DATE: November 2, 2008

TEXT: Genesis 25:19-34 and Genesis 27

TITLE: "Genesis XVII: Jacob and Esau"

Before I launch into our study of Jacob and Esau, let me remind everyone of the overall purpose of Genesis. Genesis is the record of God working with humanity. As a matter of fact the entire Bible is the record of God working with humanity... it just begins in Genesis. Remember, God tried to reveal himself to all of humanity. He did so in the Garden of Eden. He did so in the world before Noah. Humanity again and again chose to ignore and reject the revealed Creator. Therefore God changed tactics. God decided to reveal Himself to humanity through one family and one people group. God desired that through that concentrated revelation the entire world would see the truth and the light of God. He chose the family of Abraham and his descendants who later became know as the Israelites. But we need to understand this truth... just because God chose the family of Abraham does not mean they were free from the sin that affected the entire world. I do believe the presence of God tempered their sin.... but it certainly did not eliminate it. We see this truth in our story this morning of Isaac, Rebekeh, Jacob and

Esau. I want us to look at each person and see a number of lessons from each personality that we see. I warn you in advance, most of the lesson are negative lessons.

Study # 1 Note the lesson taught by the parents Rebekah and Isaac.

Lesson # 1 The birth of Jacob and Esau was divinely planned. *Genesis* 25:21,23

Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

God has a plan. Once again, as we saw in the story of Sarah, the conception of the twins was by God's hand. At birth God knew Jacob would become the child of promise and esau would reject the promise. God has a plan. God has a plan to reveal himself to humanity. God does indeed bless Jacob. Jacob later becomes Israel and is the father of the tribes of Israel. Truthfully, as you read our text this morning you will see that Jacob is far from a perfect man. But in spite of mans imperfection God has a plan. That was true 3000 years ago and that is true today. As soon as you surrender your life to Jesus Christ... truly surrender and make Him Lord of your life.... you become his child. But, as we can all testify to, that does not make us perfect.

The process of perfection will take an entire lifetime and will only be accomplished when we enter His presence. But in spite of our continued imperfection, in spite of our continued sin, God has a plan for each and every one of us. God is sovereign. His will can not be thwarted.

Lesson # 2 Notice the poor parenting of Jacob and Rebekah. *Genesis 25:27,28*

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

The favoritism of the parents was clearly evident to the sons. The favoritism clearly destroyed the family. Let me jump to the end of the story. After the deceit of Jacob, what happened to this family? Jacob had to flee for his life to his uncle Laben. Rebekah said she would send for him after Isaac died and after Esau was no longer angry. We know this fact. This never happened. Jacob spent 20 years in Haran.... miserably trying to marry the woman he loved. When Jacob finally returned to the promised land.... called to return by God himself, Rebekah was dead. As far as we know, Rebekah never saw her son alive again. I believe we can be sure the relationship between Rebekah and Esau was also destroyed at the time of the deception. The family was destroyed because of the favoritism they showed to their children.

Again, that is a practical lesson for us today. Parents love your children equally. Parents appreciate your children regardless of their skills and abilities. Kim and I learned this very early as parents. Erin and Adam were very, very different. Academically they were different. Erin breezed through school. Adam hated school and had to work every day of his life. Kim and I had to be very careful we did not base value of natural academic skills.

Erin and Adam were very, very different in personality. Adam was far more caring and naturally loving than Erin. Erin had to work to empathize... it was natural for Adam. We had to not base our value on natural empathy. I could go on and on and on. I am sure you could give me example after example in your own family. As parents we must allow children to grow naturally and affirm their value as they are.

Lesson # 3 Jacob and Esau attempted to manipulate the will of God. Again this prophecy at the birth of the twins....(*Genesis 25:21)*

The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

Both parents tried to manipulate God. Isaac tried to ignore this word from God... Rebekah

tried to force the word of God into her timing. We saw before that the result was horrible for everyone involved.

God reveals his Word to people today. It is called the Bible. What do most people do with the word of God? They either ignore it... or they try to twist it to fit their desires. I remember a commercial that was on T.V. last year. I think it was a commercial for Subaru. It had a car on the road staying in its lane. The voice said something like this... "all of life wants you to stay between the lines." Then you see the car zip off the road and go cross country and the voice says. "But now you can break free and not stay between the lines." Makers of commercials are smart. They understand that people like to see themselves as free spirits desiring adventure in life. But I think the more difficult choice is to stay between the lines that have been established by God for the good of you and me. It is difficult to allow someone else to be Lord of your life. Our natural sinful nature says... "no one can tell me how to think.... no one can tell me how to act.... no one can tell me what is right and what is wrong."

Isaac and Rebekah wanted to manipulate life to their own will. The end result was misery

for every one. They did not trust God. The truth is this... God cares for His children. God Watches over His children. Jesus made this promise in *Luke 11:9ff*

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 11"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

We have a God who desires to give his children His riches. He gives on His terms... not on our terms.... but he does desire to give. We need to trust. We need to surrender our will... we need to surrender our timing into the hands of the Lord... and relax and discover the joy the Lord desires for his children. Isaac and Rebekah never discovered this. Sadly, because of their parenting either do Jacob and Esau

Study # 2 Note the lesson taught by Esau. The choice of the world will destroy the spiritual gifts the Lord desires to give to His children. Esau was not a nice man. *Hebrews 12:16 gives us this description of Esau*

See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son

Genesis 26:34 tells us this about Esau

When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

Remember last week we saw the terrible sin of marrying a Canaanite woman. Esau married two. He ignored God. He ignored his parents. The picture we get in scripture is a brutish, uncaring man.

Esau was a man who did not care about God or worship the Lord. We see this in the story of the birthright. Let me read *Hebrews 25:29-34*

29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. 30 He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.) 31 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright." 32 "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?" 33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

Talk about the need for instant gratification. Esau was hungry and tired. Jacob, you know the mama boy, was making soup... a red lentil soup. "Give me soup" say Esau. Jacob says "sell me your birthright." And much to Jacob's amazement, Esau agrees. The question is this... What is the "birthright? My <u>*Preachers Outline*</u> gives this answer

The birthright probably included the following: the son became the spiritual head of the

family. There was a sense in which he was the high priest of the family. He was God's representative for the spiritual welfare for the family..... Note that the birthright included both privilege and responsibility. Both rights and duties. In relation to Jacob, note that material wealth was not what he was after in the birthright, at least it was not his primary interest.

Esau had no interest in the spiritual responsibility in the family. He was willing to sell it for a bowl of stew. Jacob was indeed the man of God in this family. Esau's ends up with his greatest desire was to kill his brother. He had uncontrolled anger.

In the end Esau became the father of a nation called the Edomites. This was a Canaanite nation that tried to destroy Moses and the Israelites. Esau, became the patriarch of a nation opposed to God.

And so we end with yet another lesson on parenting. God continues to give birthright to his children. The birthright is given to the husband and father. He is called to be the spiritual leader of the family. This is a place of privilege and responsibility. Let us follow the example of Jacob and not the example of Esau. Let us not give up our birthright in order to receive instant gratification and follow the way of the world. Let us lead our families in the way of the Lord. Then we will receive the blessing of the Lord.

AMEN