10.25.26

Genesis
Chapter 27 - Good Blessings Bad Delivery
Do It Yourself Manipulation (vs.5-17)

Genesis 27:5-17: Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, ‘Bring me some game and prepare a savory dish for me, that I may eat, and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.’ Now therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you. Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats from there, that I may prepare them as a savory dish for your father, such as he loves. Then you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death.” Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, “Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me, then I will be as a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing.” But his mother said to him, “Your curse be on me, my son; only

obey my voice, and go, get them for me.” So he went and got them, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made savory food such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. She also gave the savory food and the bread, which she had made, to her son Jacob.

Most of you are aware of the fact that my mother passed away just recently. And if you were at the graveside, you probably remember me sharing Galatians 2:20, "I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave His life for me." That was my mother's favorite verse. It was a verse that she learned when she was just a child. That's a pretty long verse for a child. You would think it'd be John 3:16 or something like that. That was actually the first verse that

she learned. And as she was getting close to breathing her last, she still remembered that verse. She didn't always remember me. And she didn't always remember what was going on or where she was. But I would turn to her, and I'd say, "Mom, what's your favorite verse?" And she'd say, "Galatians 2:20." I said, "Would you say it for me?" and she would say it for me verbatim. Wouldn't miss a beat. So, the word of God, how transforming and how wonderful to know that though I die, Christ lives in me and I will never die, as John 11 so wonderfully puts it. Do you believe this? What a wonderful hope. Probably one of the reasons why the song was so endearing to me as well.

We come to a passage dealing with the blessings of God. Who doesn't want blessings? I mean, everybody wants the blessings, and in particular, the blessings of God would be such a wonderful thing. The question is, where do blessings come from? Well, it's the blessings of God. So, it has to come from Him. How strange it is that we would think differently. Nevertheless, we begin to think extremely differently and handle things differently because of our flesh and because of our nature and

proclivities and the inclinations of our heart that oftentimes come in. But Scripture tells us in Genesis 12 that God had blessings for Abraham. He had blessings for his inheritance, and they were going to be given to him. It was a guarantee, "I'm going to bless you." He didn't say it might happen. He said, "I'm going to do this." And so, the blessings were given to Abraham and to his lineage. Nevertheless, we can detract from those blessings, and we can miss the joy of the blessings that God has in store for us by virtue of putting our own fingers in the mix. And so, there is a clear tendency to do that.

James will put it this way in James 1:17,

"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."

In other words, it's all good. God doesn't give part good; He gives total good. And it is the blessings of God, as Proverbs 10 will say, that make rich, and He adds no sorrow to that. We begin to once again put ourselves in the position of the driver's seat and then we begin to steer off of the wonderful promises that God has for us

and the good things that He has for us. The question is, how does that happen and what does it look like? And so, what the Old Testament does for us is it begins to show us what these things look like.

Now, I just want to remind you, once again, that as we look in particular at the Old Testament and specifically at the Book of Genesis that these are periods of times in man's life, that God is revealing specific ways in which we not only deal with things, but the consequences of those decisions that we make. And so, as you look specifically in the Book of Genesis, it's the beginning of man, which is much like the beginning of mankind, or if you were to think of it as the beginning of childhood, as a child would be born, they don't come in thinking what's right, the law or anything like that. However, God has implanted within them this thing called conscience. And though Adam and Eve had done something wrong, they knew instantly that it was shameful. Now, they didn't have to have a law that would tell them that. God didn't initially say to them, "Shame on you." But instantly they felt that shame and it's that internal conscience that God gave man. And so,

even as a child you tell them not to do something, and they do it. You don't have to read the laws of Moses to them. All you have to do is watch how they hide when they do it, or they try to dodge you in the process. And the point is that God has given us a conscience. Now, the other thing that God has given us in the early stages is not only a conscience, but consequences. So, your parents tell you not to mess with that vase on the table; you pull on the tablecloth, and the vase hits you in the head. That's called a consequence. And it oftentimes hurts. God doesn't stand around going, "See, I told you not to do that." He didn't have to. The pain did it for Him. So, at the early stages, in particular in Genesis, what you see is man begins to act in accordance with the way he thinks he should act, and the consequences begin to come out. And he has to bear them, whether it's Noah getting drunk, Lot as well, or whether it's just making the wrong decisions and doing the wrong thing or abusing what God has given. So, you see the consequences that come within the Book of Genesis.

