



The Sermon

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Genesis 27:41-28:22

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TRANSCRIPT

Well, I am so eager to look into the Word of God with you this morning. And I have no idea how these verses are going to specifically intersect with your life, but I do know this, that the Word of God is relevant for each and every heart and soul, and that God has something very specific and very powerful to say to each and every one of us here today. So I want you to take your Bible and turn with me to the book of Genesis, Genesis chapter 27, and I want to begin reading in verse 41, and we will go through chapter 28, verse 9. Genesis 27, beginning in verse 41. And the title of this message is "A Festering Root of Bitterness. A Festering Root of Bitterness."

I want to begin by reading these verses: "So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, 'The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.' Now when the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, 'Behold your brother Esau is consoling himself concerning you by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, and arise, flee to Haran, to my brother Laban! Stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury subsides, until your brother's anger against you subsides and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send and get you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?'

Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I am tired of living because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these, from the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?'

So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him, and said to him, 'You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May He also give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you, that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham.' Then Isaac sent Jacob away, and he" - Jacob - "went to Paddan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

"Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take to himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he charged him, saying, 'You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan,' and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan-aram. So Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac; and Esau went to Ishmael, and married, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth." This is the reading of God's Word. It is inspired, it is inerrant, it is infallible, it is all-sufficient for our lives. It is immutable, it is invincible, and it has something very specific to say to us this day, though it is nearly four thousand years old when this occurred. Let us go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, as we now come to Your Word we are mindful that we step onto holy ground; it is though You are speaking to us through the burning bush still. And so as we come to Your Word, we remove the sandals from our feet and recognize that we step onto sacred soil, Your Word. I pray that we will handle it carefully today, and that by Your Holy Spirit You will make known to us the true meaning of what is recorded here, and also its relevance for our lives. I pray that You would grant to us repentance; grant to us a confessing heart; grant to us an obedient will. Father, this is our prayer for this day. May You open the windows of heaven and pour out Your blessing upon this assembly of believers, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses we continue our look at this dysfunctional family that we began looking at last week. And in these verses what we see is the ugly reality of a festering root of bitterness in someone's heart in the family. And it always starts out small. It starts out with a hurt feeling. It starts out with one sibling being favored over another. It starts out with a cross word. It starts out with neglecting to affirm someone and instead affirming another, and someone feels left out; but it never stays small. It's like a

pebble in the shoe; it begins to irritate and create a callous, until it becomes very painful. It's like a small spark that starts out so small, but then the wind whips it up, and soon it spreads to become a forest fire; and it just started out with a spark, with just a small pebble. And over time a root of bitterness festers and becomes infected and it is filled with all kinds of toxic pus and poison, and eventually it becomes very destructive, no more so than in a family where there are close quarters and people are rubbing shoulders together on a constant basis.

A root of bitterness unchecked becomes wrath, and it exasperates, and it becomes anger, and an unforgiving spirit develops. Small things now become big things, and the smallest little thing will trigger an overreaction, and soon now the door is swung wide open for the devil to come in and for the devil to exasperate this whole situation. Things become blown out of proportion, and now there are overreactions within a family to what has happened; and pretty soon family members begin to shoot a mosquito with a cannon, and they're ready to blow everything out of proportion. It's a festering root of bitterness that has gone unchecked and has grown and developed now and has ushered forth a bitter harvest of animosity and hatred within the walls of a home.

That's exactly what we see here. This text before us is so real to life. And if any one of us was to be a fly on the wall in someone's home here today we might be quite shocked at some of the tone of voice and some of the abrupt language that is used. And what we see here with Isaac and Rebekah and Jacob and Esau and two unbelieving wives, and then a third, and uncles and cousins, and another uncle and a grandfather, this whole thing is a melting pot for trouble, as a root of bitterness grows in Esau's heart. Let me set the scene, because we step into the middle of a revolving door here. We step into the middle of this scene, which we began looking at last Lord's Day.

But Jacob has just deceived his father Isaac into blessing him by masquerading as his twin brother Esau, and all this was by the prompting of the conniving mother, the controlling mother, the manipulative mother pulling strings behind the scenes, Rebekah. So we step into this family feud, but we step back into this ugly mess, and there's much for us to learn here. So as we walk through this passage, the first thing I want you to note is "Esau's contempt"; that's in verse 41, "Esau's contempt."

