

Why Are Some Families Blessed and Others Cursed?

- We made it, we're at the end of Genesis, at least this sermon series, so congratulations, you've made it. And if you're brand new, what a week to show up? You just put in one hour and you're done, that's fantastic. We've been spending the whole year going through the book of Genesis, this is sermon number 32. The longest sermon was an hour and 12 minutes. Some of you are wondering, are we gonna do that? I'll let you know in an hour and 12 minutes but nonetheless, we've been in the book of Genesis and we've been looking at this amazing book of the Bible and this is the last sermon in the series. And so if you want to get caught up at realfaith.com, the first three study guides are there all the way through the book. We're finishing this one today and we just debuted the last study guide. So the remainder of Genesis is on the life of Joseph. And it's a 10-part audio series that we're releasing as well as the study guide. All free at realfaith.com but today, here's what we're gonna do. We're gonna look at Genesis 35 and 36. And we're gonna answer this question, why are some families blessed and other families cursed? And as we've looked at Genesis, one of the great themes of Genesis is this theme of blessing. And obviously, the opposite of that would be cursing. And so we saw God bless all the way back in Genesis one. It says that God made people, first thing he does, he blesses them. This is the good news about the character and heart of our God. He likes to bless people. In a lot of religions, you gotta earn it. You gotta fight God, you gotta beg, you gotta suffer. Our God likes to bless. Our God longs to bless. Our God continually pours out blessing and this is his presence and his protection and his provision. This is a life that is made possible by his power. Well, about 400 times in the Bible it says that God blessed, 80 of those are just in the book of Genesis. More than any other book of the Bible, you could even say a major or the major theme of Genesis is God blessing. And so blessing is what happens when we obey God. When we hear from God and we heed God. Cursing is what happens when we disregard or we disowned God. And what you're gonna see today is two men leave legacies. They live two lives, they're twin brothers, Jacob and Esau. And they live two lives, one is blessed, the other is cursed. One is a believer, the other is a non-believer and they leave two legacies. One is blessed and one is cursed. And I wanna say this, you're gonna see this today, God doesn't curse these people. They curse themselves. Okay, God pours out blessing 'cause he is good and if you disobey God, he can't bless you 'cause God can't bless which is against him. He can only bless what is for him. And so by choosing to rebel against God, you're walking away from God's blessing and you're cursing your own life. That being said, what we're looking at today is the culmination of everything we've been studying from Genesis 25 all the way up to and through Genesis 36. And that is what happens when a family walks with God in faith. It started with Abraham, the grandfather. Then we looked at Isaac, the son. Today we're gonna look at Jacob, the grandson. What we're looking at is a three generational case study and what happens when we walk with God versus don't walk with God. When we live in the place that God blesses or we curse our lives by walking away from the places that God blesses. So what we're gonna do, we're gonna jump in and we're gonna look at blessed families first, cursed families second. We're gonna read all of Genesis 35, it's gonna take a while I'm gonna go as fast as I can. If you showed up and you think, I hope a middle-aged man with a thick neck reads an old book for a long time. It's your lucky day, here we go. Genesis 35, blessed families. Here's Jacob's legacy. "God said to Jacob, 'Arise and go to Bethel.'" That means house of God. "And dwell there. "Make an altar."

This is like building a church, worshiping God. This is meeting with God. "To the God who appeared to you when you fled "from your brother Esau." God's been present in his life for decades. "So Jacob said to his household, all of his family "and those who are part of his extended household "and all who are with him, ""Put away the foreign gods that are among you."" They're believers but they've got some bad old habits that they're dragging forward. "And purify yourselves and change your garments." Get cleaned up. "Then let us arise and go to Bethel so that I may make there "an alter to God." I'm gonna worship God. "Who answers me in the day of my distress." Here's what he says, "This God has always answered my prayers "and I'm gonna keep worshiping him. "And he's been with me wherever I have gone." That's the goodness of our God. "So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had "and the rings that were in their ears." I don't know what that is, probably some sort of ancient paganism. If you're a man with an earring, take it out just in case. "Jacob hid them... just give you a second. What about the nose ring? Okay, "Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree "that was near Shechem. "And as they journeyed, a terror from God "fell upon the cities that were around them." God is present, God is providing, God is protecting. This is God's blessing. "So that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. "And Jacob came to Luz." That is Bethel, which is in the land of Canaan. "He and all the people who were with him "and they built an altar." So they're gonna worship God and have church. "Called the place El-Bethel," which means the God of Bethel. "Because there God revealed himself to him "when he fled his brother." That's where he got saved, that's where he first met God. He goes back to continue to worship God in the place that God met him. "And Deborah," and what we're seeing here is the conclusion. There's seasons and cycles in families where one generation starts to pass away and then the next generation starts to replace them. That's what's happening. "And Deborah, Rebekah's nurse died and she was buried under an oak below Bethel. So he called its place Allon-Bacuth. "God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram and blessed him and God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob,'" which means trickster or deceiver or conman or politician. "No longer," probably shouldn't have said that. "Shall your name be called Jacob but Israel," which means wrestles with God. If you're a believer who wrestles with God, you're like there's things, I don't understand. There's things I struggle with, welcome to the Christian life. Israel means he believes in God but he wrestles with God. He says that shall be your name. "So he called his name Israel. "And God said to him, 'I am God almighty.'" There's no God alongside of him, there's no God that is like him. And then he commands again and God says this throughout Genesis to his people, "Be fruitful and multiply." God is a pro-life God and he wants his people to be a pro-life people. "A nation and a company of nations shall come from you. "Your descendants are gonna rule the nations "and kings shall come from your own body. "The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac, "I will give to you." We now know this as the promised land, the nation of Israel named after this man, Jacob, whom God changed the name from Jacob to Israel. This is setting up the nation of Israel. And then Jesus is gonna come as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "And I will give the land to your offspring after you. "Then God went up from him in the place "where he had spoken with him and Jacob set up a pillar "in the place where he had spoken." He memorializes this place. "A pillar of stone. "He poured out a drink offering on it, poured oil on it." That's symbolizing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He's asking for the Holy Spirit to anoint and appoint and bless his family. "So Jacob called the name of the

