

Crossroads Community Church

Sunday March 15th, 2015

With Spring just around the corner and sun shining on us we were excited to worship the Lord. Pastor Don shared announcements then prayed over us, "Dear Father God, we pray for truthful hearts, the kind that follows good instruction and trust your plans for our lives, help us not become impatient and take matters into our own hands which can cause hurt and deception, in Jesus name, Amen." Today we begin to examine the roller coaster life of Jacob starting in Genesis 25-27. Jacob was the son of Isaac the Grandson of Abraham to whom God made this promise, "I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you," Genesis 17:6. This is the lineage God chose for Jesus our Messiah to come from.

When we read the fascinating stories of characters of the Bible we can definitely relate with many of them. Moses felt inadequate, after years in the desert with the Israelites he became annoyed and frustrated with them. The apostle Peter wimped out of fear when Jesus went to the cross and let us think of Paul on the road to Damascus when Christ blinded him and revealed Himself to him; he had an epiphany of sorts that he honestly needed to change his thoughts and actions, going from persecutor to promoter. God wants us to learn the very same lessons today; he turns our deceptions into honesty, our weaknesses into strength, our frustrations into passion, our fears into courage, our criticism and judgments into encouragement and compassion. God did it then and He wants to do it in us now if we allow Him to. Let us keep this question in mind, are we an early Jacob who deceives and runs from God? God wants to bless us; He doesn't withhold any good thing that is within His will for us. God encourages us to pray fervently for all things and the desires of our hearts, but God knows when to grant them in His time. The Lord God decides to withhold an answer for a time to broaden our insight on genuine needs, to deepen our appreciation for His answers and to allow us to grow in maturity so we can use His gifts wisely.

Isaac prayed for a wife and children and he married 20 years later, and waited another 20 years to have twins a blessing for any parent but even from the womb the brothers had their own character and were at odds, (Genesis 25:22-26). Their given names displayed who they were. Esau meant "Hairy" and Jacob Meant "Trickster". They were like night and day, Esau was rugged, robust and loved to hunt and his father preferred him. Jacob was mild tempered and liked to stay at home which greatly pleased his mother. Tradition of the day was that the firstborn son was entitled to a double portion of the family inheritance and to him also fell the honor of leading the family after the passing of the father. If he chose to, he could sell the birthright, but in so doing he would forfeit his blessings. Unfortunately Esau made that mistake, on a day where he had not been successful despite hunting all day, he was starving. Jacob saw an opportunity to obtain what he wanted and after tempting his brother with a bowl of stew, in the heat of the moment Esau relinquished his birthright to Jacob, (Genesis 25:32-34). We can almost feel sorry for Esau but he only sought to satisfy his immediate satisfaction without counting the cost, he didn't think things through. Sadly many of us may have made similar mistakes in the heat of the moment. We cannot ignore Jacob's mistake either. He was greedy, impatient and resorted to manipulation. Sometimes we too act this way when things don't happen the way we think it should or in the time frame we want. Esau didn't value his God given birthright and Jacob lacked trust in God's promise.

Let's jump ahead to chapter 27, again Jacob along with his mother lacked faith in God's promises. They devised a plan to trick blind ailing Isaac to give Jacob the blessing that was intended for the firstborn, (Genesis 27:1-4). Although Jacob had his mother's help he had second thoughts, he didn't look like Esau and if he were found out he was afraid his father would curse him instead. His mother reassured him and disguised Jacob to be like Esau, and Isaac blessed Jacob instead of Esau. Although Jacob had previously scammed for his brother's birthright, for it to be completely valid he needed the blessing of the first born therefore he felt justified for his lies; as for his mom, she felt the end justified the means.

Beloved what is wrong with this scenario is that Jacob was more concerned about getting caught doing wrong than displeasing God. He was tempted and God gave him the way out and nudged him twice. God gave him the opportunity to walk away from the deception. He could have said no to his mother and trust God's promise. Too many times we allow temptation to catch us in the heat of the moment, when we should rather stop to think things through and ask God to show us the way out. We need to correct ourselves as soon as we become aware that we are about to do something that would displease God. In that moment it may feel wrong to do the right thing, but it is still the right thing to walk away from sin. Friends this is the only way to be free from sin's devastating control. Remember God's promise that when we are tempted he is faithful to provide a way out so that we can overcome it. Asherey Shalom!

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