Now the first word of verse 41, "So," indicates that what follows now is a response to what just happened; and what has just happened is Isaac has given the blessing to Jacob, not to Esau, and Isaac has told Esau that it will not be well for him, that he will be a servant to his brother. And so, verse 41, "So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob." That's the New American Standard, and quite frankly, it's stronger than just "bore a grudge." The King James and the ESV I think has it more potently accurate. It really means "hatred." It's a strong word, "bore a grudge," and it means "malice" and "animosity," and it means "deep-seated anger, deep-seated anger," and "a persistent hatred."

That's what is brewing now. The seeds of discord have been sewn into the fertile soil of Esau's heart, and now there is a root of bitterness that is growing. "He bore a grudge against Jacob." The fact of the matter is he hated his brother Jacob. And so now there is this tension, this war, this strife, this enmity between the two twin brothers; and we read why this is happening: "because of the blessing which his father had blessed him." You see, it was jealousy on Esau's part, envy, because he saw his father blessing his brother, not himself.

And so we read, "And Esau said to himself," - and this is heavy, this is weighty - "The days of mourning for my father are near." He senses that his father will be dying soon. The fact of the matter is his father lived a long time after this. And the reason, no doubt, that he thought his father would be dying soon is because his father keeps drawing attention to himself by saying, "I don't feel well," like the woman that had put on her tombstone, "I told you I was sick."

"So the days of mourning for my father are near," - they're close at hand, they're fast approaching, and he says - "then I will kill my brother Jacob." I mean, this is jaw-dropping. Do you believe this? He's so filled with jealousy and envy and rage that he now plots an assassination within his own heart, and he is going to kill his own brother once his father dies. He's closer to his father than he is to his mother. Jacob is closer to his mother, Esau is closer to his father. He doesn't mind driving a stake into his mother's heart, but he will not drive a stake into his father's heart, so he will not carry out this dastardly deed until after his father dies. And what's going on in Esau's mind, this hatred is, "If I cannot enjoy the blessing, then neither will Jacob." Esau would rather kill Jacob than watch him enjoy the blessing from his father Isaac, and so Esau's mentality is, "If I cannot enjoy the blessing, then no one will enjoy the blessing. I will put Jacob to death." And jealousy is driving Esau.

Sin will always make you stupid, and it will always drive you to make the worst decisions. Never make an important decision while you're in sin, except the decision to repent and to confess it. And I have a passage I really want you to turn to. I want you to turn with me to Hebrews chapter 12, because this is the New Testament commentary on what's going on right now inside of Esau, and I want us to look at Hebrews 12:14-17, and this is a very important cross-reference. The Bible interprets the Bible. The Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible. And what we have presented here is Esau as one of the most classic examples of someone who came so close to salvation, yet was so far away, and that there is a root of bitterness that had festered inside of Esau that really was sending him to hell.

So beginning in verse 14 the writer of the Hebrew says, "Pursue peace with all men." Stop right there. That's the very antithesis of Esau. He's not pursuing peace with his own twin brother. And then the writer adds, "and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." If there is no sanctification, there is no justification. If there is no sanctification, there has been no regeneration. If there is no sanctification, there is no salvation. Everyone who is truly forgiven of their sins and have had imputed to them the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ will be progressing in sanctification, they will be growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. No one is ever half saved. And so this statement stands, "the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." And there is no sanctification going on in Esau.

Verse 15, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God." In other words, "See to it that no one who hears of the grace of God and has an interest aroused, see to it that no one comes short of coming all the way to faith in Jesus Christ." Don't leave your toes on the outside of the narrow gate leading into the kingdom. And then he adds, watch this, "that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled." That's exactly what's going on in this family. There is a root of bitterness in Esau, and it is causing trouble for the whole family, as he now plots in his own heart to kill his own twin brother. And verse 16 actually mentions Esau by name, "that there be no immoral" - it's the word that comes into the English language as "pornography," just gross sexual sin - "or godless person" - meaning "unholy" and "profane" - "like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal."

