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March 28, 2021

## GENESIS 27

Series: Understanding Your Roots

We're going to look at God's word now. So I want to ask that you would pray with me. We're going to pray to settle our hearts, prepare our hearts for what God might say to us today through His word. Let's go before the Lord together.

[PRAYER] Lord, you've taken us from this experience of communion that was celebrated in that upper room during that week before Easter and that we now celebrate, remembering the death of Christ. So we're so grateful for that. We're humbled by your love for us and your care for us. Now Father, we're going into your word to look at more about what it has to say for our own hearts. Lord, I'm impressed how you are working behind the scenes in this story. It reminds me that you work behind the scenes in each one of our lives to bring about your desired result. Lord, I ask that you'd make us more sensitive to your workings and to your plan and to your strategies and the things that we need to know so that we can trust you more. Make us more aware of your operations and what you're doing in this world and in our lives so that we can trust you every day. Lord, we want to do that. We know that trusting you is the solution to our own mental health and our own well-being and our ability to share the message of the gospel with others. So Father, now as we open your word we ask you to teach us. In Jesus' name, amen.

We use the word 'dysfunction' to describe a family that has some challenges in it. Many of you know what that means when we talk about dysfunction because you grew up in a dysfunctional home, a challenging home where there was dysfunction and difficulties. Others of you have challenges inside your own heart of dysfunction and you know "oh man, I'm just a dysfunctional person." We understand that. But you can have a dysfunctional government, you can have a dysfunctional [audio glitch]. There can be a lot of dysfunction that exists in our world today. [audio glitch] for us to understand particularly what it means for us to have an understanding of God because the more we understand God the less dysfunction that we experience in our lives.

I started talking to you about dysfunction. We experience dysfunction and today as we go into our passage in Genesis 27 we're going to see a dysfunctional family. As we look at this dysfunctional family, we're going to see the challenges they faced and we're going to learn some very important things about our own lives. But we have to go through the dysfunction to see this very important part of what's going to happen in their lives.

I want to introduce you to the characters in this story. The characters in this story are significant. There are four of them in Genesis 27.

The first one is Isaac. Now Isaac is the dad in this story. Isaac knows that he should be passing the blessing on to Jacob. Because there was a prophecy about Jacob that he would be the one to receive this. But he doesn't do that. He wants to subvert what God is doing. So he, because he favors Esau, is going to try to pass the blessing onto Esau. So he's character number one.

The second character in this story is Rebekah. Rebekah knows what should be happening here, but doesn't know how to talk rightly to her husband. So what she does is she uses all these conniving techniques to try to manipulate the situation to make it happen. That's the second character.

The third character is Esau. Now Esau is a man's man. He's the kind of guy that drives a truck. I mean he's a hunter. He's into gaming. He's out there being a man's man. In fact he's not the guy who just has a truck; he has a gun rack in the back of his truck. He's one of these real men kind of a guy.

Now yesterday John Snee and I were working out here on the Barn with some others, a whole team of people, to get things set up. And John (this is a man thing, okay) is looking at my power tools that I brought and he says, "Oh where did you get those from? Hasbro or Playskool?" He's joking with me about my tools. When I grow up I want to be like John Snee. I want to be a man like him and have his manly tools like he's got. If I'm ever going to buy tools I'm going to check with John Snee beforehand. That just reminded me about Esau. He's a man's man kind of a guy.

Then we've got Jacob. Jacob has a completely different personality. If you want to learn more about Jacob, you're probably going to sit down and watch the cooking channel. I mean he's this guy who is very different than his brother Jacob. Jacob's going to be conniving too, cooperating with his mom to trick his brother out of the blessing.

In the center of this story is the blessing. That's the beautiful part of this story that we're going to take with us and we're going to understand more about as we proceed through. So go ahead and let's look at this story. I'm going to take you into Genesis 27 and let's see what God has to say there.