By the time you come to Exodus, it is the Law that's being introduced. Just to remind you that when you look at the Book of Genesis, that period of time from Genesis 1 to the very end has actually more time in it than all of the rest of the books of the Bible. So, you have the beginning stages of man, and then as you come to Exodus, it is the Law that's given to Moses, and that Law begins to say, "Okay, don't do this, don't do this, don't do this, you should do this, don't do this." And it's sort of like a remedial thing in which you put your kid in school and he begins to learn his ABCs and math and all those sort of things. And he also learns that he probably shouldn't be talking in class. So, there are a lot of things that he begins to learn because there are laws that are given to him. And now, there's this thing called punishment. If he doesn't do what he's supposed to do, then he's punished for doing that. So, now in this particular stage, you not only have conscience and consequences, but you also have law and punishment. And your thought would be, "Well, all those things working together, people are going to be perfect by the time they're done." And what the Old Testament shows us is, no, they got worse. They got worse. And so,

ultimately God has to bring them into captivity as they become almost like rebellious teenagers. And God goes, "So, you want to leave home?" And they go, "Yeah, we want to leave home." He says, "Okay, I'll send Babylon to pick you up." And so, God does, and they go into that captivity. Well, the book of the Old Testament ends with, though God has released them from, and you would think that there would be great gratitude because you were released from captivity. You know, you're not only having to deal with the consequences of your sin, but you're dealing with the punishment that comes with disobeying what you know was right, and that would be the Law. So, you would think that if you were rescued for that, if you had a get out of jail free pass, that you would just be celebrating and be thankful that God has given you that. But Malachi will end with no, they're just more disrespectful. The question then arises at the end of the Old Testament, "So, what will make people better?" And so, that's the New Testament. The only thing that can make you better is if you get a new spirit. Because it's not within you to think right. It's not within you to want right. And so, the nature of man is to rebel.

Paul will state this in Romans 7; he'll say, "The things I want to do, I don't do; the things I don't want to do, I do. Wretched man that I am, who's going to set me free from this nature?" Because the fundamental reaction to somebody telling you not to do something is to actually do it. That's just the opposite of what it was meant to do. And so, he says, "The law, though it was good, actually made me want to sin."

But you come to Romans 8, and he says, "Who's going to set me free from this?" And we realize, well, that's the Spirit of God. So, he begins to proclaim this wonderful message of, "There's therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." And the wonderful hope within that particular passage is, as it ends in Chapter 8, "Who will separate us from the love of God?" And so, what a wonderful story we begin to read in the New Testament. And as Acts 2 comes into play and the Spirit of God comes upon man, we realize that Peter is no longer afraid of what man thinks. He speaks boldly the wonderful, wonderful news of God. And man begins to do

what's right because he wants to. And so, the Spirit of God changes our want to.

All of this is the process. So, when we're looking at the Old Testament, if in fact you're reading in particular in Genesis where God should maybe perhaps say something like, "You shouldn't have done that," He's not going to say that. What He's going to do is He's going to allow the consequences to reveal what's going on because we're in the early stages of life. And so, as we come to this passage, what we're going to begin seeing are the consequences to wrong decisions and the making of those wrong decisions, and in particular, which starts off in Chapter 27 with Isaac and the way that Isaac thinks. And once again, you begin to see the patterns and the nature of man in which he wants to somehow mix his own desires with what God has promised to be blessings.

Let me put it another way. When God promises His blessings, and some of the blessings we've actually mentioned within the passage that God has promised His direction, correction, you know, "If you're going the wrong way, I'm going to let you know," as well as His

protection upon him. And even when you look at the end here with Isaac and the fact that he had enemies surrounding him in places of the Philistines, and yet God caused them to be at peace with him, and that was without any effort of Isaac. So, the blessings that God gives us is not only a sense of purpose, but He gives us this peace that is enduring and something that is not something that you have to make yourself. It's literally effortless and it is the grace of God. All of these things are gifts of God, and yet we say, "Well, that's nice, but I'd like something else." So, we have kind of our own agenda that we would like to mix with the blessings of God in order to make the blessings more palatable. Now, it's not that the blessings of God are not fulfilling and wonderful in and of themselves. It's that we have wrong desires and our thought is by virtue of attaining those things, we would actually be happier. So, when you have Isaac and he's going to pass on this blessing to his son, that's a wonderful event. Couldn't we just settle with that? No, we're not going to just settle with that because it has to be something that would in some way appeal to his senses; gratify his desires. It's a very interesting passage. I

mean, Genesis is a book of firsts, isn't it? The first of everything; the beginning of everything.

