Study of Jacob - Part 2

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[0:00] Seeking the Lord's blessing, let's turn again to the first portion of scripture we read, Genesis chapter 25.

And we'll read the last verse of the chapter.
Verse 34, then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he did eat and drink, and rose up and went his way.
Thus Esau despised his birthright. He ate, drank, rose up, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.
Now though the text more particularly refers to Esau, as I indicated a couple of weeks ago, I want to begin with you looking at the life of Jacob.
[1:27] And Jacob's life in the scriptures is one of the most remarkable, and one of the most full of rich spiritual instruction from beginning to end.

Every single step of the way has a great lesson to teach. Jacob is a much misrepresented man. I have heard him called many things which I wouldn't repeat.
But these are because people have not really understood the spiritual significance of what Jacob is doing at particular points. And it's of the utmost importance for us to understand what kind of man this was, and the twists and turns which his life takes, and the spiritual instruction that it has to impart to ourselves.
And I hope that you'll see with me that by the time we have finished this man's life, that it is a very relevant life, and one that has much to say to us in our own day and generation.
Now we're introduced more or less to him in terms of this birthright dispute, which is more or less tearing apart the family.
[2:35] But to understand that dispute itself properly, you have to go back a little further. And so I want just to sketch in very briefly the background for us to understand what exactly is going on here in the passage we read.

We saw a couple of weeks ago how Rebecca was brought from darkness to trust in God, and she was brought to be a wife for Isaac.
They settled with Isaac's father Abraham in the plains of Hebron. Now although Abraham was a pilgrim, he had many people sojourning with him.
He had probably an excess of 1,000 servants. So you can remember the sheer number of tents that were sprawled across the plains of Hebron, where the man of God had his residence.
His own tent would be pretty much in the center, and beside it would be that of Isaac and Rebecca.
For 20 years they had no children.
[3:39] God's promises always seem to make us cling to him in faith. For 20 long years there is no child. Isaac prayed, and Rebecca conceived.

Now the joy that she felt when she conceived seemed to change after a while when movements began to take place in her womb. And the movements were so unusual that she took the matter to the Lord, and she prayed, and she said, If it be so, why am I thus?
In other words, if this is the fulfillment of the promise, and if the Messiah or the father of the Messiah is to be born, why am I like this?
And the Lord answers her with a kind of holy oracle. He tells her that there are two nations in your womb. That was the intimation to her that she was to give birth to twins.
Two great peoples. And the Lord said to her distinctly that the elder shall serve the younger. One people shall be stronger than the other, and the elder shall serve the younger.
[4:44] So that was a message to Rebecca that the birthright was to fall to the youngest child. Now that was an unusual thing, as we'll see later on.

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But she was to understand from that oracle that the youngest child was to be raised by the Lord out of his sovereign good pleasure into a position of dominance over the other one.
So that he was to become the spiritual leader of the family. And from his loins, the Messiah was going to come. He was to be the spiritual guide and the spiritual leader of the home.
And he was to rule over Esau, his older brother. So that was the message that she was given. Now it would have been the duty of Rebecca and of Isaac to take that message, to accept it, and to yield to it.
And as the children were being raised, they were to be progressively instructed in that. Esau was to be reconciled to it. And Jacob was to be taught that the position of privilege and spiritual leadership was his.
[5:52] If they had all accepted it, and if they had all dealt with it as the Lord had given it, how many problems it would have saved in the home. But that was not the way that things were to be.

And in his sovereign good pleasure, that was not the way the Lord allowed it to be. The same was through many years later in the life of Joseph. Joseph received dreams from the Lord.
And he told them to his brothers. Had his brothers and his father accepted those dreams, how much trouble it would have saved. But they did not. They rejected the word of the Lord.
And because of that, they brought great grief and great chastisement into their own lives. Now something similar happens here. And we'll see that as we go along.
Now we're told in verse 27 that the boys grew. Now they grew in the same home. And they were raised in a very privileged and in a very godly home.
[6:54] And for the first 15 years of their lives, they had Abraham to learn from. Because Abraham, although you wouldn't tell from the narrative here particularly, was still alive at this time.

