

## Genesis – Jacob and Esau Gen. 33:4

*Thesis: To help us understand the power of forgiveness by looking at the relationship of Jacob and Esau.*

### Introduction:

- A. Even in the birth and early years of Jacob and Esau, we see two opposing sides (Gen. 26:22-28).
- B. Today, we will notice the first two stories that we have of Jacob and Esau.
  - 1. In both of these stories, we see that Jacob is deceiving Esau and taking something that did not rightfully belong to him.
  - 2. Because of these two stories, Jacob is going to flee from Esau.
- C. The purpose of this lesson is to see not just the betrayal of Jacob towards Esau, but that we see the forgiveness that Esau offered to Jacob.

### I. Jacob took advantage of Esau when he bought his birthright for the stew (Gen. 25:29-34).

#### A. Esau was weary and hungry when he came in from the field (25:29-34).

- 1. Esau had been in the field hunting.
- 2. When he returned, he was hungry and asked Jacob for some stew.
- 3. Jacob gave him the stew on the condition that he was given the birthright.
  - a. The birthright was extremely important to the oldest child.
  - b. It gave him the greater blessing from the father.
  - c. It also gave him a double portion of the inheritance.

#### B. It is clear that Jacob took advantage of his brother.

- 1. Some today would say that he was just making a business deal; and that if Esau was willing to pay the price, it was good business.
  - a. If we were to be honest, we would say that Jacob stole the birthright of Esau.
  - b. However, we cannot deny the fact that Jacob was taking advantage of his brother.
- 2. This certainly does not mean that Esau was innocent.
  - a. Gen. 25:34b - Thus Esau despised his birthright.
  - b. Heb. 12:16-17 (as the writer was talking about those who had fallen short of the grace of God) - lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. { 17 } For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

**II. Jacob deceived Isaac in order to take the more prominent blessing (Gen. 27:1-40).**

**A. Isaac was determined to bless his son, Esau (27:1-40).**

1. Isaac tells Esau to go and catch and prepare game for him (27:1-5).
2. However, Rebekah overheard what Isaac said to Esau and told Jacob to deceive his father (27:5-17).
3. Jacob goes into his father and deceives him in order to receive the blessing (27:18-29).
4. Isaac blesses Esau with an inferior blessing (27:30-40).

**B. Esau was furious with Jacob, and vows to kill him (27:41).**

1. Esau was just waiting for the days of mourning for his father to end before he killed his brother.
2. The only reason he did not kill Jacob immediately was because of Isaac.
3. One can only imagine the hatred that Esau had for his own brother.
4. Jacob had taken away everything from him, and he was ready to kill him.

**C. When Rebekah discovered this plan, she again tricks Isaac into allowing Jacob to leave (27:41ff).**

1. She gets Isaac to allow Jacob to go to Laban, the brother of Rebekah to ask for a wife from among their family.
2. The real reason for her request was to save Jacob from Esau.

**III. Even though Jacob treated Esau terribly, it is in the reaction of Esau that we learn of true forgiveness (Gen. 33:1-17).**

**A. When we last saw Jacob and Esau together, Esau wanted to kill Jacob (27:41).**

1. Remember what Jacob has done to Esau.
  - a. He had stolen him birthright for a little stew.
  - b. He had deceived his father in order to steal his blessing.
  - c. On top of all that, Jacob had fled from Esau and had been gone for twenty years.
2. If anyone ever had the right to be angry, it was Esau.

**B. Jacob was afraid that Esau was still angry with him because of what he had done to him.**

1. When Jacob sent messengers to meet Esau, Esau came out to meet Jacob with 400 men (32:1-6).
2. Jacob was afraid of Esau, and so he divided his possessions so that if Esau was still angry with him, he could only take half of his possessions (32:7-12).
3. He also determined to give Esau whatever came to him that night as a present for Esau (32:13-21).

**C. Even after all the things that Jacob had done to him, Esau was willing to forgive Jacob (33:1-4).**

1. Esau was willing to forgive Jacob unconditionally.

- a. If anyone had the right to be angry and hold a grudge, it was Esau.
  - b. His brother had stolen his birthright and his blessing.
2. Esau gives us a great example of the unconditional nature of forgiveness.
- a. Today, we must be willing to forgive others unconditionally.
    - 1) **Mt. 6:14-15** - For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. {15} But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
    - 2) **Mt. 18:35** (After Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving servant) - So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.
    - 3) If we are not willing to forgive others, God will not be willing to forgive us.
  - b. After forgiveness was offered, Esau never held this against his brother.
  - c. When we forgive others, we no longer hold the act against them.
    - 1) When God forgives us, He forgets the very act of sin.
      - a) **Heb. 8:12** - For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.
      - b) **Heb. 10:17** - then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."
    - 2) When we forgive others, we need to forget the act that they committed.
      - a) Obviously, we cannot "forget" the sins of others against us.
      - b) But we can not hold it against them any more.

### Conclusion:

- A. One of the great lessons that we learn from Jacob and Esau is the necessity of unconditional forgiveness.
- B. If we are not willing to forgive others for things that they have done to us, God will not be willing to forgive us for things that we have done to Him.