



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor
March 14, 2021

GENESIS 25

Series: Understanding Your Roots

[PRAYER] Lord, thank you for speaking to me this week. I just want to ask you now to help me to speak clearly the things you've shared with me from your word. That your word would come across clearly and that your Holy Spirit would reveal truth to people. Lord, I know that people are coming with all kinds of challenges that they're facing. Lord, we know that you meet us each in our unique ways where we need to be met by you today. So we're entrusting our hearts to you. Please be careful with them. They are tender. We ask you to do just what you need to do in our hearts today. In Jesus' name, amen.

It's fun to listen to the birds out there, isn't it?

Alright. Question: Who knows the longest running game show on TV? What do you know? What do you think it is? Not *Jeopardy*. What else? *The Price Is Right!* Not the *Wheel of Fortune*. *The Price Is Right*. In 1956 *The Price is Right* came out. It's this show I'm sure we've all seen at least once where the people who do well are the people who know the value of things. They're the ones who can tell that this household product costs a certain amount without going over. So if you know the value of things you can do well on *The Price is Right*.

Today we're going to talk about the value of things, spiritual things, and in particular we're going to talk about how God has given us all kind of valuable things. What I hope today is that you'll experience what the contestants experience when they are right. When they're the ones chosen to go to the next level, what do they do? Oh they're jumping up and down and they're yelling. They're doing this cheering. I think they must instruct people that if you win you must be emotionally exuberant in what you're doing. It reminds me of praising the Lord. You know, "Praise the Lord!" Yes, that's what we do when we experience spiritual blessings.

Today as we look at this passage of scripture we're going to see that Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. He didn't realize the spiritual blessing. He didn't realize how valuable it is. He was a loser. I mean he lost the game in essence. But it was a huge game. It was a game of life and he missed out. We're going to look at him. We're going to see what God has to say about him in this passage today.

I'm eager to share this with you because I want you to see the value that God has given to you. I want you to experience the fact that you're a winner. This isn't just a game. This is life. And when you understand the value of things, the value of spiritual things, great things happen inside your heart. You just want to say praise the Lord. God is good all the time. Right? That's what we want to say.

So in order to get there we have to get to the story. We've been studying now since Genesis 12-50 the story of the four patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. We've been mainly looking at Abraham and the things that are going on in his life. We're going to shift today to the next patriarch.

So there are parts of this story that connect us here in Genesis 25 that I want you to see. I'm not going to read it all, but I want you to see the connection. I don't want to skip over it totally, but I'll make some comments about it. That's what the first few verses of Genesis 25 say that *Abraham took another wife*. Now we know that Sarah was his wife. She passed away. And after she passed away then he took another wife. He has all these kids with her.

Notice verse 5. It says – *Abraham gave all he had to Isaac*. So he passed all of his blessings, all of the material possessions he had and so on to Isaac who is the child of promise. But just to kind of end what's going on with Abraham there, we just see what happened later on in his life. In fact if we go further into the passage we see this. We see that it says – *These are the days of the years of Abraham's life, 175 years*. The guy lived 175 years. That's a long time. *Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people*.

You know what he died of? He died of years. That's what he died of. He was just old and he was full of years. He was *gathered to his people*. I like that phrase. When someone dies we say they passed away or they passed on. But they say he was gathered to his people. I like that. There are people waiting for me in heaven. They can hardly wait for me to die. Because then I'll be up there with them. If I could see them. And I'll be gathered to my people and I'll see all those friends I've had over the years or believers who have passed away and I'll be gathered to my people. I like the description of Abraham that he was gathered to his people.

Notice it says – *Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with Sarah his wife*. I find it interesting that Isaac and Ishmael are together now in this. I'm sure you've seen this at a funeral. We've got people coming together that wouldn't normally be together, there was strife in the family or whatever. But now they come back together to bury Abraham.

Verse 11 says – *After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi*.

