

Parenting in Crisis

Genesis 25:24-29; 27:41-45

Sermon Outline

A. Prayer Answered (vs. 25-26):

1. Delivered – God blesses Rebekah by opening up her womb.
2. Fulfilled - God had blessed Rebekah to come to her full term. She had a healthy pregnancy without any doctor visits.
3. Behold – Moses wants us to take special note that Rebekah was having twins.
4. Came forth – The birth of Esau was a complete success.
5. Came forth – Jacob's birth was continuous. Not sure if the change in tense represents Esau's birth was complete but Jacob's birth would be for generations meaning eternal.
6. Holding on – Jacob seized Esau's heel as if he is going to fasten himself to his brother's heel.
7. Called Jacob – There was a specific purpose for calling her second son Jacob.

B. The Absence of Leadership (vs. 27):

1. Grew up; Greater, full-grown - Grew up means that they were now fully grown but will still continue to live.
2. Became a skillful hunter; To be – Esau was continuously an expert hunter, and this would be something that would characterize his life.
3. Peaceful – Jacob did not like confrontation but was harmless, the complete opposite of his brother. He was content with managing the day to day responsibilities of the household.
4. Living; dwelling; abide – Jacob was not an outside person. He remained at home most of the time.
5. Two sons at odds – They knew before these two boys were born that they were at odds with each other. The family then needs to be structured so that they grow up to build as best a relationship as possible. This did not happen. They went with the flow and did what was natural. This leads to problems between two nations and centuries of conflict.
6. Isaac loved Esau – Isaac had a strong emotional connection with Esau spending a lot of time showing him tenderness and affection. He did not do so, with Jacob.
 - a) Isaac's plans to bless Esau, he was ignoring the plain word of God

about which son should have supremacy (25:23). Isaac's blessing of Jacob, which was intended for Esau, pictured Jacob as master of his brothers (27:29; cf. 25:23). When Esau came in later and Isaac realized what had happened, he trembled because he saw the hand of God in what he had unknowingly done (27:33). The Nuzi tablets attest to the fact that an oral blessing was legally binding. Once given, the blessing could not be successfully contested (27:33). Afterward, Esau lamented loudly, hated Jacob, and made plans to kill him.

7. Taste for game – Isaac enjoys hunting and eating wild game.
8. Rebekah loved Jacob – Rebekah tenderly and affectionately loved Jacob.

C. Family Chaos (Genesis 27:41-45):

1. Esau bore a grudge - Esau harbored animosity, hostility, and long-term resentment towards his brother.
 - a) Jacob had no guilt—only fear—regarding the plan.
 - b) “Grudge” (*śāṭam*) is a deep-seated anger that results in violent retaliation (v. 41; cf. 49:23; Ps 55:3[4]). At the death of Jacob, the same term describes the “grudge” that Joseph’s brothers feared he might hold against them (50:15). That Esau felt free to act only at the death of his father exhibited reverence for his father, a respect that Jacob does not yet possess (35:27–29). Or, less charitably, we might cynically conclude that Esau worries of potential recompense (as with Cain, 4:14).^[1]
2. Because of the blessing – Isaac gave God’s gift of favor and good will to Jacob.
 - a) The birthright concerned only the material inheritance from the parents. The inheritance was divided into the number of sons plus one. The eldest son then received a double share. This was a customary practice throughout the ancient Near East. The stew buys from Esau that additional share (probably not his entire inheritance). There are no examples in the known literature from the ancient Near East of such a deal being made. The closest is in the legal materials from Nuzi, where one brother sells some already inherited property to one of his brothers.^[2]
3. Blessed – The blessing provided Jacob prosperity and goodwill because of God’s divine favor. This leads to happiness.

- a) The ancient law of primogeniture provided that, under ordinary circumstances, the younger of two sons would be subservient to the older. God's election of the younger son highlights the fact that God's people are the product not of natural or worldly development but His sovereign intervention in the affairs of men. Part of this verse is quoted in Rom. 9:10-12 as an example of God's sovereign right to do "whatever pleases him" (Ps. 115:3) – not in an arbitrary way (Rom. 9:14), but according to His own perfect will.
4. Esau said to himself – Esau began to conceive in his mind what he would do to his brother.
 5. Mourning – What he planned to do would take place after he loudly with high emotion grieves his father's death.
 6. Killed – Was not just planning to take his brother's life. He was planning to continuously with much violence slaughter him.
 7. The words of Esau was report; Tell – A messenger came to Rebekah and reveal to her what Esau was endlessly planning to do to his brother.
 8. Sent – Rebekah made every effort to persistently get Jacob's attention.
 9. Called – Rebekah in a sustained loud manner sought to get her son's attention. It seems like Rebekah took Esau very seriously, maybe because she knew he was a good hunter (makes sense when you read Genesis 33) and meant what he said. She spoke continuously loud to the messenger to make sure her son got the message.
 10. Said – Rebekah endlessly keep saying to Jacob what she needed for him to do because of his brother.
 - a) Rebekah would never see her favorite son again, and Jacob would have to face life without father, mother, or brother. And what about God's plans for the kingdom? How could they be worked out in the face of such selfishness, intrigue, and deceit? The Lord of hosts is not to be thwarted by men's opposition, failure, or lack of faith. He is able to make His will prevail in spite of all.
 11. Behold – Rebekah wanted Jacob to give his full attention to what she was talking about.
 12. Console; Comforted – Jacob is told that Esau is trying to comfort his anger and resentment by planning to kill him. This is how he is going to make himself better.
 13. Kill – Esau's animosity was so strong that he desired to violently slaughter his brother like a soldier killing at war and destroying a nation.
 - a) The expression a few days is ironic, considering the great length, twenty years, of Jacob's subsequent sojourn (31:38, 41). Bereaved: Rebekah would lose both her sons if Esau killed Jacob—the one to

