse 8 she says listen carefully to what I tell you which is literally obey my voice and then later on in verse 11 and 12 Jacob is not so sure about this he's worried about getting cursed instead of blessed and so verse 13 his mother said to him my son let the curse fall on me just do what

I say in other words literally actually obey my voice and yet what happens at the end you know Rebecca's wearing the pants of the family but do you remember what happens at the end when Esau is after Jacob it's on the next slide this is what Rebecca says to Jacob when your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him hang on a second didn't Rebecca just tell Jacob twice to obey her this is her plan she subtly shifts the blame doesn't she she's a master of manipulation she'd make a great politician perhaps this is where Jacob gets it from after all Jacob's name you remember means heel grabber which is a euphemism for someone who deceives and man is Jacob a good and skillful deceiver not good as in positive but skillful deceiver so down in verse 19 of chapter 27 he lies the first time to his father and says yep

I am Esau your first born Isaac verse 20 he's not so sure about this so he says how did you find it so quickly you know the game that you prepared my food for notice his response oh well the Lord your God gave me success he replied how quick a thinker is that what a save it's better than the old oh fell off the back of a truck this is the second lie Isaac is still not sure so he questions Jacob again in verses 22 to 24 so verse 22 Jacob went close to his father Isaac who touched him and said the voice is the voice of Jacob but the hands are the hands of Esau he did not recognize him for his hands were hairy like his brother Esau so he proceeded to bless him although he hesitates and says Jacob's third lie but notice he's now realized it's his voice giving him away and so he changes tact again and he answers his father with as few words as possible did you notice that he just went

I am and kept quiet he is a skillful deceiver and totally undeserving of any blessing isn't he Isaac is still not totally convinced so in verse 26 he asked Jacob to come closer and then it's then when Isaac smells Esau's original country road clothes that he decides to bless him so verse 27 he went to him and kissed him when Isaac caught the smell of his clothes he blessed him and said ah the smell of my son is like the smell of the country field that the Lord has blessed may God give you heaven's due and earth's richness an abundance of grain and new wine may nations serve you and peoples bow down to you be Lord over your brothers including your cousins and may the sons of your mother like Esau bow down to you here is God's promise may those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed

[22 : 54] Isaac thought he had outwitted God and thwarted God's promise but it's Isaac who has been outwitted and blessed Jacob just as God promised the older Esau would indeed serve the younger Jacob you see despite all Isaac's scheming God's promises are kept aren't they he even works through their sinful schemes to keep them and what's more despite all Jacob's sin Jacob is still blessed even though he doesn't deserve it so we might start to wonder does that mean it doesn't matter if we sin I mean God's promises are going to still be kept we still get blessed well of course it matters sin still matters because it leaves an aftermath of mess so point to an outline and again we'll see it with each of these characters firstly with

Isaac and Esau's heartache and as I read from verse 30 see if you can hear their heartache so at verse 30 Isaac just finishes blessing Jacob he scarcely left when Esau came in at verse 31 he says my father please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing verse 32 his father Isaac asked him who are you I'm your son he answered your first born Esau Esau who

Isaac answered Esau I've made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants and I have sustained him with grain and new wine so what can I possibly do for you my son Esau said to his father do you have only one blessing my father bless me too my father then Esau wept aloud his father Isaac answered him your dwelling will be away from the earth's you will live by the sword and you will serve your brother but when you grow restless you will throw his yoke from around your neck Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessings his father had given him and said to himself the days of mourning for my father are near then I will kill my brother Jacob Isaac blessing for Esau is not much of a blessing is it it Edomites will indeed serve the nation that comes from

Jacob that's Israel and they do that's what happened in history the Edomites served the Israelites until about 80 years after Israel was divided into those two kingdoms if you remember and then the Edomites were able to throw off Israel's rule and have their own king but did you hear their heartache that of Isaac and Esau because of Isaac's sinful scheming to bless Esau with everything he ends up giving him nothing here's the tragedy of this drama if Isaac didn't work against God's promises then Esau could have been blessed with something and if Esau didn't despise his birthright or let himself be ruled by his earthly appetite then he would have had a place amongst God's people serving Israel as God promised yes but serving and sharing in the blessings with Israel I mean if you're playing on a team a sports team and you serving the captain you don't mind serving the captain and doing what he says or she says if your team is winning do you because you share in the win well that could have been the

Edomites but because Esau despised his birthright and didn't care about being part of God's people until it was too late they get nothing no birthright inheritance no blessing no place amongst God's people what's more while Esau and Jacob later reconciled the bitterness that began here in verse 41 took root amongst the Edomites such that they lived by the sword in constant hostility towards Israel until that bitterness actually consumed them and now the nation of the Edomites no longer exists today over the last couple of weeks I've mentioned our new family member Ruby the rabbit well the latest in the Ruby saga is that she has sinned she was supposed to use the litter box for the toilet but instead she left the puddle on the floor boards of our laundry probably shouldn't be confessing this because it's a church house but anyway for the record we cleaned it up but the point is her sin literally made a mess and that's what sin does and not just for

[28 : 25] Isaac and Esau but for Jacob and Rebecca too because in verses 42 to 45 it leads to flee from Esau now in fact in the remaining story we're repeatedly told that Jacob had to go to Laban in Paddan Aram I don't know if you realized or heard that repetition as Cynthia was reading just so we don't miss the fact that Rebecca sin has helped to tear her family apart if she just trusted God then Jacob could have stayed and he would have been blessed anyway God keeps his promises what's more in verse 46 it seems Rebecca is still manipulating her husband she no longer trusts Isaac to protect her favorite Jacob from Esau so she uses the one thing that she and her husband have in common their dislike for dodgy Hittites and so she says I'm going to lose it if Jacob marries a Hittite why don't you send him away to get a different wife really to save him from

