

*Sermon Questions for Life Groups*  
*“Scandalous Grace” – Genesis 25:19-34*

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Sunday, May 10, 2015

*These questions are generated by several authors for Life Group discussions  
or family or personal devotions*

1. As God's blessing (grace) was passed from Abraham to Isaac, perhaps you too have had God's blessing passed on to you as well. Share this with members of your group.
2. What is the significance of informing us that Rebekah, like Sarah, was barren? How did Isaac respond to this? What did he do when God's promises seemed unlikely to be fulfilled? In what areas of your life are you tempted to doubt the likelihood of God fulfilling his promises?
3. How would the story have changed if Sarah and Rebekah had not had difficulty in childbearing?
4. Why would God upset the natural order in the births of Jacob and Esau? Why weren't they simply born in the opposite order?
5. The birth of Esau and Jacob sets the stage for all that will follow. The statement “the older will serve the younger” was contrary to the customs of that era. Where else in Genesis do we see this reversal? Why does God reverse the natural order and choose Jacob? Is it because of anything in Jacob? Why is this aspect of God's character good news for us? Consider what Paul says concerning this in Romans 9:10-12.
6. What evidences do we see of dysfunction and sinfulness in the parents (Isaac and Rebekah) and in the children (Jacob and Esau)?
7. Have you ever seen the grace of God advanced by the sin of others? What does this tell you about God? About grace?
8. Contrast Jacob and Esau as described in 25:27-34, in their habits, character and spiritual outlook. What lesson is drawn in Hebrews 12:14-17 from Esau's conduct in regard to his birthright?
9. Hebrews 12:16ff tells about Esau's "bitter root". Have you ever been tempted to allow the bitter root to affect your spiritual life?

10. In question 1 you talked about your spiritual birthright. How have you treated that birthright?
11. As you consider the concept of ‘spiritual birthright,’ review Hebrews 6:4-6. What could cause some to give up their spiritual birthright and what disciplines can/should be in the lives of young/new/all believers to preserve this birthright?
12. In reviewing how Jacob obtained the birthright from Esau, discuss how this act of scheming falls into line with God’s sense of ‘orderliness and holiness’ when providing His blessings and approval to individuals and to nations? Why do you think God allowed this channelling of blessing to occur in this manner?
13. Where in our culture do we still see the custom of birthright at work? What was the birthright that Esau despised? In what ways are Jacob and Esau wrong in the incident of the lentil stew? How might we despise our birthright?
14. What have you done that deserves God's grace to you? What does this teach you about God? About grace?
15. Pastor John mentioned Iain Duguid’s publication *Living in the Grip of Relentless Grace*. Read the following excerpt:

*“First, there was the same problem of a barren wife, threatening the fulfillment of God’s promise of numerous descendants (Gen. 25:21). Then, like his father before him, he was faced with famine. God’s promised land seemed unable to support him, and he had to decide whether to stay there or leave it for the perennially greener pastures of Egypt. In that situation of weakness, Isaac encountered the same temptation that his father had of passing off his wife as his sister in order to protect his life (Gen. 26:1– 11). Subsequently he was involved in quarreling between his herdsmen and those of an ally, Abimelech, over scarce resources, a conflict that closely mirrors the earlier conflict between the herdsmen of Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 26:12–35).*

*Isaac’s life is thus in a sense a rerun of the life of Abraham. Isaac’s life is not merely a compilation album of Abraham’s greatest hits, however. Rather, in Isaac’s replaying of Abraham’s experience we also see God’s faithfulness extended to a new generation. The promise to Abraham was valid for Isaac also.*

*That surely was an important lesson for the original audience of the Book of Genesis, the wilderness generation, who stood with Moses on the brink of the Promised Land. They had not personally experienced the exodus out of Egypt; they had to rely on their fathers’ testimony for that. Would the God who had done great things for their fathers also do great things for them, so that they might conquer the land? The answer was that just as Isaac could count on the God of Abraham, so also the God of Moses would continue to be with his people as they attempted to conquer the land under Joshua. That is an important lesson for us and for our children as well.*

*Like them, we too can rely on the God of Abraham and Isaac, the God of Moses and Joshua, to fulfill faithfully his promises to us in our day and situation. God does not change; his faithfulness endures forever.”*

Share with each other how you are trying to pass along the promises and faithfulness of God to the next generation? What sort of things are you allowing your children to see on your own journey of faith?