He was an old man. He wasn't able to go out and to come in as he used to. But he was there in the center of the home. And I'm sure on more than one occasion he took the young children on his knees.
And he told them the many things which he had to tell them. Of his own great migration from Ur of the Chaldees. How he came into the land of Canaan. How he saw the fearful destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
When the Lord caused fire and brimstone to rain upon these two cities. And he would have told the children there never to doubt. The justice or the punishment of God.
He had seen it with his own eyes. He could tell them that I stood up, he says, on the ledge. And I looked down where the cities of the plain were. And I saw nothing, he says, but flames and ruin.
[7:57] And smoke ascending up into heaven. He could have told them of the way in which he had fought with the king of Sodom. And rescued Lot. He would have told them the many things that happened to him himself on his pilgrimage.

How he had even offered up their father Isaac on Mount Moriah. And the angel intervened and stopped him just when his hand was about to plunge the knife into the heart of his son.
All these things he would have told the youths as they grew. And they grew up in the same home. And they heard the same things. One went one way.
And the other went the other. That God's purpose of election might stand. Isn't it a solemn thought? One going one way.
And the other going the other. One saved. And the other lost. Now, I'm sure there are many people. Well, I've often heard, for example, people saying that as grandparents they have far more time with the children of their own children than they did with their own sons and daughters.
[9:03] Well, my friend, if that's true, see that you don't give all that time over to what is not really profitable. If you have that time with your grandchildren, then use it well.

Take them on your own knee and teach them. And show them the way the Lord has led you. Things the Lord has done in your own lives. Teach them things from the scriptures. Put these things into the minds of the children while they are still young.
I'm sure Abraham did that. But Abraham noticed as these children grew that they grew up very differently. In their nature and in spiritual things, they were different children.
Esau, for example, naturally, as a natural man, he was distinctive. And he was that even from the moment of his birth. And usually he was born with a red coat of hair.
He was a hairy child, a soft red hair, even as he was born. And the name stuck to him, or there were the beginnings of a nickname there. And he had a kind of rough appearance.

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[10:09] And in his character, he matched up with that. He was a man of the earth and he was a man of the field. He loved to hunt. He liked the chase of the hunt. And he went after game. And in that way, he lived very much what you could call an outdoor life.

He was wild and rugged. And that was the way that he liked to live. And he was like the man who came many generations before him, Nimrod, who was a mighty hunter before the Lord.
Genesis 10. And he was respected for that. And I'm sure that Esau had great respect amongst the peoples of Canaan because of his ability in the hunt. Jacob was a different man.
We're told that he was a plain man dwelling in tents. Verse 27. Esau was a cunning hunter. That's a skillful hunter. A man of the field. Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents.
He had a quieter shepherd life. You could call that perhaps the basic distinction between an outdoor and an indoor type of person. Jacob was a more contemplative kind of man.
[11:15] He was a quieter man. He was given to meditation and to deep thought. And it appears that Jacob was loved by his mother. And Esau was loved particularly by his father.

We'll come back to that in a moment. Spiritually, there was a difference as well. And I'm sure Abraham saw it before the children reached even 15 years of age.
Spiritually, Esau was a man of the field or a man of the earth as well. He was the spiritual heir of people like Ishmael and Nimrod. Hebrews tells us that he was a fornicator and a profane person. Now that describes his life in a nutshell. It tells us that he was a person who was more and more given to profanity. In other words, to treat the things of God lightly.
To make light of his word. To make light of his promises. To make light of his name. He's the kind of person who would have used his name as an oath and thought nothing of it. He was a profane man.
[12:21] And along with that, he satisfied his lusts. He was a fornicator or an immoral person. He lived for the here and now. He lived to gratify the fleshly appetites in whatever form they came.

He didn't seem to stop at it or to ask questions. He didn't ask if he was going down the wrong road. None of that. He just went out this way. Openly this way. And nothing was going to stop him.
And how catastrophic that lifestyle was going to prove to be for himself. It was the long road downwards to hell itself. To death and to destruction.
No one fuels the other. The more immoral, the more careless he is with his life. The more he lives to himself, the more profane he becomes. The more he cheapens himself in the things of this world and abandons himself to his wine, his women and his song.
The more lightly and the more flippantly he treats the things of God. And of course the more lightly and the more flippantly he treats the things of God. The more immoral he becomes. You would never say he was God less.
[13:30] You would say that his God was his belly. That he lived to please himself. And he lived less and less to please the Lord or to care about his word.