Now we're going to shift from this story of Abraham to the story of Isaac as we go into this passage and we're going to learn a little bit more of him. But before we do we're in transition here in this passage. So we're going to... I'm not going to read this passage either. But it talks about the generation of Ishmael. Remember God had promised to Abraham that I'm going to take care of Ishmael and Hagar and he's going to have all these princes and I'm going to raise them into nations. Well this is just the fulfillment of that. If you want to read about the twelve princes, there they are. They are noted there in particular because they become nations and we're going to hear about them in biblical history going forward. So all of that is noted here in Genesis

25:12 and going forward. Which then takes us next into this passage of Isaac. We're going to shift our study now of Isaac and see what God is doing in his life. Actually we're going to move quite quickly through Isaac and get to Jacob even today.

These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac, 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. That's what we talked about last week. That's where we left off the story. Remember? Where God worked out this miracle of bringing Isaac and Rebekah together to be married. We talked about those five principles for determining God's will especially a marriage, but in any kind of decision-making. And one of them is praying that God would go before us as decisions are being made. That God would go before.

Just as we were sharing in the small group on Wednesday night kind of reflects on the sermon, people were sharing needs. I was just thinking about how every one of us as we shared those needs, we're all praying the same thing. "God, would you please go before me with this medical issue? Would you go before me with this challenge I'm having with other people in my life? Would you go forward before me with financial challenges? Lord, I'm just asking you to go before me." And that's what we saw last week in that beautiful story of how Isaac and Rebekah came together. I'm impressed with these two people, Isaac and Rebekah. They had a prayer life. They loved the Lord.

Notice what it says starting in verse 21. *And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren.* He prayed to the Lord for his wife because she was barren. I think about what is the trigger that prompts you to pray? I think often the trigger for me is when things aren't going as expected. When I get in my car and start driving out of my neighborhood, I don't pray, "Lord, help this car get to the next location." But when I hear that rattle in my car or when I feel like something's wrong in the car then I do pray, "Lord, help me get to the next location."

I just upgraded cars. That's why I'm thinking about it. I moved from my 2006 Santa Fe to a 2009 Santa Fe. Big move for me. So I have this now 2009 Santa Fe. But these last two weeks I've been driving my 2006 Santa Fe, and I'll tell you, when I pull into the gas station to get gas, it's faith to fill up the tank. So I always wonder should I fill it up or not? That would be a lot of faith to think I might get to use that whole tank of gas.

When do we pray? We pray when things aren't going the way we would expect. That we feel like things are fine, but then we kind of feel that little ache or pain and we go oh something might be wrong here. When things aren't going the way we expect. And when things aren't going the way we expect sometimes we can get anxious, sometimes we can get upset.

Well Isaac, he prays things aren't going the way I expect. You know we take for granted having children. A couple says, "Hey, we're now going to try to have children." And it takes time. Sometimes it doesn't take any time. It just goes. You just expect and children come. Other times it doesn't come the way you would expect. And here they had tried month after month. They're disappointed. So now Isaac goes to the Lord and prays because she was barren.

And notice the very next phrase. This is what hit me. *And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.* It's like well, there it is! All you just need to do is pray. If you just pray then it's there.

I think wow, I wonder how many times should I have prayed for something and gotten it but I didn't. In fact let me just show you a verse from God's word that illustrates this. Two verses. When you put these two verses together, they make a point. The one from Isaiah 65:24 says – *Before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear.* In other words, God has formed the answers to our prayers before we even ask Him for them.

And then James says – *You don't have because you do not ask.* Do you know what that tells me? That tells me there's some unanswered prayers in heaven waiting to come down. I think next to my name there are some unanswered prayers that are waiting to come down. Like that time I was really anxious about those things and I didn't obey what Philippians 4:6 says. *Do not be anxious about anything, but with prayers and petitions make your request known to God and he will give you the peace that passes all understanding.* That's a prayer waiting in heaven that I didn't take advantage of. That was an unclaimed answer to prayer. It was there. I could have taken it, but I didn't.