place "where God had spoken with him Bethel," means house of God. "Then they journeyed from Bethel, "when there were still some distance from Ephrath," that's where Jesus is to be born, Bethlehem of Ephratha. "Rachel," that's his beloved wife, "went into labor. "She had hard labor," painful birth. We learned earlier in Genesis that birth is now with much pain for women because of the curse. "When her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, "'Do not fear, you have another son.'" At this point, there are 11 sons in the household born to four different women. There is also one daughter, one son is missing and here he is appearing. This will allow us to have the 12 tribes of Israel. "And as her soul was departing," she was dying. She said earlier to God, "Give me a son or I will die." And now she actually dies birthing her son. "She called his name Ben-oni "but his father called him Benjamin." Benjamin, Ben-oni is son of my sorrows. She's grieved that she's dying at the birth of her son. The father named him Benjamin. "So Rachel died, she was buried on the way to Ephrath," that is Bethlehem, again, so she is buried where Jesus is many decades later born. "And Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb." He loves her, he's gonna remember her. "It is the pillar of Rachel's tomb," we still know where this is today, it's a holy site the people pilgrimage to. "Which is there to this day. "Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent "beyond the tower of Eder. "While Israel lived in that land," this is where the family still has some real problems. "Reuben," that's a son, "went and lay with Bilhah, "his father's concubine. "And Israel heard of it. "Now the sons of Jacob were 12." So now we have the 12 tribes of Israel that become the nation of Israel. "The sons of Leah, Reuben," Jacob's firstborn, "Simeon, Levi." We saw them last year, last week, rather. They went and avenged the assault of their sister. "Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. "The sons of Rachel," you're gonna notice 12 sons from four women. "The sons of Rachel; Joseph and Benjamin." Joseph is gonna be center stage in the remainder of the Genesis story. "The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant; Dan and Naphtali. "The sons of Zilpah, Leah servant; Gad and Asher. "These were the sons of Jacob "who were born to him in Paddan-aram. "And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre "or Kiriath-arba," that is Hebron, "where or Abraham and Isaac had sojourned." So he is gonna die and be buried near the family. "Now the days of Isaac were 180 years, "Isaac breathed his last," this is the end of Isaac's life. "He died, was gathered with his people old and full of days "and his sons, Jacob and Esau buried him." Here's the big idea, every one of us lives our life and at some point, it comes to an end. And then the next generation determines what the legacy of the family will be. We've seen it from Abraham to Isaac and from Isaac here to Jacob, this is the end of the life of Jacob. This family represents the church. God's people who are not perfect, okay? For those of you who've been with us, is this a perfect family?

- [Congregation Member] No.

- No. Like if Jacob were a pastor today, I couldn't even imagine what the internet would be saying about him and his family. First of all, the four wives would be a lot to explain for the healthcare benefits at the church. You're like, yeah, we're gonna need a little more. We got four wives like that's at least three too many. And so this is not a perfect family, it's got a lot of problems, welcome to a believing family. Okay, some of you need to know that a believing family is not a perfect family, it's a forgiven family which means that it's a sinning family. This is not a perfect family but it's a believing family and it's a blessed family. It's a blessed family. That being

said, are you living in such a way that your life and your legacy can be blessed of God? Okay, so I'm gonna pull out of this story eight questions. Number one, are you living in God's will in the place that he has called you as he has instructed you? Are you living in God's will? Hear what we see, God tells him, some chapters earlier, leave Laban, go to Bethel. Finally here he arrives at Bethel, he is finally in the place that he's supposed to be. Last week, when something horrific happened to his daughter Dinah, he was not yet in that place, he was in the place he wasn't supposed to be. So a lot of people are like, God, why don't you bless me? He's like, well, I'm blessing you if you're over here but you need to be in the place that I told you to be 'cause my blessing for you is there. Are you in the place that God has called you to be, living the life that God has called you to live? He's in Bethel, he's worshiping God, he's leading his family, he's hearing from God, he's doing the things that God has instructed him to do in the place that God has called him to do them. So for you, you've gotta ask, are we where God would have us to be? This is where right now we see this mass migration in America, people are moving. Well, it's fine to leave a place that is bad but you need to find God's will to arrive at the place that is good. And so for our family, we know we're supposed to be in Arizona. We've been blessed here, we love it here, we're glad to be here. But first and foremost you gotta ask, okay, God, where do you want me? What do you want me to do? Who do you want me to be? Be in that place that God is most likely to bless. Number two, are you worshiping God at home and at church? You notice this family, wherever they go, they build an altar. This would've been wives, kids, members of the household, employees, you're probably dealing with hundreds, thousands of people. And so everywhere they go there, isn't a church there so they still worship God and set up church. They're worshiping at home privately, they're worshiping together publicly. Are you worshiping, here, we're glad to have you, we love you, we're honored to have you but also at home. Is the Bible opened, is prayer happening, or singing to the Lord in the car all by yourself where nobody can hear your voice on the way to work, that's how I do it. The Bible says make a joyful noise and I'm halfway there. I make some noise. But I like to sing to the Lord, nobody else likes to hear it. He's got a filter between me and him, by the time it gets to him, it's all dialed in, sounds amazing. But the point is you shouldn't just sing here, you should sing through the week. Don't just pray here, pray during the week. Don't just open God's word here, open God's word during the week. Make sure that relationship with God and worship God is something that happens publicly in church and privately and home. Number three, have you removed anything that hinders your worship of God? And a lot of times we are walking with God but we're taking some other things with us that God does not want us to bring. And what these are, these are religious and spiritual elements of idolatry or demonology that they have taken with him, they're called idols. And some people are like, well, I love Jesus but just in case he doesn't come through, I have a plan B. Well, then that's actually not faith. My wife just said, that's right 'cause let me use it as an example that I shouldn't, okay? So I love Grace with all my heart but what if I had a backup wife just in case the first one didn't work out? Grace laughs, she would not live up to her name. I'll just tell you that right now. For us to have a truly devoted relationship, we need to be fully committed to one another without a backup plan, amen?