Now you find instances of this, for example, in chapter 26 and verse 34. Esau was 40 years old when he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beri the Hittite, and Bashemoth, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, which were a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah.
Now there you have the physical side of his nature. He went after perhaps the physical beauty of these Canaanite women. And he married two. He married them together.
He didn't care that they were heathen. He didn't care that he was marrying outside the covenant. He just went for what he wanted. And he got what he wanted.
That is the profanity and the immorality of Esau coming to a head. You find his profanity coming to a head too in this matter of the birthright.
[14:44] It's the birthright controversy here that shows us what Esau really thinks of spiritual things. Now I'm sure that for a long time perhaps he was able to hide his way of life, certainly from his father.

And I'm quite sure as well that Jacob knew better than Rebekah, and certainly better than Isaac, what kind of man his own brother was. You remember the same thing again happened in Jacob's own family.
Joseph was the same. Joseph used to be out there with his brothers. And he used to hear and to witness the kind of evil men which they were. And he used to take that home to his own father. And his own father never protected him in the way that he ought to because he was afraid of the rest of his sons. Now you find the same thing, interestingly enough, in his own father's family.

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Here you have Jacob, who is probably a daily witness of the kind of person that Esau is, living at close quarters with him. Esau manages somehow to veil it for some length of time from his parents, and it's a grief to Jacob.
[15:54] But gradually Esau becomes a grief to his mother, and to some extent to his father. Because even his marriages were a grief of mind, we read to Isaac and to Rebekah.

Now just bear with me at this point. I'm just sketching in a background that is very necessary for us to understand what is going to happen here in a moment. Now Jacob, on the other hand, we're told in verse 27, was a plain man dwelling in tents.
Now this word plain, I've said that before, I'm not really sure why it's translated plain in this part. It means just, it means upright.
It's a word that pertains really to his spirituality. Just as Esau was a man of the field, a now-doored man, and as Hebrews tells us, a profane man, Jacob was actually a plain or a righteous man dwelling in tents.
Jacob had already learned from a young age to love the Lord, to look to him, to trust in him, to cleave to his promises, to value his word. Esau might be going one way, but Jacob was going the other way, and Jacob was determined to go that way.
[17:11] And however much he was laughed at, sneered, or persecuted by Esau, Jacob was going his own way, which was the way of the Lord, the way of truth, and the way of righteousness.

Now, this is where it begins to get complex, because there was a problem in the family. And it comes out very briefly in verse 28.
And Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his benefit, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Now, that's very brief.
But when you take that, and when you add to it the rest of the history as it unfolds, what you have is a sad picture indeed. It is a blatant case of family favoritism.
The parents themselves are divided from a fairly early stage. One is drawn to Jacob, and the other is drawn to Esau.
[18:12] Now, Isaac, Isaac, what do you mean more than anyone? Because why do you love Esau? Is it because your firstborn is a spiritual man?

Is it because he's showing great signs of being your heir and your successor? No. Why does he love him? Because he brought him venison.
Because he did eat of his venison. Now, that is not just favoritism. It is favoritism of the worst sort.
If Isaac had been looking at things in the way in which he ought, he would have recognized that the signs of spiritual life were being seen in Jacob, even from an early age.
And his mind would have gone back to the oracle that Rebekah had told him. Now, I believe with all my heart, and perhaps we'll see in a few weeks' time why, but I believe that Rebekah told him before the twins were born of the way God had come to her in the night time, and told her that somehow, mysteriously, the elder was to serve the younger.
[19:20] Maybe Isaac laid hold of that, but as time passed, you know, he would have put it to the side or he would have forgotten about it. It's quite possible to do that. If certain other things come before you and blind you, it can take away from you something even that strong.

