

## Genesis 27

### *God Speaks, We Obey*

How many of you here like somebody telling you what to do? How many of you struggle with rules?

I've known my wife since she was 16 years old. I gotta tell you, she's always been like this. She tells me she got it from her dad. If there's 2 doors in front of her and one says "exit" and one says "entrance," guess which one always she tries to go in?

Most of us struggle at times with listening to authority. If that's true on a human level with things like the speed limit, it's also true when it comes to obeying God.

How do you respond to clear commands that are given to you in the Bible? How do you respond to those things that God has plainly said and has called you to obey?

I'm sure that in the life of most of us there is a variety of answers that could be given to that question depending on which biblical commands you were looking at. Different people often struggle with different areas when it comes to obeying God.

We're currently in a study of the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis. In Genesis 27 we're given a unique look at 4 different responses to God's commands.

We're going to see 4 characters who all have their own perspective on life and who all have different motives and different attitudes toward God's will.

The situation displayed in Genesis 27 didn't develop in a single day. The chapter covers the events of one day but its roots go back to the birth of Jacob and Esau many years before.

Isaac, the Son of Abraham, the heir of God's promise of blessing and father of the Jewish people, married Rebekah. They had no children, but finally after years of prayer Rebekah conceived and gave birth to twins.

Before the boys were born God made His will known. He said the youngest would receive the blessing. The youngest was Jacob, the oldest was Esau. The problem was, Rebekah loved Jacob and Isaac loved Esau. And the seeds of that favoritism that had been sown for so long ultimately bore fruit.

## Turn to Genesis 27 page 25

The story opens with Isaac in bad shape. He's well over 100 years old, he's blind, bed ridden, and depressed.

This is shortly after the time that Isaac's half-brother Ishmael had died and Isaac expects to go soon himself.

### *I. God's Commands Can Be Disobeyed*

In verse 1 we read... **read 1 - 4**

In spite of the clear instruction from God concerning Jacob before he was born, in spite of the plainly obvious superiority of Jacob's character and spiritual discernment and convictions over those of Esau, in spite of the fact that Esau despised his birth right and sold it to Jacob in obvious indifference to his spiritual heritage, in spite of all this, Isaac still determined that he was going to give his blessing to Esau.

As we saw back in our study of Noah and his sons, the blessing of the father in the days of the patriarchs was very significant.

It was a promise of blessing as far as the inheritance of the family went, but more importantly with these men who were in the line of Jesus Christ, it was a prediction of the future. It was God's blessing being conferred through the father to the son.

And here's Isaac in direct opposition to the revealed will of God choosing to bless Esau.

This is plain old outright disobedience. That is knowing what God says to do, but doing something completely opposite.

Now, you might wonder, how could Isaac who was raised in the home of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and who had experienced God's blessings personally in his own life, do such a thing?

This was deliberate disobedience.

And really we're not given any answer except that Isaac was very partial to his first born, he loved Esau from the beginning and he wanted to bless him.

The heart of willful disobedience is self will. And at this point we see Isaac doing what he wanted to do regardless of what God says.

Have you ever heard anybody say, "I know the Bible says that I should, or shouldn't do a certain thing, but..." and then they give you their reason for justifying their sin? That's self-will and self will is the root cause of knowing what God says and then doing the opposite.

Life is all about us and not about God.

But, now this story is just beginning to unfold. In verse 5 we are given a new wrinkle.

*I. God's Commands Can Be Disobeyed*

*II. God's Commands Can Be Disbelieved*

### **Read verse 5**

It's significant that Isaac wasn't going through this very important ceremony of the blessing with Rebekah's knowledge. She might have been the mom but Isaac wasn't going to tell her what he was doing.

My guess is that Isaac was ashamed of what he was doing and afraid Rebekah would try to stop him.

But while Isaac was secretly sending out Esau, Rebekah was secretly listening at the tent flap. She wasn't about to be out done and have her beloved Jacob miss out on what God had said should be.

### **Read verses 6 - 10**

Rebekah's got a counter plan. Dad's blind, I'll cook him a meal, you bring it in and tell him you are Esau and you'll get the blessing that you are entitled to.

Well, Jacob isn't so quick to go along with the deception.

### **Read verses 11 - 12**

A lot of people read this and are quick to condemn Jacob for his trickery and certainly he is responsible for his actions. But I at least want you to see that this thing wasn't his idea in the first place. He was weak and indecisive. If it would have been up to him, this never would have happened.

What we'd have loved to hear from Jacob was, "Mom, let's trust God. He promised me the blessing so it will happen His way." Instead he says, "I can't pull that one off mom, I'll get caught!"

Well, Rebekah puts the pressure on even harder and Jacob succumbs.