And one of the things that we see at the beginning of Chapter 27 is handicaps. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time that a handicap has been written about. And what was the handicap? He's not seeing well. His eyes are causing problems. So, I think at times we try to compensate for our problems, our misery, our afflictions as we grow older sometimes. But we need something beside the blessings of God.

So, he turns to his son, he says, "I'm going to give you a blessing. This is the deal. You've got to fix me a really good meal. I can hardly wait to eat it. I can taste it in my mouth." I mean, the whole focus of the text is him gratifying his senses. Ultimately, within the text, as you'll see, whether it's his feeling or his smelling or his tasting, it's all about the gratification of his senses. And you know, I see this symbiotic reasoning in people's lives. They say, "Okay, I want the blessings of God. I'm going to go to church, but this is what I need to have in order for church to be palatable to me. I need to have something that the

church gives me. I need to have something that will entertain me. I need to have something that will make me feel good. Maybe a chicken dinner from time to time might help. But something that would gratify my physical longings." And it's the nature of man to do that. Well, what we're going to find in the passage is, there are consequences to thinking that way. Not only do you muddy the water of what is the true blessing; and in particular, when you look at Esau and the father giving the blessing to Esau, he's already belittled the blessing by itself. Now, all the father has to do is marginalize it. And that's what he's doing by virtue of saying, "Blessings are good, but I'm really liking the meal." And so, he begins to focus on that which is really minor rather than that which is the focus of the blessing. It causes Esau to dismiss the validity of the blessing itself. This is why you never want to, within a church, acquiesce to the desires of people. You want to preach the Word, be ready in season, out of season. The Word of God should be that which draws you, and it should be the gospel that changes you. If it's anything else, you're here for the wrong reason, and we don't want to muddy the waters. We want to make sure

you know exactly what it is that saves you, Who it is that saves you, and how that happens. And so, as we come to the passage, we realize that the nature of man is to somehow seek for mutual benefit, for his gratification of himself, and for the senses that he possesses.

Now, there is another thing that we oftentimes do. And now, we bring in Rebekah. Rebekah comes in with the idea that, "Yeah, I know the blessings of God are good, that's why I'm going to do this." And so, she begins to manipulate things in order to get the blessings of God. This is very interesting thought, "I'm going to get the blessings of God my way." And so, that's exactly what she begins to pursue. So, the blessings of God are not the bad thing. That's a good thing. “Every good and perfect gift comes from above.” But you have to remember that it's the blessings of God that make rich. And He adds no sorrow to it. Now, you stick your finger in there and you begin to manipulate it, and you begin to say, "Well, I'm going to make it happen. And I'm going to make it happen to the person that it needs to happen to." Now, once again, within the context, the blessing is that which is

promised clearly in Genesis 12. And there's nothing that states that Esau couldn't be blessed. There's nothing that stated that before this. The only thing that God had told Rebekah is, "You have twins within you, Esau and Jacob. And these are two peoples. They are two nations. They're going to be two different people." And He says, "And one is going to serve the other." And that's all God told her. There's nothing in the text that says that God says, "Only one's going to be blessed." He just said one's going to serve the other. But at this point, Rebekah's going to fight for Jacob. And of course, Isaac was fighting for Esau. His desire was to bless Esau. She's going to make sure that everything's done right. And so, she puts herself in the mix. And you're going to see the pronouns "I" and "me" quite frequently with Rebekah, like "Listen to me." You should be telling your son, "Listen to God."

Now, I have to throw this in, which, to me, makes the passes extremely bizarre. We understand that at this stage of the game, Jacob is at least 40, probably 77. Now, for his mother to say, "Listen to me," there's something wrong. Scripture tells you to honor your mother and

father. You obey your mother and father when you're young. When you're a man, you continue the honoring, but they're not to be obeyed. It's ultimately the perception and the command to leave and cleave. So, the sense of autonomy begins to happen as you age and you should be independent. But beyond that, Rebekah's stepping out from her authority because she really is subverting the authority of the husband, Isaac. So, when she says, "Listen to me," she's basically saying, "Don't listen to your dad because we know where he's leaning." And quite frankly, if you can't get the husband to agree with you, what do you do? You go behind his back and manipulate him. So, this is exactly what she does.