I've no doubt about that at all. And as time passes, Isaac is drawn to Esau. He had a natural place for him in his heart.
Now, my friends, I don't know why exactly it should be. It says here, because he did eat of his venison. Now, I wonder if that really stands for something a bit wider.
Esau was a man who was popular, without a doubt. He would lead many hunts. And he was distinguished, we're told, as a cunning hunter. He was popular.
He was outdoor. He was out and out the man. He was what you would call a man's man. Now, interestingly, that was not what Isaac himself was. Isaac was much more outdoor or much more rugged in those kind of ways.
[20:28] And the fact that Esau was some kind of hero and that he brought him venison to eat made him distinguished and made him important in the eyes of his father. And Isaac allowed himself to be blinded by the fact that his oldest son was a man of the hunt, a man of the game, and a man of the chase.

And what is the result? The result was that Esau was indulged. And his father, and I say it with caution, seemed not to come down on Esau as he ought to have come down on Esau.

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And Esau himself, as it were, seemed more and more emboldened just to go the way that he was going. Now, I have no doubt that Isaac must have seen certain indicators that other things were not right in Esau's life.
But he's blinded by the heroic antics of his oldest son. And that seems to shield from his eyes the defects that are clearly there. Ah, my friend, can you not understand that?
Can you not understand that? Can you perhaps follow it? Perhaps a part of you is seeing something, but another part of you is blinding you to that very thing. Especially when it's your own family.
[21:51] In fact, you can say that the same thing was true in Abraham. He just did not see the evil of Ishmael like his wife Sarah saw it.

He didn't. Sarah saw it for the best part of 17 years. And when finally Sarah told him, cast out the bondwoman, Abraham still wouldn't do it.
And he still wouldn't cast out Ishmael, his own son. Until the Holy Ghost comes to him and says, listen to the voice of your wife. What she says is from me. What she has seen, you ought to have seen.
Cast out the bondwoman and her son. And just as Abraham was blinded, so Isaac was blinded about his own son. And in the process, you can't help but feel that Jacob is progressively alienated from Isaac.
He's progressively alienated. He's growing up as a godly young man. And he feels that for some inexplicable reason, his father is almost always drawn to his older brother.
[22:59] He's a man who spends most of the time persecuting himself. No, I don't know, but that I may not be speaking to some young man or young woman who finds himself or herself in almost that exact situation.

He might have a spiritual mother or father without a doubt. But perhaps they seem to be drawn or blinded in this kind of way. Well, these things happen, my friend. These things happen.
They're a test to you. They're a test to you. And you make sure that you pass it by the strength and by the grace of the Lord. Time will bring other things to pass.
So Jacob feels alienated. And what's the result of that? Well, Esau lost his soul. Esau lost his soul. Perhaps if things had been done a bit more firmly.
And perhaps if the word of God had been enforced a bit more hardly in the home. It might not have turned out quite like that. But there's a division amongst the parents themselves.
[24:02] And that brings a whole rift into the home. Now, my friends, how foolish parents can sometimes be. And I don't mean to be harsh in saying that.

But how foolish parents can sometimes be. What do you look for in your own sons and daughters? Here you have one son, perhaps, who is excelling, let's say, at sport of some kind.
And he's very, very popular in the school. Here is another. He's much quieter. He doesn't have these abilities. But he spends a lot of time with the word of God. How do you treat the two?
Is it prone for you in some kind of way to show her attention upon the person who's getting all the attention? And to neglect the one who's showing other signs of good things? Same is true with our daughter.
It's easy to indulge your children in things that don't really matter. When you're neglecting the things that are most important. And you might find, to your cost, at the end of the day, that their souls have drifted and drifted away.
[25:16] Because you never took the time properly to ingrain the things of God deep into their minds and deep into their souls. You are blinded by things that don't matter.

And the things that matter were left neglected. What, my friends, if your own children rise up against us on the day of judgment?
And what if they condemn us for not having encouraged them in the right things, in the proper things, and pointed them in the ways of God?
You know, it's quite remarkable, but we live in a day and age when people give a lot of emphasis to how our children get on. How they get on.
And by that, what we mean is how they get on in school. How they get on with a job. Are they popular with other children? Do they look all right? Do they have the right clothes?
[26:13] And what about their souls? How much time do you spend during the day teaching them the Bible? How much time do we spend with them with something like the catechism?

