



The Sermon

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Genesis 36:1-43

"Seizing the World"

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TRANSCRIPT

Good morning. Excited to be here with you this morning. If you have your Bibles, please open them to Genesis chapter 36. We're going to be in Genesis chapter 36 this morning. This is the genealogy of Esau. Now if you remember, the last time I was up here I was reading a list of names. I reading a list of names of new members of our church, and as I read that list, people would stand up and we'd give them a warm welcome; and I did such a good job of reading that list of names that the elders decided they'd like to hear me preach a list of names. So here I am.

About a hundred years ago there was a baseball players for the New York Yankees, a first baseman by the name of Wally Pipp. And Wally Pipp was an excellent baseball player. In fact, in an era that they called the dead ball era he was one of the best power hitters in all of baseball. He led the league in homeruns on multiple occasions. He won a World Series with the New York Yankees. Wally Pipp was entrenched at first base for the New York Yankees. But one night Wally Pipp got a headache, and so he told his manager that he needed a night off. And his manager agreed, it's a reasonable request.

Gave Wally Pipp the night off, and in the place of Wally Pipp started a young first baseman by the name of Lou Gehrig; and Lou Gehrig started that night in the place of Wally Pipp at first base for the New York Yankees, and every game from that night forward he started at first base for the New York Yankees for the next 15 years. Wally Pipp got replaced, and so now the name Wally Pipp is actually a verb. To be Wally Pipped means to take a night off and to get replaced, to lose your job.

And so I'm not telling you this because I'm under the impression that Steve Lawson is going to get Wally Pipped today; that is not going to happen for sure. But Esau and Wally Pipp have something in common. Esau didn't get a headache, he got hungry, and he sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. Esau was the firstborn son of Isaac, he was his favorite son. It was Isaac's intention to bless Esau, but he got tricked by his brother Jacob; the blessing falls to Jacob. Esau got replaced. Esau got Wally Pipped. And so it's customary in the book of Genesis is when it becomes clear that the line of promise, the covenant promises, would pass to one son and not to another.

For example, they would pass to Isaac and not to Ishmael. While Ishmael receives a genealogy, he gets six verses just kind of a summing up what happened to Ishmael. And so there's six verses that describe who he married, where he moved to, how many kids he had, and then we move on to Isaac and his line. And so that's what we're looking at today. Jacob is going to receive the promised blessings and not Esau, so we're going to sum up, kind of wrap up Esau's line and just what happened to Esau, who did he marry, what happened to him. Now unlike Ishmael, which was six verses, this passage is forty-three verses. This is seven times longer than Ishmael's passage, his genealogy, so we have our work cut out for us. This is the fourth longest chapter in the book of Genesis, so we've got our work cut out for us this morning.

I've entitled this message "Seizing the World," because despite the fact that Esau does not receive the promised blessing, he lives an incredibly accomplished life. We're going to look at 43 verses of how much accomplishment and possession Esau has. And then we're going to look at one verse in chapter 37 that describes the life of Jacob, and that Jacob is simply sojourning in the land not his own. He's sojourning in the land.

And so Jacob and Esau really represent not just two people, they represent two paths in life, and the message of this passage is that sojourning with the Lord is better than seizing the world. Sojourning with the Lord is better than seizing the world. So we have an unusual passage, we have an unusual preacher; we're going to have to rally together this morning, Trinity. I'm going to start by reading this passage in its entirety, all 43 verses plus 1 from chapter 37, which is largely just a list of names. I'm also going to provide a heading for the major sections so you can understand the flow of the text.

So, Genesis chapter 36, beginning in verse 1. This first section describes how Esau moves out of Canaan with his immediate family to the land of Seir.

"Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom).

Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite; also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel, and Oholibamah bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

"Then Esau took his wives and his sons and daughters and all his household, and his livestock and all his cattle and all his goods which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to another land away from his brother Jacob. For their property had become too great for them to live together, and the land where they sojourned could not sustain them because of their livestock. So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom."

This next section beginning in verse 9 describes Esau's children and grandchildren, how they produced 14 tribal chiefs.

"These then are the records of the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir. These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Esau's wife Adah, Reuel the son of Esau's wife Basemath. The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho and Gatam and Kenaz. Timna was a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These are the sons of Esau's wife Adah. These are the sons of Reuel: Nahath and Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were the sons of Esau's wife Basemath. These were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon: she bore to Esau, Jeush and Jalam and Korah.