Genesis 27:1 says this: *When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death."*

Now the reality is this guy's going to live another forty-three years. He may have some hypochondriac tendencies here. It reminds me of the woman who before she died had her tombstone created, so when she died and they put it up it said "I told you I was sick." It's the same thing that sometimes I think Isaac's the kind of guy who goes to WebMD and he looks at all the symptoms and he's convinced he has twenty different diseases. Anyway, he's going to die. Now I think the reason he's coming at this point is he's 137 years of age and his brother Ishmael died when he was 137. I don't know about you, but when you pass the age of some of your relatives, you start asking the question am I next? So Isaac is asking that question. He says, "Hey, I'm old and I don't know when I'm going to die." He's got some challenges. It says *his eyes were dim*. When you start getting older, things usually come together, at the same time other

things are falling apart. That's what's happening with Isaac. His eyes were dim, so he had some challenges.

So he says – *“Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”*

Look at those words – *my soul shall bless you before I die*. The word *soul* is the word *nephesh* in the Hebrew. You can write that down. You can spell it anyway you want unless you know Hebrew. *Nephesh*. Okay. *Nephesh* is this. When God made Adam and Eve, He made them a living *nephesh*. He made them a soul. This is who they are. This is the inner most part of a person. This is their *nephesh*. Jacob says my *nephesh*, my soul is going to pass something onto you. My soul as a dad is so important I want to give something to you that you need in your life. The *nephesh*. It's going to come from his very soul.

But notice what he says. I want to give you the blessing. The word *bless* is not a new word for us. We've seen it through the Bible already, even in Genesis where it says when *God made Adam and Eve he blessed them and he said, “Be fruitful and multiply.”* Because what the blessing does is the blessing identifies your uniqueness and then empowers you to move forward in that uniqueness in the future of what God has for you. That's what the blessing does. So that's why God says that to Adam and Eve. He says the same thing after Noah had come out of the ark with his sons. It says – *God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply.”* He's sending them on a mission. We see the same word *bless* used with Abraham when God says, *“Abraham, I'm going to make your descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky or as numerous as the sand of the sea.”* God is saying to him I'm going to give you a purpose and a meaning. That's what the blessing does. We all need that blessing in our hearts. We all need it because it provides us with our dignity. It provides us with our identity. It provides us with our worthiness. It provides us with our acceptance, with our love.

Dad says, *“I want to give this to you, son. So here's what I want you to do. Take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”*

*Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, ‘Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the Lord before I die.’ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies.”*

So Rebekah is going to subvert the whole plan of her husband because she believes, of course, that God has something better here. Sometimes when we think we know the right thing we manipulate the situation. That's what she's doing. Instead of trusting in the Lord, she's taking matters into her own hands.

*But Jacob said to his mom Rebekah, “Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing.” “We’ve got problems in this plan,” he says to his mom. His mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me.” In other words, don’t worry about the problems in this plan. I’ll solve them. I’ve got the solutions. You go out there and you do what I told you to do.*

*So he went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved.*

Let’s go to the next page. This is what Rebekah is going to do as she’s conniving and figuring this out. It says – *Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. Those garments are going to be important. And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.*

*So he went in to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” Jacob said to his father [clears throat], “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.” But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” He answered [clears throat], “Because the Lord your God granted me success.”*

I always find it interesting when people try to use God to endorse their particular ideas and plans. You ever experienced that? It can happen even in the church. Someone will come and say, “Well I have a word from the Lord for you.” Now I do believe God provides words from the Lord for me through other people, so I want to listen when anybody says that. But I think it will be more humble if someone would say, “I believe I have a word from the Lord for you.” Because we know that there’s this humanity that we have and if God is passing a word to someone through you, there may be some humanity that’s catching some air either in the listening or in the presenting. So we want to be careful. I would suggest we want to say something like, “I believe I have a word from the Lord for you.” But even people who aren’t Christians will sometimes call on the name of the Lord to endorse whatever they’re doing.

When my wife and I were younger we were taught about financial principles for success. One of the things we were taught to be on the lookout for is if you’re ever in a sales meeting, someone’s trying to sell you something and they say in that meeting “this deal is only good during this sales meeting” or “this deal is only good today,” then you want to walk away. Because if they’re not willing to have you check out the plans, check out this idea, it’s probably got a problem. So be careful of these things that have the ticking clock that says “you need to buy this right now.”