- [Congregation Member] Amen.

- I'm saying amen. Grace as you know, I'm saying amen. So you can't say I trust the Lord but if he doesn't come through, I've got religion, spirituality, idolatry, I got some backup gods, I can take a few demons in, I can still get what I want. It's only Jesus, it's always Jesus and it's nothing and no one except Jesus, right? I had a guy ask me recently said, "What if you die and Jesus and real?" I said, "Then I'm in serious trouble 'cause I don't have, "here's my plan, Jesus. Like what's your backup plan? Jesus. What's your backup to the back plan? Jesus. I only got one plan. That's all we got, okay? And what they're doing here, they have Jesus plus all kinds of other things. So my encouragement to you would be, just look at your life and go to your home and ask what's here that hinders my worship of God. You're like, why do we have a dream catcher? That's native American shamanism. Why do we have a yin and a yang? That's Eastern spirituality that God is good and evil. Why did we take stupid rocks from Sedona and put 'em on the mantle assuming that they're going to send us energy, right? Why do we do it? They'll just, you know what? Set 'em all on fire. Okay, just do that. And if you have other religions, if you've got Tara cards, if you've got bad entertainment, if you've got bad habits, if you spend too much time in the liquor cabinet and not enough in the scriptures, just go to your house and ask, you know what? We probably need to get rid of some things because they're hindering our ability to really enjoy a fullness of relationship with God. Or have a yard sale and make a few bucks. Either way, just, no don't do that. But just look at your life because many of you are newer Christians and some of you, you're growing and activated in your faith and maybe some things that you've become accustomed to in your home or in your life or in your schedule or in your budget, maybe they're things that now you look at them through your relationship with God and ask, is this helping or hindering? And you may not even recognize it previously but I would say with this family, we could look at them very judgmentally, oh, I can't believe a believing family would have some things that they need to clean up. Well, welcome to a believing family. And what this indicates to me is they're at a new level of maturity where things that didn't bother them now do. Now do. In addition, living in a place that God blesses, are you trusting God for protection and provision? They're going to Bethel and there's no guarantee of how it's gonna work out. Well, is there provision there? We'll have to see, that's where God told us to go. Like when we moved to Arizona, no job, no church, no family, just knew couple of people, no clue. Everybody's like, what's the plan? I was like, I hope he has one, that's the plan. And just so you know, I'm a planner. How many of you are like me? You're like, I like spreadsheets, I like budgets, I've accepted Excel in my chart. I like to know where I'm going and what I'm doing. And God's like, go. Well, what's gonna happen? I'll tell you when you get there. Are you trusting God's provision and his protection? So they're unsure of what they're going to find when they arrive in Bethel and along the way, their move takes them through enemy territory. People that don't like them and wanna hurt them. And what it says is that God sent a terror on those people to protect them. When you and I get to heaven and I think if the Lord Jesus lets us see our life, I think there's gonna be a lot more protection than we are anticipating is happening right now. I think that there was a lot of demonic and evil plots and plans to painfully plunder God's people. And I believe when you get to heaven, you be like, Oh gosh, that Demon was coming for us. That person had a plan. Wow, okay, God, you really did protect us. Now we had some days that we wondered if you did but we didn't see all the days in which you were. So God provides for them and he protects them. In addition, are you seeking to be fruitful and multiply? God tells 'em

be fruitful and multiply, this command goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. And over and over and over again, it keeps being restated to God's people. After the flood, God said it to Noah and his wife, be fruitful and multiply. Because here's the big idea, for the future to have any hope, we need to put some people there,

- [Congregation Member] Amen

- right? I mean, have you seen the people we have? Like we need an option for the people, all right? And so, if you want the future to have hope, you're gonna need to put some people there and by putting people there, the goal is to love the Lord, to raise people who love the Lord and then when you're done and you go home, they move forward so that there are people in the future that love the Lord.

- [Congregation Member] Amen.