Now, the passage starts off in verse 5,

(Genesis 27:5) "Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau..."

That's called eavesdropping. I don't know if that came from Eve in the garden, but it actually is the beginning of these things. And you see the curiosity of Eve at the beginning of time in which she was drawn to that fruit. You go, "Eve, just let it go." No, she couldn't let it go. I

don't know where Adam was. I don't even know why he wasn't drawn to the fruit, but somehow, it was Eve that was doing that. The Book of Timothy reminds us of that. It was a woman that was tempted and not a man. So, I don't know if God's warning us with that as well. But the point is that she was eavesdropping. She was listening. And let me say this, that she's learned from the best. Sarah had done that as well. If you remember reading in Genesis 18, the Lord was talking with Abraham, and it says that she was listening behind the door. I don't know if she had her ear to the door. Is there like a wooden door in the tent? I don't know. But anyway, it says that she was listening at the door and she was hearing the things that were going on.

Why would somebody do that? And the answer is clear. They have an agenda. They're going to try to manipulate things. They're going to try to set things straight. God is not sovereign in and of Himself. I mean, He couldn't make the right thing happen Himself, could He? I mean, could it be possible that nothing is impossible with God?

Nevertheless,

"Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home."

Well, that's the opportunity to do something.

(Genesis 27:6) "Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying,

(Genesis 27:7) ‘Bring me some game and prepare a savory dish for me, that I may eat, and bless you..."

Once again, mixing business with pleasure in some way, looking for that gratification of the senses. "So, bring this in. I'll bless you. We'll all have a great time. I'll be filled and you have a blessing."

"... in the presence of the LORD before my death.’"

Once again, I just want to remind you, he's got probably another 43 years before he dies. But anyway, he was feeling old at that juncture. I understand that. I get that.

So, he goes on and says in verse 8,

(Genesis 27:8) “Now therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you."

"Listen to me." Okay. What should we be listening to?

(Genesis 27:9) “Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats from there, that I may prepare them as a savory dish for your father, such as he loves."

"I'll take care of the details. I'll fix the meal. I know what your dad likes. I know what I can use to manipulate him."

(Genesis 27:10) “Then you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat..."

"You can take credit for it. I don't care, son. You're my baby. I love you. I'll give you anything you want."

"... so that he may bless you..."

"You're the one that deserves the blessing, not Esau."

"... before his death.”

(Genesis 27:11) Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, “Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man.

(Genesis 27:12) Perhaps my father will feel me, then I will be as a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing.”

The wonderful thing about this statement is that deception is only really bad if you get caught. So, I mean,

you didn't hear from Jacob something like, "You know, that's a really bad idea, mom. I don't think that's right." You heard, "I might get a curse instead of a blessing. I don't want to do that." So, his mother has this all worked out.

The mother states in verse 13,

(Genesis 27:13) "... “Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me.”

"I'll take whatever the brunt is."

Now, we know that that's going to be impossible to happen because of the fact of, well, if you read a little bit further in the Bible, you'll read a passage like in Exodus 32, where you have Moses and his concern is for the people and he comes before God, and he goes, "Let me be cursed for the people." And God goes, "That's not going to happen. They did something wrong; I'm going to take care of them. I'm not going to let you take the curse for them. You can't do that." It's extremely presumptuous on Rebekah's part to think that she could tell God who to curse and who to bless. It's extremely presumptuous. Nevertheless, in her presumption and in her disobedience

to her authority through the manipulation, she goes on. So, he goes, "I'm good with that. You're going to take the curse, Mom?" She goes, "Yeah, I'll take the curse." "Okay, that's fine." Why would a son do that to his mother if he really believed that? "I don't mind doing something wrong if you get in trouble for it."

(Genesis 27:14) "So he went and got them, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made savory food such as his father loved."

She knew exactly what she needed to do. Logistically, she was working this on the greatest of angles. This is great manipulation and very strategic.

(Genesis 27:15) "Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau..."

Okay, now we're stealing. Once again, if Jacob is about from the age of 40 to 77, which I think he's closer to 77 at this juncture. Esau is 77. So, she's stealing from her son.

But it says,

"... Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house..."

I don't know how she got a hold of them. She was probably doing the laundry like a lot of grown kids do. They bring their laundry to their mother.