Well we found ourselves sitting with a salesman at one point, presenting something that we really liked, we were going to buy. But then he said to us, “Now this deal I’m offering you is only good right now while I’m here with you.” And that was the red flag that went off in my mind. So I said, “Oh I’m really sorry. We’re going to have to not do this because we have a

policy in our relationship that we pray about anything. We don't make instant decisions." This guy is not a believer and you know what he says? He says, "Oh I'll pray with you. Let's pray right now." I laughed. No way. I know this kind of a sales presentation that's going on here.

So that's what's happening here. He says – *"Because the Lord your God granted me success,"* he says in the Esau voice.

Let's go to the next page. It says – *Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed him. He said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He answered [clears throat], "I am." Then he said, "Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.*

*Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, my son." So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said...* We'll go onto what he said in just a moment. But notice that what happened is he smells the unique smell of Esau. I'm sure Jacob smelled completely different. Jacob smelled like Giorgio Armani. He smelled really nice. Esau smelled like the locker room. And this was like the test there. So he smells his son. He says, "Yep. Yep. This is him. This is Esau all right."

He takes advantage of his uniqueness and he's going to put that right into the blessing. You're going to see that in just a moment. Because one of the things about the blessing that he passes on to Esau (thinking that it's Esau, but it's really Jacob) is the uniqueness of the individual. You're going to have to know that. Because God wants to pass a blessing on to you. We're going to see today that we all have this need for a blessing in our own hearts and that blessing is very special that God wants to give to you.

I'm getting ahead of the story. Let me read the blessing first of all. Let's go to the next page there and read these are the words of the blessing. We'll come back to these words in a minute. But notice what he says. He takes Esau's uniqueness and he says to him – *"See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed!"* He makes a picture out of the uniqueness of his son. You are special. Here's a picture of what you're like.

The second thing he does in the blessing is he expresses the goodness of God. May God be good to you. That's part of the blessing here. Notice he says – *"May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine."*

And thirdly what he does in the blessing is he envisions a positive future for his son. That his son would be able to experience these things and be setting his mind in a positive direction of what God is going to do in his life moving forward. He says – *"Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!"* This is a very special blessing from the soul of Isaac to his son. And his son really wants this and needs this, unlike the birthright.



In fact let's read more about this story and then I want to come back and apply this idea of the blessing to our own lives. On the next page it says – *As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me." His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" He answered, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." Then Isaac trembled very violently.*

I've just got to point out that in dysfunctional families you've got all kinds of emotional challenges that exist among the people that are in them. Because tension is created. Problems come up. That tension and problems create all kinds of friction in the family. That's what you're seeing take place right now because he realizes he has been tricked. He realizes that there's damage in the relationships and is now affecting his goals in life. This is a problem.

So it says – *he trembled very violently and said, "Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed." As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!"*

When I put myself into this story, I put myself right here in the pain of Esau. I experience his pain and his longing and his grief in that he wants this blessing. He needs this inside of his heart. He wants this for his whole life. I think every one of us has a need in our hearts for a blessing. This blessing that should take place and start in a family that grows into a realization among the children that they can receive the blessing from God Himself. That's how the blessing should take place in a dynamic. Esau cries out because he knows he needs this in his life.

There are so many people today who are struggling in their lives because they don't have the blessing. It is the blessing that God provides in a person's life that satisfies those deep longings, those inner needs that we have. When a couple comes together who haven't experienced the blessing, they come with all of these needs. They come into a marriage that they're not able to handle and they place inordinate demands on the other person. Feed me. I need the blessing in my life. I'm imposing on you to give me what I need. Of course there's no one person that can satisfy all of the needs of one other person. So tension is created, demandingness becomes present, and that relationship falls on hard times. Because the person doesn't experience the blessing.