"These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau, are chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, chief

Korah, chief Gatam, chief Amalek. These are the chiefs descended from Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Adah. These are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. These are the chiefs descended from Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath. These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah. These are the chiefs descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah. These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these are their chiefs."

And the next section beginning in verse 20, the original inhabitants of the land, the Horites, produce only 7 chiefs.

"These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah, and Dishon and Ezer and Dishan. These are the chiefs descended from the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom. The sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister was Timna. These are the sons of Shobal: Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shepho and Onam. These are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah - he is the Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness when he was pasturing the donkeys of his father Zibeon. These are the children of Anah: Dishon, and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah. These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan and Eshban and Ithran and Cheran. These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan and Zaavan and Akan. These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. These are the chiefs descended from the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These are the chiefs descended from the Horites, according to their various chiefs in the land of Seir."

Verse 31 begins a section that describes Esau's line producing kings over the entire land.

Verse 31, "Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the sons of Israel. Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. Then Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah became king in his place. Then Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites became king in his place. Then Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the field of Moab, became king in his place; and the name of his city was Avith. Then Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah became king in his place. Then Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth on the Euphrates River became king in

his place. Then Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor became king in his place. Then Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar became king in his place; and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, daughter of Mezahab.

"Now these are the names of the chiefs descended from Esau, according to their families and their localities, by their names: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These are the chiefs of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of the Edomites), according to their habitations in the land of their possession."

Genesis 37:1, "Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan." Let's pray.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we give You thanks for this opportunity to open Your Word and to study this passage today. We pray You'd make clear its meaning and application through me today, Father. We pray that we would see more clearly, Father, Your intention in why You included this in Your Holy Scripture, which is inspired in equal part throughout. So we pray for attentiveness, Lord, and we pray that You'd bless our reading of Your Word and study of Your Word this morning, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

Many of you know that my family lived in Asia for a long time, we were over there for almost ten years, and when we moved over there we realized that people there had a completely different cultural lens through which they viewed the world. They saw everything differently. No matter what area of life, they saw it differently.

When we moved over there we had four kids under the age of five, and so we had to figure out with transportation what we were going to do, how were we going to get our family different places. A car was not an option. So we ended up choosing an electric 3-wheeler for my wife with a big box on the back that we strapped our kids in. I couldn't really fit on that, so I had to get something else, and so I found the biggest bike that I could find; but I was disturbed to find that in this place it was customary for men to have baskets on the front of their bike. And for me through my cultural lens, a man riding a bike with a basket on the front brought to mind words like "embarrassing," "feminine," "unfortunate." But realizing this is what

they did I determined that I would get a basket, but I tried to get as small a basket as I could get. But then I realized talking to people that actually the bigger the basket, the more masculine the bike. So I got a big bike with a big basket.

Through our cultural lens when we look at this passage it probably brings to mind words like "tedious" or "monotonous" or "foreign." But for the original audience that would have read through this passage I think it would have brought to mind words like "blessing" and "fruitfulness" and "standing" and "wealth," things that people that are very valuable to people then and now. But when we look at this format it's unfamiliar to us, and so we can kind of – our eyes can glaze over and we can miss what's in this passage.

But our first heading for the passage today is this: "Esau is blessed. Esau is blessed." In Genesis 25, if you remember, Rebekah was pregnant, had two sons in her womb and they were contending with one another, and she sought the Lord to find out what was going on, and the Lord said, "Two nations are in your womb, two nations are within you." Esau would become the nation of Edom. Jacob would become the nation of Israel.

And so really in this passage we're going to see how God according to His promises and providence is going to move Esau from being just an immediate family of wives and children to becoming the nation of Edom. Esau's going to make some bad decisions, but God is going to be behind the scenes orchestrating things and moving him towards becoming the nation of Edom.

So, beginning in verse 1, "Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom). Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan." So immediately we're struck by the fact that Esau chose Canaanite wives to marry. He chose two Canaanite wives to marry. Now later in Exodus God will explicitly tell the Israelites that they are not to intermarry with the Canaanites because they worshiped false gods. If they're to intermarry they'll be led astray, and so God prohibits that.

