

## Introduction

This week we get to celebrate one of my favorite holidays of the year, Thanksgiving. I love Father's Day and Mother's Day. We are to honor our mothers and fathers, so I think those holidays are very dear to God's heart. Resurrection Day (or Easter) is a very meaningful day to all of us. Paul wrote that if Jesus was not resurrected from the dead our faith would be in vain, and we would be the most pitied people on earth. But, Christ was resurrected from the dead and we celebrate Resurrection Day. It is a very special holiday. But, this week we get to celebrate Thanksgiving. I love the family gatherings. I love the turkey and dressing, especially the sage dressing. I love the cranberry sauce and green beans. I love the Thanksgiving holiday and I look forward to it every year. But, Thanksgiving is far more than that.

Most Americans, however, remember that the Thanksgiving Day tradition was modeled after the 1621 event in Plymouth, Massachusetts where fifty Pilgrims and ninety Wampanoag Indians feasted for three days. The Pilgrims were indeed thankful for friendship and a bountiful harvest. In the previous year, half of the Pilgrims had starved to death. A Patuxet Indian named Squanto came to their rescue helping them to survive in the New World. The first day of Thanksgiving actually took place in England a year before the Pilgrims arrived. In the United States, a number of Presidents took time on Thanksgiving to give Thanksgiving Proclamations. But the actual national holiday was not formally established until 1863. Abraham Lincoln set apart the last Thursday of November as a day of "Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens."

I think the principle of thanksgiving was established thousands of years before this. For example, the title of Psalm 100 is "A Psalm of Thanksgiving." Some versions say a Psalm of Praise. The Hebrew word is todah, which comes from yadah, which means to extend the arms in praise and thanksgiving. It is used thirty-two times. It is translated as thanksgiving eighteen times, as thanks three times, as thank offerings three times. So, seventy-five percent of the time it is associated with giving thanks. It is a Psalm of thanksgiving. We enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. For many years I have worked towards getting the church to properly come before the Lord, and this is through the gates of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving Day reminds me of something that we should be doing 365 days a year. It is to be a way of life to us.

(Ps 100:1-5) (A Psalm of Thanksgiving) "Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. {2} Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. {3} Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. {4} Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. {5} For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations."

In Psalm 50 God tells us that if He were hungry He would not tell us. He said the whole world is His and all it contains. The burnt offerings that the Jews gave were good, but in this Psalm God gives us His priorities. He said, "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the most High." Then, in verse twenty-three, He said, "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me." God wants us to honor Him by ordering our ways aright and by offering sacrifices of thanksgiving. We sometimes talk about the five love languages and we need to love people in a way that they feel loved. Karen's love language is service, and my serving her communicates love to her. God is telling us part of His love language. He loves thanksgivings.

(Ps 50:12-23) “If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all it contains. {13} Shall I eat the flesh of bulls Or drink the blood of male goats? {14} Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High...{23} "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.”

In Psalm 103, we are taught to bless the Lord and forget none of His benefits. What are some of those benefits that we should remember and give thanks about? God pardons all our iniquities. We should give thanks for His mercy and forgiveness of our trespasses. I mess up and miss the mark. I have messed up my whole life and I continue to miss the mark. I continually have to ask God for forgiveness. That also means that I should continually thank Him for His forgiveness. Psalm 103 also says that He has not dealt with us according to our sins. By the way, us is plural, so apparently I am not the only one that continually misses the mark. I am not the only one who should continually confess my sins and ask for forgiveness. I am not the only one that should continually give thanks that God has not dealt with us according to our sins. God has removed our transgressions as far as the east is from the west. Lord, we give you thanks for Your forgiveness and for removing our sins as far as from the east is from the west.

(Ps 103:1-12) “Bless the LORD, O my soul, And all that is within me, bless His holy name. {2} Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; {3} Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases...{10} He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities...{12} As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

Forgiveness is a big thing to God. He forgives us, but He also expects us to forgive others that sin or transgress against us. In the Lord’s Prayer, He taught us to pray, “And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.” God expects us to forgive others just as He forgives us. We are to forgive others; we are not to bear a grudge.

(Luke 11:2-4) “And He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. {3} Give us each day our daily bread. {4} And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’”

In Part 1 of this message, we looked at Esau and how he bore a grudge against Jacob for stealing His blessing. We saw that God had planned and intended for Jacob to receive the blessing all along. He had communicated that in a prophetic word to Rebekah when the two boys were struggling together in her womb. He said the older would serve the younger. Esau bore a grudge against Jacob and it set in motion a series of events. When someone bears a grudge rather than forgiving, it becomes a root of bitterness. We saw in Hebrews 12:15-16 that we are to see to it that no root of bitterness springs up which defiles many, and the example that is used in that text is Esau. A seed of unforgiveness in our heart turns into a root of bitterness. We saw in James that the tongue sets on fire the course of our life. Esau told others what he was planning to do, which was kill his brother after his father died. We have to deal with offenses and watch over our hearts carefully so that there is no bitterness in our hearts. Jesus said it is the things that come out of our hearts that defile us, not what goes into our mouths. So, bearing a grudge sets off a chain of events; I called it the Domino effect. When the first domino falls over, it hits the next one and that one hits the next one. The end result is many people get defiled.