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Or teaching them right from wrong? Is it any wonder, after we're finished molding the clay that it turns out a vessel, may be far removed from the one we wanted?
Now, my friend, I am not always saying that when children turn out like that, it's the fault of parents. I'm not at all saying that. And far be that from me. But neither would I say that it never is.
Neither would I say that. And may we all examine ourselves to see whether these things be so.
Now then, in this kind of situation, you'll notice that there's a breakdown in communication between Rebecca and Isaac.
That comes through already. And it will come through more and more as this passage goes on. All is not well there. Something has come in. And they are not relating with one another and with the children in the way in which they are.
[27:26] But Rebecca is doing things without Isaac's knowledge. Isaac is doing things without Rebecca's knowledge. Now, my friend, secrecy is not good in a marriage.

Let me just say that, point blank. Secrecy is not good in a marriage. Whenever the wife or the husband starts to live in any part of their life in a secretive kind of way, keeping things or an area of your life that you feel the other one shouldn't intrude in, that is the beginning of a recipe for disaster. All things should be shared, open, and above board. But here with Rebecca and Isaac, godly as they were, something has come in and hindered the communication and the spiritual interchange. And all that is fueling the discord that is in the family. Now, it's waiting for a crisis. And a crisis comes. And a crisis comes over this question of the birthright.
Now, what is the birthright? Well, the birthright was the privilege, which usually belonged to the older son, of becoming the heir in the family.
[28:43] And in that way, the bulk of the property was given to the one who had the birthright. He became his father's heir. And by far, the bulk of the property was given to him.

In this family, the birthright means more than that. Because this is the holy family, if you could call it that. The family of God chosen to be the forebears of the Messiah.
And to carry the birthright in this family meant that you had the spiritual honor and dignity of being the channel of God's blessing to the world.
Through you, the Messiah was to come. Through your teaching, and through your example, even of your own children, the Messiah was to come. It was to be the state of honor and the state of dignity. You could be a priest, as it were, in the home, in the home of God's choice, chosen above all other families in the world. Now that birthright here, we'll find, is bought by Jacob from Esau.
[29:57] Now, the narrative is quite clear. Jacob is making a pottage, a red stew. Now, this red lentil stew was a very popular one and still is, apparently, in these parts of the world.

And Esau comes home from the hunt one day and he's particularly tired and is very hungry. And he says, feed me with that pottage. And Jacob amazingly says, you sell me your birthright.
And Esau says, I'm about to die. What profit is the birthright to me? But Jacob says, swear it. Swear it to me that you'll give me the birthright. And he swore.
So Jacob gave him the lentil pottage. And Esau was told, ate, and he drank, and he rose up, and he went his way, and thus, Esau despised his birthright.
Now, the crisis reveals the man. Certain situations come in which our true natures are laid open and exposed.
[31:02] And so it is with Esau. He despised his birthright. Does that mean that he despised his father's possessions? No, it did not. Forty years later, you find him very keen to claim them.

He didn't despise any of that. What did he despise? He despised the spiritual promises and the privilege of being the forebearer of the Messiah and being the standard bearer for God in the world. He despised that. And why did he despise that? Well, because he didn't care about these things at all. He didn't care about these things at all. He didn't believe them.
For Esau, it was the here and the now that mattered. His life was summed up in Hebrews as being a life of being a fornicator and a profane person.
He was a man who didn't care about God. He didn't care about the law of God. He lived for, as I said before, wine, woman, and song. The here and now. It wasn't for him any pie in the sky when he dies.
[32:06] He just wanted to live as he wanted, as he pleased, in the world while he had time and while he had opportunity. Who cared as far as he was concerned about the Messiah?

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Who cared about any of these spiritual blessings? He just wants his food and he wants his lust satisfied. And this crisis situation brings that to the fore better than anything else.
For example, listen to the roughness of his talk in verse 32. He says, Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die and what profit shall this birthright do to me?
No, he's not at the point to die. It's very careless talk for a man who's been out one day hunting. He's saying, Look, he says, I'm hungry. I'm dead.
Or I'm famished with hunger. That's the way that he's talking. I need food, he's saying. And what does a birthright mean to me when I need food? And along with that, and this comes out clearly in the Hebrew, what he says is, Feed me.
[33:12] He says, Feed me that red. You'll notice the word pottage is in italics here. That means it's not actually in the Hebrew. It's just put in here for us to understand it better. What he says is, Feed me, feed me with that red.