I think we can assume that Abraham and Isaac had similar motivations in wanting their kids to marry within their people. But someone Esau does not; he marries two Canaanite wives, and in verses 2 and 3 we learn their names:

"Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah." And then he marries a third wife, this one named Basemath, Ishmael's daughter. So Esau married two Canaanite wives, and this caused sorrow and frustration for his parents. When he saw that it bothered his dad in particular he married a third wife, a daughter of Ismael, someone more closely related to their family.

Now it's possible that Esau had more wives. In Genesis 26 and Genesis 28 there are different names listed for Esau's wives. So it's possible he had more than these three, but it wasn't uncommon for people of that time to have multiple names. So it's also possible that these three wives were the only wives he had and they just had multiple names. Esau himself had multiple names. He's Esau and he's also Edom.

Sometimes when people live in different cultures they have multiple names. Whatever culture they're in they use that name. My wife has three names. You know her as Ashley, but she's also **Eilian** and she's also **Adelah**, depending on what culture she happens to live in. To be clear, my wife is not a Canaanite, I didn't say that.

But Esau marries these three women, and from these three women they produce five children. These five children are named in verses 4 and 5: "Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah, all born to him in the land of Canaan." So this is the immediate family of Esau. This is the starting point, and from this starting point would emerge a nation, the nation of Edom.

But if Esau's going to become a nation he's going to need land. And so in verse 6 it tells us that Esau moves his family out of the land of Canaan. Verse 6 reads, "Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters and all his household, his livestock, all his cattle, all his property which he had acquired in the land of Canaan and went to another land away from his brother Jacob."

If you remember, after Esau is cheated out of the blessing by his brother Jacob, he seeks a blessing of his own from his father; and his father does give him a blessing, but it's a lesser blessing. In Genesis 27:39 we read, "Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, and away from the dew of heaven above."

So God gives to Esau the land of Seir. This is the land God gives him, but it's a different kind of land than Canaan, with different strengths. Seir was located southeast of the land of Canaan. It was a strip of land that was 100 miles long and 40 miles wide. According to Numbers 20:17 this was a land that had vineyards and fields.

But Seir was largely a rugged mountainous area that had these high red sandstone cliffs, these narrow passageways that protected its capital city that would eventually be called Petra. And this natural defense that Seir had would later become a source of great pride for the nation of Edom that no one could bring them down. No one could defeat them because of these high cliffs and narrow passageways. Eventually the prophet Obadiah would write of the Lord's future judgment of Edom: "Though you build high like the eagle, though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down."

So why did Esau move to this place? Why did Esau move to Seir? Well, one answer in Deuteronomy 2:5 it tells us that God gave him this land. The Lord says, "I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession." The Lord gave it to him. The Lord ordained that Esau would live within these boundaries.

But from Esau's perspective that's not why he moved there. We shouldn't think of this like Esau is a believer and the Holy Spirit is within him reminding him of the promises of God saying, "This is the way, walk in it," and he walks in faith to this land. That is not who Esau is. Esau is a godless man. This is not a situation like that.

Verse 7 explains Esau moved to Seir because it was a business decision. Speaking of Esau and Jacob in verse 7 it says, "For their property had become too great for them to live together, and the land where they sojourned could not sustain them beyond their livestock. So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom."

So Esau estimates that Jacob and his own possessions and livestock were growing in number to the point where the land could not sustain them, so Esau decides he's going to move out permanently to the land of Seir along with his wives, his children, his livestock, and his possessions. So Esau

moving out of the Promised Land is really a significant event, because Esau would become the nation of Edom, and God has promised the land of Canaan to Jacob, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob; and Esau is moving out of his own volition to another land.

It's not just a business decision that causes Esau to move though. In verses 24 and 25 we learn that one of Esau's wives, Oholibamah, is a Horite. She is one of the original inhabitants of the land of Seir. In verse 24, talking about Oholibamah's father Anah, Esau's father-in-law, it says that "Anah" - verse 24 - found the hot springs in the wilderness when he was pasturing the donkeys of his father Zibeon." In other words, Esau's father-in-law was in real estate. He lived in this dry and arid land and he found very valuable land that produced water. So this is a prominent man and a prominent family, and his daughter is Oholibamah that Esau marries.

So why did Esau move out of the Promised Land? Well, he moved out because it was a business decision. He also moved out because it was a family decision. Ultimately, he moved because it was decreed by God. God gave him this land; and more importantly, God had promised the land of Canaan to Jacob and his descendants.