Verse 17, "For you know that even afterwards, when he" – referring to Esau – "desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected," – he was rejected by his father Isaac. Why? – "for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it by tears." He's the first coming of Judas who went and hung himself and went to hell because he was so filled with remorse. And so Esau stands as a prime example, just like Judas, of someone who was so close to the blessing, so close to the grace of God, so close to salvation, but ends up so far away. Esau sold his soul to the devil. He squandered his day of opportunity. He gambled his soul into hell. He fell short of the grace of God, and he chose a full belly over spiritual blessings and eternal life. Jesus said in Mark 8:36, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" Or, "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

So this is Esau's contempt. And I pray that there's not a root of bitterness in anyone here today toward another person that would be festering into a grudge of hatred. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it springs the issues of life." The most important thing about you is your heart. The most important thing about you is your soul. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart. Jesus said in Matthew 15:19, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things that defile the man." It's not what goes into a man that defiles him, food; it's what comes out of the man, out of the heart, that defiles him.

So where is your heart this day before the Lord? Is there a root of bitterness toward a family member, toward a loved one, towards a spouse, towards a child, towards an in-law? It will never stop with just a root of bitterness, it will always fester and grow into much anger and wrath, as it'll be carried out.

Well, come back to Genesis chapter 27, Genesis chapter 27. And we needed to go to that Hebrews passage and have the New Testament shine light upon this in the Old Testament. And as we continue to walk through this passage, we see not only Esau's contempt, but I want you to note now, second, in chapter 27:42, "Rebekah's counsel. Rebekah's counsel." She's behind the scenes, scheming, conniving, plotting, getting her way.

Verse 42, "Now when the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah," – now what should capture our attention here is that in the

previous verse he was only saying this to himself, but now the word comes to Rebekah of the plot to kill Jacob. And that tells us that Esau was so fuming on the inside that he couldn't keep himself contained. And what's down in the heart comes out of the mouth. What's down in the well comes out in the bucket. And this pent-up hatred for Jacob is now spewing out of his mouth, and the domino effect, until this contempt now reaches all the way to Rebekah. That's the way sin goes, it spreads fast, it never remains self-contained.

And so we read in verse 42, "When she heard this, she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, 'Behold your brother Esau is consoling himself concerning you by planning to kill you.'" This word "consoling" actually means "to comfort." The only comfort that Esau can find will be to actually murder his brother. That would be the only solace that would bring him relief would be to see the blood of his brother saturate the soil outside their tent. And so Esau is so fuming that Rebekah must call Jacob and say, "He's after you. He's coming after you. He's going to kill you." Can families ever dissolve to such a base and low level?

I pastored in Alabama for many years before moving to Dallas, and I had a couple in our church who lived on the same street that we lived on, a little bend in the street and they just lived right around the bend. They were on television, they owned a large store, many advertisements; their daughters were featured in these ads. One day I was in Nashville. Anne and I were there for a pastor's meeting, and I got a phone call in the middle of this meeting that there was a dual homicide, that this woman who was a member of my church had finally had enough. And she invited her husband into the bedroom, and it point blank just shot him dead, then turned the gun on herself and shot herself dead. So I had to get in the car and drive back to perform this funeral with two coffins, both of which had been shot in cold blood in their own home, because there was so much friction and so much tension that she couldn't bear to live with this man for another second, and then she couldn't bear to live with herself. Yeah, families can get to that point. Something small becomes so blown out of proportion that it becomes Mount Everest and it becomes bigger than life.

So Rebekah's counsel is, "Your brother is coming after you." And she knows Esau. "He's a hunter, and he's going to hunt you down, and he's going to take out your life. You need to get out of town quick and far away." So, verse 43, "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, and rise, flee to Haran to my brother Laban! Get out of here! And he lives in northwest Mesopotamia, a long ways away, hundreds of miles away. You need to go stay with him."

Verse 44, "Stay with him a few days," – well those few days turned into twenty years – "stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury subsides. I mean, he is like an erupting volcano right now, spewing lava of hatred ready to erupt on you. You just need to wait until his fury subsides and the smoke stops coming out of his ears and he forgets what you did to him." Well, truth be known, Esau will never forget. She said, "Then I will send and get you from there."

At the end of verse 45, "Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?" Let me explain what this means. The word "bereaved" here literally in the Hebrew means "childless." "Why should I be childless and therefore be bereaved of you both in one day? Because if you take his life, then we will have to avenge your life. If you take another life," Genesis 9:6 – "then your life will have to be taken." It's called the death penalty for taking someone else's life. And so she said, "I can't bear the thought of losing both my twin sons in one day, because if you kill him, an avenger will have to kill you."

