

Dysfunction Junction:

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So this is the first weekend since the holy days. And it's amazing how many people told me that the holy days is one that is filled with many family squabbles.

Well you're not the only one. Maybe you've all heard the saying, "Relatives are like fish. After just one day, they start stinking."

- George Burns once said, "Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family... in another city."

I did some research and found some of the most common causes for fights over Christmas gatherings.

#5 board games

#4 Choice of family movie

#3 Gift dissatisfaction

#2 Childhood vs adult wake up times

#1 After dinner conversation

It's a phenomenon known as hyperpresence and it effects everyone at this time of year.

But what about the rest of the year?

Well that's what we are going to take a look at today as we begin our study in the book of Genesis 25 and 27. It's what I titled today's sermon around which I call...

“Dysfunction Junction.”

It's a place most, if not all of us live.

Statistically, most people in America claim to live in a dysfunctional family. And the statistics for it are staggering.

But what I realized through my research is that **All relationships are more or less dysfunctional** in different ways and at different times. And this unfortunately includes... our church relationships.

In fact we will see as we work through chapter 25 and 27 is that even the first full Generation of God's chosen people, were dysfunctional.

Coping with Dysfunction

It was eye opening to me when I first discovered what the basic goal of psychology is based around.

The number one goal of psychiatry is helping us to better cope. Did you know that? To cope with our circumstances and the world around us.

Now, most relationships adapt to dysfunction during the time they're together. If there is enough good in the relationship to compensate, they weather those distresses and continue to be with each other, but this is not coping. Coping requires a degree of success. To merely weather a storm is like weathering a ticking

time bomb. Eventually it's going to blow up. Especially when the dysfunction junction is all around us. All throughout our lives.

So how then do we cope within dysfunction of our lives? We need to understand that.

We cannot change the world around us, we can only change us, our reactions and our responses.

We ourselves need to change, because we cannot stop everyone from sinning against us. But what I've seen in my life, is that true Change can only occur through Jesus.

We need to allow Jesus to thicken our skin, to put aside pride in arguments, to love someone even if they wrong us. To be thankful for what we have and to put others before ourselves.

And that's all the things that are missing from the characters in today's sermon Genesis Chapter 27. You will see that **they allowed their humanity to dictate to them spiritually.**

They looked at their circumstances and allowed fear of being wronged, fear of not getting what I deserve, fear of the future to blind their eyes and bring dysfunction into lives.

We will learn from their failures in this chapter to see that:

1 everyone has dysfunction, even God's chosen people.

2 that ignoring God's will in our lives takes us directly to Dysfunction Junction...every time.

3 we individually can change our perception and reality of dysfunction.

So lets begin!

If you remember the last time I was with you we learned quite a bit of dysfunction between the members of Abraham's family such as:

- Conflict between Abraham's wife **Sarah** and her handmaiden **Hagar**.
- Jealousy between Abraham's firstborn **Ishmael** and **Isaac**

Now we are going to fast forward to Genesis 25 and 27 to learn about that promised child Isaac who is now married to Rebecca and their twin boys, Jacob and Esau.

Now let me begin by saying that everyone in this narrative was in one way or the other wrong.

No one was in the right. Everyone failed. Now I'm not going to put it up on the screen.

I'd like us to just close our eyes, sit back and try to take it all in.

Genesis 27:1 When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." "Here I am," he answered.

2 Isaac said, "I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death.**3** Now then, get your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me.**4** Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die."

5 Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau,**7** ‘Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.’**8** Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it.**10** Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.”

11 Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin.**12** “What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing.”

13 His mother said to him, “My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me.”

14 So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it.**15** Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob.**16** She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins.**17** Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made.

Again we can clearly see some manipulation and deception going on here as well as some competition and jealousy concerning Esau and Jacob.

Began in the Womb

The strife between the two boys actually began in Rebecca's womb.

Rebecca was experiencing a lot of bumping around in her belly and so she inquired about it to the Lord.

Genesis 25:23 The Lord said to her,

“Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and **the older will serve the younger.**”

This idea that the older child would serve the younger child is something that was not the Norm.