Now keep in mind, the original audience of the book of Genesis are Israelites that have left Egypt. They're in the wilderness preparing to enter into the Promised Land. And think of how encouraging this would be, these stories of how God had removed nations from the Promised Land in their past and left their ancestors in them, the patriarchs in them.

We saw this in Genesis 13 when Abraham and Lot's livestock grew in number. They're bumping into one another. Abraham says to Lot, "You choose where you want to live," and Lot chooses to go toward Sodom, leaving Abraham in the land. God is providentially moving the pieces, moving history forward to accomplish His purposes and He's doing it through these normal human decisions. It's not as if he's doing miracles and intervening in shocking ways, these are through normal human decisions. Kent mentioned this a few weeks ago this passage. Proverbs 21:1 says, "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes." God moved him through normal human circumstances and decisions.

We shouldn't assume though that Esau's response to God providentially blessing him with land is thanksgiving and praise and worship. This is, again, not who Esau is. Esau is a godless man, he's not interested in spiritual things. So God is opening doors for him providentially; and if we think about in our own lives how God has done that for us, how God has connected us to our spouse or brought us to Trinity, we marvel at the providence of God when we get glimpses of how God has faithfully moved us places and opened and closed doors if we marvel. But for the unbeliever, it's unnoticed and unappreciated.

Our family, we used to live at the edge of civilization. We lived on a city that was built on an oasis, and outside of this city itself was fairly modern, but outside of this city was desert and mountains. And so you didn't have to go very far before you would find people living in very, very primitive settings, like a hut on a mountain. Now these people who lived in the middle of nowhere would come to this city for education and to get a job, and we would try to take advantage of those opportunities to share the gospel with them. So we studied their language, and one of the people like this who lived in the middle of nowhere and came to our city I met and began to build a relationship with, started having spiritual conversations with him, and it eventually led to studying the Scripture, opening up the Word and studying in his language the Word of God. And we spent months trying to build the foundational pieces of the gospel: "Who is God? Who is man? What is sin? How is man separated from God by sin?" What is God's one solution to this problem of sin? It's the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so after months of studying and laboring in this new language that I was learning, finally he came to the place that he understood the gospel. And this man who would live in a - he lived in the most remote place you could imagine. This person lived in the middle of nowhere, and this man's one objection to the gospel was this: "What about the person who lives in the middle of nowhere and has no opportunity to hear the gospel?" And as he's saying this to me, I'm thinking, "You are that man. You are the man. You live in the middle of nowhere, and God has providentially brought me literally across the globe, along with my family, to study your language, to encounter you, and to share the good news of the gospel with you."

But through the eyes of unbelief, the providence of God is unseen and unnoticed. And this is the case with Esau. God is being gracious to Esau in providing him land, but this is not saving grace, this is common grace. Matthew 5:45 says, "God sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." God is providentially blessing Esau with land.

Next we see that God also blesses Esau with successful descendants. Verse 9 says, "These then are the records of the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir." Then we have this list of names, again, representing Esau's children and grandchildren born from each of his wives.

Starting in verse 15 we read, "These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau." So listed in these passages is 16 names of his children and grandchildren; 14 of them would become tribal chiefs. Now this word "chief" means "ruler of thousands."

And so these descendants of Esau become very successful people. These are prominent men. These are leaders of men. This was a military political type role that these 14 of the 16 of his descendants are able to step into. These people were formidable, they were successful, they commanded respect. One grandchild, Amalek, mentioned in verses 12 and 16 would become a nation himself, the Amalekites who would become a bitter enemy of the nation of Israel.

This next section is a little bit different beginning in verse 20. This shows us that God blessed Esau by making his people the dominant people in the land. Here in this section it begins in verse 20, "These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land." Now the word "Horite," the first part of this word means "cave." And so these were cave-dwelling people who originally lived in Seir. So before Esau moved there, these were the people who lived there.

And only seven chiefs are mentioned in this list. Seven names are mentioned as chiefs, showing that Esau and his descendants pretty quickly become the dominant people in this region. The book of Deuteronomy tells us later that Esau and his descendants would destroy the Horites by the sword. So there may have been intermarriage at the beginning to some extent; but ultimately, Esau would triumph over the Horites and gain control of the land.

So God, according to His promises and His providence has blessed Esau with land, He's blessed Esau with successful children and grandchildren,

and eventually God would bless him with kings. Beginning in verse 31, "Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the sons of Israel."