I think about that verse in Ephesians that says *God is able to do more than we ever ask or imagine.* I think I imagine this and I keep doing my own imagination in life. I say there's some unanswered prayers there that are unclaimed that God has that are more than what I imagine. If I had just gone there next to my name, I'm sure there are unanswered prayers that I could have received and I could have appreciated and I could have enjoyed. Because God offers those. Unclaimed prayers. Unclaimed answers to prayer in heaven. Wow, isn't that an interesting thought.

Now I'm about to share an illustration with you and I think I'm going to lose some of you by sharing this illustration, but I'm going to share it anyway. But I know that some of you will stop listening to me and because you're so interested in this illustration. But I want to encourage you. I'm going to tell you the point of the illustration first so that you remember this as you're getting distracted from this sermon.

The point is this. There are unclaimed answers to prayer in heaven, which should motivate us in our hearts to be "I want that." It's like the emotional experience at *The Price is Right* to be jumping up and down saying, "Yes! I'm a winner! I want those things!" That's the application to the illustration I'm about to give.

There are in the United States a lot of unclaimed resources. In fact there's 3 trillion dollars' worth of unclaimed material out there. One out of every ten people has something waiting out there to be claimed and you can find out if there's something there for you at unclaimed.org. I'm going to suggest you don't go there right now. I know some of you are getting your phones out. Those of you who are online are already you put me on pause. Don't do that yet. Okay? [Unclaimed.org](http://unclaimed.org). You're going to want to go there, I'm telling you.

The reason I say I'm going to lose you is because I lost myself. I was preparing this sermon this week and when I saw that I go, "Forget the sermon. I'm going to go find out if I'm on this site!" I'm so excited. So I look on unclaimed.org. You know what I found out? I'm not there. But my mom is on there. My daughter Elizabeth is one there. My son Josh is on there. I'm thinking whoa! So I wonder what they have that's unclaimed. There's 3 trillion dollars' worth of money that's out there willing to give to whoever claims it if your name is there. I wonder do any of my friends have any money out there?

I looked up Peter Brown. That's a real common name. Peter Brown. But you can put in his address. I put it in there. Peter, you're not there. But when I was looking for you I saw Tim, your son, has two things waiting for him. I just stopped my sermon, put that aside (like I know some of you have already done), and I called Tim and I said, "Tim."

He says, "I'm on my way to work."

I say, "Yeah, well I just want to tell you about my sermon on Sunday is how we have these unclaimed blessings in heaven that we can receive. And I was doing that, I looked up this unclaimed.org to see what kind of blessings people have here on earth and I saw your name on there twice."

He says, "Okay, I'll get back to you." He gets to work, before he starts any work he goes straight to unclaimed.org, sends me a text, "I don't know what they are, but I've requested that whatever it is be sent to my parent's homes." So whatever it is in two or three weeks it will appear there. Maybe it's a car. Who knows! A bill. Yeah.

I was just so tickled by that. You know why I was so tickled by it? It's because it's the same feeling I imagine people have who win *The Price is Right* and they go, "Oh this is so exciting! I just won the vacation package" or whatever it is. I think it's the same experience that God wants us to have when we recognize the benefits of prayer. The benefits of who we are as Christians. I have lots more to share on that, but let's go on here. I hope you're back with me now.

Alright. Let's go down here to verse 22. *The children struggled together within her...* There's your little hint that there's more than one kid in there. This is multiples. Alright? *And she said, "If it is thus, why is this happening to me?"* She's like something unusual here. So what does she do? *So she went to inquire of the Lord.* Because something unusual is going on here.

And the Lord said to her, "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."

She going to have twins and they're wrestling inside of her. I have no idea what that feels like at all, but I imagine it must be weird to be pregnant and feeling something inside of you moving around. And now you've got two kids fighting in there? That would be really interesting to experience, I'm sure. Maybe interesting is not the word. But she was rather concerned about the whole experience.

