

Genesis 27 v30 to 46

Welcome to another episode of 'Canaanation Street'! :-

We see a **family divided**: deception, manipulation, favouritism and threats – all the soap operas rolled into one.

Here in Genesis is a description of a **broken society**, a broken family – a family not unlike many of our own families in our own society

you can imagine them on the **Jeremy Kyle show** all lined up and each accusing the other of something. He deceived me, she forced me to do it, he stole my birthright, he threatened to murder me, she went behind my back, he was always your favourite!

And in all this brokenness we ask where is God? He seems to be absent from most of this story so far and yet, as Mark said last week, God is **working behind the scenes**.

Mark was sharing with me how he gave his life to Jesus when he was 38 years old and now as he looks back he is aware of how God was working behind the scenes to prepare him not just to become a follower of Jesus but also for the ministry that he is now doing.

I'm sure if someone 20 years ago had said that he would be standing up in front of people sharing the good news of Jesus and leading life-groups and praying and studying scripture – he would have laughed and yet now he can see how God was leading and training him even before he gave his life to Jesus

– Jesus told a story about a lost son in Luke 15 and it tells us that the son decides to return to the Father and it says '**while he was still a long way off**' the Father saw him and ran towards him.

No matter what has gone on so far and no matter how messy things may be for you at the moment God is looking out for you and when he sees you coming He will run to you.

God is working behind the scenes to repair the broken pieces, to get things in place, to create foundations, to remove barriers to those foundations being laid so you can be prepared for the work of God in your life – He is preparing you for something greater than you've experienced before. Maybe bigger than anything you might currently think is possible. We look at the barriers but God looks at the horizon.

We saw last week how Jacob's way out was to deceive his way into receiving the blessing from Isaac that, according to tradition, should have belonged to his older brother Esau. Jacob, the second born, deceived his way into getting the blessing of the first born son. Yet this too was part of God's plan.

God decided what would happen – not the tradition of men. Esau seemed the natural heir and the obvious one to take over – He was the Steven Seagall of the Ancient World.

But God chose the 2nd born.
Do you feel like a 2nd? Do you feel less than 1st place?
God chooses you.

It is God's way – throughout the Bible we see God choosing people who are 2nd 3rd or 4th

place, the weak and the sinful and the fearful. Saul, David, Paul, prostitutes, tax-collectors, lepers, the demon possessed and Jacob.

1 Corinthians 1 v27: God chose the foolish, the weak, the lowly things, the despised things, the things that are not

Do you feel foolish? Weak? Lowly? Despised? Insignificant? God chooses you

It's good to read the stories of how people became Christians and there are a number of people here in church who have been sending me their testimonies which I'm hoping to publish and give out at some point.

God reaches out to you AS YOU ARE, WHERE YOU ARE – just as He reached out to Jacob.

It wasn't the 'done thing', it wasn't tradition, it wasn't the obvious choice - but God did it anyway.

You would think that God wouldn't be happy about Jacob deceiving his way into getting blessing but I love what Eugene Peterson (the guy who put together the Message version of the Bible) says:-

“When we sin and mess up our lives, we find that God doesn't go off and leave us- he enters into our trouble and saves us.”

What matters more to Christ is not where we've come from but where we are heading.

You may think – well that's ok for everyone else but God doesn't really know me.

That leads us to quite a sad moment in this story.

Isaac in this story was blind and asks a question when Esau comes into his presence – **'Who are you?'** and this is the same question he had asked Jacob.

He couldn't distinguish between his 2 sons. Even his favourite son was unfamiliar to him.

And it struck me what a huge contrast with God our Father.

Psalms 139 says 'O Lord you have searched me and you know me, you know when I sit and when I rise, you perceive my thoughts from afar, you discern my going out and my lying down, you are familiar with all my ways'

God knows us totally – you cannot deceive Him. He knows you – he has counted every hair on your head (Matthew 10 v30) – I love Grace and sometimes I will just watch her sleeping, which sounds creepy but if you're a parent you'll understand what I mean – yet even I have not counted every hair on her head – and that's how intimately God knows you.

