



Christ crucified... can appear as foolishness to those not yet in relationship with God through him.

Christ risen from the dead... can elicit disbelief... because to humans our experience with death is that it is irreversible.

But the foolishness of God... which provided salvation through an innocent man crucified... is wiser than human wisdom... and the perceived weakness of God... that he would not step in and rescue his falsely accused Rescuer... is stronger than all human strength combined.

1 Corinthians 1:25

But the gospel of Jesus can cause even further offense.

“What makes the gospel offensive isn’t who it keeps out, but who it lets in.”

I would invite you to interact with one another regarding this statement... do you agree? disagree? and why?

“What makes the gospel offensive isn’t who it keeps out, but who it lets in.”

Coffee/Question:  
Interact with this statement.

03:00

The passage we want to study for today is a longer one. But it is important that we read it in its entirety. If you have your Bible, I encourage you to follow along.



Isaac was included in the family line of God’s Rescuer. The gospel of Matthew begins, saying...

Matthew 1:1-2  
A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ,  
the son of David,  
the son of Abraham:  
Abraham was the father of Isaac,  
Isaac the father of Jacob,  
Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.

The gospel of Luke also includes the genealogy of Jesus, and it too records Isaac as an ancestor of Jesus.

But as we can see, it is clear that Isaac and Rebekah and their family, like all of humanity... was in desperate need of rescue. Isaac and Rebekah were not chosen because of their stellar lives or their exemplary marriage or their remarkable parenting skills.

They did not write books that became enduring classics.



Why then were they chosen to be descendants of the Rescuer? Because of God's mercy and grace. See Genesis 12:1; 18:19.

When God rescued their descendants... the nation of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, the LORD told those descendants why he had rescued them.

Look at what the LORD said through Moses.

**Deuteronomy 7:7-10; 9:5**

**The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.**

**[Nor was it because of your righteousness ... for you are a stubborn people].**

**Deuteronomy 7:7-10; 9:5**

**But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.**

**Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.**

The LORD had not chosen them because they had approached him first. God had made the first move... God had come to them... God had set his affections upon them.

God chose the descendants of Abraham and Sarah, and of Isaac and Rebekah because... he loved them... and because of the oath he had made to their forefathers.

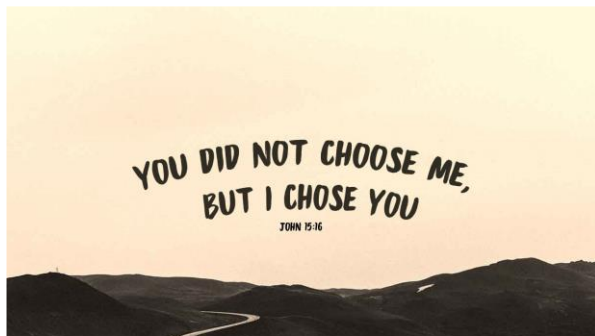
It is because God loves us that we love him.

It is God's faithfulness in saving us from our sin and from his wrath... that motivates us to be faithful to him.

And even when we are not, God remains faithful.

He promises to finish in us that which he began.

The last night of his life, before a new covenant was to be made by the sacrifice of his life, Jesus said to his disciples, John 15:16....



If Jesus had not chosen them... if he had not chosen us... if the Father had not drawn the disciples to Jesus... if the Father hadn't drawn us... then Jesus' disciples would never have chosen him... nor would we.

The first thing we notice in our passage is the dysfunction and deep division within the family of Isaac and Rebekah ... and their desperate need of God's Rescuer.

**The second thing** I want to point out is the remarkable ability of God to advance his will and purposes, which are always good, which always bring life and peace.... even when humans attempt to thwart God.... or resort to the using of means that are not in line with who God is.

Let me explain.

When Rebecca was first pregnant, and didn't know that she was carrying twins, and couldn't understand the intense movements happening in her womb, when she inquired of the LORD, the LORD spoke to her, saying, Genesis 25:23...

**Genesis 25:23**  
**Two nations** are in your womb,  
and **two peoples** from within you  
will be separated;  
one people will be stronger  
than the other,  
and **the older will serve the younger.**

When it came to the family line of God's Rescuer, typically it was the first-born son in a family who was chosen to be a descendant/  
But there are many surprises in the genealogy of Jesus.

In the case of Abraham, Ishmael, his first-born, was not chosen.  
And in the case of Isaac, Esau, the first-born was not chosen.