death and the other, like Cain, to exile. Sadly, she died before Jacob returned (31:18; 35:27–29).^[3]

14. Obey; heard – Rebekah commanded Jacob to provide her his undivided attention so that he fully understands what she is saying.
15. Arise; To establish – Rebekah commands to organize himself and put in place plans to leave and stay with her brother.
 - a) Her plan never materializes, however, for it is not Rebekah but God who beckons Jacob to return home (31:3, 13), and it is not the subsiding of Esau’s wrath but the anger of Laban and his sons that prompts Jacob to leave (31:1–2). Upon his return to Canaan, he reconciles with “his father Isaac” (35:27), but there is no mention of Rebekah except her burial (49:31). She does in a sense lose both her sons on that regretful day.^[4]
16. Flee to Haran – Rebekah commands him to move so fast it would be like a shadow disappearing from a person.
17. Stay; Abide – Jacob needs to remain with Rebekah’s brother, settle in completely until all that Esau plans to do is gone. Her deception, a father and mother’s favoritism has caused two brothers to be at odds and parents to now have a splintered family. Rebekah knew that it would be a few days. She just lost her son.
 - a) *For a while* – 20 years, as it turned out (31:38,41).
18. Fury; wrath – Rebekah’s interpretation of Esau’s anger was that it was a full blown rage.
19. Subsides; Deny; Turn away – Rebekah literally believed that the relationship these brothers had would come back. She obviously did not understand our own son Esau since she had given too much of our time to Jacob. She did not understand that in Jacob’s mind he had nothing else to live for with his birthright and blessing gone forever.
20. Your brother’s anger – Rebekah believed that Esau’s intensely high emotional state would calm down and be back to normal. Again, she did not understand how her deception was the straw that broke the camel’s back.
 - a) *Both of you* – Either Jacob and Isaac or Jacob and Esau, who would become a target for blood revenge if he killed Jacob (2 Sam. 14:6-7).
 - b) Rebekah expresses the concern that she might lose both in one day. This could either refer to losing both Isaac and Jacob, that is, Isaac dies and Jacob is killed by Esau; or losing both Jacob and Esau, that is, Jacob would be killed and Esau, as his murderer, would either have to flee or end up the victim of blood vengeance.^[5]

21. Subsides; Deny; Turn away – Rebekah believed that everything would be back to normal. They just need some time apart.
22. Forget what you did to him – Rebekah believed that Esau would lose sight of how significant of all that took place and soon overlook it. Esau did make bad decisions about the wives he selected (26:34-35) and was a wild man. Again she demonstrated that she did not understand him.
23. What you did to him; To do, Deal - Rebekah believes that Esau is going to eventually overlook what she now claims Jacob skillfully and creatively worked hard to conceive to gain his father's blessing. This took a lot of work because Isaac loved Esau and only had one blessing to provide. Please note she said 'you' did to him.
24. What you did to him; To do, Deal - Leadership was now in the hands of her son because of the parent's failure. This is an act that is completely set in place.
25. What you did to him; To do, Deal – It will take an act of God for these two brothers to live at peace (Genesis 32:24-33:17).

^[1] Mathews, K. A. (2005). *Genesis 11:27–50:26* (Vol. 1B, p. 437). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^[2] Matthews, V. H., Chavalas, M. W., & Walton, J. H. (2000). *The IVP Bible background commentary: Old Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ge 25:28-34). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

^[3] Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary* (p. 51). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

^[4] Mathews, K. A. (2005). *Genesis 11:27–50:26* (Vol. 1B, pp. 437–438). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^[5] Matthews, V. H., Chavalas, M. W., & Walton, J. H. (2000). *The IVP Bible background commentary: Old Testament* (electronic ed., Ge 27:45). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.