

It's Only Words
Genesis 27:1-40
7-27-2025

It's only words! But oh, what amusement they can provide
Take for example these actual statements from the athletic world.

Philadelphia Phillies manager Danny Ozark once said, half this game is ninety percent mental.

When he spoke of the training regime of heavyweight boxer Andrew Golata, trainer Lou Duva said, He's a guy who gets up at 6 AM every morning regardless of what time it is.

When asked about his teams 7-27 record in 1992, the Orlando Magic general manager, Pat Williams said: we cant win at home. We cant win on the road. As general manager, I just cant figure out where else to play.

In regard to one of their former players, Utah Jazz president Frank Laden said, I told him son, what is it with you? Is it ignorance or apathy. The player said, coach, I don't know and I don't care.

When he was at the University of Kentucky, forward William Bennet said, I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body.

A senior player on the University of Pittsburg basketball team was recorded saying, I'm going to graduate on time no matter how long it takes.

When Chuck Nevitt was at North Carolina State, his coach wanted to know why he was so stressed out at practice. He said my sister is expecting a baby, and I don't know if I'm going to be an aunt or an uncle.

New Orleans Saints running back George Rogers once said, I want to rush for 1000 or 1500 yards this season, whichever comes first.

Bill Peterson, a Florida State football coach was quoted during practice telling his players, You guys line up alphabetically by height. And you guys pair up in groups of three, then line up in a circle.

Like I said, they may only be words but they can be a lot of fun, and if we are not careful, they can also get us into a lot of trouble.

Most do not really pay enough attention to the things we say and the affect our words have on others, how we can tear down rather than build up, curse rather than bless with them

We may tell our children sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me, yet we know this is not true

Words can hurt, they can wound us deeply and even ruin people's lives which is why there are laws about slander and libel and yelling fire in a crowded building.

But words can also be a tremendous source of blessing and strength, hope and encouragement, building up and affirmation.

They have the power to bless or to curse, to build up or tear down

It's just a matter of how we use them.

Words do matter which is something we find in the passage I want to look at this morning, found in

Genesis 27

It is a long passage but I want to read the entire story.

"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. Isaac said, 'I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death. Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. 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.' 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, '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.' 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. Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.' Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, 'But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin. 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.' His mother said to him, 'My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me.' 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. 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. She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. He went to his father and said, 'My father.' 'Yes, my son,' he answered. 'Who is it?' Jacob said to his father, 'I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.' Isaac asked his son, 'How did you find it so quickly, my son?' 'The LORD your God gave me success,' he replied. 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.' 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.' He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him. 'Are you really my son Esau?' he asked. 'I am,' he replied. Then he said, 'My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing.' Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, 'Come here, my son, and kiss me.' So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, 'Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed. May God give you heaven's dew and earth's richness— an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed.' After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, 'My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.' His father Isaac asked him, 'Who are you?' 'I am your son,' he answered, 'your

firstborn, Esau.” Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!” When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me—me too, my father!” But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.” Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me: He took my birthright, and now he’s taken my blessing!” Then he asked, “Haven’t you reserved any blessing for me?” Isaac answered Esau, “I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?” Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!” Then Esau wept aloud. His father Isaac answered him, “Your dwelling will be away from the earth’s richness, away from the dew of heaven above. You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck.”” (Genesis 27:1–40)

The ancient world understood how powerful words can be, to either bless or to curse
Receiving your fathers blessing was considered by many to be at least as valuable as any possessions he may pass on to his child

Oftentimes their blessing was even considered the most important thing a parent could pass on to their child because it represented their greatest wish and hope for their child

and in the case of Isaacs blessing, it was tied directly to passing on the work and promises of God, affirming the one through whom those promises would be fulfilled

- Rebekah cared enough about Isaac’s blessing that she convinced Jacob, her favorite son, to lie and deceive her husband in order to steal it.
- Jacob cared enough to risk his father’s wrath and his curses, as well as his own brothers anger to obtain it.
- And :41 says that Esau cared enough to plan to murder his brother over it.

When he realized what his brother had done, :34 says Esau cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry: bless me—bless me too, my father!

And he wept aloud

All because of some words that were spoken

Words I might add that were based on Jacobs lies and deceit.

That didn’t matter because once they were spoken Isaac couldn’t get them back and once spoken, we cant get our words back either.

That should be quite a warning to us to watch what we say and repeat.

Our society is inundated by half truth and conspiracies and lies stated as if they are fact.

living in our echo chambers, paying attention only to sources we know will tell us what we want to hear we can be taken in by our biases, whether it’s true or not

Like Isaac, we can be easily deceived and merely pass on what we have heard or read as if it were fact

It doesn’t matter if we agree with them or not. As Jesus said in Luke 6:27-28

“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” (Luke 6:27–28)

Words matter!

and to pass on falsehood regardless of our source is still lying and gossip.

James 3:8-10 calls the tongue a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we can praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in Gods likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. And this should not be.

Of course, the blessing and curses in Isaacs home went on long before this event.

In chapter 25 it says Isaac loved Esau but Rebekah loved Jacob.

They played favorites.

How often do parents unintentionally bless one child while at the same time cursing another through comparing one with the other or saying things like why cant you be more like your sister, or your brother wouldn't act like that.

We may sometimes think we are encouraging them to try harder and do better, but in actuality rather than a blessing it is a curse they will have to live with the rest of their lives

all because of our careless words

the one on the outs never feels good enough or able to live up to the accomplishments of the other.

Again, James warned, if anyone considers themselves religious and yet does not keep a tight reign on their tongue, they deceive themselves and their religion is worthless.

In our fractious and highly divided world, social media is filled with voices spewing whatever grievance or conspiracy they have, essentially tearing down and cursing others rather than blessing and building them up.

how much better off we'd be if instead of tearing each other down, Christ followers especially need to heed Pauls' words to the Ephesians to bless them when he instructed, "do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their need."