It is God's prerogative to choose who he chooses.  
Before Esau and Jacob were born, God had decided that the family line of his Rescuer would be counted through Jacob the younger son.

In doing so, God upset the status quo.  
But do you know what's fascinating?  
There is no mention of God wringing his hands, wondering if Isaac and Rebekah would approve of what he decided.

God regularly finds ways to lovingly remind human beings that he is God, and we are not.

### **In choosing Jacob, was it God's will that Jacob be given the birthright and the blessing?**

Before we answer that let me clarify.

**birthright**

**gotquestions.org** explains:

The birthright was the privileges granted to a family's firstborn son. After a father died the firstborn son assumed his father's authority and responsibilities.

That said, the Bible also details that a father could rescind the birthright and pass it on to a younger son.

In addition to assuming the leadership role in the family, the recipient of the birthright inherited double to that of the other sons.

**blessing**

Again, **gotquestions.org** explains:

The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all gave formal blessings to their children—and, in Jacob’s case, he further blessed some of his grandchildren, the two sons of Joseph.

Receiving a blessing from one’s father was a high honor, and losing a blessing was tantamount to a curse.

An Old Testament blessing of a father to his sons included words of encouragement, details regarding each son’s inheritance, and prophetic words concerning the future.

For example, Isaac’s blessing on Jacob (which was meant for Esau) gave him the earth’s bounty and authority over his brother (Gen. 27:28-29).

Isaac also said that those who blessed Jacob would be blessed, and those who cursed him would receive a curse—words that echo God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3.

While a father could bless all of his children, a greater blessing was given to the one who held the birthright.

We’re ready to answer the question now – was it God’s will that Jacob be given the birthright and the blessing? Yes.

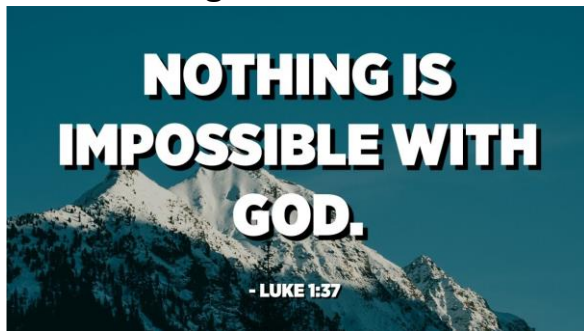
**But was it God’s will that Jacob defraud Esau of his birthright?  
Was it God’s will that Rebekah and Jacob deceive Isaac to have him  
bless Jacob instead of Esau?**

Isaac was ready to defy God and bless Esau... the son that he knew was not to be blessed.

And so... if Rebekah and Jacob hadn’t acted, what would God have done to ensure Jacob was blessed?

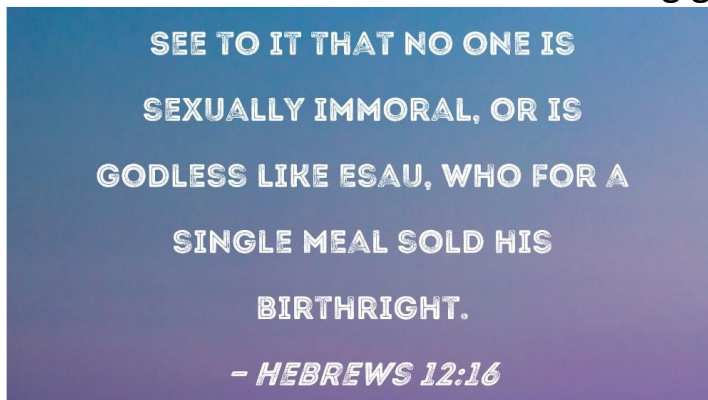
We will never know... because they took matters into their own hands. But what we do know... is that... **God never has, he never does, and he never will use evil means to accomplish his good purposes and will.**

In spite of this family's dysfunction and division, God was more than able to bring about his because...



His will... will be done... on earth as it is in heaven.

**There's a third emphasis** that we see in this story. Hebrews 12:15 describes Esau as being godless.



Esau lived without regard for God.  
His appetites ruled him.  
His life was not centered in God.

The practice of sin never leads to life... nor does it fill the heart of a person with joy, but only regret and tears.



# The practice of sin

- takes you where you don't want to go
- keeps you longer than you want to stay
- costs you more than you want to pay

**Romans 6:23 – The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.**

Esau's godlessness fractured his relationship with his dad, his mom and his brother.

