

Saturday, June 13, 2020 ▫ Read Genesis 26:34–28:9

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom does Esau take as wives in 26:34? What do Isaac and Rebekah think of them (26:35; 27:46–28:2; 28:8)? Whom does Esau take as wife in 28:9? What was Isaac's condition (27:1–2)? What does he want to do for Esau (v4)? But what does he need Esau to do for him first (v3-4)? Who was listening (v5)? And what plan does she share with whom (v6–10)? What concern does Jacob have about this in vv11–12? What does Rebekah suggest as a solution to that (v13)? Upon whose activity do vv14–17 focus the most, as the plan is carried out? How do you know, from vv18–24 that Isaac is actually pretty suspicious? What is Jacob even willing to do in his deceit in v20? With what things is Isaac quite pleased in v25–27? How does this relate to the first set of blessings in v28? What is the focus of the blessings in v29? How soon does Esau come in (v30)? Of what do v31–32 remind us? What are his and Esau's reactions in v33–34? What does Esau now want (v25–36)? Why doesn't Isaac think this is possible (v37–38)? Where does Isaac bless Esau to dwell (v39)? What relief does Esau's blessing in v40 occasionally provide from v29? What does Esau plan to do when Jacob dies (v41)? What is Rebekah's new plan for this situation (v42–45)? How does she initiate the new plan in v46? What does Isaac do, openly and conscientiously, in 28:1? Where is he sending him? What does he call God in v3? From where is the language of this blessing taken (v3–4, cf. chs 12, 17, 22, 26)? How does Esau try to increase his own blessing in vv6–9?

Through the sinful chaos in this passage the Spirit teaches us that God's grace to us is unstoppable, unassistable, unimprovable, and unfakeable.

First, God's grace is **unstoppable** because it comes by His own plan and power. Nothing that Isaac could come up with can stop 25:23 from coming true. Joseph's brothers cannot stop God from blessing and using him. Satan himself cannot uncover Job or prevent Jesus from completing His mission to save. In fact, everything they do ends up being used by God to carry out His gracious plan! The same is true with God's gracious plan to save each believer, and to glorify Himself in each of their walking with Him.

Second, God's grace is **unassistable**, because He doesn't need our help. Rebekah goes into full problem-solving mode, trying to figure out how to trick Isaac into blessing Jacob instead. How ridiculous! The Lord had made a promise concerning Jacob, of which she could have reminded her husband (see the previous paragraph!), and it was impossible for this promise to fail.

Her unbelieving conclusion that God's plan needed a little help led not only to her own sin, but also to Jacob's sin (which curse she of course cannot take upon herself!), even to the point of the blasphemy in v20, attaching the name of Yahweh to a lie!! When we jump into pragmatism as a form of problem-solving, rather than seeking to follow strictly according to what God requires of us in His Word and leaving the result to Him, we open ourselves to all sorts of well-intended but ultimately evil actions.

Third, God's grace is **unimprovable**. Since Isaac tried to make Esau's blessing over-against Jacob's, there was no real blessedness left for Esau, once the two of them realized what had happened. The blessing of God in Christ is so great, that once it is given, what more can be left? In fact, it includes such great defeat of all of His enemies that the only hope of being blessed is to be included in His own blessing. How great is God's unimprovable grace to us in Christ! Indeed, when God gives Isaac a second chance, and he intentionally and conscientiously pronounces a blessing on Jacob in 28:3–4, he uses words from chapters 12, 15, 17, 22, and 26 that remind us that truly the heart of this blessing is that God Himself is giving Himself to Abraham and all who are with Abraham in his faith in the promised Seed, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, God's grace to us is **unfakeable**. We almost feel badly for Esau as Isaac tries to come up with a blessing for him: "you'll live outside where all the good stuff that ultimately belongs to your brother is, and every once in a while you'll get tired of him and successfully rebel, only to bring upon yourself the curse at the end of 27:29" (27:39–40). We almost feel badly for Esau as he realizes that Hittite wives are the very opposite of the path to blessing, so he hurriedly goes out and gets himself an Ishmaelite too (28:9). But any attempt to imitate blessedness apart from Christ cannot produce genuine blessedness. His blessing is unfakeable, and we need to pursue belonging to Christ: first, last, and everywhere in-between. In such a life, everything becomes blessing. Without such a life, nothing can be blessing.

Glory and praise and thanksgiving and love and service be unto our God of unstoppable, unassistable, unimprovable, unfakeable grace!

Of whose grace are you jealous? In what situations might you not be trusting that God is already bringing good out of it? In what parts of life are you more focused upon increasing what good the Lord gives you, than you are upon enjoying Him and His goodness in His good things?

Suggested songs: ARP181 "God Our Only Good" or TPH446 "Be Thou My Vision"