

Building on Biblical Foundations

“Can We Choose Character?”

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Genesis 25:19-34

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Genesis 25

Genesis 25: Abraham comes to the end of his days and is buried alongside Sarah.

He leaves all he owns to Isaac, as the Lord commanded him.

We pick up our story with the introduction of Jacob and Esau. . .Chapter 25:19

Jacob and Esau

19 This is the account of the family line of Abraham’s son Isaac.

Abraham became the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.

23 The Lord said to her,

**“Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you will be separated;
one people will be stronger than the other,
and the older will serve the younger.”**

24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau (*in Hebrew means Hairy*). 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob(*in Hebrew means grasping the heel – aka deceiver*). Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. 30 He said to Jacob, “Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!” (That is why he was also called Edom (*in Hebrew means Red*).

31 Jacob replied, “First sell me your birthright.”

32 “Look, I am about to die,” Esau said. “What good is the birthright to me?”

33 But Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So, he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So, Esau despised his birthright.

What can we learn from this story?

- 1. Each Generation MUST find its own faith.** God keeps his promises for each Generation, but you cannot rely in your Father’s Faith. You must trust God and rely on His promises for yourself. Even if your father was Abraham – the FATHER OF FAITH! Our faith will be tried, each one of us individually. Our character will be tested in the waiting period. Will we continue to pray and believe or will we become bitter resentful and turn to our way?
- 2. God will keep his promises.** God promised Abraham that his children would be as numerous as the sand of the seashore... like the stars in the sky. How can he become a great nation if the son of promise, the son of faith does not bring forth children? Rebecca’s barrenness is a test of Isaac’s faith. Will he believe what God promised Abraham? As Isaac presses into prayer.. and this is 20 years of waiting to conceive.... Rebecca becomes pregnant.
- 3. There will always be struggle on the earth.** These two children once again fulfil the promise of God to bless the entire world, and yet they enter the world with struggle. The rivalry between the two brothers existed in the womb. Before they were even born, they were wrestling. They came into the world with distinct personalities and character traits. As a mother I can attest to this. We enter this world with DNA that greatly determines our character.
- 4. Our true nature will reveal itself.** One can try to be elusive, or cloaked but your character will be revealed in time. Whether you are patient or impatient, a peacemaker

or a trouble maker, whether you are honest or dishonest, whether you are courageous or fearful, whether you see the glass half empty or half full. As we follow Jacob and Esau their character is revealed. Jacob indeed as his name bears, deceived his brother by “selling” him stew for his birthright. And Esau, is more concerned with immediately gratifying his carnal desires than the establishment of his future. A birthright in those times was everything. Your birthright entitled you to all of your family’s wealth, and the blessing of your father as the elder son. To bargain it away for a bowl of stew revealed Esau’s shortsightedness, and imprudence. For a meal today, he forfeited his inheritance tomorrow.

Is this fair?

Don’t you love that question? How can it be fair if Esau was born that way? How can we reconcile this? How does this work itself out in your life? Are we slaves to our inborn nature and character? Without Jesus Yes, but with Jesus NO!

1 Corinthians 5:17

7 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

When we allow God to work in us and through us, we are indeed transformed. God would not tell us this if were not possible.

Romans 12:2

2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

We are not stuck as we once were. We have the ability to become ALL that the Lord call us to be.

What does he call us to be?

- Imitators of Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:6)
- Transformed by renewing our minds (Romans 12:2)
- Strong and Courageous (Joshua 1:9, 1 Chronicles 28:20)
- Shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16)
- Good manager of our resources (Luke 12:42-48)
- Good neighbors – loving one another (Luke 10:25)
- Faithful (Psalm 30:4, Psalm 37:28, Proverbs 28:20)
- Steadfast, tenacious, longsuffering, patient (1 Corth 15:58, 1 Peter 5:10)
- Quick to forgive, slow to anger (Colossians 3:13, James 1:20, Ephesian 4:31)
- Know the Word of God, and be ready to share it (Mark 16:15, 1 Peter 3:15)
- Generous to the poor (Matthew 19:21, Mark 10:21)
- Bind the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1)

- Be Gentle (Ephesians 4:2)
- Teach the word of God to our children at every occasion (Deuter. 4:9)
- Be industrious, hard working and not lazy (Proverbs 6:6, 2 Thess. 3:10)
- Look after orphans and widows (James 1:27)
- Worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24)
- Discern the times, discern the spirits (Matthew 24:4, 1 John 4:1)
- Follow the Good Shepherd, know his voice (John 10)
- Not cling to this life (Matthew 10:39)
- Expect sufferings, trials, temptations, persecutions and bear up knowing that these things will purify us before Him. (James 1:2, Romans 5:3)
- Not to store treasures on earth, but in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20)
- Keep our vision fixed on eternity, not temporal things (Colossians 3:2)
- Put on love as a garment (1 Corinth 13:3)

These were off the top of my head... imagine that. I honestly just sat there asking the Lord what is important to Him and these poured out of me... there are more. How did I know this? I know HIS WORD.

All of it. The Old Testament stories, the Gospels and words written in Red, the New Testament letters and instructions to the baby church, the books of prophecies and history. I can't emphasize this enough. I cannot teach you everything in this book!!! Even if that is all I did for the remainder of my life. You must read it for yourself. The Holy Spirit will teach you what YOU need to know. He knows what you need today. Tomorrow. And every day for the rest of your life.

We have this amazing book that was written to reveal God to us. To each of us in a very personal and intimate way. His word will penetrate into your heart, mind and soul in ways I cannot even describe. He formed you, and He knows you.

If you will come to him in all humility and ask, He will re-form you into the person He always desired you would be.

In the end it will not matter how much we acquired. Our homes, or cars, or farms, or even family and friends. What will matter most is how much of yourself you allowed God to shape. Did you become more like Jesus? Could others see Jesus in you? Did you reveal HIM to those around you by the way you spoke, or did not speak, by the way you forgave, by the way you trusted, by the way you comforted, sacrificed?

That is the end goal folks.

As we will discover following Jacob and Esau, they each made choices, choices influenced by their character and they each had opportunities presented. One will choose to change that inborn nature. . . he will exchange his natural ways, for the ways of God. He will present

us with a picture of hope. Regardless of your inborn nature, the character you were born with, your less than positive tendencies, YOU too can Surrender to the Lord and be transformed – at any time.

And if you stumble and fall? Come back and surrender again. . .and again and again as many times as your need to until you take your last breath. There is no shame in redemption. This is God's provision for all of us. Thank you to Jesus and his sacrifice, we can all be renewed by the transforming power of the Lord.

Can we choose character? Yes! When we choose Jesus, we can choose his character to replace ours.

Let us Pray ... Read communion note.