Isaac knew what the LORD had said to Rebekah about the twins. He knew the LORD had chosen to bless Jacob. And yet, he intended to defy God. Isaac was determined to do what was right in his own eyes.

At that point in his life, Isaac thought he was about to die. But in fact, he lived until he was 180 years old... at least 80 more years. But this is the last we will read of him until Genesis 35:27-29 that speaks of his death.

There are no further incidents recorded about his life nor his faith.

Centuries later when King Saul disobeyed the LORD, the prophet Samuel said to him,

**“You have acted foolishly.”**

1 Samuel 13:13

**... You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you.”**

1 Samuel 13:13

The same word... could have been pronounced to Isaac, for he too acted foolishly in his disobedience.

Rebekah deceived her husband... and coached and facilitated her son to lie to his father.

She thought that by doing so she was helping God out of what she determined was a time sensitive situation.

But did God need her help?

Absolutely not.

But what would God have done if she hadn't stepped in?

We will never know because she never gave God the opportunity.

How many opportunities have been missed for God to gloriously intervene in the lives of his people because a follower of his wrongly determined that unless they did something... God wouldn't do anything.

But if God kept the prophet Balaam from speaking curses upon the nation of Israel, when an enemy king hired him to do so, and Balaam could only speak blessing... then the LORD could have kept Isaac from blessing Esau.

What Rebekah did cost her dearly.  
She never saw Jacob alive again.  
And who knows what happened to her marriage and her relationship  
with Esau after this incident.  
The Scripture says nothing more of her.

In the case of Jacob, his deception and his willingness to go along with  
his mother's plan also cost him dearly.  
He was forced to leave his home because Esau intended to kill him in  
revenge for what he had done.

Jacob was forced to repeatedly experience deception and fraud at the  
hands of his uncle Laban as God slowly and painstakingly reordered  
Jacob's life bringing him into a relationship with himself so that the God  
of his father and grandfather became his God.

This passage impresses upon the reader that the follower of God in  
word and action is to honor the character of God.

**There is a fourth and final emphasis.**

In the story of this dysfunctional family, we find hope... in who God is...  
and in God's power to save.

The LORD who had chosen Jacob before he was born... brought him into  
a covenant relationship with himself.

The transforming work of God's grace within Jacob was so great and so profound that like his grandfather Abraham, whose name was changed by God, so the LORD changed the name of Jacob...

Jacob → Israel

... to Israel, to mark Jacob's struggle with God and God's victory over him.

God sent his Rescuer into the world to save people like Jacob, like all of us... from their sin.

The Rescuer, though he was born a human in every capacity, lived the life, the perfect life that not one of us... is capable of living, and then gave his perfect life in sacrifice, dying the death we deserve, in order that the goodness of his perfect life might be credited to all who would believe in him and receive him as their God and Savior.

The story of each of us may play out differently than that of Isaac and Rebekah and their two sons.

Maybe your marriage isn't as dysfunctional... or maybe it is... or maybe your family isn't as divided... or maybe it is... or maybe your relationship with your siblings isn't as fractured... or maybe it is.

But each of us is as needy of God's grace as they were.

All of us here have fallen short of the glory of God.

We cannot rescue ourselves.

We cannot pay off our sin debt.

But we could not do, Jesus did for us.

As we sang earlier – Jesus Paid It All.

The blood of Jesus is powerful to forgive and to cleanse us from our sin.

It is true, that Satan, the accuser is quick to point the finger at God's people in order to discredit God and to insinuate that God is as flawed as those he calls into relationship with himself by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Satan does so, hoping to embitter those not yet in relationship with God... while also attempting to discourage the people of God from availing for themselves... the inexhaustible mercy and grace of the God who saves sinners.

Knowing this is the strategy of the devil, we are urged to be quick to confess our sins as the Spirit of God convicts us.

Knowing this is the strategy of the devil, as followers of Jesus we spur one another on to live like Jesus lived.

This is why we gather during the week in discipleship groups.

It's why we open the word of God and our lives to one another.

We believe the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

Our hope is in Christ alone... our only righteousness is His.

We cannot earn our salvation.

But having been saved, we can, in gratitude, serve God.

And as we do, God in his faithfulness ... takes our efforts, even those that are flawed ... and uses our lives, in ways we could never imagine, to bring about his will and good purposes.

We have a mighty Savior whose grace is always enough.