On the other hand when we do experience the blessing of God, we have this satisfaction that flows deep into our *nephesh*, into our soul that allows us to experience God's grace in a powerful way. See God designed this blessing so that every one of us would be able to experience and enjoy it. The challenge is where are we going to get it. Living in a home is the first place where you experience the blessing, or should.

Now I know some of you grew up in a home where you didn't experience the blessing in your life. You struggled in your life because the blessing wasn't present for you. In fact when you start thinking about God as Father, you say to yourself, "I can't even think about God as Father.

Because when I start thinking about God as Father, I'm so disrupted by my earthly father that I didn't even have a father or my father was certainly any demonstration of godliness. I can't even think about God's fatherhood in my life." That person is making a mistake when they say that. Because what they're doing is they're focusing in on an earthly model of fatherhood to imagine what God is like. That is not what we're to do. What we're to do is to go to the Bible and learn about our heavenly Father. To experience Him in all of His fullness.

In 2 Corinthians 1 it talks about how God is the God of comfort and the Father of compassion. Oh I love those words. Many fathers aren't compassionate, but our heavenly Father is. He's the Father of compassion. When we're introduced in the Sermon on the Mount to Jesus as Father, He describes Him – "You know the birds get cared for and the flowers get cared for. Your heavenly Father loves you so much more that He cares for you in your own personal life." Our God is a caring God. He's a Father who cares for us. We read in Hebrews that God disciplines us because He loves us. He cares for us. He disciplines us. All of those things are present in our understanding of God.

So we go to God's word and we learn about what is the Father? And when we understand more about God and His fatherhood qualities then we use that model to evaluate every earthly model of parenting. You know what we discover? We discover there are no perfect parents! We all live with imperfect parents. Because we all live with a sin nature. So in a family when you have different people whose sin nature is reigning, you have selfishness that affects the family in ways that cause all kinds of division and problems. But when people accept the Christ as their Lord and Savior, they now have the Spirit of God to help them overcome that selfishness and make changes. So we have less friction. We have more growth in our lives. We have less tension, more cohesiveness in our family dynamics and family relationships. It's the model of God as Father that's so important for us to enjoy. When we see that we can experience much more in our own lives.

Well let's go on and see more of the story here. I want to come back and make some more comments about the blessing.

On the next page it says – *But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing." Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? Isn't he living up to his name? (Jacob means heel-catcher. When you're running along and someone trips you by kicking your foot across so you trip so they can get ahead. That's what Jacob means.) For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." Then he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"* Can you feel the pain in Esau's voice?

*Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?" Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, my father?"*

Isaac has got a real problem. He's fixated on one child and he's invested all that into one child where he should be able to give a blessing to another child. That's what he should be able to do. When it gives time for Jacob to give the blessing to his sons, he gives out twelve different

blessings. Because every child needs a blessing from the dad and from the mom. Receiving that blessing.

We don't know that Rebekah had a dad because we don't have him referenced. But you remember when the servant went to get Rebekah for Isaac that when they're going to leave rather suddenly they agreed and she's going to go, the Bible says her older brother Laban came out and he blessed her and he said, "May you have thousands of children." It's that blessing that she needed as she was going off to get married. There was a blessing that was provided for her. Every one of them should receive a blessing.

*Esau says to his father, "Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father." And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.*

*Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck."*

Now look at what happened to Esau in his own heart. It says – *Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob."* This is dysfunction. Obvious dysfunction in this family where hatred grows. It starts with the favoritism exerted by the parents. The children are fighting. It's just a terrible situation. And now Esau wants to kill his brother.

*But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away—until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him." This breakup in the family is really a sad thing. You know Jacob is going to leave the family and now he will never see his mother again.*

Interestingly enough as we'll see later on in this story, Jacob and Esau will reunite. The fascinating thing for me is that even in a dysfunctional family, God is at work. So take heart! If you grew up in a dysfunctional family, God is still working in the midst of all of the challenges that are there.