Usually in that culture, the oldest son would be the head of the household because he would receive the family's birth right.

And almost everything that is going to cause the conflict within this narrative revolves around the **birthright and the blessing.**

Now what is the birthright?

The birthright was given over when the father was nearing the end of his life and the father would pass on the birthright to the first born male.

This was always celebrated(party) except her. This was done in secret.

Isaac was hiding his intentions from his wife.

Now...The birthright had two main rights that were given to the oldest son:

- 1-Being the high priest (head of household) of the family and
- 2-Receiving a double portion of the inheritance.

The blessing

The blessing was a **sanctioning** of the rights of the firstborn from God through the father giving the blessing.

It was pronouncing favor and grace by God over the son to take over his new rights and role in the family. (At this time in biblical history the blessing was **considered to be an absolute**. That the one blessed would truly be blessed. It was not just nice hopeful word placed over an individual.)

Rebekah's failure:

Rebecca was the first to fail here and what's interesting is that she failed even though she believed God.

She was right in trusting God when he told her, "not the older son, but the youngest son was to receive the blessing." But she manipulated the situation and set her son up to lie to his own father and she took advantage of her husband's infirmity because she started to think that her husband was going to prevent Gods will.

We don't need to lie for the kingdom.

Rebecca became fearful that Gods will would fail without her intervention.

Guys, that's impossible. Just because something isn't working smoothly the way we want doesn't mean that it won't be achieved.

Just because time passes from when you heard from the Lord... doesn't mean God is not active.

We can't manipulate the way and manner of Gods will. We cannot do Gods will our way!

And this means even the subtlelies that we may engage in and don't realize.

It's easy to do and I fear that we do it more often than we would think.

For instance, God doesn't need us to enhance stories about what God had done in our lives, how he delivered us from a particular situation and so we add to the story in some way to make it sound more "supernatural".

Or telling people that accepting Christ as your personal savior will make your life picturesque and you will walk around with a permanent smile on your face. or being fake with people to look more Christian.

I catch myself being fake with people all the time because I'm expected to be this guy who has his life worked out cause I'm in ministry. And people see through that! Particularly young adults see right through the fakeness.

God doesn't need us to manipulate or over exaggerate our circumstances or the truth to achieve his will.

Remember...

Gods will, will be Gods... and Gods alone!

Gods timing needs to be His...

Gods methods needs to be His...

Gods choices needs to be His.

And that was Rebekah's failure and opened the door to dysfunction junction.

So now let's move on to the two boys

24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. **25** The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.[\[d\]](#)

26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.

So here we see that Esau was in fact the first born son and we also see something else....

he was red and hairy!

This disorder is known as Hypertrichosis (Werewolf Syndrome).

And this is why they named him Esau because it means both red (edom) and hairy.

To me... this explains a lot about Esau's personality.

Can you imagine being named after a disorder?

You see I myself had an extremely rough school life. I was picked on mercilessly for years in school because of weight, because my family life was weird and I had a different name from my biological father which was easy to pick on.

Well the bullying of course was not monitored the way it is today and I was bullied from the time I walked onto the school bus (kids wouldn't let me sit with them) all the way till I got home.

I was beaten often and had been jumped in 6th grade and beaten so badly that one boy broke his hand on my face. They had to actually put me into another school to get me away from the other kids.

So to me we see why Esau became basically a loner.

Verse 27 says this...

27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, (or the wild) while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. Now look what happens next...

28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

So now we see favoritism develop in this family.

And this favoritism made Esau not fit in with the people and especially his mother Rebekah. What a tragedy.

Do we do this? How about when we see someone come into the church who may not be dressed the way we like? Or talk the way we like? Maybe they seem a little off...

if we treat them differently....**it can sow the seeds of dysfunction in there lives.**

James 2;8 if you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,”[a] you are doing right. **9** But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Now... that’s a reminder of us not personally engaging in favoritism that we can control.

But what about when we see favoritism come against us???

When our boss favors someone else at work and that person doesn't even work as hard as I do. When we have a friend who doesn't reach out to us the way they did in the past because they have new friends...

WHAT DO WE DO?

Do we become bitter?