And in the Hebrew, it almost conveys the idea of insatiable lust. It's feed me, feed me with the red. That red thing there. Remember who Proverbs says, Look not on wine on the cup when it is red. What does that mean? It means that wine is dangerous for you. when it's most attractive to you. That's what it means. When the wine is dazzling, and when it is inviting, that is when you must resist it.
Now the word red means the same thing. He's pointing to the thing and he said, Give me some of that red. Some of that red. Because that's all that matters to him. And that's the kind of lifestyle that a godless person has.
All that comes at him is what's presented before his lusts there and then. It's what's called living for the moment. What does the moment say to you? What does the moment present to you?
[34:18] What does today present? Well it's an opportunity for this. Here you go, take it. And isn't that what the world says? Seize the opportunity. Language like that. Do what you can or go and do it or what have you.

Whatever presents itself to you, just do it. It's red, so go for it. And that is the way that Esau spoke. It was the language of a coarse, carnal man.
Feed me that red, that red thing there. But oh my friends, isn't it solemn that when the writer to the Hebrews refers to this, he calls it a different thing altogether.
He doesn't say, lest there be any of you like Esau, a fornicator or a profane person who for red stew sold his birthright.
what he says is that Esau who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright. The red, red thing becomes in the New Testament a morsel of meat.
[35:19] Why? Why my friend? Because it is the difference between sin as it looks to you when it is tempting you and sin as it will look to you in hell.

That's what the difference is. when you're living in this world satisfying all your lusts it all looks so red you must have it it is so alluring and it is so attractive.
But come the day when you go to a lost eternity you will see it in that light it is only a morsel of meat. That's what I gave my birthright for. That's what I gave my life for.
My soul for. A crumb that meant nothing. A crumb that meant nothing. Now you have your birthright every single one of you you have your birthright.
The vast majority of you were baptized into this church or into the church of Christ. Baptized into it. And with the water of baptism poured out upon you God is stretching his hand even from childhood and he's saying come in come in to the inheritance.
[36:25] You can all be first born. You can all be my first born. Come in and taste and see that God is good. And you're selling it. You're selling your birthright.

What for? Well it's something that looks red to you all right. I won't deny that. It's very very red the thing that's keeping you in this world. But in the cool light of day it's a morsel of meat.
And believe you my friend that the day will come when all the redness will vanish out of the things you're treasuring and pricing. The redness will go. Seems so important when it's there.
But you will rue the day that you sold your soul for a mess of pottage. Mess of pottage. That's the way Esau lived and sad to say that's the way that Esau died.
He showed himself to be under the control of his appetites. given over to fleshly lusts. He lived like that and he died like that.

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[37:31] And it's a sad thing when you see people cut down living in the midst of their fleshly lusts. What of Jacob?

Well Jacob erred. I've no doubt about that. And he was going to pay for it. He erred. And he erred because he took advantage of his brother's weakness.
And no one should ever do that. No one should use the weakness of another as a kind of lever to get something for yourself. Which is what Jacob did. But there are several things to understand.
First of all this, the birthright was actually his. is. And it's very important to understand that. It was his. Now again I've no doubt that Jacob knew from his mother what the Lord had said.
And that he was waiting all his life up to this point to receive some kind of intimation from Isaac that the birthright was going to be his and there was no sign of that appearing.
[38:46] What's more, he wanted the birthright for spiritual reasons and Esau didn't. And he couldn't help but see this man walking around who was just given over to the flesh.

And Jacob is saying is he still in possession of the spiritual birthright? And over and above that there's this. Do you not think that he was grieved at his father?
I believe he was. That he could hardly understand how his own father could be so blind to Esau's life and to Esau's faults.
Right here 40 years later, and I will come to this next week, 40 years later, Isaac as an old man is going to bless Esau with the great spiritual blessing.
It seems that this man has a blind spot and Jacob just cannot understand it. And here is the key.
Along with all this, Jacob cannot understand how the Lord is not bringing his own purposes to pass.
[40:03] And I want to focus on that for a minute with you because it's of the utmost importance to understand it. Jacob knows what God's will is for his own life.