### **Read verses 14 - 18**

When Jacob came in and spoke to his father, he probably tried to sound as nearly like Esau as he could.

Being brothers, there was certainly some similarity in their two voices.

Isaac was expecting Esau. He smelled the dinner so his presumption was that it was Esau. As far as he knew, he and Esau were the only ones who knew what was going on.

There was one problem though. Usually someone who loses their sense of sight becomes much more acute in their other senses, especially hearing. And something didn't sound quite right. So just to make sure he said, "Who are you?"

Sin has a way of grabbing us and pulling us in deeper and deeper before we know it.

I'm sure Jacob had hoped that his father wouldn't ask him any questions at all. But now there was nothing that he could do but be as persuasive in the deception as possible.

### **Read verses 19, 20**

Notice how quickly one thing leads to the next.

This is like one of those sitcom episodes where one of the characters is trying to hide something from their partner and they keep getting forced into a tighter and tighter spot.

Only this time the situation isn't imaginary. It's real and it is not only not funny it's but gravely serious. First Jacob lies in verse 19 and says "I am Esau." Then he even brings God into it.

Isaac is amazed that he could go out hunting and come back and prepare food so quickly so he says, 'How did you get back here so soon?'

Jacob's answer: "Yahweh your God brought it to me." Here's God's chosen guy lying and deceiving and using God for his excuse.

Jacob's already into this a lot deeper than he wanted to be and every step took him even deeper.

### **Read verses 21 - 27**

Jacob passes 3 tests. 1st is the test of feeling with the animal skins. 2nd is the test of taste with the stew. 3rd is the test of smell. With a kiss of deception he gets his blessing.

### **Read verse 28, 29**

Do you see the second response to the command of God? The first was deliberate disobedience. The second is unbelief.

God said, "The elder shall serve the younger." Before the boys were even born he revealed directly to Rebekah that her second born would be blessed.

Now here she is thinking that God can't bring to pass what he's already promised. God can't do what He says He's going to do. This doesn't make sense to Rebekah. She can't figure it out so she's going to finagle and scheme and work out a way to make God's promise come true.

I know I'm treading on thin ice when I begin to evaluate people's motives but I don't see anything here that would lead me to believe that Rebekah was doing all this because she really cared about God.

She was a believer in Jehovah God. She had a respect and reverence for God, although it was very imperfect. But her main concern doesn't seem to be God's glory, it's her favorite son's benefit.

Jacob was her favorite from the beginning. Now he's apparently about to miss out on this important blessing. God had promised it to him but she doesn't believe that God is able to make good on His promise so she takes matters into her own hands.

Unbelief will, over time, yeild four very devastating results in a persons life.

1. Unbelief leads to impatience. Here it was. Things were right down to the wire. Esau is about to be blessed. God's word is going to fail. His plan won't be carried out. And Rebekah becomes impatient.

The thing is, God so often lets things go to the very edge. He so often lets situations go right to the brink to build character in us. Not only that but when He finally does what He says it proves unquestionably that he was the one that brought things to pass.

2. A second problematic result of unbelief is that it lowers God and elevates man. Rebekah was probably thinking God's certainly in a corner now. God's got boxed himself in. How's He ever going to get out of this one? I'll have to work things out for Him.

3. Unbelief does evil that good may come. When we say "I know the Bible says that I should do this thing and that God's working in my life, but I don't think it's going to work out so I'll disobey and get His will done my way" we're saying that the end justifies the means.

4. The 4th result of an unbelieving response is some very tragic consequences.

Jacob was blessed because of God, not because of his trickery. And for all their scheming and lying Rebekah and Jacob both paid a high price.

Jacob ends up having to run for his life and does 20 years of hard labor under Laban and Rebekah never saw her beloved son again. He left home on this day, because of the anger of his brother, and she died before he was able to return years later.

The thing she valued most was the thing she lost because in God's plan, the end never justifies the means.

That's something we can never forget. God's way is the right way even if it doesn't make complete sense to us.

Well, there's a 3rd response to God's commands and that is to simply obey in reverence towards God.

*I. God's Commands Can Be Disobeyed*

*II. God's Commands Can Be Disbelieved*

*III. God's Commands Can Be Obeyed*

Ironically it's Isaac who so openly disobeyed God's command at first, who becomes an illustration of obedience.

During this whole deception process I'm sure that Rebekah and Jacob were on pins and needles just hoping that Esau wouldn't come in and totally blow their plan.

But Esau does eventually return and this shows the fine timing of God's counsel.

**Read verses 30 - 31**

Esau had killed a deer, prepared a meal for his father, and was all set to receive Isaac's blessing. Even though Esau despised the spiritual side of the blessing and was willing to sell his birthright, he knew that politically and financially this was what he wanted.