"... and put them on Jacob her younger son.

(Genesis 27:16) And she put the skins of the young goats (kids) on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck."

I don't know how you read that, but that would be like deception, wouldn't it?

And the passage is telling us, if you look at verse 16,

"And she put the skins of the young goats (kids) on his hands..."

There's kind of a subtle way in which Scripture is saying, "You do see the irony of this?" And you go, "What do you mean by 'irony'?" The skins of the kids, that's goats. The difference between goats and sheep, sheep have more of a tendency to flock and obey, where goats have a tendency to wander and be independent. Well, she's saying it's okay to be independent and to go our own way. And the deeds that you have the things that you do with your hands. And from the reasoning to the doing would

be the neck. The reasoning to the doing. So, it'd be okay to do that.

"And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck.

(Genesis 27:17) She also gave the savory food and the bread, which she had made..."

To give to her son that he would give to the father and convey the deception. There's lying going on. There's deception. There's theft. There's presumption. There's disobedience of authority. But hey, we're going to get the blessing! It's the blessings of the Lord that we're looking for, and we're going to make it happen. And that's the fallacy of our thinking. We operate in the realm of, "We can make it happen. We can transform things. We can bring it into existence." We hear the blessings of God, but then to wait upon Him or to do things according to the way that He tells us to do them is not our nature. *We know how to get the blessings a lot better than God does.*

From the beginning of this church, from the very foundation of it, if you were to ask some of those that had been with me from the very beginning, they would affirm

this- I have been preaching dogma. Dogma basically, if I were to define it for you, is a principle or the principles that are brought from authority, that are incontrovertible truths. And so, I've been proclaiming truths that are incontrovertible, that you don't manipulate, you don't change, you don't compromise, you do what God tells you to do. The thought is that if somehow, you can possibly mix the blessings of God with your own sensual pleasures, or maybe you could mix the blessings of God with your own manipulation and what you think is best and the best way for God to mete out the blessings. And so, we pursue those things, but that's not what Scripture says. Scripture says that God gives the blessing. Not you, not Rebecca, not Isaac, God. God is the One that you need to please. Ephesians 5:10 says that you should try to learn what is pleasing to God. You should be looking for those things rather than the things that would in some way bring you what you believe to be success.

If you were to think about blessings, I kind of have them in different categories. One group would be satisfaction and happiness, right? These aren't bad things, right? Is it

bad to be satisfied? No, God wants you to be satisfied. God wants you to be fulfilled. So, satisfaction and happiness or joy. Is joy a bad thing? No. In His presence is fullness of joy; at His right hand are pleasures forevermore. Those are blessings.

But if you were to read the Book of Ecclesiastes, really the whole book is about Solomon trying to get them his way. And so, in particular, as you begin in Chapter 2, he starts off with, well, drinking, "Maybe it's by virtue of drinking or drugs or perhaps I can bring myself into a frenzy of some happiness and some joy." But fundamentally that didn't work, and he buys all this stuff and that doesn't work, and he has all this entertainment and that doesn't work. And he finally comes to the conclusion at the end of Chapter 2, and he goes, "You know what I found? You can't have enjoyment without God. God has to give it to you. And the only way that God gives you joy and wisdom," which is the ending statement of Ecclesiastes 2, "is if He thinks that what you're doing is good in His sight." Now, that's an interesting statement because what the passage is saying is it's not good in your sight. You

know how people say to themselves, "I think I'm a pretty good person." Okay, that has nothing to do with whether or not you're pleasing God. You have to be good in His sight. So, that's why you have to keep going back to what is pleasing to Him. Nevertheless, we pursue materialism and substance abuse and all kinds of things to find those kinds of things. We go about it the wrong way. We deceive ourselves. Recognition and insecurity, those are good things, aren't they? To be recognized, to be loved, to be affirmed in some way, and to feel secure in the things that we have.

