

## "Real Faith: Blessing the Sons" - 29.08.10

READ **Heb 11.20-21**: there is a relationship between these 2 events, deeper than father/son

What does this have to do with Real Faith? Why not "By faith, Isaac trusted his father up the mountain" / "By faith, Isaac prayed to God about his & his wife's inability to conceive, and they had twins (Gen 25.21)" / "By faith, Jacob served diligently for 14 years in order to marry the woman he loved, despite knowing father-in-law's deceptive heart"? Why say this instead?

FIRST: let's understand what is meant by the cultural formalities of the time in which fathers BLESSED their sons:

- *Blessing = n. the act of invoking divine protection or aid; the bestowal of a divine gift or favour* ("Blessed" = to be favoured by God (re father - Isaac & Jacob))
- Biblical def = *"the prophetic announcement by which the head of the family passed on favours to his children"*
- *The idea behind bless is to speak a good word over someone (eg Ps 29.11)*
- Here today, we tend to avoid talking about death - almost taboo - and don't have the formality of "Blessing". Back then, they understood reality of how binding they could be.

READ **Gen 27**

41: "Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him"::

[**Esau Sold His Birthright for some stew!**] (**Gen 25:29-34** ESV) "Birthright" = *Inheritance/privileges of firstborn son* (The Nuzi texts from the 15th century BC. in Mesopotamia give evidence for transferable birthrights, mentioning one particular case in which a man sells his birthright for a sheep.)

So Esau has been "usurped" twice. His reaction/response? No humility or grace. Bitterness, hatred, revenge. NOTE: these aren't children/teenagers we're talking about! They were in their 70's at this time! **How would you have reacted? Colleague gets promotion, someone gets chosen for worship leader etc? Invited to dinner? Years were wasted in unforgiveness!!!** Jacob & Esau = nations of Israel & Edom = Christ & Herod (who tried to kill Christ at birth)

Jacob and Rebekah are motivated by selfishness, greed, jealousy - she didn't need to have done any of this: already decreed/announced by God: *And the LORD said to (Rebekah), "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger."* (**Gen 25:23** ESV)

MAIN POINT HERE: Why is it that Isaac blessed "By Faith" here? Because he did not revoke the blessing over Jacob once he realised he'd been conned, but stuck to his original pronouncement IN FAITH, and REINFORCED IT TOO WHEN SENDING HIM AWAY!! (**Gen 28.3-4!**) - He trusted that God was sovereign and would work through this (here is the prophecy over Jacob coming true)

Now READ **Gen 48**

**MAIN POINT HERE:** Just as Jacob's father Isaac had blessed IN FAITH, Jacob here too blesses by faith because he was prompted by God to swap hands and make a prophetic blessing over his grandsons as further demonstration BY GOD of HIS plans for election.

Jacob knew how he had personally received his own blessing - undeserved and thoroughly sinful - and acted this time in a righteous manner. He became a changed man just prior to the moment he's reconciled with Esau for 1st time in 20 years - he wrestled with God & finally stood in faith, trusting in the promise over him and being called Israel for 1st time: From MUMMY's BOY to PROPHETIC FATHER.

THUS: implications for us today = IRREVOCABLE BLESSINGS OVER US = IF saved, always saved; perseverance of the saints... SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED

God chose Jacob, regardless of his selfishness, greed, jealousy, and willingness to be manipulated by his mum. He chooses US despite our sin, our weaknesses. What is our response? **Do we step into these promises? Really?**

By faith, we need to understand God's sovereignty, His will, our standing in Him, our future hope, etc....

JESUS is our blessing - in Him is the key to receiving co-heir-ship, our inheritance of eternal life with God - He became a curse for us - Gal 3.10 - "*For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."*, then v13 - "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us - for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"*"

THUS, BY FAITH, [Steve] can pronounce blessing over those with whom he has influence - because he is chosen despite his sin, he is blessed beyond comprehension, because God has a purpose for him - Eph 1.3 and 1 Pet 3.9.

Jacob:

1. Sinful, weak, devious
2. bestowed with grace upon grace (God's favour/election, not just that of his earthly father's)
3. used by God to bestow further blessing

= you and me!!!

[PAY IT FORWARD film] = Trevor = paying a favour not back, but forward -- instead of them paying him back he asks them to "pay it forward" by themselves doing a good deed for 3 more people. Trevor's efforts to make good on his idea bring a revolution. The original author has set up the Pay It Forward Foundation which educates & inspires students & teachers to do exactly that...

We, as God's people, should not bless others in order to be blessed (approval, obligation, or moral duty) but simply BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED. We give because we've been given; we pour grace upon others (UNDESERVED) because grace has been poured over us; we love because we're loved (1 Jn 4.19 - we love because He 1st loved us); forgive because we're forgiven. PAYING IT FORWARD...

LUKE 6.27-36

**By Faith**, we know we have been blessed beyond our imagination, so **by faith** we can go on to bless Him and bless anyone and everyone around us - despite their manipulation or undeserving nature or behaviour, **simply because God has bestowed immeasurable blessing upon us as his sons and daughters...**

Cell Q's:

1. How easy do you find it to forgive? What is your natural response and how do you deal with it?
2. Discuss the consequences of "paying forward" blessings.

\* The age of Isaac is thus ascertained: When Joseph stood before Pharaoh (Genesis 41:46), he was thirty years old, and hence thirty-nine when Jacob came into Egypt. But at that time Jacob was one hundred and thirty years of age (Genesis 47:9). Hence, Jacob must have been ninety-one years old when Joseph was born; and as this happened in the fourteenth year of Jacob's stay with Laban, Jacob's flight from his home must have taken place in the seventy-seventh year of his own, and the one hundred and thirty-seventh of his father Isaac's life. - <http://gospelhall.org/bible-teaching/old-testament-history/old-testament-history--1-16--isaac-jacob-esau.html>