So Esau's descendants would reign over the entirety of the land of Seir. They would rule over Seir. And there are eight different kings that are listed. Interestingly, none of the kings are succeeded by their son, so that's not clear why that's the case. It could be a situation like the book of Judges where one ruler emerges and reigns for their lifetime; and when they die, another leader emerges from a different location and different family. And rules and reigns, we don't know why that it at this point.

So after listing more chiefs according to the area that they ruled, the chapter concludes in verse 43 with this statement: "These are the chiefs of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of the Edomites), according to their habitations in the land of their possession." Now I think it's fitting that this chapter end with the word "possessions," because this was really what Esau has. He is a child of possession. All the things that are listed in this chapter we learn that Esau has fame, he has land, he has material possessions, he has political power, he has military power, he has a kingdom. Esau, according to God's promises and providence, is extremely successful. Esau is blessed.

Now again, the fact that God has given Esau land and blessed him materially and given him all these things should not lead us to the conclusion that Esau is in right relationship to God. Esau is not in right relationship to God. Hebrews 12:16 tells us he a godless man. And so our second heading is very important and cannot be missed, and that is this: "Esau is cursed. Esau is cursed." The New Bible Dictionary defines "curse" as "God's judgment on impenitent sinners," and that's a good picture of where Esau is. Esau is under the wrath of God. Romans 9:13 says, "Jacob I love, but Esau I hated."

Esau is cursed, and we see evidence of his spiritual condition in a few places in this chapter. First, we mentioned his selection of Canaanite wives that he married outside of his family against his parents' wishes, unlike his brother Jacob, causing frustration for his parents. This caused them grief.

We also see it in the list of the names of his descendants. When I read through those names probably you just sort of eyes glossed over, weren't thinking, just name after name after name. But in the ancient world names meant something. Somebody's name really meant something. And so when we look at this list of names we learn that when Esau was in the land of Canaan and had these five sons in the land of Canaan, two of those five sons had the word "El" in their name, which is short for "Elohim: God." For example, one of his sons was named Reuel which means "friend of God." But when we look at the trajectory of the names that follow of grandsons and eventually all of these descendants, God is almost entirely absent in this list.

Here's a sample of the meaning of some of the names listed in Esau's descendants. Reuel means "friend of God." Zerah means "shine." Then we have, "thunderer, mouse, Baal is gracious, tent of the high place." You can kind of see a trajectory here on these names that are listed. In the beginning when Esau's living in the Promised Land possibly under the influence of his family, the name of God is present among his kids. He moves to Seir and his descendants, child after child, have different names. There's a different focus. Towards the end of this list one of Esau's descendants is named after Baal, the Canaanite god Baal. This is the trajectory of Esau's life. Personally, it's away from the Lord, and this is the trajectory that Esau has set his family on. Esau is on the friend of God, thunderer, mouse, Baal is gracious trajectory.

In the New Testament we see an example of this kind of spiritual deterioration in the example of Demas. He's mentioned three times in the New Testament. Philemon 24, Paul mentions Demas as a fellow worker. In Colossians 4:14 his name is mentioned with no description. Then finally, in 2 Timothy 4:10 it says, "For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica." Demas went from a close associate of Paul to abandoning him.

Now if we look at Jacob's descendants you might be thinking, "How do we know that these names really mean anything or are significant?" If we look at Jacob's descendants in Exodus 6 and just look at some of the names that mention God among his descendants we see this. We see names like, "Blessed. The Lord is my strength. Who is like God? God has helped. God has purchased. God has heard."

So Jacob is far from a perfect parent, we know that from the last few weeks. Jacob abides in the flesh. He's not always following after the Lord, but Jacob knows the Lord, and that's reflected in the names of his descendants. We see that in the names of his descendants. And this is really an important warning for us as parents, particularly fathers, is that our own spiritual life doesn't just affect us, but it affects our family, and potentially can impact generations to come. Is your own spiritual life lukewarm? Does Jesus Christ have someplace in your life but it's not at the center? This is a dangerous place to be. We could be setting our family on this same trajectory of Esau. This is a friend of God, thunderer, mouse, Baal is gracious path. This is what Esau did, and it's a tragedy.