- Okay, this is where people who hate God they don't think about being fruitful and multiplying. People who do love God, we gotta think about being fruitful and multiplying. In addition, are you encouraging sexual purity? This family has got generations of brokenness and real trouble when it comes to sexuality. Just the dad with the four wives would be a clue that they did not land the dismount on this part of their faith walk with God. So what happens is the younger son, so what happens is there's two sisters that Jacob bore, Israel, God changes his name. He marries Rachel who he loves, Leah who he hates. If you read the text carefully, who just died? Rachel, the beloved wife. So now there's Leah and two other gals and then the question is which one's gonna assume the leadership position as the female matriarch and the leader of the family? Well, her son realizes that if he goes and sleeps with one of dad's wives, see this sounds sick to us but our culture would ask, why judge? Tolerance, diversity, who are you to judge? I was like, okay, well, he judged so, there you go. You're naughty. But nonetheless, okay so, young boy sleeps with one of his older stepmothers, we'd call her a cougar today, we've actually got a category for this which is a Greek word for demon. And what happens is he sleeps with her and what this will do is two things. It will remove her as being a candidate to be the preferred wife. The preferred wife Rachel is dead. Leah's not loved, there's two other women. If the son sleeps with one of those women, well, then she is sort of discarded and dismissed. This allows his mom to finally be honored and respected. I'll just tell you this, if you live in a home where the husband, the father doesn't respect and cherish the mother, sometimes the children do some despicable things trying to create a scenario where finally she gets some dignity and respect. In addition, I think he's trying to replace his father as head of household. So is your family practicing sexual purity? There's some profound brokenness here. And a lot of times in a family system, the pains, problems and perils come through our pants. I just put together a little hip hop run for you. Pastor Diddy here, I don't know where that came from, I just kinda felt that. Pains, problems and perils in your pants, if that goes viral, I'm good with that. And then number seven, the next question is, are you setting up the next generation for success? Is Israel or Jacob here, is he doing some things to set the next generation up for success? Yeah, he's moving them to Bethel. God said they need to be there. He's like, okay, then before I die, I gotta

get 'em to where God wants 'em to be so that God can bless. Is he leaving them financial wealth, inheritance, portfolio, assets? Yes. So part of setting the next generation up, it's very practical and it's very spiritual. Is he worshipping God? Is he praying? Is he teaching them to worship God? He's back to the place that God saved him and spoke to him. He builds an alt alter, he's like, hey guys, family meeting. This is where God first appeared to me and he spoke to me and he saved me and he's changed my life. And he just told us, every prayer I've answered, God has heard. God's never forsaken me. God's never left me. I've made some real problems but God has been a real help and savior, please, please, please, don't forget this God. He's the God of your grandpa. He first appeared to Abraham here. He's telling the whole family story. He's setting that him up practically and spiritually for success. Here's your wealth and here's your worship. Someday, I'm gonna be gone, know what to do with the wealth, know what to do with the worship, know what to do with the practical, know what to do with the spiritual. Are you setting up your family, your legacy for success? It's a huge question. This is where God's people, we care about things like investment portfolios and tax burdens and generational transfer of wealth 'cause God wants us to bless our children's children. Proverb says a wise man leaves an inheritance to his children's children. And the government keeps trying to take cookies out of the cookie jar every generation. They call it taxes, I call it crime. Why would you punish people who worked or were trying to set up their family for success? But are you trying to bless practically and also spiritually the next generation? And then the question number eight for this blessed family's example is, are you living for King Jesus? He tells them through you are going to come kings, through them, these 12 sons is gonna come the nation of Israel. They will have a succession of kings. Through that nation are gonna come to prophets, priests and kings, ultimately bringing us Jesus, the King of Kings. This is echoed at the end of Genesis in 49:10 where it says through one of these 12 boys, Judah, that the septon will not depart until the one who has the rightful authority to take it visits the earth. And it's talking about through the line of Judah is gonna come not just to king but the king of kings, the Lord Jesus. The septon is the ruling tool of the highest ruler. Are you living with Jesus as your king? Your authority, your highest authority, your exclusive authority? This family gets a lot of things wrong but there's one thing they get right, they're under the Lordship of King Jesus. And because of that, there is blessing. Not because they did it right but because he is good. Our king is gracious, loving, kind, merciful, patient. He likes to bless his people. That being said, this man Jacob, what did God change his name to? Israel. Here's what's crazy, this family still exists. We have still a nation called Israel. We are thousands of years later. Just look at world history from a few thousand years before Jesus to now we are a few thousand years from Jesus. So you're looking at about 4,000 years of human history. And God said, I'm gonna make you a nation and guess what? It's still there. True or false, they've had a little opposition. I mean, their neighbors, always share one thing in common. We'd like to destroy them. You can read the rest of the Old Testament like everybody hates and attacks them and there they still are. To me, it's one of the great miracles in history that evidence is that God blesses his people because everybody's against them, God is for them and there they still are. Jerusalem has been the capital of Israel, I looked it up this week. They've been attacked 52 times, besiege 23 times, ransacked 39 times, destroyed and rebuilt three times, captured and recaptured 44 times and they're still there. That's unbelievable. There's our Jewish friend, okay, so. But how many of you you're like, yeah, there's no way that

this family creates a nation that lasts for millennia. Small, surrounded by enemies on every side, constantly attacked by guys like Adolf Hitler in World War II and there they are. Here's what happens, God blesses. God protects, God provides. And from this, what we're seeing is that, this is again, not a perfect family but it's a blessed family. And this family is being told some things that Paul echoes in Colossians and Ephesians in the New Testament. Put some things off, put some things on. He's like, put off your idols, put on the worship of God. put off living in that city, put on living in this city. Put off sexual sin, put on sexual purity. And so they're maturing, they're putting off some things and putting on some things. This would be the question for you, what is God asking you to put off and to put on? Maybe even things that your parents or your grandparents put on and your family's been wearing it for generations. Like we gotta put that off 'cause that's not what God wants, we need to put this on 'cause that's what God says. And the blessing here is two fold so God not only blesses this family, he blesses for thousands of years. Today there are spiritual and physical descendants of this family that are blessed. So let's start with the physical, who are the physical descendants of this family? The Jewish people. Who are the spiritual descendants blessed through these people? Christians, the church.

- [Congregation Member] That's right.