Jacob does but it can't have been a healthy marriage where one person is constantly manipulating the other especially when she didn't need to because in chapter 28 verse 3 and 4 if you look there Isaac now willingly blesses Jacob again this time conferring God's promises to Abraham do you remember the lob promises land offspring blessing he confers those promises now upon Jacob he even says in verse 4 that may God give you the blessing of Abraham which was particularly the land in this case but like a couple of weeks ago the author again ends with Esau verses 6 to 9 he hears that his current wives his Hittite wives displease dad and so he goes and marries his step cousin the daughter of Ishmael who was part of Abraham's family to try and please his dad it seems perhaps he can still earn a blessing but it's futile because it's all too late you see sin matters because it causes an aftermath of mess doesn't it in all these lives but what does all this mean for us here today point three well first and foremost

God's promised blessing comes despite our sin and deserving you see just as God blessed Jacob despite his sin so also us God's promised blessing of life eternal and a heavenly inheritance is not based on how good we are but like with Jacob it's based on God's grace God's undeserved generosity hence our series title God's sovereign grace and this is great news for us because we are all sinful like Jacob aren't we from time to time we deceive we tell white lies or half truths which are really full lies not to mention we've not treated God as well God in our lives all the time we live our way instead of his and we try and justify it and yet God's promise to bless us with eternal life and heavenly inheritance will not be stopped by our sin how good is that in fact so much so he even sent his son

Jesus to die on the cross to pay for our sin so that we can still receive this blessing on the next slide Paul puts it like this in 1 Timothy he says Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst says Paul I was shown mercy so that in me the worst of sinners Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for all of us who would believe in Christ and receive the blessing of eternal life Paul says he's the worst of sinners I think Jacob could have given him a good run for his money but if God can still bless Jacob and Paul despite their sin then he can do the same for us can't he for all of us who believe and so the first question again for us this morning is do you believe in Jesus do you believe in Jesus it's the only way to receive

God's blessing of eternal life and heavenly inheritance and for us who do then we are to be thankful that not just because our past sins haven't stopped God's blessing coming to us but because our ongoing sins won't stop it either we can have ongoing forgiveness every time we ask it doesn't mean sin no longer matters it does it causes a mess on the floor of our lives and those of others and most of all it grieves God but it won't stop God from his promised blessing of eternal life which is incredibly gracious of God isn't it and it ought to make us incredibly thankful to God second though while our sin won't stop God's promised blessing we can be tempted to throw it away and so Esau stands as a warning like we saw a couple of weeks ago after all our author ends with Esau here just as he ended with

[34 : 00] Esau in chapter 25 and so the New Testament picks up Esau as a warning on the next slide it says in Hebrews chapter 12 see that no one is sexually immoral or godless like Esau who for a single meal sold his birth inheritance rights as the oldest son after it that's chapter 25 two weeks ago and this is today after it as you know when he wanted to inherit this blessing he was rejected even though he sought the blessing with tears he could not change what he had done this warning here from Hebrews is written to Christians because God uses these warnings to keep us as his people and the warning is don't be an Esau I was shaking hands this morning at the door and one person came up to me and said do you realize my real name is Esau I was talking about the other one not you don't don't don't don't be this Esau here where he traded his heavenly inheritance for an earthly appetite whether that earthly appetite is money career comfort family fitness another guy whose desire for fitness many kept missing church on

Sunday mornings to go cycling and he realized that after a while he realized he was starting to throw away his heavenly inheritance for fitness so he repented it could be an appetite for relaxation or fixing up the house or kids sport which means we keep missing church when teaching our kids the routine of church is really what's good for them or I've seen some do it with prayer you know their appetite for a yes answer to their prayer was so great that when God didn't answer the prayer the way they wanted it they became bitter and gave away their heavenly inheritance thinking it's not worth it but it is worth it I mean which is more valuable an answer yes for a job now or an eternity in paradise later a yes answer to healing now or an eternity in glory with a perfect body and so we're to watch out that no earthly appetite drives us to despise our heavenly inheritance which is worth so much more and thirdly and finally

God's promises cannot be stopped by worldly schemes remember Isaac's scheme to outwit God and stop his promise it didn't work did it it could not stop God's promises and it's the same with Jesus so on our last slide we see from Acts chapter 4 that Herod and Pilate met together with some people of Israel and they conspired here's the scheming they conspired against Jesus but notice the last bit they did what your power God's power and will had decided beforehand should happen anyway you see no matter what conspiracies or schemes there are to outwit God or thwart his plans they won't work God will still accomplish them even if he has to work through these sinful schemes to do so so we need not fear when certain lobby groups conspire to teach our kids on biblical values in schools or fret when our worldly schemes seek to thwart our religious freedoms and so on are sure sign petitions pursue legal avenues to stand for biblical truth but we need not fear nor fret for God's promises including to build his church will not be stopped

I was talking with a Chinese couple last week who are studying here in Melbourne at a Bible college and they're exploring they're wanting to stay in Melbourne to do ministry when he's finished because the church they started back home was disbanded by the government and they had a ban placed on them which means they're not allowed to enter they're not allowed to go back home for at least 10 years his parents his dad was dying they applied to go back on compassionate grounds denied his father has since passed away they couldn't even see him and yet despite these schemes the church there is still growing God's purposes and promises cannot be outwitted or thwarted by worldly schemes so we need not fear nor fret it's a great story isn't it it's long thank you for bearing with me but it teaches us great truths that God graciously blesses us with an heavenly inheritance despite the fact we don't deserve it so be thankful and that we're not to trade it away from any earthly appetite so be watchful and that his plans and purposes will not be thwarted by any worldly schemes so don't be fearful let's pray we might live in light of these great truths let's pray let's pray