So, verse 46, "Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I am tired of living,'" – I mean, she's worn out with all this tension inside the house, and she said – 'I'm tired of living because' – and she now adds a whole other dimension to this family friction of what's going on – 'because of the daughters of Heth.'" Now, who in the world are the daughters of Heth, and how do they get woven into this tapestry? Well, these are Esau's two wives. This is like a reality TV show, *Jersey Housewives*, just trash.

So Esau is married not just to one woman, but to two women; and not just any women, but they're Hittites. In other words, they're heathens, they're Pagans. They don't worship the one true living God; they don't have the same core values; they don't have the same priorities. Esau – and sad to say – is actually equally yoked with these two women, because Esau is unconverted as well. Like attracts like, trash attracts the flies. But now they all live together. And so Rebekah is having to live not just with this tension with Jacob and Esau, but two Hittite women in the mix of all this. So this is just a formula for disaster.

"So Rebekah said to Isaac," – verse 46 – 'I'm tired of living because of the daughters of Heth.' – And that doesn't mean she's wanting to take her own life, she's just saying, "I'm tired of living with this mess." – 'If Jacob



takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these, from the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me? I failed as a mother. Why do I even want to go on? I've poured my life down a dry hole.'" And she is scared that Jacob will end up being like his brother and marry an unbelieving woman.

So Rebekah knows that if Isaac marries a Hittite woman – listen, no matter how beautiful she is, no matter how charming she may be, it will be opening the front door for more trouble to enter into this family than they can even imagine. Parents feel this heavy burden for their children to marry well as they pass them off to the next generation. And when their children marry a believing spouse, it brings blessing to the whole family, it just does. But if you marry an unbeliever, you've really just brought the devil into your home, and you'll pay for it. So this is Rebekah's counsel: "Get out of here before your twin brother kills you."

Well, this leads now, third, to "Isaac's charge," verse 1 of the next chapter. Isaac and Rebekah have been talking behind the scenes as a husband and wife do, and Rebekah has persuaded Isaac of the plan of how this needs to be carried out, and so Isaac now becomes the mouthpiece for Rebekah's plan. I've been in elder meetings like that. Elder opens his mouth and it's his wife's counsel coming through.

"So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him" – officially confirming now the blessing upon him – "and charged him," – and the word "charged" means literally "commanded him," "gave him orders," "laid charge at his feet" – "charged him, and said to him, 'You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.' – Why? Is it because he's prejudiced? Is because he has some racial animosity? No, it has nothing to do with the external, it has everything to do with the internal and the eternal. The daughters of Canaan are unbelievers, they're idolaters, they're pagan worshipers, heathen worshipers of another god. – 'You marry one of those women, she's going to bring you down. You marry one of those women, she will compromise your conviction, she will delude your faith, and the next thing you know, she's not going to be going to church with you, you're going to be going to church with her.'"

And I think of Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together except they be in agreement?" It's a rhetorical question, the answer of which is no. Two people, a believer and an unbeliever, cannot walk together stride for stride,

be headed in the same direction, be going down the same path, have the same standards, have the same values, same desires for their children, the way we're going to raise our children. It's impossible. And that's why 2 Corinthians 6 talks about "not being unequally yoked." And the imagery there is of a cart, an oxen cart, and two oxen pulling the cart; and if they're unequally yoked, it really means one is bigger or stronger than the other one, and one has a mind of its own that's different from the other ox, and they're going to be going in opposite directions. And so therefore the cart's going nowhere. It's like one is pushing down on the gas pedal and the other's riding the brake the whole time, while they're both grabbing for the steering wheel.

Now you cannot be unequally yoked to an unbeliever and live in a marriage as God intends for it to be, it will be certain trouble. And there is something worse than not being married, and that is being married to the wrong person. It's like flies on the screen door; those on the inside want out, and those on the outside want in. So that's father's counsel: "Don't marry one of those unbelieving women, you're going to have more trouble than you ever thought."

So, verse 2, "Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father." And there's really a hint here in how Jacob is his mother's favorite, because even as Isaac speaks here, he doesn't say, "Go to your grandfather's house," he says, "Go to your mother's father." And he says the same later in the same verse that "you take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother." I mean, everything in Jacob's life has revolved around his mother, as he is her favorite, and Esau is his favorite.

