

**Genesis 27: 1-29: "The Stolen Blessing", Sermon # 80 in the series -
"Beginnings", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 27th, 2006
in the Morning Worship Service.**

I wanted to go only as far as verse 29 in our reading of this passage because I want to deal with the sins of Rebekah and Jacob first, before we turn our attention to Esau's reaction to what they did to him. We have seen that Esau is a profane man. He despised his birthright and yet now he seeks the blessing of his father Isaac. Hebrews 12: 17 says, "For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears." This is the passage that the commentary in Hebrews refers to. But as we read it, we actually begin to feel sorry for Esau because of the awful sins of Rebekah and Jacob against him. We should not feel sorry for him, but we should note carefully the deceitfulness of sin. Rebekah knew the Lord, and surely these sins that are recorded here against her are beneath what we would have expected of her, from what we have read of her in the past. We need to recognize that believers can stumble and fall into sin. They can also lead their own children into doing wrong things as well if they do not guard their heart.

Rebekah and Jacob do not believe that Jacob is going to obtain the good things that God had promised to bring about years before, at the time of her pregnancy, when the twins had struggled in her womb. At that time Rebekah prayed to God and it was said to her that "the older would serve the younger." Esau would come to serve Jacob. Rebekah had believed what God had told her, but now it looks like the blessing of Isaac, the great prophetic blessing would be given to Esau even though Rebekah knew that God had promised differently. Isaac had evidently heard Rebekah relate the words of God to her telling her that this was to be God's decretive will, but he personally did not believe it or he did not want to believe it. It says in Genesis 25, verse 28 that Isaac "loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob." The blessing of God upon the future life of her son Jacob, the son that she loved and favored was at stake here. She knew that Isaac favored Esau and would give to him the blessing for sure, and Jacob would be left with a "second best" portion of the inheritance. This was not right, she thought, because she had been given this prophecy by God and Esau really had sold his birthright to Jacob. She knew that Isaac was determined to give the blessing to Esau and it did not appear that God would intervene to change this or to prevent the blessing from coming to Esau. So they thought that they would have to obtain this blessing by stealing it. This morning God would have us come to understand the sinfulness of their actions so that we will not seek for blessings in the wrong way. The question that we will ask then is this; "How can we seek the blessings of God in the wrong way?" And the answer that we find in this passage is that we can seek for blessings in the wrong way when we develop sinful strategies to obtain them. There are 4 sinful strategies which Rebekah and Jacob use to obtain this blessing from Isaac. The 1st is this-

1. They take advantage of the blindness of one who is a husband and a father. (Verses 1-5)

This incident took place it says when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see. It is amazing that even though Isaac thought he was drawing near to death at this time that he lived 43 more years after this. But when a man loses his ability to see, he concludes that life is coming to a close. It is so important to be able to see and

to see clearly so that we can make what we think are right decisions about things around us. Isaac thought that he was making the right decision about giving his patriarchal and spiritual blessing to Esau even though it was God's will that Jacob have it. Isaac was swayed by what he should have not been swayed by in this; earthly considerations. He loved the fact that Esau continually supplied him with savory food; he "ate of his game" for many years. He evidently was impressed with Esau's manliness and his ability to hunt. And Esau knew that this was what his father liked and he worked hard at winning his father's approval of him in this way. Isaac gives instructions to Esau in verse 2 and says, "Behold now, I am old." "I do not know the day of my death." "Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me." "And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die." Notice that this was not to be just any blessing that Isaac would give. It was the "blessing of his soul" that he would give to Esau. Now this surely is a great mistake in judgment that Isaac is making here. He is going blind in more than one way in regard to this blessing. He does not have the eyes to see spiritually that God's purpose and plan was different from, and greater than, his own. But Isaac is inclined to bless Esau because he does things for him that he likes, in an earthly sense. He is willing to bless a profane man and a fornicator, as Esau is called in Hebrews 12, with the richest blessings of the earth and the promise of the Messiah. Surely it would be a great favor to God and the family for Rebekah to turn him away from this course of action. And Rebekah is providentially in the right place to do it. She could have prayed and asked God for the wisdom to know how to turn her husband aside from his purpose. But we do not read of this. Perhaps she had prayed, but had received no answer. But when she hears these words addressed to Esau she did not act in faith or patiently await the outcome of what God would do to bring about his own decreed will in this matter. She feels that she has to take matters into her own hands and use deception against her own beloved husband. We rarely see, at the time of our greatest mistakes and sins where it will lead us, and what God will have to do to bring us to understand the error of our ways. She purposes a scheme to take advantage of the blindness of her husband, knowing that there is not a moment to lose if she would see Jacob have the blessing. It is never right to deceive another person by taking advantage of their physical weaknesses and ability to perceive things correctly. But how much more the husband that you love. Can she really be said to do this out of love? No, this was a test of her faith and she was failing it. Love does not break the commandments of God in order to obtain blessings. Leviticus 19: 14 says, "You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the Lord." Now surely this is a stumbling block, to get your blind husband unwittingly to give the most important blessing of his life to the son that he did not want to have it. It is going to be based upon lies and deception and Jacob's life will be greatly affected by it as well. God has many ways to accomplish his decrees without our thinking that we have to sin against someone we are close to, in order that they might be accomplished.