Jacob was a very wealthy, influential man and this was Esau's chance to cash in.

What a surprise for Isaac and Esau.

**Read verses 32 - 33**

It didn't take Isaac long to figure out who came in there for the blessing and he "trembled exceedingly."

The Hebrew term that's used here *charad* literally means "to shake fervently, powerfully." It's translated in other places "terrified," "startled," "frightened."

Talk about an emotional moment. All kinds of emotions overwhelm Isaac. Anger with Jacob, concern over Esau, grief over Rebekah's deception, resentment at having his own plans thwarted, all those caused him to tremble.

But most of all he saw that God himself had spoken to him in judgment. He'd been caught. As if we could hide anything from God, right? He had to come to grips with the fact that he endangered himself by ignoring God's command, he'd betrayed the trust of his father Abraham, he'd practically destroyed his own home, all because he had to have it his way.

God isn't mocked. And you know what? God's purposes can be accomplished even as people rebel against him, that's how awesome He is.

So finally, Isaac submits to God's command.

1st of all at the end of verse 33 he says *and indeed he shall be blessed*.

That was an admission of what God had promised long before. Jacob would be blessed by God.

Second... **Read verses 34 & 38**

I want you to see the New Testament commentary on this particular situation in Hebrews 12. **Turn to page 1070 Read verse 17**

Repentance, *metanoia*, means a change of mind. Esau found no place of repentance in Isaac. He couldn't get his father to change his mind even though he wept tears.

Because Isaac finally bowed in obedience to God he refused Esau.

**Back to Genesis 27**

Then... **read verses 39 & 40**

Here we have a prediction of the future. Hebrews 11:20 says, *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come*.

God said "The elder shall serve the younger." After all Esau's tears and pleadings, Isaac confirms God's prediction.

"You will serve your brother except for these times when you shall become restless, or literally 'shake yourself.'"



And from the time of David on except for little short uprisings, Edom (Esau's descendants) were ruled by Israel.

Why did Isaac finally submit at this point? Because Isaac realized the most profound principle in the Bible. God does what He says and He can even work through our sins, our errors, and our self will to accomplish His purposes. Isaac had been overruled by God.

The most important truth that we can come to realize is that God's Word stands. The New Testament in Romans 11 makes this powerful proclamation...

*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?"*

*For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*  
Romans 11:33-36

God's purposes can't be changed. And here's the choice. We're either going to be in on the blessing through obedience or out of the blessing through rebellion.

There is, of course, one last attitude that we need to look at, and that's found in Esau.

### **Read verse 41**

- I. God's Commands Can Be Disobeyed*
- II. God's Commands Can Be Disbelieved*
- III. God's Commands Can Be Obeyed*
- IV. God's Commands Can Be Misunderstood*

Esau knew God's Word on this whole deal. He knew God's pronouncement that his brother would receive the blessing. But all of that goes over his head and he blames Jacob and hates him. He's blind to what God has said and decides to kill his brother.

Why is an individual unable to understand God's commands? One of two reasons:

1. Either he's an unbeliever and has no spiritual life.
2. Or he's saved but because of lack of spirituality in his life he can't see spiritual truth.

How we need to understand God's truth and then obey it. How we need the peace and the joy that comes from lining up our lives with God's purposes.

If you have never trusted Christ as Savior you'll never understand how God's Word ultimately applies to you.

You need to come by faith to Jesus. If you haven't trusted Jesus Christ as Savior you need to believe that Christ died for your sins.

The Bible says, *All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* Isaiah 53:6

Believe on Christ as Savior and you'll have eternal life in heaven when you die, and the spiritual life that will enable you to see and understand God's commands and how they apply to you now.

If you are a believer, God has clearly revealed His will for you.

Every time you sit down to read the Bible or you hear a message preached, God's will is revealed.

Here's some statements of God's will. How are you doing on these things?

It's God's will that you forgive that person whose offended you.

It's God's will that you love your enemies.

It's God's will that as much as lies within you, you live at peace with all men.

It's God's will that you worship and glorify God.

It's God's will for you to pursue holiness.

How will you respond? Remember, it's simple and outright obedience that puts us in the place of God's greatest blessing.

First it's the simple obedience of faith. The New Testament gives us a command. It says, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.* Acts 16:31 That word "believe" is actually in the imperative mood in the Greek text. In other words it's not just a suggestion. It's not an option. It's an order. It's a directive, a commandment, an edict.

It means trust Christ as Savior and you'll be forgiven and made part of God's family

or refuse to trust Christ and spend an eternity separated from God.

Then we follow up with the simple obedience of submissiveness to God's commands in the Bible. *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* Ephesians 2:10

Good works flow out of our relationship with God. They don't produce a relationship with God.

Have you come to God by faith? Are you obeying God in response to His grace?