So the counsel is, "Don't marry one of these Canaanite women. You go to Laban's house and you marry one of his daughters, which would be one of your cousins. But you marry him. And you will worship the same God, the one true, living God, and you will share the same values and priorities." This really speaks to how important it is who you marry. That influence upon your life is inestimable, how God uses them for better or for worse in your life.

So he says in verse 3, this is Isaac's pronouncement of blessing upon Jacob, as he will now be departing, "May God almighty bless you." That in the Hebrew is *El Shaddai*. You've heard the song *El Shaddai*. It means "the

Omnipotent One" or "the Almighty One"; which again we are reminded that God has all power. You and I have no power except what little drops of strength God gives to us. The devil has no power except what God has allotted to him. The universe really has no inherent power within itself except that which God has placed into it in weather, et cetera, and the rotating of the planets. God has all power, all power.

"May God Almighty bless you." And by the way, the word "bless" here means "to kneel down." "May God kneel down and come down all the way to where you are and speak His blessing of favor into your life." And we are also reminded of this, that God is the source of all blessing. Whatever blessing you have, it's come from God. James 1:17 says, "Every good gift, every perfect gift comes down from God above, the Father of unshifting shadow, with whom there is no variation." Every blessing in your life, every single blessing in your life has come directly from God Himself.

In Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be" - meaning "praise be" - "blessed to be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Every blessing there is in your life, A to Z, alpha to omega, has come from God. And Paul will say in 1 Corinthians, and I think it's chapter 4, "What do we have but that we have not received it?" Nothing has self-originated within us that is of any good. If it's good, it's come from God.

So in verse 3, "May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. This request is that you would find the right woman, that you would marry, that you would have children, that you would have grandchildren, that there would be a large company of people." The word means "a congregation," "a multitude of descendants from you."

Verse 4, "May He" - God - "also give you the blessing of Abraham, which was that you would be a great nation, that you would have a great name, and that through you would come blessing to all the families of the earth," - and here we see that the messianic line will come not through Esau, but it will come through Jacob, with untold blessings that will come to the world through a descendant of Jacob: Jesus Christ the Lord - "to you and to your descendants with you, that you" - Jacob, verse 4 - "may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham." A reference to the Promised Land.

Before I move on I just want to say this. We have a lot of singles in this room, and I am so thankful. I'm amazed at how many young people, how many single adults are members of this church and who are attending this church. Praise the Lord for you. And for those of you who are single, this charge that Isaac gave to Jacob applies to you, that you may only marry a fellow believer in Jesus Christ. Hear the word of God, hear this preacher say the word of God, that you may only marry in the Lord, 1 Corinthians 7:39. You need to marry someone who causes you to love the Lord more. You need to marry someone who enables you to serve the Lord more. You need to marry someone who makes you want to follow Christ and obey His Word even more.

And for those of you who are married who have been given such a spouse, you have been greatly blessed by God. Proverbs 31:10, "An excellent wife, who can find one? Her worth is far greater than precious stones. The heart of her husband trusts in her, for she does him good and not evil all the days of her life." And at the end of that passage, "Her husband and her children will rise up and call her blessed." So for those of you who are single, do not cut any corners; you wait patiently for God's sovereign providence to work.

Come to verse 5. Number four, I want you to see "Jacob's compliance. Jacob's compliance." This is somewhat amazing in that he follows his parents counsel. He's an adult living at home, but he's still honoring his father and mother. Look at verse 5: "Then Isaac sent Jacob away, and he" – Jacob – "went to Paddan-aram to Laban." Please note how compliant Jacob is to his father and mother even as an adult. They counseled him to leave for his own good, not to marry a pagan woman, but to marry a God-fearing woman; and Jacob did what they said, it was good for his soul.

It doesn't mean that parents are always inerrant and infallible, and wisdom and discernment does need to be used to measure the words of a parent even when you're an adult. But they know you better than anyone else knows you. And if they know the Lord, you need to take to heart their counsel. Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and mother." There's no time limitation said on that. That's not in effect only when you're a teenager living under your parents' roof. For the rest of your life, honor your father and your mother. And the word "honor" begins with a heart of respect. Put them on a high pedestal; honor them. And then in Ephesians 6, Paul uses that very passage and changes it to "obey."