2ndly- Rebekah uses her parental authority to command Jacob to deceive his father in order to obtain the blessing. (Verses 6-10)

"So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, 'Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother saying, 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the Lord before my death.'" "Now therefore my son, obey my voice according to what I command you." Go now to the flock and bring me

from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father such as he loves." "Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death." She doesn't ask Jacob if this would be the right approach, she commands him to do it using all the parental authority that she can muster. "Obey my voice according to what I command you" she says. And children are to obey their parents. But it is "in the Lord" that they are to obey them it says in Ephesians chapter 6. It is when they are commanding their children to do what are the right things to be done, not when they command them to sin against the other parent. This was not only to be a sin of bearing false witness, but it was to be the sin of impersonation to steal the blessing. This is what Rebekah was commanding. It is not right for one who knows the Lord to attempt to bring about the promised blessing by using deceptive means and by getting one of their children to live out a lie. This is surely not commendable. If Rebekah was walking in the Spirit I believe that she would have said to Jacob, "I do not know why it appears that God is going to permit Esau to receive your father's blessing." "It contradicts His own word to me that "the elder shall serve the younger." "But we will pray about this and lay the matter before the Lord and He will answer us and give us wisdom." "He will intervene to see that His own word is fulfilled." And I believe that God would have done just that. The Lord is not limited in the means that He uses to accomplish the end that He intends which is according to His purpose. But this was indeed a test of faith, and Rebekah thought that she was doing right thing here, to do whatever it took to obtain the blessing. But the ends do not justify the sinful means. And two wrongs do not make a right. Isaac's desire to bless Esau for earthly and personal considerations rather than faith in God's revealed word is not right. But the means that she used to prevent this were not right either. It is never right to misrepresent ourselves in order that our personal advancement and blessing may be obtained, or even when the fulfillment of God's Word is at stake. There are ways that only God has in order to bring these things about in the right time and the right way; ways that do not involve our sinning against others to obtain them.

3rdly- Jacob, instead of resisting the temptation to deceive his father, goes along with it when Rebekah agrees to accept the responsibility for their actions. (Verses 11-17)

Jacob had a good opportunity here to resist the temptation to go along with this deception and not become a deceiver of his father, but he too, fell prey to his mother's worldly wisdom and selfish ambition to have this blessing by their own cunning efforts. It is not as though he did not see that there were real problems standing in the way of success, and so he quizzes his mother about them. He says to Rebekah, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth skinned man." "Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse of myself and not a blessing." This is only reasonable as an objection if you have already in your heart decided that the end does justify this kind of means. Jacob is saying, "What if my father is able to discern that I am not Esau?" "Then I will seem to be a deceiver," he says. No, Jacob, you will not seem to be; you will be regarded as a deceiver. But since you also believe that this is the only way that the blessing can be obtained, you also will go along with the means. No, he should have taken his stand against his mother's sinful methods immediately at that first point. Instead he looks for a further answer from his mother in regard to who will have to accept the consequences of their sinful scheme being found out. He says, "Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him;

and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." He is clever enough to think of the consequences but not smart enough to resist the certain and definite answer which came from his mother. "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me." I think that it is her self-confidence and the certainty of Rebekah's words that gave Jacob the confidence to think that what he was going to do was right.