In the late 1800s there was a sociologist by the name of Richard Dugdale, and he was tasked with studying 13 county prisons in upstate New York, and as a sociologist he's looking for patterns that emerged among these prisoners, these details of their background and who they were, trying to study why people are in prison. And as he studied he became interested in and intrigued by the fact that there was so many people related to one another by blood or by marriage. And so he created these elaborate family trees with all these details, and what he found was really fascinating. There were 42 different men in the county jail at that point in history who were related to this one man named Max Jukes who lived in the previous century.

So he began to dig, and Max Jukes was a man who, like Esau, loved nature. Max Jukes just wanted to be in nature. So he moved to upstate New York and he built a shelter next to a beautiful lake. Max Jukes didn't really have any interest in the Lord, he didn't want to go to church. There were good churches in his areas, he didn't want to attend. Dugdale's study revealed that from this one man Max Jukes, as he studied the generations that would follow, from Max Jukes came 7 murders, 60 thieves, 50 prostitutes, 130 convicts, 310 people who were destitute. Of the 1,200 people traced from Max Jukes, one-quarter died prematurely. This was the path that Max Jukes had set.

Interestingly, the Puritan preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards in a separate study done looking at his descendants came to a very different conclusion, a different line. From Jonathan Edwards, 100 pastors, 13 college presidents, 65 college professors, 75 military officers, 60 authors, 60 doctors, 3 US senators, 1 US vice president.

Now certainly, when we follow the Lord and when we set the path in our home that doesn't mean our kids are going to follow, our spouse is going to follow. But we need to understand that our lives, our spiritual lives have an impact beyond ourselves. This is the case for parents and fathers, but this is also the case for all of us, even for kids in our congregation. If you are in middle school, if you are in high school, your life right now can count for great spiritual good. Your life could count for amazing spiritual good right now.

Last month I was in Frisco having coffee with Algene Santos, Algene and Christian help head up our youth ministry; and I was talking with Algene and we were just discussing something, and I looked over and there was a man staring at me. And I tried to figure out, "Who is this man staring at me?" and I realized that the man staring at me was the grownup version of the 14-year-old boy who'd led me to Christ. When I was 14 years old I was walking to 7-Eleven with my best friend on the baseball team Joe Mazzola, and Joe and I were going to 7-Eleven to get slurpees and baseball cards, and he shared the gospel with me and that's how I got saved.

So regardless of where you are in life, whether you're married or single or what your station in life is, you have the potential for great spiritual good, to do good right now. This is not the path that Esau is on though. The trajectory of Esau's life from a spiritual standpoint again is friend of God, thunderer, mouse, Baal is gracious. Esau is headed this direction, he leads his family in this direction. Esau's cursed, and the nation that would emerge from Esau would likewise be cursed. The nation of Edom would become a great enemy of the nation of Israel.

There are five times in this passage where something like Esau is Edom or Esau's the father or the Edomites is mentioned. Five times repeated, "Esau is Edom." I think this is there because God wants His people to know who their neighbor would be. Their neighbor would be the nation of Edom who is related to Esau.

Around 1400 BC when the Israelites were attempting to pass into the Promised Land, the shortest path would have been through Edom. God gave them specific instructions and said, "Do not take even one footprint of land from Edom; I have given Edom the land of Seir to Esau." And so they said, "We will just pass on the highway. Will You allow us just to pass on the highway? We won't go through the fields." And yet even under these

conditions He would not allow them passage. So the Israelites had to go around the nation of Edom.

In 850 BC when they were being attacked by foreign invaders, Esau-Edom did not come to the aid of their brothers; instead, they joined in pillaging their cities. And as a result, in the tenth verse of Obadiah this is what God says, "Because of the violence to your brother Jacob you will be covered with shame and you will be cut off forever." Esau is blessed materially, but Esau is also cursed.

Now, in contrast to these 43 verses that we've read about Esau, we're going to now take a look at this one verse in chapter 37, verse 1, about Jacob. So if your Bibles open, Genesis 37:1 says this: "Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings in the land of Canaan."

Now our next heading is, "Jacob has little. Jacob has little." Now to be fair, God has blessed Jacob abundantly. He has large flocks, he has a large family; but in comparison to Esau, Jacob is way behind. With regard to land, Esau has essentially possessed the land of Seir during his lifetime. We see that he has a large number of tribal chiefs that emerge. Eventually he destroys the Horites by the sword. God promised land to Esau and Esau possesses that land in a short amount of time.