As we continue the story today, Rebekah was told by others that Esau was planning to kill Jacob. So, she comes up with another plan. This time, it was not to get a blessing for her son; it was to protect her son. She tells him to go to her brother Laban's house for a while until Esau's anger subsided. Her plan included going to Isaac and telling him to send Jacob away to find a wife from her brother's house. So, Isaac listened to Rebekah and calls for Jacob, and he charged him to go and marry one of his relatives and then he blessed him.

Our text ends today with Esau's response. In the final part of the passage, Esau sees that Jacob has obeyed his parents and he decides to marry a relative on Abraham's side of the family. He marries Mahalath, one of Ishmael's daughters. All the events in our passage today come as the result of an offense and a grudge against that person.

1. Esau's Plan To Kill Jacob (Gen 27:41)
2. **Rebekah's Plan To Protect Jacob (Gen 27:42-46)**
3. **Isaac's Blessing And Charge To Jacob (Gen 28:1-5)**
4. **Esau's Plan To Redeem Himself (Gen 28:6-9)**

2. **Rebekah's Plan To Protect Jacob** (Gen 27:41-46)

(Gen 27:41-46) "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.' {42} 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. {43} Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, and arise, flee to Haran, to my brother Laban! {44} Stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury subsides, {45} 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?" {46} 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?"

We see a domino effect in this passage. First, Esau bears a grudge against Jacob. He said that he was going to kill his brother. He did not just say these words to himself, he either said it loud enough for others to hear, or he also told other people what he was going to do. First came the grudge, then came the words of his plan to murder his brother. The tongue acts as a rudder and directs the course of the ship. (James 3:3-6) The plans were now in motion. When his words were reported to Rebekah, she came up with a plan to protect Jacob.

Her plan was for Jacob to arise and flee to Haran, Rebekah's brother. She told him to stay there a few days until his brother's fury subsides. I mentioned a few weeks ago that many scholars think that Isaac was about 137 years old, and that he died at 180 years of age. I don't have any verses to back up my belief, but I think that Isaac was probably between 90 and 100 at the time. No matter what age he was at the time, Esau's plan was to kill Jacob after his father died, so his plan was long range, somewhere between 90 years and 43 years in the future. Jacob ends up staying 20 years with Laban, not just a few days. I believe that God worked out the time because Esau's grudge was not going to last a few days.

Rebekah's plan included two parts. The first part was to tell Jacob to arise and go to Laban. The second part of her plan was to tell 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?" She found a way for Jacob to be sent away with a blessing from Isaac, rather than just fleeing. She also communicated that Esau's wives were causing her much grief. When a husband hears that something is bothering his wife, he will fix it. We husbands like to fix things. Sometimes our wives just want us to listen, rather than to fix it. I have learned to ask my wife if she is wanting me to just listen or if she is telling me something so that I can fix it. Isaac decides that he is going to fix the problem.

I want to talk about the domino effect of grudges. A couple of weeks ago I spent some time helping us recognize the symptoms of bearing a grudge. We also looked at the process of how an offense becomes a grudge, and then a root of bitterness. I want to take just a minute to look at the results of an offense. Esau bore a grudge and then he purposed to murder his brother. Rebekah took preventative measures to protect her son, and it involved separation. Separation is often necessary when there is a root of bitterness. A bitter heart will emotionally abuse others. A bitter heart will physically abuse others. A bitter heart may even murder others. The fruit is not good. Many times, an abused person needs to separate from the bitter heart. Separation is a protective measure. I have seen women who had to separate from their abusive husbands. I have seen husbands who were so emotionally abused that they had to separate from their wives. God's plan is for people to forgive one another and remove the roots of bitterness, but it requires the cooperation of both parties. When someone is not willing to forgive and work through things, separation is often the end result. Sometimes, as is in our text today, separation is for the protection of others.