We need to understand something from this that is very important to our growth in wisdom, maturity, and holiness in the Christian life. Just because a person like Rebekah is able to state with self-confident certainty that what she was doing was right and that she was willing that the curse should fall upon her, does not mean that she that she was right in what she was doing. People can be very sure that they are right in their own eyes in what they are doing and still be wrong. They plunge ahead as these two did in their wrong actions, because they haven't considered the truth that God is just as concerned with how we come to obtain the things that we want in this life, as He is in the fulfilling of His eternal counsel that we shall have them. And if we sin in the way that we seek to obtain our blessings, by lying and misrepresenting ourselves to get them, then will not God find this out and reward us according to our works? Listen to Psalm 18: 25 and 26. "With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd." It is not our deviousness that will bring God's blessing. If we are devious, then He will have to be shrewd with us. He will reward a person according to their works. Rebekah, no doubt, was zealous for the establishment of the Lord's word to her son Jacob that the "elder shall serve the younger," and she was going to see that word fulfilled. But she forgot to consult God in the same way that she did when the twins were struggling in the womb. She should have inquired of the Lord for wisdom. But we find none of that here. And can she really accept the curse of Isaac and of God? No, this self-confidence in doing the wrong thing should not have been believed by Jacob. The right way to find God's blessing is to pray and to be humble, not to assert our willingness to accept the consequences of our own sin or that of others. Those who were responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus said to Pilate, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." They were very confident that they were doing the right thing when they were involved in great wickedness. We need to be people who will follow the injunction of the Apostle Paul in Romans 12: 16 if we would find the blessing of God upon our lives. "Be of the same mind toward one another." "Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble." "Do not be wise in your own opinion." This is how to seek and to find the blessing of God your Father.

4thly- Jacob lies to his father in order to obtain the blessing and he does obtain it, but he does not realize that God will have to teach him the error of his ways. (Verses 18-29)

Just look at all the lies that Jacob had to tell in order to deceive him. The first question that Isaac asked him when he came to him with the savory food was, "Who are you my son?" "I am Esau your first-born; I have done just as you told me; please rise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." Then when he is asked by Isaac how he came to have found the game so quickly he not only lies about it but attributes what he has lied about to the Lord God bringing it to him. Now the Lord supposedly is helping him in his wickedness! Isaac wants confirmation of this being his son Esau and so he asks him, "Please come near that I may feel you, my son, whether you are my son

or not." And Rebekah had not only dressed Jacob up in Esau's choice clothes, but she "put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and the smooth part of his neck." What an incredible ruse. Isaac when he hears him thinks, "It is the voice of Jacob." But when he feels him he thinks, "It is the hands of Esau." He even asks one more time, "Are you really my son Esau?" And Jacob can in cold persuasive sincerity say to him, "I am." You would think that inside, that Jacob's heart would be breaking with grief over what he is doing to his poor father, but he has been nerved by his mother to think that he is doing what is right. There would be many times in the future when God would so order His providence in Jacob's life that he would in anguish remember this incident. He had deceived his own father but his sin was plainly seen by God. And yet, the blessing was really coming to him now, and it would not be revoked once it was given. "Come near now and kiss me, my son," Isaac says. It was the kiss of betrayal, but the blessing would come to Jacob.

There was someone else in the history of redemption that was betrayed with a kiss, and that someone was the Lord Jesus Christ. When Judas came to the garden of Gethsemane that night with an armed band to take our Lord away to be tried, he drew near to kiss him it says in Luke 22: 47. He was a false son and no true disciple. When he kissed him our Lord said to him, "Judas are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" When Isaac was kissed by Jacob he was deceived into giving his blessing to him. When Jesus was betrayed to his death by Judas, it was so that Jacob could be blessed so many years before and not cursed. Jesus was not deceived by Judas when he kissed him. He knew what Judas came for. And He knew that He must die in the place of Jacob and Rebekah and yes, even Isaac, as well as for all those who come to realize that they are sinners and need a savior. That is the beauty of Christ's death on the cross. He was not deceived by our sinful schemes to seek for God's blessings in the wrong way. He died for us so that we could be saved from our self-deception and the lies that we live, and be forgiven and blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Isaac may be blind, but the Lord Jesus Christ is not. Even the greatest of sinners can be forgiven and blest if they will come and kiss him. Because of Him Jacob would find that God will give him the "dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth." "Peoples would serve him when he became a nation, and nations would bow down to him." "He would be master over his brethren, and his mother's sons would bow down to him." And because of Him we rejoice today that He will not let us succeed in ruining our lives and the lives of others who we are related to when we plan and scheme to get God's richest blessings in the wrong way. He will bring us around to His way of doing things in time. He will give us the blessings, but He will also teach us His ways which are holy ways. Praise Him now with me that it shall be so for every true believer, every one of God's Elect.