Jacob's descendants would not have possession of any of the land in Canaan for over 500 years. Like his father and grandfather before him, Jacob sojourned in the land, but they didn't possess the land. They were strangers in the land. They were children of promise, but that promise had not yet been fulfilled. They're dwelling in the land of promise, have not yet received the promise.

With regards to successful descendants, Esau had a 40-year head start on his brother Jacob, 40 years. He started marrying and having kids 40 years before his brother Jacob; so by the time Jacob started having kids, Esau's having grandkids. So he's essentially a generation ahead of his brother.

With regards to kings, in Genesis 36:31, again, it says, "Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the sons of Israel." Esau had kings before Jacob's descendants. It's not totally

clear when the kings of Edom began to reign; but if they began to reign three generations after Esau it would be almost 800 years before Israel would have kings. It's possible that Esau had kings 800 years before Jacob and his descendants. So Israel would eventually become a much stronger nation than Edom, according to God's promises, but it would take a long time for that to come to pass.

Esau also seemed to avoid many of the difficulties that Jacob and his family faced. We don't see any problem of infertility or slavery or wilderness wanderings. Jacob's wife Rachel has died in childbirth. In comparison to his brother for a long stretch, Jacob has little. I think that there's a temptation for us, if we're honest, to look at the success of unbelievers, to look at other people's lives and to see that things just seem to go well for them. The areas that I struggle in, they don't seem to have those struggles.

Open your Bibles to Psalm 73. Have you ever felt like this, wondering why everything seems to be going great for everybody else? You seem to be behind. People get promotions, people get married. They don't have the health issues that I have. Kids seem to be doing well. This is what the psalmist struggles with in this Psalm.

In Psalm 73 beginning in verse 3 he says, "For I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pains in their death, and their belly is fat. They are not in trouble like other people, nor are they tormented together with the rest of mankind." One Old Testament scholar commenting on this passage says, "They seem to be carefree and unconcerned about tomorrow. For them, life is now, and now seems to be forever. For them, life is now, and now seems to be forever."

Well this is the catch is that now is not forever. In verse 18 the psalmist says, "Surely You have set them in slippery places; you have cast them down to destruction. How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!" These paths of Jacob and Esau, they have an end. They're on these paths, and these paths have an end. And the reality for the people on the path of Esau is their situation is much more precarious than it seems. They are under the wrath of God a moment away from eternal separation from God. The Bible describes that separation as eternal conscious punishment in hell - a moment away from that. It appears as the opposite. It appears as stability and success. But as the psalmist says, "The end comes quickly; it comes suddenly, unexpectedly; and then it's over."

The reality for Esau is much worse than it seems, and the reality for Jacob is much better than it seems.

We've pointed in this chapter that Esau is blessed, that Esau is cursed, that Jacob has little. Our final heading is, "Jacob has everything. Jacob has everything."

In verse 1 of chapter 37, again we see, "Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings I the land of Canaan." And this is the land of promise. God had promised this land to Abraham, and He promised this land to Isaac, and He promised this land to Jacob, and they dwell in the land; they have not yet received the promise, and we have this great contrast of Esau having received the land and Jacob not having yet received the land.

But things are often not as they appear in God's plan. You notice this in Scripture. There's a number of places, if you just take a snapshot, in Scripture of a scene you can come to a wrong conclusion very easily. For example, the Israelites trapped at the Red Sea with the Egyptian Army approaching. That looks like a very bad situation for them.

I think of Hezekiah. Judah is being surrounded by the Assyrian Army during the time of Hezekiah. It looks like a terrible situation; but things are not always as they seem. I'd like you guys to stay in Psalm 73, but I want to paint a picture for you in a different part of the Scriptures. In Luke chapter 23 we have a scene in which we have two kings: one is a descendant of Esau and one is a descendant of Jacob.

In Luke 23:6, Jesus is sent to Herod Antipas during His trial. Jesus has been arrested, He's sent to Herod Antipas and He stands before Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas is a descendant of Esau, he is an Edomite. Although at that time in history they called them Idumaeans. Jesus Christ in His human nature is a descendant of Jacob. And I want you to do your best to imagine what this scene would have been like. Jesus Christ has been beaten, He's been physically beaten. He's been dressed in kingly attire mockingly, and He stands before Herod, who likely is also dressed in kingly attire.