- The biggest movement of any sort or kind in the history of the world, over a billion people on planet earth today claim to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Lord Jesus Christ. Is this golf? I mean, God, I don't, you're like, hey, Jesus, bless the nations they're like, oh, on the 17th hole, don't interrupt the putter. I don't understand. Okay, so I get paid the same either way but I am pretty excited that thousands of years later we're worshipping their same God, his name is Jesus. All right. All right. All right. The dead and Christ rise first, that's this service, okay. So we looked at the blessed families, now we're gonna look at the cursed families. This is Esau's legacy, his brother, okay? It's a comparison and a contrast. Jacob is like the church, Esau is like the world. "These are the generations of Esau," that is Edom. He becomes the nation of Edom. "Esau took wives," polygamous, "from the Canaanites." These are not the godly people. These are the people who hate the God of the Bible. It broke his mom and dad's heart, we read earlier. "Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah." I never saw that, that is a little, I won't say what I'm thinking but it is interesting. Michelle Obama. "The daughter of Anah, the daughter of," sorry, I got something on my throat. "The daughter of Zibeon the Hivite and Basemath." If you're offended, send an email, we got a team standing by to delete it. We have a ministry for you. "Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth "and Adah bore Esau, Eliphaz, Basemath bore Reuel." These are all his kids and his grandkids. "And Oholibamah," you'll never read that the same again. "Bore Jeush, Jalam and Korah. "These are the sons of Esau who were born to him "in the land of Canaan. "Then Esau took his wives, sons, daughters, "all the members of his household, his livestock, "all the beasts, all his property that he had acquired "in the land of Canaan. "He went into a land," where? "Far away from his brother Jacob. The place where God is, he's getting as far away as he possibly can. "For their possessions were too great "for them to dwell together." They're both very rich. "The land of their sojournings could not support them "because of their livestock. "So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir." Esau is Edom, I'll explain that in a moment. He becomes the nation of Edom.

"These are the generations of Esau, "the father of the Edomites and the hill country of Seir." I'm not gonna read the rest, you can read it for yourself but it just denotes all of his family history and legacy. Here's a big idea. God knows everyone who's ever lived on planet earth. He knows them by name. He does. God misses no one. God is cognitively aware of everyone. And he knows all of the family members, the children and the grandchildren that descend from Esau. Now Esau represents the world, as juxtaposed with the church, he is the cursed, not the blessed. And again, I wanna state this. Does God curse Esau? No, he's healthy, he's rich, he's successful in every sort of natural sense of the word but he curses himself and he curses his family because he doesn't love God. And he doesn't seek to love God. Here's what's amazing about Jacob and Esau. They were twin brothers, they grew up in the exact same home. They ate the same food. They studied the same subjects. They had the same homework. They had the same mom and dad. One loves God, one hates God. Now I wanna take a burden off of some of your parents because sometimes what parents are told is if you don't have a good kid, it means you are a bad parent. Here we see two kids have the same parent, one loves God, one hates God. At some point, you can't save your kids. You can love them, you could pray for 'em. You could bring 'em to church. You can answer their questions. You can repent your sin. You can't save your kids. That's between them and God. And what's interesting is Esau has had God all over his life but he doesn't let God into his heart. I'll give you some example. So God spoke to Esau, we saw earlier, God told him, "Don't kill Jacob, I'm gonna deal with you." So he knows there's a God, this God has showed up to him, this God has spoken to him. Does he care? No. So he is not an atheist. He's all like, well, I'm not sure there's a God. I'm sure there is, I just don't care. God speaks to Esau but Esau never speaks to God. In his whole life, from Genesis 25 to 36, we never see him pray or worship or sing. We never see him say anything to God. In addition, Esau new believers, he was in relationship with believers but he never became one. His brother is a believer. His mom and dad are believers. His grandma and grandpa are believers, he doesn't care. You can know who God is and you can have family and friends who know who God is and the question is, do you love God? He doesn't, in addition, Esau was blessed by God but he never acknowledged God. We saw earlier in Genesis and we see it here too in the sort of recount of the story. Both boys grow up and they are richly blessed. They're healthy, they've got land, massive companies, huge families, significant estates, they need to get lots of distance 'cause all of their livestock and wealth is so great that they need an incredible amount of land just to sustain everything God has given them. God blesses him but he doesn't bless God. We saw earlier in the story of Jacob and Esau, everything that Jacob had when he encountered his brother after 20 years away from home, his brother was like, "What happened?" He's like, "God really blessed me, "look at everything that God gave me." So Jacob, thanks God. Esau doesn't. There are people that are blessed of God that don't bless God. I've seen people heal by God that still don't thank him. I've seen God do wonderful things at people's lives and does not move the needle in their soul. This is the sad story of Esau. Again, God is good to him but he's not good to himself, he's not good to his family and he doesn't leave a good legacy. And it's not because God cursed him, it because he cursed his own family. In addition, his mom and dad were believers. His grandma and grandpa were believers. His brother married a believer. His parents really wanted him to marry a believer. He married multiple unbelievers. We saw earlier that it broke his mom and dad's heart. He's like,