Do you ever feel like no-one 'gets you'? So often we waste so much time trying to get others to understand us and get us and we hate it when we are misunderstood – it almost hurts because we know they are thinking something about us that just isn't true.

I wonder how Esau felt when he walked in and his father asks 'Who are you?' - I know he was blind but it still must have hurt a bit.

How fantastic it is when you find someone who knows who you are.

When I became a Christian I've often said I moved from knowing about God to knowing God but that's only half the story because it was more that I realised that God knew me and accepted me.

But then something else tragic happens:-

When Esau finds out that Jacob has been given the blessing instead of him it tells us he *'burst out with a loud and bitter cry'* – he realised too late the value of the birthright he had given away in Chapter 25 when he had swapped it for a bowl of soup.

Don't leave it too late.

Don't wait and wait and wait until it's too late to realise the blessing God has got for you.

I recently read this article that appeared in the Daily Telegraph in November 2008:-

Dust covered painting in attic found to be a masterpiece

A dust-covered painting found behind an old mattress in an attic has turned out to be the work of a famous artist worth £50,000.

The 45 year old woman had been given the art work for her ninth birthday but had kept it in her loft for years and forgot about it until she put her house up for sale.

An eagle-eyed auctioneer who was valuing her belongings spotted the oil painting and was stunned when he realised it was by 19th century artist John Everett Millais.

Imagine having something that valuable in your attic or under your nose and you don't realise it – yet so many people are like that with Jesus.

Knowing Jesus daily is the greatest blessing you could ever have in your life but so many people just leave it to a rainy day.

Or there are even Christians who have the blessing of knowing God but they get up and they don't meet with Him and they don't read His words and they basically ignore Him and they too miss out on the blessing and they say – I'll leave it.

I had a picture at the prayer time last Monday morning of God's hand writing out a cheque, He wants to bless us – but a cheque is useless unless we cash it. If it just sits on the side then it's just a piece of paper – we need to make use of it – we need to step into all the blessing God has for us – not trade it for something less.

In v37 Isaac responds to Esau's cries by saying “I have made him lord over you ...” probably not what Esau wanted to hear – 'this is what you could have won'!!

and then Isaac says 'what can I possibly do for you, my son?'

Isaac couldn't bless Esau because it was a limited blessing – it was only possible to bless one son and once that had happened there was no more blessing left.

But listen to this amazing thing: It's completely different with Jesus!

Galatians 3 v26 'You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

The ultimate blessing is having a daily minute by minute relationship with God Himself.

Finally we see a strange thing – after receiving this amazing blessing Jacob has to flee for his life. That doesn't look much like blessing to me!

There are times when we become Christians thinking God is now going to bless us because we've given our life to Him, and then an amazing thing happens - things get worse!

Circumstances kick us in the teeth, we seem to trip up more rather than less!

Jeremiah 29 v11 says 'I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future' and we say OK God – when?!?!'

Yet once again as we look back with hind-sight we can see that God was working behind the scenes – Jacob **had** to flee.

Not just from the hatred and threats of his brother Esau but the over-reliance on the controlling love of his mother. A love that caused him to deceive and lie to his own father. Rebekah called the shots but God wanted to.

Sometimes God needs to wrench us away from where we have come to rely on everything else other than Him. And sometimes the wrenching is painful or even violent yet in the end it is for our blessing.

We leave this chapter with Jacob fleeing and it looks like the opposite of blessing but we will see next week in Chapter 28 that it is in the desert place that Jacob will finally meet God for himself. And the God who has been working behind the scenes comes centre stage.

Sometimes we have to leave our comfortable places and sometimes God allows what looks like pain to cause us to step into a greater degree of blessing in His presence as we are called to give up our self-reliance and start to rely on Him.

So:-

God is working behind the scenes for us

God chooses us even when we feel like we are unworthy

God knows us intimately (better than we know ourselves)

God wants to bless us and will bless us even through the most difficult of times if we keep our eyes fixed on Him .