Can you envision this scene, Jesus Christ dressed in this regal robe, beaten, standing before this king? As you picture this scene I want you to ask these

questions: "Who has authority? Who has power? Who has a future? Who is blessed?" Well, clearly it's Herod. In that picture it seems to be Herod. I mean, Herod is a king, he's the tetrarch of Galilee. He has political power and Roman military power at his disposal. Clearly Herod is the one who is blessed and powerful and authoritative. It's estimated that Herod's annual income was like eight figures in modern terms.

Jesus Christ in contrast from a human standpoint has no possessions. He's been abandoned by His friends. He's being tried as a criminal. He's been beaten. He's headed toward crucifixion. But things are not always as they seem in Scripture, things are not always as they seem.

We've been studying the book of Genesis, and in the book of Genesis, if we just look at the book of Genesis and say, "Who is Jesus Christ?" we know that in Genesis 1, Jesus Christ is the Word of God through whom all things were created. All things were created through the Lord Jesus Christ. In Genesis 3, He's the promised seed of the woman that would crush the head of the serpent. We know in Genesis 12, He's the promised seed of Abraham through whom all the nations would be blessed. We're going to see in Genesis 49 that He is the Lion of Judah from the tribe of Judah, the son of Jacob. The scepter will not depart from His hand. Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is literally God incarnate in the flesh. In this scene it doesn't seem like that at all.

James Montgomery Boice points out that Christ at that moment, He could have called a legion of angels to come and obliterate Herod Antipas. He's God incarnate, He could call upon these angels. But He did not. And Boice writes this. He says, "Jesus did not want the throne that way. He did not want the throne until you and I could share it with Him; and to achieve this He would have to die."

And so this King from the line of Jacob, Jesus Christ, a few hours later would go to the cross to accomplish the salvation of all who would repent and place their faith in Him, in order that we might be with Him forever. Jesus Christ went to the cross and became a curse for us so that you and I could be reconciled to God. All of us would be on the path of Esau if it wasn't for Jesus Christ. We would all be living for now headed towards an eternity of punishment away from God. And yet Christ offers us the free gift of eternal life if we will repent of our sins and trust in Him. This is the good news of the gospel.

The Lord raised Jesus up from the grave, and He ascended into heaven, and He will return one day. And this is ultimately the answer as to why sojourning with the Lord is better than seizing the world. It's because we get Jesus Christ. We get Him now and we get Him forever. It seems like Esau is blessed and Jacob has little, but really Esau is cursed and Jacob has everything, and Jacob has everything because Jacob has Jesus Christ.

Let's look at the conclusion of Psalm 73 here, beginning in verse 25; and this really should be the attitude and cry of our hearts as believers. Psalm 73, beginning in verse 25, "Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I might tell of all Your works."

So if you are in a place in life right now where you feel behind, you feel like what you had envisioned for your life, where you thought you would be, this is not it. And it could be in a number of different areas. It could be with regards to education. It could be marriage or children, or your job or your career. Or you may have started out on a path and faced tragedy and are trying to pick up the pieces. You may look around and see that other people don't seem to have these problems that you have, these deep wounds and pain that you face every single day; they don't face it.

And yet, in that situation you are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is your treasure. You're entrusting yourself to Him who judges justly. You're eagerly awaiting the return of Jesus Christ. If that is where you are today, then hear me in this: you are in good company. This is the path of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. You are sojourning in a land that is not your own. You're setting your hope upon the return of Christ. You are a child of promise; and this is a hard place, but this is a good place.

On the other hand, if Christ has someplace in your life, but He is not Lord; if the cry of your heart is not, "Whom have I in heaven but You, and earth has nothing I desire besides You; earth has everything I desire besides You"; if you're growing indifferent to the things of God but love to achieve and to accomplish and to amass and to attain, then be warned: this is the

path of Esau, and this is a path that ends in tragedy. "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"

Matthew Henry says, "The children of this world have their all in hand and nothing in hope. They have all in hand and nothing in hope." But if you don't have Christ, what does it matter ultimately to have all in hand? Sojourning with the Lord is better than seizing the world. Living as a stranger in the world with Jesus Christ as your treasure is better than obtaining all that this world has to offer. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we thank You for this passage; although challenging, points us to an important truth, that there are two paths in this life, and that we can ultimately falter and find ourselves far from You and without hope. But we thank You for the good news of the gospel, that through faith in Christ that we can be reconciled to You. And I pray that's where our hope would be this morning, in Jesus' name. Amen.