hey mom, dad, look, I met my wives. They're like, oh, no, don't marry them. They don't love the Lord, they don't know the Lord. This is not gonna go well. He's like, that's what I'm doing. It was a grief all the days of their life. 'Cause the most important decision you make is who's your God. Second most important decision, who's your spouse. And Esau did not choose the God of his parents or grandparents. And he did not choose spouse or spouses that knew and loved his God. In addition, this family is rich and they're powerful but they're ungodly. True or false, there's still a lot of families like that. They're rich, they're powerful, they're ungodly but Esau can't say, well, I didn't know. You did know. Well, nobody ever asked me to go to church like we asked you every day. Well, I didn't know any Christians. Your whole family was believers. Well, God never spoke to me. He's like actually he did. Esau is a terrifying example of what happens when God is all over your life but not in your heart. God is all over his life but not in his heart. He doesn't know and love the Lord. And it says here that Esau becomes the nation of Edom. Some of this gets lost on us 'cause we're, I'm Irish, right? So we don't have any beef with the Edomites, we just don't. Like we do with alcohol but not the Edomites, right? They've never been against us and caused us a lot of problems. When the Jewish people first read this, they would've realized that from Esau came a bunch of nations that were their neighbors that were opposing them and threatening them and attacking them and this would make sense, oh, that's why we have so much conflict with these neighbors. So Esau becomes the nation of Edom. The Edomites join the Syrians in war against David, the descendants of Esau. In addition, there are whole parts of the Old Testament that prophets are warning God's people about the Edomites who are the kings descended from Esau as promised in Genesis 36. So you've got whole sections of Obadiah, Old Testament prophet. Malachi and Jeremiah, all warning against the Edomites. In addition, one of the sons here, we read it quickly but one of the descendants who became a king and he's the son of Esau, he is the father of a group called the Amalekites. You can find these people in the Old Testament. The Amalekites hate God's people. And in the book of Esther, there is a particularly nasty villain named Haman who's trying to destroy God's people and he is an Amalekite, a descendant of Esau. These boys were fighting in the womb, they fought through their whole life, they got a little piece when they got older but their descendants picked up the battle. In addition, this battle goes from Jacob and Esau, this is mind melt, okay? Through Jacob, Israel, comes the nation of Israel, comes Jesus Christ, the King of Kings. Through Esau comes nations and kings and kingdoms. One named Herod who is a descendant of Esau and when baby Jesus is born, Herod puts out a death sentence to kill all of the Jewish baby boys descended from Jacob or Israel to destroy Jesus before he can grow up and raise from the dead and return to heaven and rule in rain as King of Kings and the King Herod who tried to destroy the King of King's baby Jesus, descendant of Esau. And so God works through some families and Satan works through others. And the battle is in every generation. This is a picture of the war that is between the church, God's people through Jacob and the world through Esau's descendants. So here's my question, what kind of life are you living and what kind of legacy are you leaving? Is it godly or ungodly? Are you living out your destiny as part of the church or are you living out your misery as part of the world? Here we have two men but thousands of years later, we have nations. And many, if not most of the descendants of Esau, they're still worldly. And many of the descendants of Jacob including those of us who are spiritually adopted into the family because we worship their God Jesus are

blessed. Now let me summarize Genesis as we bring it to conclusion. Here we are, thousands of years later and what we have been studying is a multi-generational perfect, Holy Spirit inspired, God ordained and authored account of family systems and what happens over the course of generations and how the decisions of one generation impact not only families but nations, okay? And God has set before us here in Genesis 35, the way of the church, Genesis 36, the way of the world. This is where we find ourselves and the question is, well, pick your path. You gonna follow Jacob or you gonna follow Esau. And so I was doing some research this week and I find it interesting 'cause I've said repeatedly Genesis doesn't tell us what happened, it tells us what always happens. And a lot of people think, oh, the Bible's old. No, actually, it's eternal. Something old gets outdated, something eternal is always very timely because it's over history, it's not just in history. So within this, I was studying this week. In the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, there were two prevalent predominant schools of sociology in America. One was called the Chicago School and it was neo-Marxist. It's today would be called wokeism which is a counterfeit to Christianity. And it's a progressive agenda of the academic descendants of Esau. And they were pushing for a rethinking of gender and marriage and family. They were the majority of sociologists that helped create curriculum and parenting and education and degrees that led to the rebellion of the 60s and 70s, it continues to this very day. On the other side, there was one sociologist, there's no indication that he was a believer, that he knew the Lord but he functioned in a prophetic way. And he kind of stood alone against the rising tide of liberal sociology. His name was Carle Zimmerman. He was a professor at Harvard. He is considered by some to be the most significant sociologist in America in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. And what he did, he did this large survey looking at human history objectively as a non-believer, most likely and just asking what makes a civilization great and then what causes a great civilization to decline and ultimately to cease to exist? What causes a culture to go up? What causes a culture to come down? He published his findings in "Family and Civilization". Hear me in this, 1947, okay? 1947. And he asked the question, what causes a culture, a nation, a civilization to flourish and are there any common characteristics or traits that cause it to decline and ultimately to be destroyed? And he came up with 11 things. Number one, divorce. What we learned in Genesis is before God made the church or the government, the first government he made was the family. He starts with marriage, it's not good to be alone. Sin hasn't entered the world yet. Be married. You build a civilization on marriage. You build an economy on marriage. You build generational legacy on marriage. You build the church on marriage. Marriage is the cornerstone for every other institution that is built in any functional healthy society. We learn this in Genesis, that's where God starts. So what he says is, and again, for those of you who've been divorced, not judging you, you may have good reason, I'm not saying that the Bible never allows divorce, I'm not saying that at all. But what he says is when people just treat marriage haphazardly, dishonorably, it begins the decline of the culture. in our day, this would be no fault divorce, increased rapid easy divorce. There's no sense that we should try and make marriage extend till death do us part. The second thing he says is anti-child, anti-parent sentiment in the greater culture. This is where people decide, we don't want children, they're an inconvenience and they're an expense. So it's an anti-child sentiment. This also leads to an anti-parent sentiment. This is what we have with birth control and abortion and now you've got a record number of people in their 20s getting vasectomies and tubal ligations and it's like, wow, I mean, the whole