You go to Matthew 6, and it starts off with Pharisees who begin to proclaim just how wonderful they are. His statement is, "Beware of practicing your deeds before men that they might see you." We want the blessings of God. We want recognition. We want to be valued, and we want to feel secure. So, we go at it our way. And we don't want to do any good deed unless the camera's running. I mean, have you noticed that? Once the camera's running, people not only put on smiles, but they start working harder. But the point of the matter is that we pursue it

our way. Rather, what we should be trying to do is please God. And that's how that chapter went. But you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Right? Don't seek man's praise. I mean, when you fast, don't put on a gloomy face so that everybody else can see you. And when you pray, don't stand on the street corner so everybody can hear you. And when you give your alms, don't do it in such a way that everybody saw it. But do what you do as unto the Lord. close the door when you pray. Just talk to Him and God will reward you. Why? Because we actually believe blessings come from God. You come to the end of that particular chapter and what is everybody worried about? They're worried about what's over their head, the roof over their head. They're worried about their clothes. They're worried about their safety, their security, their future. And He goes, "All these things everybody else thinks that they have to pursue; they have to manipulate." I mean, it's no wonder why people lie, cheat, and steal. Because somebody has to take care of #1. Right? So, that's why they pursue it that way. But once again, the passage ends, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all these

things will be added unto you." The only thing that you and I cause by virtue of trying to make things work out our way is anxiety. And you'll see that repeated over and over again in Chapter 6 of Matthew. Don't be anxious, don't be anxious, don't be anxious, don't be anxious. "I'm trying to make things work." Then just seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. He'll take care of you. Do the right thing. Work hard with your hands. Don't try to be in any need but do it as unto the Lord. Whether you eat, drink, whatever you do, do it for God. Because if you do it for God, you'll do it all the time. You won't do it just when somebody's watching or just when somebody notices, but you'll do it all the time. Seek first the kingdom of God. Seek first His standards. Seek first His "Well done, good and faithful servant."

We look for achievement and success, and we pursue it. And I was looking at Corinthians and here you have a church, a church, and Paul writes to the Corinthians, of course, they're extremely immature; which to me just parallels directly with Genesis. It's the beginning of that life, you know. And you start thinking that, "Okay, I'm

saved. I want the blessings of God." So, it starts off in chapter one that they start competing with one another. You ever seen churches competing with one another? Or you see people within the church competing with one another? And God goes, "Nope, that's not how you do it." That's not how you get the blessings of God. I mean, "I'm of Apollos," "I'm of Cephas," "I'm of Paul." And Paul goes, "Stop. We're all of Christ. I came to you knowing nothing but Jesus Christ crucified. Stop. Stop competing with one another." But it's a sign of immaturity and it's a sign of somebody trying to manipulate things. Chapter 3 goes into the realm of just sagacious rhetoric in which they start boasting about how wise they are. And he goes, "Stop boasting about yourself. Stop doing those kinds of things." Academic superiority, as it goes on in the passage, they were all saying that they were smarter than somebody. In fact, he says, "I know that you think you're far wiser than I do." You know, when people begin to boast of themselves, what they're saying is, "I need to feel significant," and they're trying to make it happen. But the only thing that does is bring sorrow and disappointment. Because no matter how many times you say that you're

smart and wonderful, it doesn't make you any smarter or wonderful. But God is the One that can do that. Scripture tells us that God is the One that gives us wisdom. He makes wise the simple, as Psalm 19 tells us. So, only God can do that. So, there was a push for academic superiority. There was a push for financial extravagance. Interesting statement in 1 Corinthians, he says, "You all boast of your riches." He says, "And I would that you would be kings without me." It's an interesting statement. He goes, "I don't care. You know, it's fine that you would be well-off, but don't brag about it. Don't make that the source of your value, the fact that you have things." Scripture has never said that it was a sin to have things. It does say it's a sin to trust in it; it's a sin to love it; and it's a sin to boast in it. Nevertheless, they began to do that. And one of the reasons why people do that is that they think that by virtue of doing that, it brings them significance; it brings them some kind of success and achievement.

Even when you consider in 1 Corinthians 6, there's that sense of oppression by litigation, "Let's take people to court to get what we want." I mean, that makes a lot of

sense, doesn't it? "Well, God wants to bless me. So, I'll sue you." Have you ever heard somebody say, "I won in court. I sued somebody and I won in court with the blessing of the Lord." I'm going, "That's not the Lord that blessed you. You know, the god of this world blessed you. And there's going to be a lot of sorrow with that." But wouldn't you rather have God take care of you? Wouldn't you rather have His blessings so that there wouldn't be dissidents, so there wouldn't be the destruction of the relationship with you? Impulsive variations, all kinds of things, even indifferent gratification. When you look at Chapter 8 through Chapter 10 in Corinthians, you have them saying, "I can eat anywhere I want to. I can do anything I want to." And Paul says, "You don't think you should think of somebody else?" "No, I have blessings that I need to get." And so, by virtue of their just being detached from how their decisions affect other people, they're getting their blessings their way.