I do have twins, by the way. Megan and Elizabeth are twins. And you don't ever say to twins when they're fighting...you don't come in there and say, "Who started it?" because it didn't start today. It didn't start yesterday. It started in the womb. They were wombmates back there and

they're fighting in back there in the womb. That's what's happening here with these wombmates. Let's go on and read more of this story and see what's happening with these guys inside.

When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. I do not know. I cannot imagine a baby coming out hairy. But he came out with hair on him. and they're looking at him going okay, we're going to call him hairy. That's what they called him. Hairy. That's what Esau means. His name is Hairy.

Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so they called this guy tricky guy. Because the idea here is that Jacob was holding his heel. You know when two kids are on the playground and one's trying to get ahead of the other, one might rip the other by knocking his heel over and making him trip so he can get ahead. Well that's what tricky guy means. Heel grabber. And that's what Jacob means. Now God's going to have mercy on him and change his name from Jacob to Israel, but now it's Jacob.

Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

That's going to play into the story in some unhelpful ways. I know that in parenting there are some children that are easier to raise than others. And so it's easier to want to favor one than the other. It's just going to be a problem here. So we always have to be careful as parents to try to love children uniquely. I don't think equally. We love them uniquely according to their needs because they have specific needs. That's going to be a mistake made in this family that will have some repercussions as we go down into the story.

Now we come to this place. This is the part of the story where I kind of camped out and where I found the most practical illustrations for my own self that I want to share with you today. Let's read the story. It says – *Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted.*

See he was a gamer. He was out there shooting...well it wasn't electronic gaming, but he was out there shooting a game and his brother was inside cooking food. Two different kinds of guys. But Esau came from the field and he was exhausted. He wasn't just tired, he was exhausted. In fact he wasn't just hungry, he was starving. It doesn't say he was starving there, but that's the idea you get. You ever have kids come into the kitchen and say, "I'm starving." And you're going, "Oh my goodness. Come on. You don't even know what starving is." But that's what happens. He comes in and he was exhausted.

And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.) That little parentheses there is going to be important later in biblical history because Edom means red. That's the translation. The Edomites come out in different places in history. So the Holy Spirit is allowing us to see the history of these people right here. That's why that parentheses is there. We'll learn more about that as we advance through God's word.

Jacob said... Here's tricky guy again trying to manipulate this whole situation. And here's the thing. Jacob already had this. I just think there are some people today who are trying to work their way into heaven, they're trying to somehow please God in a way that is outside of... You know. They're trying to earn their way. And you don't have to do that. It's already yours. But Jacob is going to try to buy it. He's going to try to earn it.

He says, "Sell me your birthright now." Esau said, "I am about to die (I'm starving to death); of what use is a birthright to me?" Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. That means he didn't value it. He didn't recognize its importance.

What was Esau's mistake? He magnified his current situation and minimized the future benefits. I'm starting to see an application in there for me. Sometimes I magnify my current situation. If I get angry at someone and want to tell them off or get revenge, I'm magnifying my current situation instead of valuing what God is doing and what He wants to do in my heart on the long run.

It says *Esau despised his birthright*. He didn't value it. I think if we understand the value of the birthright then we can do much better. It's like *The Price is Right*. If you understand the value of things you can do well in that particular game show. But if you understand the value of spiritual things, it transforms your life into something very different.

As I pondered this birthright, the birthright is the right that usually the oldest son had that provided him with several benefits. One, that he would get a double portion of the blessing. Two portions of the inheritance as opposed to the others who would each get one portion. But this person would get a double portion. Also he would represent the family's name. Whenever he was out anywhere he would represent the family's name. Thirdly, he would manage family resources. So he was the one who was in charge. It was a very important position that he had as this firstborn son or the one with the birthright.