culture just seems to be like, children are a problem. And once they're born, there's a dishonor, disregard and disrespect for parents. So all of a sudden you're like, hey, we had kids, you didn't have any kids but you wanna write the curriculum to teach our kids and then you wanna tell us how to parent our kids and then you want brainwash our kids and then you wanna take out more taxes that you're expected to be paid by our kids. Hey, you don't have kids, you don't know what you're talking about. Anti-child, anti-parent sentiment. I mean, I come from a place that is, huh, I mean, it's like the left of hell. That's where I raised my kids and I never forget we'd come out to our suburban and there were always stickers all over that I'm ruining the planet, I'm destroying the environment, I hate mother earth and I'm always out there with a razor. The kids are like, dad, what's it say? Don't worry about it. I'll never forget, we're in a grocery store, I shouldn't tell you this but we're in a grocery store line and we had all the kids, with five kids and these people that will tell you, they couldn't have kids so they had an opinion about, they're like, oh my gosh, it's so many, count one, two, three, four, five. Oh my gosh, it's so many. Oh gosh, I was like, do you have a problem? They're like, the world is too many people. I was like, well, then you guys can go, you know? Make some room, you know? Make some room. Third thing, meaningless marriage. So in Christianity, is marriage meaningless or very meaningful? It's very meaningful 'cause the Bible says that our relationship with God is like the church is a bride and Jesus is the groom and so marriage is the metaphor for God's relationship with his people, that's as big as it gets. And so if you're here in our church, you're thinking about getting married, first and foremost, just thank you for thinking about getting married. That means you're not looking for someone that you can have a good time but someone with whom you can leave a good legacy and you're not gonna just do the hookup, shack up and break up. You're gonna try to do marriage which means you're probably not gonna rush into a relationship. You're not probably gonna put the sexual before the spiritual and emotion. You're probably gonna get wise counsel from family or friends. You're gonna sign up for a premarital class. You're gonna hear what God has to say. You're gonna put a wedding on the calendar, you're probably gonna put it in a church. A pastor's gonna oversee it, he's gonna read the Bible, invite the presence of God. You're gonna take vows and tell everybody there, please remind us to hold up our vows. See that's a meaningful marriage. The option is yeah, we were drunk in Vegas and went through a drive through, not as meaningful. We just sort of ripped the meaning out of marriage. And even the marriage ceremony used to be a time to remind everyone like marriage is meaningful and it matters. And if you're outta marriage ceremony, it's a good time to examine your own marriage. Well, what happens to then, our heroes get villainized in a society and decline. We take people in the past that we used to write history about and we used to honor and thank and maybe even have holidays for, and we just completely rewrite history. We cancel them, we attack them, we name call them and then we destroy them. All of a sudden the people that generations looked up to are people that the next generations are to deplore and to cancel. Oh, they were heteronormative. Oh, the guy was tough. He was toxic in his masculinity. Yeah, the women had children and that's how they oppressed them. All of a sudden you're like, whoa, we're rewriting all of history. And we're taking all the villains and we're making them heroes and we're taking all the heroes and we're making them villains. And the Bible says, what do those who call good evil and evil good and light darkness and darkness light but that's what we do. And then what we come up with he says is marriage alternatives. Live together, no need to get married. Have an

open marriage. Be swingers, practice polygamy. Now we have same sex marriage, lots of alternatives to marriage. Again, I told you, when was this written? 1947. What does it sound like? Today. In addition, he says, this will be the trinity of terror, feminism, narcissism and hedonism. Feminism was the beginning of eradicating binary gender categories. And we know that oftentimes feminism comes into existence because some men are evil and active and other men are passive, we just saw that in Genesis 35. But feminism is this, we hate men and we don't agree with binary gender categories of male and female. You add to that, feminism he says, also narcissism which is, I don't care about you, I don't care about anyone and I don't care about the future. I don't have any kids so yeah, let's just, hey, give me some money and just tax people in the future 'cause I'm not gonna be there and I got no people. Make horrible decisions today because I'm not gonna be there tomorrow and I don't have any people that I'm putting there tomorrow so what do I care? And hedonism, hey man, it feels good, it's pleasurable. I like it, I get the dopamine hit of my brain. This leads to glut me, this leads to alcoholism, this leads to drug use and abuse. This leads to sexual perversion and addiction. So we reach a point of society we're like, well, let's legalize all of that. Well, let's at least tell people it's harmful and self-destructive. Here's what I can tell you about drugs. I've never done drugs but I've never met a person who has and thinks have benefited their life. I've never met anybody that said, Fentanyl really helped. But what we've done now is we've said everybody gets to do whatever feels good and then what you find is anything that feels good apart from God eventually becomes very painful. The story continues, he says then the culture trends in general just toward anti-family. The school system, you're like, man, the whole curriculum is anti-marriage and family. That's okay, we'll let our kids be entertained by entertainment. Anti-marriage and family. Well, we'll take 'em to the park. We can't 'cause everybody's camping there and there's drug needles. Like oh gosh, well, I'll put 'em on our soccer team. Well, they gotta wear a rainbow jersey. You're like, ah. Kids just stay home. We tried that for two years and that didn't work either. So it's just not working. How many of you feel like we're in a place that the culture is just anti-family.

- [Congregation Member] Yes.