A lot of sorrow is going to come from the decisions that Rebekah makes. A lot of sorrow is going to come in to Jacob acquiescing to it. A lot of pain. He will have to leave

the house. She will never see him again. She will never see her grandchildren. And she will live in misery with Esau and his wives. Things will not go well. Now, had God given them the blessings? Absolutely, all the blessings are theirs. They just muddied the water. They made the blessings a horrible thing rather than a good thing. Just simply because they tried to do it their way.

There are specific passages of Scripture. Let me just give you a few that I can encourage you with, since we've kind of hit it from the other angle. Let me go antithetical on you and give you encouragement. Scripture tells us that wealth and blessings come from the Lord. In fact, Deuteronomy 8:18 says that He's the one that gives power to make wealth. So, once again, isn't He the One you should be talking to? Isn't He the One that you should be pleasing? Ask yourself, "What is pleasing to God?" He'll give you success that doesn't cause regret. But Psalm 1 tells us that if you want success and stability, and I'll throw one in, security... So, those are three good things, aren't they? Success, stability, security, then fundamentally do this: Don't listen to the wicked counsel,

don't seek the path of sinners, and don't elevate yourself by criticizing other people. Here's another part to that- But get in the Word of God, delight in the Word of God, think about it all the time, day and night, and what does he say? You'll be like a tree, firmly planted, that's stability, by the water, which means you don't have to worry about the weather, and you'll bring forth fruit in a season. That's success. Scripture is telling us how to get the blessing.

We try to get it our way. "I want to live long." Okay, so they have these operations that you can get and you lose a body part, just get one put on. Just trade them in. You can take all kinds of drugs. You can work out all your life. I oftentimes hear people that have worked out a good portion of their life and then they die while they're doing it. My point is, there's no guarantee that because you're doing all these things, it's going to make you well or it's going to make you live longer. There is a guarantee in Ephesians 6. Honor your mother and father, that it may be well with you and that you would live long. Very simple passage. The blessings are yours. And Scripture says, as in Christ, all the blessings and the promises of God are ours

in Christ. That's 2 Corinthians 1. So, the emphasis of that passage is telling us that they're there for us to grab them. But you start manipulating and trying to get them your way... I mean, Ecclesiastes 2:26, you want joy? It's God who gives it, so you better look for ways to please Him.

One of the most poignant passages in all of this is Matthew 18. There are people that have, the best way I can describe it is, torturous things that afflict them in their lives. And they don't even know where it comes from. Matthew 18 tells you where that torture is coming from. You didn't forgive somebody. Read it. You want to get rid of the torturous afflictions in your life? Forgive. I know it doesn't make sense biologically. You know, I don't know how that works. Actually, James will talk about this. He says, "You want to be healed?" Now, the context is that there's a lot of misery that comes from being bitter and critical and angry. And that can affect you physically. I don't know if you know that or not. The Scripture says there in James 5, "If you'll confess this to the one that you're hostile towards and pray for them, you'll be

healed." It's one of the few places where there's a guarantee of healing in Scripture. I mean, there's a plethora of promises that go throughout Scripture that tell us what we should do and how we receive the blessing. Because all of these are things that please God. Forgiveness pleases God? Absolutely. Praying for one another; caring for one another; not criticizing anymore. These are things that please God. I mean, what does God require of you? To do justice, to love kindness; to walk humbly before God. What is that, Micah 6? So, God is telling you what to do. You're trying to go about it your way, and because of that, you're finding a lot of disappointment and a lot of misery. So, Rebekah gives us a wonderful lesson, doesn't she? Thank you for that, Lord.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we ask You to work within our hearts. We have our own ways of doing

things and our perception of how blessings could profit us better than the way that You have intended for them to profit us. Nevertheless, You're the only One that brings true blessing. And so, Lord, today we submit and surrender our pursuits, and we embrace Your wonderful truths. You tell us that salvation is from You. If we will believe in our heart, confess with our mouth that You are Lord and that death cannot hold You, that You have died and risen again, that we might have everlasting life, we will be saved. The blessing of salvation, how magnificent that is. Who could make that happen?