Sometimes, a bitter heart separates himself from the other party. When I managed a golf club in Orlando, I became friends with a man from Chicago named Tom. He and another friend, Ted, would come to Orlando every winter to play golf for a few months. Tom wanted to become a professional golfer, and he took lessons from me. Through those lessons we became friends. Karen and I practiced a lot of hospitality in those days. We invited a different family over every week after church. We invited Tom and Ted over for dinner one day. During our dinner conversations, I asked Ted if he was married. He replied yes, but then added that they don't speak to one another. In fact, he said they lived in separate areas of the house. He got angry with her one day and he separated himself from her. He cut off all physical, emotional, and verbal contact with her. They were Catholics and didn't divorce, but in reality, they were divorced. He removed his affection, his communication, his physical presence. All of this came about because he bore a grudge and it ended in emotional and physical separation. Separation, whether physical or emotional, is just one of the many domino effects from bearing a grudge.

### **3. Isaac's Blessing And Charge To Jacob (Gen 28:1-5)**

(Gen 28:1-5) "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. {2} 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. {3} May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. {4} 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." {5} Then Isaac sent Jacob away,

and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.”

Luke wrote in Acts 2:23 that God had a pre-determined plan from the beginning to send His son. That plan included a lineage going from Adam to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and all the way down to Joseph and Mary. It was God’s plan for the older brother to serve the younger brother. He told Rebekah this while the boys were in her womb. God knew all these things were going to happen. Paul gives us some insight on this when he wrote in Romans 8:28 that God causes all things to work together for good. God is going to turn this grudge into something good. He is going to give Jacob another blessing and a wife. God used Rebekah to help carry out His plan and to work this out for good in Jacob’s life.

(Rom 8:28) “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

So, Isaac bought into Rebekah’s plan and called Jacob to himself. Then he blessed him and charged him not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan, but to go to Paddan-aram and take one of the daughters of Laban, Rebekah’s brother. The Canaanites worshipped false gods and God did not want the sons of God to marry the daughters of men. We saw that earlier in the days of Noah. The sons of God, that is those who were of the lineage of Christ, were marrying the daughters of men, those who did not worship the true God. Because of this, God said that His spirit would not strive with man forever, and he put a limit on the lifespan of men to 120 years.

(Gen 6:1-4) “Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, {2} that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. {3} Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." {4} The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.”

The principle of marrying believers is still valid. In 1 Corinthians 9:5, Paul was defending his apostleship and asked a rhetorical question, “*Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?*” Paul had a right to take a wife, but only a believer. We are encouraged not to become unequally yoked with an unbeliever. So, Isaac charges Jacob not to take a wife from the pagan nations, but to take a wife from Rebekah’s relatives, who worshipped the true God.

Isaac then blessed Jacob. He asked God Almighty to bless him, make him fruitful and multiply him. If you ever want to know how to bless someone, these passages provide a great example of how to pray and bless people. My desire is to be fruitful. In John 15:8, Jesus said, “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.” So, I pray for fruitfulness in my life and in Karen’s life. We want to glorify God. Not only do we want to be fruitful, we want to have good fruit. There are some keys to being fruitful. In 2 Peter 1:5-11, Peter gives a number of different qualities that help us live fruitful lives. He said if these qualities are ours and are increasing, they render us neither useless nor unfruitful. Another way of saying this if we do these things, they will help us to be useful and fruitful. When I pray for fruitfulness, I also pray about these qualities because they help us to be fruitful.

(Gen 28:3) “May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.”

(2 Pet 1:5-8) “Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, {6} and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, {7} and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. {8} For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Isaac also prayed for Jacob to have the blessing of Abraham. The blessing of Abraham was to possess that particular land. It was a recognition that Jacob was the one that God had chosen to carry on the lineage and to fulfill the promises given to Abraham.

(Gen 28:4) “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 went to Paddan-aram to Laban, Rebekah’s brother. Little did Isaac or Rebekah know that it would be a long time before they would be with their son again. Jacob was going to spend the next twenty years serving Laban before returning.

(Gen 28:5) “Then Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.”

#### **4. Esau’s Plan To Redeem Himself (Gen 28:6-9)**

(Gen 28:6-9) “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,” {7} and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan-aram. {8} So Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac; {9} 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.”

Several years ago when President Trump was campaigning, it was reported by some that he never apologizes for anything; instead, he just tries to do better the next time. There have actually been a number of times the past couple of years where Trump did apologize for things he had done or said. I don’t know if Esau ever apologized either, but in this passage he just tries to do better. He had married two Canaanite women and it had brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah. It was obviously very much against their wishes for him to marry these foreign women. Now, two chapters later, and probably many years later, he saw that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram to get a wife, and that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father. Surely he had to have known this long before.

(Gen 26:34-35) “When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite; {35} and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.”

We do not see Esau apologizing or repenting. Instead, we see him trying to do better the next time. He now marries a third wife. He goes to Ishmael's family and marries Mahalath. He does marry a woman who is not a Canaanite, and a close relative, but it was not real repentance. I say it was not repentance because Hebrews 12:14-17 tells us to pursue peace with all men and to make sure that no root of bitterness springs up. Then, it says that there should not be any immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. Then, it says that when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears. Esau was sorry for the consequences of his actions, but he was not repentant. Tears are not the true sign or indication of repentance.