Which reminds me of the verse in John 1:12 which says – *If anybody receives him (that's Christ) and believes on his name, he has the right to be called a child of God.* Each one of us has a birthright. That birthright that God gives to us that allows us to experience the double blessings of God, that allows us to experience the ability to represent Him, represent the Father in situations, the ability to manage the grace of God in our lives. God has given us this beautiful privilege, this birthright. If we recognize how valuable it is, then we would choose it. We wouldn't be choosing the meal over the birthright. Esau despised his birthright.

I started thinking about the privileges and responsibilities that come with being a child of God. Oh there's lots of them. They fall into two big categories. We talk about the privileges and responsibilities that come with being a child of God. One is that we're growing and rising to the next level in our personal development. You go to college and you try to advance to the next level in your development. Some of you are in training at work because you want to get new skills so you can advance to the next level. Some of you are trying to do something in your

personal life to advance to the next level so you can take on a different occupation. Or you can do something else. You're advancing to the next level of your development. You see what God wants to do in our lives is He wants to move us to the next level of our development spiritually. He calls that process sanctification. He moves us forward. That's one of the beautiful things about being a Christian. God has us on a track of growth. We're not just stagnant. He's moving us to the next level. I don't know what He's doing in your life, but probably you want to write it down. What is God doing to move you to the next level of your personal development? He's working in your life right now and that can be challenging at times.

The second responsibility and privilege we have is to represent Christ to a world who is in need. A world that doesn't even appreciate us as Christians, for the most part, and may despise us as Christians. But we have this privilege and responsibility to represent God, represent the Father and what the family name means as we go forward. There's so many things that happen when you become a child of God. You get a new inheritance, you get a new name, you get new brothers and sisters, you get new rules to know how to live by in this family. You get all of these great benefits that come with being a child of God. This birthright that we understand.

When we understand all the spiritual blessings in Christ, I picture us really jumping up and down like in the show. You know – “Oh yes, I get to go to the next level. I'm so excited about that.” That's what the Bible says. Let me show you the verse that talks about this very thing because Paul is just starting out the book of Ephesians this way by saying “I'm jumping up and down. Praise the Lord!” he says. *Praise be to the God Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!* You can see him jumping up and down. You can picture his excitement. Why? *Who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

There are so many blessings we have, it just motivates us to live differently, doesn't it? It motivates us to follow Christ in ways that we didn't imagine before. It gives us this sense of hope and enjoyment, and we go yes! I'm so glad that I have the blessing of God. Those blessings aren't just the parking place that we find at times. The blessings are having God so close to us that He's closer to us than any other challenge that can face our lives. We have Him right there. That's the blessings of God. Spiritual blessings in Christ. You have them. You can be excited. I know you're eager, and some of you have already gone online to unclaimed.org to see what you can claim. However, spiritual blessings you have are waiting for you. They're right there next to your name in heaven and we just need to call upon them and ask God to bring them down.

So I'm a pastor and my goal is to help you take this passage and apply it to your life. It's always great when somebody does it before I do. Especially if someone in the Bible does it. That's what happens in Hebrews. The writer of Hebrews says let's look back at this story about Esau and let me apply it to your lives. So let's go and see how this person does that, the writer to the Hebrews, how he adds these things.

This is what he says that we should do because of this story of Esau. He says – *Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy.* In other words, when you understand these blessings and they mean something to you, then you're going to choose a life that's following after the Lord. A holy life. A life that's following God.

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God (okay, there's this grace of God that He wants to give to us) and that no bitter root grows up (a bitter root is like anger, bitterness that takes root) to cause trouble and defile many. Because if you have anger in your heart that's unresolved then what happens is you have a greater propensity to get angry. That means you'll get angry more often. Your triggers are more prevalent. So you will maybe get more intensely angry at things. You become critical. You're easily offended. That's this bitter root of anger that causes trouble and defiles many. Anger is a problem he says.