Well, I need to quickly get to the last heading. Come to verse 6. I want you to see "Esau's conformity." You see, before I read verse 6, Jacob has set a good example for Esau in that he was compliant to his parents. And so Esau will now mirror what he has seen in Jacob, maybe not with the right motives, maybe wanting to work his way back into the good graces of his father; but nevertheless, now Esau becomes really a reflection of Jacob in this matter.

So please note this, verse 6, "Now Esau saw." Just underscore that word "saw." It means "to observe with perception." It's used in Genesis 1:4, "Let there be light," and God saw the light that it was good. So this is the word that's used here, "to see with perception."

"Esau saw that Isaac" - number one - "had blessed Jacob," - number two - "had sent him away to Paddan-aram to take for himself a wife from there," - number three - "and that he charged him" - referring to Jacob - "saying, 'You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.'" And now in verse 7, the fourth thing he observes, "that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan-aram." Jacob has set a good example, and Esau has observed this, and he will follow it to a point; but to a point he does not, and I'll show you this, and then we're finished.

"So Esau saw," there's that same word for "saw": *raah* in the Hebrew. "When Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac," - Now who were the daughters of Canaan? Those are the unbelieving women, idolatrous women, pagan women, heathen women - "displeased Isaac," - the word means "to cause misery and injury" when he saw how repugnant his own marriage was to these two Hittite women. Just remember now, Esau is already married, he's married to two unbelieving women. They're both Hittites, or Canaanites. And earlier in Genesis 26:34, for those of you taking notes, we read that Esau married two Hittite women which greatly provoked his father Isaac.

"So when Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac," - meaning, "He's not pleased with who I've married," he tries to make up for it. And guess what he does: he goes and marries another unbelieving woman. So this is bad money going after bad money.

Verse 9, "And Esau went to Ishmael." Now Ishmael is already dead, by the way - that's back in chapter 25, verse 17 - so it must refer to the Ishmaelites or the people of Ishmael. "Esau went to Ishmael and married," - now note this - "besides the wife that he had," - so he already had two wives, that's clear as a bell; now he adds this other woman - "Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael." So this is only complicating it even more. I mean, when you're in a hole, stop digging.

Well, it's what a root of bitterness does inside of you. It so skewers your judgment. It inevitably causes you to see the world around you out of focus, inverted, distorted, and a root of bitterness leads you to make the wrong decisions in life. And there are plenty of people who get married on the rebound, and they jump from the fire into the furnace because they still have a root of bitterness. "I'll show that first one, I'll find someone else quick," and it may not be what God had in mind.

So how should we respond to this? Just very quickly, number one, "Examine." Examine your heart. Is there any root of bitterness in you? Because it'll eat you alive. It's an acid. It is a toxic, lethal acid that will erode your soul. Second, "Confess." Confess it to God if that's there today. We're about to come to the Lord's Table. You need to confess to the Lord before you take the Lord's Supper any root of bitterness that would be in you. And then, third, "Repent." You need to turn away from it and not keep milking that and playing the sympathy card. Confess it and repent of it, and move on in a positive direction. And then, fourth, "Love." Show love to those to whom you have previously been at odds with. Jesus said we're to love even our enemies.

So I don't know how this passage has intersected with your life, overlapped with your life. I don't know which parts of this have been true to life for you; but, "He has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." And if you are in a healthy family and in a healthy marriage, God has lavished His grace and His goodness upon you one hundredfold. How grateful you should be in your heart today, that as we've walked through this passage, you're almost scratching your head wondering, "What would it be like to live in a den of iniquity like this?"

Just be grateful to God that in His good providence He has ordered your steps in a totally different way. But if you find yourself in a situation like this, number one, it should impress upon you how real to life the Bible is. I

mean, this is a tell it like it is book, and this is real to life for some, many here today - I have no idea. And if this is where you find yourself, just be encouraged to know that God Almighty is yet greater, and He can always work in a powerful way to turn hearts around, beginning with your own heart. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father in heaven, many lessons for us to take from this passage. It's somewhat shocking how close to home it appears to be for many. I pray that You would deliver us all from ever finding ourselves in such a home such as this. But we do know this, that failure is never final, as long as there is the grace of God. So we praise You for Your grace that is greater than any heartache that we would experience. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.