No...We change ourselves. We change our outlook according to how God sees us.

Out of all of Gods creations, we are his favorite. And God loves you and thinks of you continually and unconditionally.

We believe that I personally am known and loved by my heavenly father who was willing to die for me. To remember that my value and purpose has nothing to do with the world’s view of me, only what our eternal Gods view is of me. We are loved.

There’s no need for bitterness.

Jesus Himself was wronged

Jesus himself was called a bastard all throughout history and even today.

His own immediate family thought he was a wack job which caused him to say a prophet has no honor in his hometown.

If it happened to Jesus...why do we think we are the only ones?

We need to change our perspective about us the way God sees us.

Again, We can't change the world around us, we cannot make people not sin against us.

We can only change us.

But how did Esau handle this?

Genesis 26:34 When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. [35](#)They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

So he became bitter and therefore He deliberately went into a polygamous marriage with two worshippers of the gods of the Hittites, and this resulted in profound grief to Esau's parents.

And all in all...Esau grew up not caring much for God or the things of God.

Here look...

29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished.**30** He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me

have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

31 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

32 "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

It's interesting to me that the Bible mentions the word Red when it comes to Esau.

He had red skin (Ruddy) and the Bible describes this one detail that the soup as Red soup. Coincidence? Well if we look at biblically what the word red signifies in scripture, it means **flesh**.

Jesus blood on the cross was a symbol of "crucifying the flesh of mankind."(Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Gal 5;24)

Again he didn't care about his birthright, he didn't care that it upset his parents that he married two heathen woman which He did it for spite.

To satisfy his bitterness towards his family and sticking his middle red finger in their face..

He only cared about his fleshly needs. The momentary needs.

How many of us have given up our own birthrights as believers to satisfy the flesh, which only lasts a moment. How many of us flipped God the middle finger and said I'm going to do this my way, only to find ourselves later looking in a mirror disappointed in ourselves because we exchanged the peace of God for pain?

Did you know As believers we have been given an inheritance as well?

Ephesians 1:11 says, "In [Christ] we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will"

And by right of our new birth in Christ, we gained power and privileges that no one else has. Yet so few of us actually enjoy or utilize those privileges.

If only Esau would have been strong in the Lord, and put bitterness and jealousy aside, the dysfunction that we see would not have been. It would have stopped with Him.

To send this point home I'd like us all to stand for a moment

Hebrews 12:14-17 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.

Sometimes the bad bargain you make is so pivotal that it affects the rest of your life, and even has eternal consequences. Esau didn't get it.

Jacobs name

Jacobs name of course means surplanter

So Jacob grew up thinking he was all that and decided to steal something the Lord really already gave him. And it's funny when we realize that his name means surplater.

That is defined as someone who trips up another. The idea of grabbing a heel.

One of the most disliked and unqualified biblical heroes I can think of is Jacob.

He was a liar, a conman, a trickster, a fraud.

And for what? He spent much of his life haunted by bad decisions. He became exiled from his own family.

41 Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob," and although Jacob was all of these negative things the one truth remains.

GOD DID NOT GIVE UP ON HIM!

God used another trickster, Rebekah's brother Laban to beat the wickedness out of Jacob.

So never think you are too far gone. Or that God can no longer use you.

HE will not abandon you!

Isaac Lives

And you know what proves this within this narrative?

Isaac lived 43 years after all this happened? 43!

I thought He was on his death bed!

And every commentator misses this point of why would God allow this to happen, allow Isaac to live so many years with this infirmity of blindness when he and everyone around him thought he was just days away. Why?

Because Esau said
“The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

God kept Isaac alive all those years to allow time for Esau to put what happened in the past. And if he didn't...There would have been no 12 tribes of Israel. The entire Bible would have been completely altered. This shows us that God plans cannot be derailed because of our failures. And it also shows us that even in our last days, despite how old or useless we may think we are... there is a great purpose for all of us that we may not yet see.

Gods will, will be Gods. And as long as we walk in the will of God, our value and purpose will be realized.

Lastly...Isaac's failure:

We know a lot about Abraham and Jacob, but not so much about Isaac. So generally people don't view him in a negative light.

