**God’s Promise**

***The Promise Continues***

**July 16, 2023**

**Overarching Theme:** 2023 – Living the Dream

**Instructions:**

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasis in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

**Core Point: 2023 can be a year of living the dream of faithful discipleship as we take a next step forward in following Jesus Christ.**

**Reflect on this Scripture:** Genesis 25:19-34 NRSV

19These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, 20and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. 21Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. 22The children struggled together within her; and she said, “If it is to be this way, why do I live?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. 23And the Lord said to her,

“Two nations are in your womb,

and two peoples born of you shall be divided;

the one shall be stronger than the other,

the elder shall serve the younger.”

24When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. 25The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. 26Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

27When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. 28Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

**Esau Sells His Birthright**

29Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. 30Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!” (Therefore he was called Edom.) 31Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” 32Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” 33Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

**Commentary:** The first half of our passage holds many parallels between the story of Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah. Just as Sarah was not able to bear a son for some time, so too was Rebekah. It was not until prayer happened in both instances that a child was conceived. Just like Abraham, Isaac has two sons, all through the difference here obviously is both of Isaac’s are from the same mother. Finally, just like with Isaac being the one that was chosen by God to continue the promise, so too will Jacob continue the promise through the words that God speaks to Rebekah, “the elder shall serve the younger” in verse 23.

It is said that the children could not be any more different throughout this passage. Esau being described by physical attributes when being born, Jacob being described by his action. Esau being a hunter and gatherer, an attribute given to those that are strong, whereas Jacob is placed inside the home during the latter half of this passage. Esau is described as someone who might act first and think later. This comes from his response to Jacob asking for the birthright, “of what use is a birthright to me”, in verse 32. On the opposite side, Jacob is thought to be someone who thinks first before acting, which can be noticed through Jacob’s understanding of the importance of the birthright that Esau holds as the first-born child.

Finally, an important note to make is that both boys together, Esau and Jacob, are acting out against the religious and social norms of their upbringing by bargaining with the birthright of the first-born. This is something that historically would have been severally frowned upon in this area of the world. Esau has a responsibility when he grows up to take care of double the amount of inheritance as Jacob, meaning that it would be Esau’s responsibility to continue on the family legacy and duties. For him to just give that up over a pot of lintel stew is preposterous! This action, along with actions to come, would be the start of the major divide and issues that arise over the next 11 chapters in Genesis.

Commentary is pulled and summarized out of The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary V. I

Pgs. 520-522

**Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:**

1. What might it mean for Isaac and Rebekah to go through the same struggles that Abraham and Sarah faced when trying to have children?
2. How do you perceive God’s words of, “The elder shall serve the youngest”? (Might be fun to see who the older and younger sibling in their family is is first)
3. How might Esau and Jacob’s actions with bargaining with the birthrights effect the way that God’s promise is shaped in future scripture passages? (Remember this is breaking religious traditions)
4. In what ways are we more like Esau (quick to act first before thinking) in our relationship with God, and in what ways are we more like Jacob (quick to think before acting) in our relationship with God?

**Activity for the Life of a Disciple:**

* 1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
  2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week:

**Genesis 25:23**- 23And the Lord said to her,

“Two nations are in your womb,

and two peoples born of you shall be divided;

the one shall be stronger than the other,

the elder shall serve the younger.”