Let's take one more page, the end of this story because Rebekah has a problem now. Because now her son is leaving. How is she going to talk to her husband about it? So instead of having a logical conversation about this, she says – *"Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?" Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?" So she says to Isaac, "I'm sending him away to get a wife."*



Wow. What a sad story. Maybe one of the saddest chapters in the Bible. But right in the center of this story is this brightest picture that we need to look at and we need to understand. Because the blessing is this place where a person experiences in their uniqueness the acceptance and the value that they need.

Do you know that God has made every one of us very unique? You know that. You are unique and special. So when a father comes along and amplifies that and says you are accepted, you are valued, you are loved. When a mother comes along to a child and makes that kind of a statement, it does something to you on the inside. It really prepares you as you're growing for the spiritual blessing that God is going to also do. Because God wants you to have the blessing in your own personal heart.

If you're struggling today because you don't feel accepted or worthy, you don't feel loved, you feel challenges in your life, in your own self-concept, you're just riddled with all kinds of struggles, you need the blessing. Maybe you didn't get it growing up. But you need to know you can get it today from God Himself who is your heavenly Father who fills in all of those gaps and gives you those things. It's a beautiful thing that God does.

The family is very important. It's God's first place where people learn love and acceptance and identity and so on. But as the people grow and we move out and we're in different places, God has designed another family. The family of God where you can enjoy the blessings of the Father and they can minister to you deep, deep within your heart in that special place where you need.

But the blessing isn't just for you. Yes, many of you have received that blessing. You said, "Yes, I'm so grateful that I know God as my personal Lord and Savior. He is now running my life because I now have the blessing at work in my life." Do you know what you can do with that now? You can turn that around and bless other people. Because a lot of you have parents that never received the blessing from their own parents. When you turn around and bless your parents, you're passing onto them this blessing that they need, this affirmation that they need in introducing to them the faith in Jesus Christ that will satisfy every part of their needs. It's not just for your parents. It's for everyone in your family. But it's not just for your family. It's for everyone that you come in contact with. There are so many people you see acting out in life. Why? They don't have the blessing. They're like Esau crying out and they're trying to find their blessing by putting other people down or by racing around in life. Because they don't have the blessing. They're trying to earn it somehow.

When I see people racing by me on the freeway or cutting me off, I can say now, "Hey, I understand. You're going to find the blessing. I've already got it. Don't worry about me." I've got the blessing. God has given that to me and it's something that other people need. In fact God's church is this place where the blessing is found.

If you're here today and you've never experienced the blessing of God and you know you need it like Esau in your heart – "oh God, I need this" – you need to know you can find it here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope. First of all we're training parents to pass that blessing on to their children. We're teaching husbands and wives how to have close relationship to contribute to that in those relationships. But all of that is pointing to something much bigger and that is the

relationship we have with our Father who wants to come in and He wants to give us that blessing deep within our hearts.

I trust that this church is the place where people can walk in the door and experience the blessing of God. They can experience that not just in some surface tension, but something deeper inside. That they're receiving that and God is blessing them so deeply inside of their lives. That this blessing considers the uniqueness. God says everybody is unique. They all have this spiritual gift. Come. The church becomes this place where you can express it and you can use it and you can find that meaning. That we encourage one another and we're praying for the blessing for each other that God would do good as this blessing does in this story. And then God envisions this positive future for us that we need that God is in control. He's leading us, He's moving us forward. I'm excited about what God is yet to do here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope and in your lives together.

If you've never received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you can do it today. Talk to the person who invited you to come online and watch. Talk to the person who brought you today. Jesus Christ wants to pass that blessing on to you. It's a powerful story and prepares you for Easter and what God wants to do in this resurrection of life that we're going to learn more about next week.

Would you pray with me? Stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we do thank you for the rain which represents the blessing that you pour out on our lives. Lord, I pray that you'd rain out that reign on our hearts that we need, that blessing that sinks down to every part of who we are into our being so that we can learn how to forgive and we can learn how to be gracious and we can learn how to experience joy. Not humanly speaking but because of the power of your Spirit at work in our lives thank you that you do that. We are so grateful for that, Father. In Jesus' name, amen.