Isaac was determined to bless his firstborn and apparently favorite son Esau even though He surely knew the God had already told Rebekah that the older son will serve the younger.

But he was determined, because of how proud he was of his boy.

And although Isaac was physically blind, I believe his selfish love for his oldest son made him spiritually blind as well.

He was blind to the obvious signs and red flags that gave him pause.

18 Jacob went to his father and said, “My father.”

“Yes, my son,” he answered. “Who is it?”

19 Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

20 Isaac asked his son, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?” (first red flag)

“The Lord your God gave me success,” he replied.

21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.”

22 Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, “**The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.**”**23** He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him.

24 “Are you really my son Esau?” he asked.

“I am,” he replied.

You see, Isaac was suspicious of what was going on. First the food arrived sooner than what was possible but Jacobs answer really threw Isaac off. Look what he said.

“The Lord thy God bought it to me.” **22** Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, **“The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.**

Now this is not the tone of the voice. Remember they were paternal twins and probably sounded relatively close. But it was **what** was in the voice. **What he said.**

Esau didn't speak of “THE LORD THY GOD.” Esau wasn't a Godly man. He didn't talk the way Jacob did. Jacob despite his flaws was a man of God and is the very reason why God wanted the blessing to go to Jacob.. Because Gods name was on his lips.

And that gave Isaac pause. But what made Isaac decide to believe this was Esau and not Jacob? for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him.

It was the physical. It was what he could touch and smell. But what was more important... and what he should have done... was use his **spiritual eyes** and ears and listen to that still small voice that was saying “somethings off”.

But he didn't because he wanted to believe it was Esau. He wanted this to be right so badly that he ignored the still small voice for the screaming voice that shouts MY WILL. MY WAY.

You know we do this.

Often I talk with younger people who are in a dating relationship and everything may be there .

The way the person looks. The way they smell, their job etc. The clothes they wear.

But what is off is **what was in their voice**. It's not the voice of Christ. A voice that speaks of God. Does it sound like the voice of Christ? Like a Jacob or does it sound like a voice of the flesh...like an Esau?

We need to keep our ears open and not act as if we are spiritually blind. But we often ignore that subtlety for the physical. What we can touch. And this will help us to stay out of dysfunction junction.

Look, if any one of them Jacob, Esau, Rebekah, Isaac would have put the Lords will above their own, any one of them...this story would have been a happy one.

With no dysfunction.

If Rebecca would have trusted in the Lords timing and left what was Gods for God...the same result would have happened. Jacob would have received the blessing and...she would have had a longer relationship with her son. Remember, she never saw Jacob again.

If she would have done what was right, there would have been no dysfunction.

If Jacob would have said to his mother look, if I'm going to be the high priest of my family then I have to act like it. I will not deceive and lie to my father and in turn hurt my own brother.

If he said that, the same result would have happened. Jacob would have received the blessing, but with out having to spend decades fearing for his life and being mistreated by Laban. There would have been no dysfunction. Because of what one person would have done.

If Esau would have put His bitterness aside and trusted the Lord there would have been no dysfunction. He didn't hear that there were **two nations** in Rebekah's womb. He did in fact grow into a nation called the Edomites.

All that pain and suffering would not have been there if Esau just lived the life as a man of God rather than a man of the flesh. If Isaac would have obeyed the will of God for his sons and trusted Gods wisdom, if he put Gods will before his own, there would have been no dysfunction.

Gods will will be Gods. His plans will come to fruition. We saw with Abrahams family that they too had dysfunction. And it seems that family dysfunction can pass down (although not always) to the next generation... and the next and the next. But we can break that cycle. At any time.

We can be the first to say no to dysfunction in our lives
We all need to consistently and fervently commit to prayer and ask the Lord

to thicken our skin, to put aside pride in arguments, to love someone even if they wrong us, to be thankful for what we have, to put others before ourselves.

If we do this then we can escape the cycle. To close the doors to dysfunction junction forever.

It begins with us.

And the change begins with a relationship to Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who changes lives. To see life through His eyes. And he wants to change yours, not only in this life, but for all eternity.