As Gods promise so states so clearly, God blesses us with the intent that the we in turn will bless the world around us

And for this to happen, our words matter!

Athletes aren't the only ones who don't always pay attention to the words they use.

Celebrities' verbal blunders can also provide a great amount of amusement.

Like when singer Mariah Carey said, Whenever I watch TV and see all those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean, I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff.

Or when Brook Shields was being interviewed to become the spokesperson for a federal anti-smoking campaign, she said, Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life.

And several years ago, the Beauty contestant from Alabama in the Miss USA contest was asked, If you could live forever, would you and why? To which she answered, I would not live forever, because we should not live forever, because if we were supposed to live forever, then we would live forever, but we cannot live forever, which is why I would not live forever.

Its only words, but they sure can be fun and if we are not careful, they can get us into trouble as well.

When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak he could no longer see, he called for his son Esau because he knew words matter and was concerned with the need to pass on his blessing to his favored child.

Isaac was quite possibly dealing with some illness here and thought he could die at any time. Yet he was still alive 20 years later when Jacob returned with all his wives and children from the years he had been staying with his uncle Laban in order to avoid Esau's wrath

According to some scholars, it is possible he lived for at least another 12 years after that, long enough to witness the effect of the curse of his favoritism being passed on to his son Jacob, who then passed on that curse to his grandsons

For like his father and mother, Jacob too played favorites with his children.

Joseph was his favored child, 37:3 states Jacob loved him more than any of his other sons and showered special gifts on him

and like the anger brought on by the curse of such favoritism aroused in their uncle Esau, Joseph's brothers despised Joseph because of it.

Like their uncle, they too discussed killing their brother but instead decided to sell him into slavery.

In verse 33 it says when Isaac realized what had happened, that Jacob had deceived him in order to steal his blessing, he trembled violently and even though he was deceived, he **said I blessed him and indeed he will be blessed**

Words matter and once spoken, they can never be taken back

We can either bless others or curse them

blessing them through words of encouragement and support, or cursing through comparisons and complaints?

blessing through lifting up and praising them or cursing through tearing them down with faultfinding and complaining?

We can be amused by the verbal foibles of athletes and celebrities, but perhaps because of just how much they talk about so many things, politicians always seem to be sticking their foot in their mouths

like the congressional candidate from Texas who said of his opponent, that lowdown scoundrel deserves to be kicked to death by a jackass and I am just the one to do it.

Or the one in South Carolina who oversaw sending out notices stating, Your food stamps will be stopped on March 1 because we received notice that you have passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances

Or the one who said I haven't committed a crime. What I did was to fail to comply with the law.

Or the one who said it isn't air pollution that is harming the environment. It's all the impurities in our air and water that are doing it.

Another stated I have opinions of my own strong opinions—but I don't always agree with them.

And lastly, from the state of Michigan one said, I don't see anything wrong with saving human life. That would be good politics even for us.

Another said some of our friends wanted it in the bill. Some of our friends wanted it out of the bill. And Jerry and I are going to stick with our friends.

And finally, I don't think people appreciate Just how difficult it is to be a pawn of labor.

Of course, it's all just words, right?

But words do carry power and we need to give more thought to just what words we use and the things we say to and about others

By his mighty word God created the heavens and the earth

In the beginning was the word and that word was Jesus

And as James said out of the same mouth comes both praising and cursing but this should not be.

The promise was made that first through Abraham, then his son and descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. That blessing comes through Jesus

And now Gods people, the church, are called to spread that blessing, not just through our actions of love and compassion and mercy, but through our words and our witness

In Restoring Your Spiritual Passion, Gordon MacDonald writes of the importance of learning to be a blessing by giving an example from the life of Sir William Osler, cofounder of the John Hopkins Hospital and one he refers to as one of the most highly esteemed doctors in modern medical history.

One day he entered the pediatric ward of a London hospital and noted with delight the children who were playing at the end of the room. As he looked around, he saw one small girl all by herself on her bed with her doll in her arms. He asked the head nurse about her and discovered that she has been ostracized by all the other children. Her mother was dead and her father had visited her only once when he brought her that doll. Apart from that one visit, no one had ever come to see her again. From this, the other children had apparently concluded that she was unimportant and therefore treated her with disdain.

Sir William immediately walked over to the girl and in a voice loud enough for all the other children to hear, asked her if he could sit down. I can't stay for long on this visit, he said, But I have wanted to see you so badly. Those watching said that the girl's eyes became electric with joy. For several minutes he just sat there talking with her now in quiet tones, almost like they were sharing secrets. He asked about her doll's health and appeared to listen to the doll's heart through his stethoscope. Then as he rose to leave, he raised his voice again so that all the other children could hear and said, you won't forget our secret will you? And remember, don't tell anyone. As he left the room he turned to look as this once lonely girl suddenly became the center of attention of all the other children

That what being a blessing can look like
Seeking ways to build up, to encourage and strengthen not to criticize and tear down
And often it is done simply through our words

They may only be words, but they can change a life

Of course, the greatest blessing of all comes through Jesus Christ, the word become flesh who dwelt among us
The word of God who gave his life as an atonement for our sin
And one of the greatest blessings we can share, is to share that word of life he died to make a reality

There is an old Jewish story of a father and son who were out in the field when one of the father's enemies confronted them and started shouting curses at him. the father immediately threw his son to the ground and fell on top to cover him so the curses wouldn't touch him

In a sense that is what Jesus has done for us
He has covered us with his blood taking the curse of sin upon himself
Inviting us to share his blessings instead

Have you accepted them by receiving Jesus into your heart and life?