See that no one is sexually immoral (and then he goes right on) or is godless like Esau. But sexually immoral. So we want to be careful about anger issues, we want to be careful about sexual immorality – things that could trip us up or get us into trouble. Or being godless. That's living as if God is not present. That God doesn't exist. Like Esau. That's how he lived. He goes, "Oh the birthright, that's not important to me. I just want to live in the here and now. I want to eat right now." I know some of us who are trying to lose weight, we go, "You know what, I need to put off my present desire for food for some greater blessing." We can apply this to making wise food choices. But there's this sense of godlessness that Esau had that he wasn't concerned about spiritual things. See, as Christians we have this birthright. We have his special blessing. We're not like Esau, *who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.* *Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.*

So what Esau does is he engages in this mistake of giving up something so valuable. I think we do that. We're Christians. We're the children of God. We have the birthright. Yet when we get involved in things that we know we shouldn't get involved in or we allow our emotions to take control of us in ways that aren't healthy or helpful, then we end up selling our birthright for some temporary benefit. Oh that hurts me when I think about the times I do that. It's painful.

See I'm convinced that God wants us to understand that we are a winner. We are a child of God. We are yes, I've won the game.

There's that other it's not a game show, but the one where you fill out the... Publishers Clearing House. That's the one. Publishers Clearing House. What they do is they give \$1,000-\$5,000,000 checks out. They do that. And you know what they like to do? They take their whole camera crew out to whoever they're going to give it to and they like to surprise them. So you open your door and there they are, the whole camera crew, and they say, "Here's your check. You have won a million dollars" or whatever it is. And they want to receive your response. If you're not there at home, do you know what they do? They don't want to come back again. They go find you. Where is she? Oh she's at the gym. Okay, we're going to go find her at the gym. Or she's at the grocery store. Well which grocery store? We're going to find her at the grocery store. Or we're going to find her at work. They pursue the person so that they can film them instantly when they find out they've won that huge amount of money.

I just find that fascinating because I think God wants to surprise us with His blessings and He pursues us. I think some people view the blessings of God in God's hands and we have to pry them out by being good and by doing our devotions and by giving money and being kind. So we

feel like we're prying them out of God's hands. That's not the view we have of God's goodness. The view is that they're running after us. We just have to slow down. We say okay, okay. I'll take them. I'll take them. You know that God wants to give out these blessings. That we're a winner in God's sight. That God has given us these things that we've already won.

I just want to talk to you who feel like losers. Because I think some people think, "I'm not a winner; I'm a loser." I say that's the first step to becoming a winner. Because when we come to Christ we have to recognize that this isn't because of us that we're winners. We're all losers. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God. That means we aren't winners in and of ourselves. We're sinners and we fall short. We don't get the glory of God. But you see when we trust Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, then it's because of Christ's righteousness that we receive all of these blessings and we get to go on and yes and we get to say I'm a winner. I'm a winner, not because of something I've done, but because of what Christ has done.

So if you're here today and you're feeling like I am just not a winner, I'm a loser, I want you to know you're at the first step. Once you recognize that you're a loser, that you've sinned, then you're at that first step toward salvation and you say, "Lord, I need you." That's why He's called a Savior. To save you because you're losing. He's going to save you. When He does, then He brings you into this new life, this birthright, this beautiful thing that God wants us to have and it causes us to live differently. We start living with our head held high and coming before God and asking for those blessings, those answered prayers that are waiting for us in heaven. All of those things come to us because we know who our Daddy is. We can go to Him and trust Him and embrace Him as our Savior.

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, thank you for this story. We don't want to be like Esau. We want to accept that birthright, all those blessings that you give to us. We appreciate the fact that you've done so much for us. Lord, thank you for that. So make that real in our lives this week so that we live differently this week because of what you've done for us on the cross. Lord, thank you for your goodness. As we sing that song now, we ask that you speak to our hearts, each one. In Jesus' name, amen.

Let's continue worshipping the Lord together.