(Heb 12:14-17) "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. {15} See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; {16} that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. {17} For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears."

In 2 Corinthians 7, Paul writes about two kinds of sorrow, a worldly sorrow and a godly sorrow. Worldly sorrow is simply being sorry for getting caught, but not being sorry for the actual crime committed. This is the sorrow that produces no change in behavior and results in death. When I was young I loved to tease my sister. She would cry and I would get in trouble. I was sorry that I got in trouble, but did not have godly sorrow. I kept teasing her. There was not a change in heart, mind, attitude and behavior.

Godly sorrow is an attitude of sorrow for having committed a deed that is contrary to God's will. Godly sorrow is not sorrow about being caught; it is sorrow that you did something wrong. A godly sorrow produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation. It results in a change of behavior, to becoming more Christ-like.

When I was a prison chaplain, I went through some training by the Sheriff's department and by the Senior Chaplain, Doc Frady. Some of the training was about safety and awareness. We were not to be in a room with more than one inmate at a time. That really hindered me because I liked to meet with small groups, rather than one-on-one. We were not allowed to wear regular ties. We had to wear clip-on ties. We were supposed to wear only belts that fastened with Velcro. Then, we had spiritual guidelines. One of them was we were not supposed to ask them about why they were incarcerated. I never understood that one, and I found that one of the most important questions that I could ask a man was why he was in prison. I found if he was sorry that he got caught and there was a denial of what he had done, I would not have much success in helping that man. But, when a man confessed that he had done something wrong, and he was sorry that he had committed the crime, I saw great changes and growth in that inmate. All of this has to do with godly sorrow versus worldly sorrow. Godly sorrow produces a repentance without regret. Based on the passage in Hebrews 12, I believe that Esau had worldly sorrow about his birthright and other actions. Esau was a godless and immoral man who did not repent before God. He just tried to do better and marry another woman who was not a Canaanite.

(2 Cor 7:10) "For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death."

## Conclusion and Applications

In Part 1 and Part 2 of Esau Bears A Grudge, we looked at bearing a grudge. We looked at the symptoms of bearing a grudge. We looked at the progression. When we have unforgiveness in our heart, we begin to say things and plan things that are not righteous. We saw the fruit of bearing a grudge, which include separation and even murder. We also saw that God exhorts us to watch over our heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. God wants us to let all anger and bitterness be put away from us. The word was airo and we have to pull up the anchors that keep our ships from moving on to their destination. We have to see to it that we have no root of bitterness and if we have one, we need to pull the roots of bitterness up. We do that through forgiving others and asking others to forgive us. Hebrews 12 tells us to pursue peace with all men, and forgiveness is a big ingredient in that process.

This week as I prayed over the passage and the message, I felt like the Lord wanted to focus on the separation caused by bearing grudges. Some of you have been isolated and separated because of a root of bitterness. In some ways you identify with Jacob. You have not had a root of bitterness, but people around you had a root of bitterness and you are the one that had to go to Paddan-aram. You are the one that had to leave and you are suffering from the consequences of others. I want to share several quick words of encouragement to you this morning.

First, God was with Jacob in his separation from his family. God is with you. He is Jehovah Shammah. He is your nearness. He promises never to leave you or forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6, Hebrews 13:5) During this time, press in to God. Seek Him and His presence. Think of this time as a time to draw even closer to the Lord.

Second, know that God works all things together for your good. (Romans 8:28) He worked things out for good in Jacob's life. God used these circumstances to introduce his wife. God used these circumstances to bless and prosper him. God used these things to build character into Jacob. God will use your current circumstances for good in your life. Trust him.

Third, God is Jehovah Rapha, a God that heals us. God is wanting to bring healing and wholeness to your life. (1 Thessalonians 5:23) Allow God to cleanse and restore you in this time. Humble yourself before Him because He promises to exalt you in due time. Finally, if you would like prayer, Karen and I would be happy to pray over you.

**Introduction** (Ps 100:1-5, 50:12-23, 103:1-12, Luke 11:2-4)

**2. Rebekah's Plan To Protect Jacob** (Gen 27:41-46)

**3. Isaac's Blessing And Charge To Jacob** (Gen 28:1-5, Acts 2:23, Rom 8:28, Gen 6:1-4, 1 Cor 9:5, John 15:8, 2 Pet 1:5-11)

**4. Esau's Plan To Redeem Himself** (Gen 28:6-9, 26:34-35, Heb 12:14-17, 2 Cor 7:10)

**Conclusion and Applications** (Deut 31:6, Heb 13:5, Rom 8:28, 1 Thess 5:23)