- The next thing he says is adultery. We just encourage people to stray outside of their marriage covenant. We make it normative and we celebrate it. Commit adultery, swingers, polygamy, open marriage, there's no sense that we're one flesh in a covenant consummated, committed for the sake of honoring God, raising kids, sending people into the future that are a blessing and not a cursing. He says like sex becomes the new religion. So then this leads to invariably he says, 1947, child rebellion. The children just grow up and say, we hate God, we hate authority. And we hate our parents' authority and we just rebel. And the expectation is every generation's just gonna hate their parents and rebel against them and criticize them and self destruct, it's just assumed. Just watch any programming for early to late teens. All of the advertising, marketing is all appealing to rebellion. I still can't find the product that's like, hey kids, this will help you obey your mother and father. I still can't find that. So then the result is not shockingly, juvenile delinquency. More people are getting into more trouble more early than any other time in history. Now you've got drugs and crime and addiction. You've got out of wedlock childbirth. You've got

gangs. You've got violence in the streets. You've got civil disorder. Includes mental health. A lot of people today are young are like, I don't know why I have mental health problems. Is 'cause everything you believe is wrong and you're fighting against the will of God. And he's not cursing you but you're cursing yourself. And he can't bless you until you have a change of mind and live a different way. So he said, then it all comes to an end. Here's sort of the bottom of the septic tank, sexual perversion of every sort and kind is not just tolerated but celebrated. And it's not just enough to say, well, I disagree but you can do what you want. I need to repost your hashtag. I need to wave your flag, I need to join your parade. And I just come to the point, like why are these people so insecure? We disagree and I don't care what you think. I don't know why I gotta be a part of your fan club. 1947, sociologist looks at the history of the world. Every culture, what made it work? Marriage, family, parenting, gender. What destroyed it? Marriage, parenting, family, gender. Where are we? We're swirling to the drain America, that's where we're at. That's where we're at. So there's no hope, good luck. I'll pray for you. No, okay. So here's the good news. We've read in Genesis the answer, in the beginning, God, that's where Genesis start. You know where you begin? God, who's God, okay? God is Jesus. He's the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Start with God. Start your life with God. Your identity with God, your day with God, your family with God, your budget with God, your sexuality with God, start with God, okay? God, psychology says, you need to understand yourself. Bible says, you need to understand God first and then he'll help you understand yourself. Get to know God. Then God made us male and female, crazy that's like binary gender. And then God made marriage, okay, I guess it's a thing that God cares about. And they didn't have sex and consummate their relationship till they were married, what a crazy idea. And then they had kids and then their kids had kids and this is God's divine design for the world and it's not perfect 'cause we're not perfect but God can draw straight lines with crooked sticks and that's the story of Genesis. So here's the good news, okay? Here's the good news. God has a divine design and if you will seek to live in his will, you will find that you are enjoying his blessing. If you live outside of his will as Esau did, you're living apart from God's divine design and his blessing. My pastor, Jimmy Evans when he preach for us in March on marriage and family, you're gonna love hearing from him but he says that when you're in God's will you canoe is going downstream when you're against God's will your canoe is going upstream. A lot of people are like, I'm exhausted, I'm tired, I'm stressed, this isn't working, what's wrong? Your canoe is going upstream. You don't know God and you're not obeying God. Repentance is, you know what? I'm wrong, God's right. The way I've been doing it is wrong. I need forgiveness through Jesus. I need new life through the Holy Spirit. I gotta turn my canoe around. Here's what God says about life and marriage and gender and sex and family and finances. And well, I still need to row but it is a lot easier to go downstream with the will of God than upstream against the will of God. So I wanna thank you for letting me teach Genesis and I'm praying for your family. Couple things I'll say in conclusion, I hope it's encouraging. Since we started Genesis, every month this year, we've set a record that month for kids' ministry. Amen. And the last few months, during the summer we grew and every week we set a new record for kids' ministry. That means that people are getting married and they're having children and they're bringing them to learn about Jesus in a fun, safe environment. It's amazing. Next week, we're gonna look back and celebrate everything that God has done here for six years. And then the following week, I'm gonna start the book of Nehemiah, we're gonna

look forward, everything that God has for us as his counter-cultural, weird, outlier, subculture church family, okay? And then in January, we're gonna jump into the Song of Songs and we're gonna have a lot more kids in kids' ministry. Let me pray, that's not a prophecy, that's just a fact. We're gonna spend some time worshiping God. I want you just to ask, okay, God, where would you have me to be? Any changes I need to make, anyways that my canoe is going upstream that needs to pivot in turn to be in your will. Father, I just wanna bless the people now. God, I wanna close Genesis with this great theme of blessing. God, I wanna bless those who are young and trying to figure out their faith early before they make some of the most painful decisions of their life, would you bless them? God, for those who are single and they wanna marry in a covenant, they wanna marry someone who loves and serves the Lord Jesus. God, I pray a blessing over them and the spouse that you would have for them and that they would come together in the right way at the right time to live according to your divine design. God, I pray for the husbands and wives, would you pour out a lot of grace on them? Marriage takes a miracle. God, we need your presence to heal our hearts and to lift our burdens and to forgive one another and to dwell in peace. And I pray a blessing over the marriages and God for the children, they are a blessing. And so we pray a blessing over the children who are our blessing. We pray that they would know and love and serve the Lord Jesus from a young age. That they would carry forth a legacy of faith into the future. And God, I thank you that thousands of years later, we realize that your word is still true, that your way still works. And that if we'll just come to you and trust in you and obey you and follow you, no matter the bad things we have done, your good overcomes it. No matter the poor decisions that we have chosen, you can override them. And so God, we come to meet with you now, please speak to this church family and their families. And God, I just pray a blessing over everyone who has given me the honor of teaching him this great book of the Bible in Jesus great name, amen.