

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

Sermon Nine – “Lessons From A Dysfunctional Family”

Texts: Hebrews 11:20; Genesis 25-27

INTRODUCTION: Isaac was the only son of Abraham by Sarah (Genesis 21:1-5). His name means laughter. His supernatural birth would be occasioned by laughter and joy (Genesis 17:17; 18:9-15; 21:8). Genesis 18:9-15 tells us that the Lord appeared unto Abraham in the plain of Mamre and told him that Sarah would have a son. Sarah laughed in mockery and unbelief (Genesis 18:12-15).

Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old (Genesis 21:5; 17:17). His mother's skeptical laughter was turned into joy and exultation. The next event about Isaac's life is his weaning according to Middle Eastern custom, when he was about two years old (Genesis 21:8). Abraham made a great feast as an expression of his joy. Ishmael found no occasion for rejoicing since his birthright was being taken from him. Next, we read about Isaac being offered up as a sacrifice to God (Genesis 22).

After this event a long gap occurs and we hear nothing of Isaac until his marriage to Rebekah.

- 1) When Isaac was thirty-seven years old, his mother died.
- 2) Abraham's servant set out to find a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24).
- 3) Genesis 24 is the longest chapter in the book of Genesis. It is the story of how Rebekah became Isaac's wife. Why?
 - a) The chapter emphasizes the separation of God's people from the world.
 - b) This manner of selecting a life mate is not used in our culture, but all of the principles still apply (We must want God's will, we must pray and seek God's guidance, and we must be willing to obey, and be alert to what God is doing).

Isaac was the next link to God's chain of blessing that would culminate with the birth of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, his home life was a disappointment to God.

I. LOOK AT THE FAILURES OF A DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

A. Look at the Sinful, Unspiritual Father (Isaac).

1. Isaac had become a carnal, sensual, and worldly man.
2. He was more concerned about the things of the world than spiritual things.
3. When he was 137 years of age, Isaac believed that he was going to die.

- a. He lived another forty-three years.
- b. He actually died at 180 years of age.
4. However, convinced that he was going to die, Isaac decided to make out his will.
5. There was one special thing that he had to pass along – the patriarchal blessing. It involved the family **property**, the family **priesthood**, and the family **pedigree** (the right to be in the direct line of the Messiah).
6. The **birthright** was the privilege, advantages and responsibilities of the Israelites. It normally was given to the firstborn son.
7. The firstborn was the object of special affection to his parents and inherited special rights and privileges.
 - a. Genesis 25:31, 32; Deuteronomy 21:15-17
 - b. The firstborn received a **double portion** of the estate.

B. Look at the Scheming, Unsurrendered Mother (Rebekah – Genesis 27:5-17).

C. Notice the Subtle, Unscrupulous (Shady) Son (Jacob – Genesis 27:18-29).

D. Look at the Sorry, Unsaved Sibling (Esau – Genesis 27:34-38).

1. He thought that the spiritual things could be bought and sold like a commodity.

II. LOOK AT THE DISCIPLINED FATHER (Isaac – Genesis 27:33-40)

A. Isaac realized that he had been deceived by Jacob.

B. “Isaac trembled very exceedingly” – this means that Isaac trembled because he realized that God had sovereignly overruled Isaac’s own selfish plan to give the blessing to Esau (Genesis 27:33).

1. Isaac shook all over. In other words, he trembled with a great trembling.
2. Isaac was no longer interested in Esau’s savory meat.
3. He was shaken to the very depths of his soul.
4. The full weight of the conviction of the Holy Spirit came down upon him.
5. Notice what happens when Esau pleaded with Isaac to change his mind and to give him what he had just given to Jacob – **the blessing of the firstborn, the birthright.**
 - a. Isaac refused to change his mind. Isaac straightened himself up.
 - b. His dim eyes saw beyond the darkness, and he said: “. . . yea, and he shall be blessed.” (Genesis 27:33)
 - c. Look at Hebrews 12:16-17 with me, *“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

d. In essence, Isaac said the blessing of God stands!

III. LOOK AT THE FORECAST OF A DETERMINED FUTURE (Genesis 28:1-4)

A. God's plans and purposes will be accomplished regardless of what man does. God is never out of business.

B. Man may rule, but God will overrule (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28, 29).

C. God is a sovereign God (Psalm 47:8; 93:1; 96:1-10; 99:1; 146:10).

1. Were these characters responsible for what they did? **Absolutely!**
2. Was Isaac wrong to be sensual and sinful? **Yes.**
3. Was Rebekah wrong to scheme? **Yes.**
4. Was Jacob wrong to connive? **Yes.**
5. Was Esau wrong to despise the birthright? **Yes.**
6. Yet over it all, God was working. God was ruling (Proverbs 19:21; Psalm 33:10). **What a mighty God we serve!**

D. How does this apply to us today? What God has said will not be nullified by man's decisions or actions (Numbers 23:19).

1. God made a promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).
2. God gave the blessing to Abraham.
3. Abraham gave the blessing to Isaac.
4. Isaac gave the blessing to Jacob.
5. Jacob gave the blessing to his son, Judah.
6. Out of Judah came the house of Jesse.
7. Out of the house of Jesse came the house of David.
8. Out of the house of David came the lineage of Mary and Joseph.
9. Out of the lineage of Mary and Joseph came the Lord Jesus Christ.

E. What lessons can we learn from a dysfunctional family?

1. Dysfunctional families produce dysfunctional children.
2. A father's priorities often determine the family function.
3. Parents have great power to bless or curse their children (we need to pray for them).
4. We cannot always choose for our children.
 - a. God has given children a will.

- b. Sometimes parents take credit for good children and sometimes they take the blame for bad children.
- c. What about Proverbs 22:6?
 - i. This is a proverb, not a promise.
 - ii. A proverb is a principle which if generally applied, brings a general result.
- 5. No matter what happens in society, man's failure cannot nullify God's sovereignty.

CONCLUSION: *"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."* (Hebrews 11:20). Isaac prophesied of things to come. He prophesied the coming Messiah. He prophesied the godly line. He prophesied the birthright. By faith Isaac saw the coming of the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.