But here he is and he still doesn't see it happen. Now it's all very well to say, well, he should have waited. Yes, he should have waited. But do you know what it's like to wait for something like this for year after year after year?
I suppose in some respects it would try any man's faith. It tried Jacob's and he was found wanting.
Now these tests of faith are an important thing.
Look at Abraham and Sarah. For a long time they went childless. And then Sarah, notice it's Sarah who had the idea it wasn't Abraham. Sarah says to take the maidservant Tagar and to have a child through her.
And that child would be the child of promise. Now you notice the subtlety of the thing. They are at their wit's end. And what Sarah thinks is this, well, it hasn't happened yet.
[41:11] Maybe the Lord meant it to actually happen in this way. Maybe I'm slow as it were on the uptake to understand that this perhaps is how he's going to bring the thing to pass.

But what does she do? It's a preparation of the flesh. And what's the result? It's a fleshly result.
Ishmael is born of the flesh and he is fleshly himself. Now you find the same thing coming through in the Bible in many occasions.
For example, Saul is chasing David. One night, David has an opportunity to cut down Saul.
But David goes in and he takes the spear and he takes the jug. And the next morning Saul looks up the hill and he says, David, with the spear and the jug in his hand, and David says, see, he says, I had the opportunity, he says, to kill you.
But I did not, I have nothing against you. And Saul is overcome with a kind of repentance. But that was a test for David. And what was the test?
[42:16] Well, it's this, will you take things in your own hand or will you leave them to the Lord?
And nowhere, I think, does that come through more clearly than in the whole area of vengeance or in defending yourself.

how often people are prone to defend themselves by some kind of unworthy method. That a person does something to you and he stoops down to do it.
So what do you do? You stoop down and return. Or here is an opportunity. Let's say someone has found out something about you and circulates it. And lo and behold, you discover something about this person.
Now, what's that? Is it an opportunity for you? It is nothing of the sort. It is a temptation for you. That is what it is. Are you going to descend to the same thing in order to be vindicated?
Or will you say, rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him, do not fret, for him who prospering in his way, success in sin doth get? And that is the test of faith.

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[43:18] Can you wait for God? Or will you take matters into your own hand? Real, living, vital faith, exercised faith, leaves matters in the hand of God.

And when that faith flickers or fails, there is a grasping of a thing into your own hand. What did Jacob do? He grasped it in his own hand. He had waited as it were long enough and he said, right, I know what God's will is, so I'll bring it to pass.
As though the end justified the means. The end doesn't justify the means. It never does. Never does. If you are breaking the law of God to bring about something that you think is good or that you know is good, it does not justify what you are doing.
Now I've come across plenty individuals who think that the means, that the end justifies the means. It does not. And if you are breaking the law of God to bring something right to pass, God will visit you and he will visit you with his chastisement.
Two wrongs don't make a right. And that's what Jacob found out here in his life. Now if I'm not mistaken, that is actually the most dominant teaching in the life of Jacob as a whole.
[44:41] Because it's not only once you see it coming through, you see it coming through again and again. He just can't wait for the Lord's time. He puts his own paw in there.

Remember when he was born, he was born with his hand on the heel of Esau. Now that was no doubt a sign, even to the parents, that God's purpose would come to pass, that the younger would supplant, that's what the name Jacob means, that he would supplant the elder.
But perhaps it also indicated that maybe the way he was going to do it wasn't the best way. It's as though he's going for the weak spot and overthrowing. He's taking the heel of his brother and supplanting him.
Esau comes out first, but Jacob's hand comes out before Esau's heel. And he's called the supplanter. All the time he's doing good, but he's doing it in an unhealthy way.
And that causes the Lord's chastisement to come down upon him, until one day things become very different in the life of Jacob. No, my friend, let me leave you with that very thought.
[45:59] God will test your faith and mine in many different ways. And one of the most precious psalms that you can sing and that you can learn in your heart is this, I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear.

Why? Because at length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear. It is a beautiful witness to always commit yourself into the hand of God as a loving and faithful creator.
He'll bring your righteousness to light. He'll bring all things to pass. And in his grace and in his providence, he will see to it that you are not put to shame.
Woo! Woo! Woo! Woo! Woo!
Woo! Woo!
[47:13] Kiwi nac! Woo!

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