

Family Feud Genesis 32-33

Introduction

- The Family Feud Game Show
 - Two families square off to see who can guess the closes to public surveys concerning random questions
 - Example: “Bad jobs for someone who is accident-prone”¹
 - Survey says...
 - Driver
 - Construction
 - Police Officer
 - Food Service
 - Glass Maker
 - Window Washer
 - Surgeon
 - I always liked this game because it was easier than *Jeopardy!*
- This game is fun to interact with and funny to watch, but it’s not a fun game when you experience a true *Family Feud*.
- Sermon Series: “All In: The Family of God”
 - Developing the foundation of our family’s story around God’s story
 - What do you do when part of your family story includes conflict???
 - No matter how perfect a family portrait may seem, there is almost always conflict behind the smiles.
 - How we handle the conflict that tells the true story of our family.
 - The story of Jacob and Esau is a great example of how family feud can either tear a family apart or bring them together.
- There are certain stories in the Bible that just don’t make sense.
 - Why would God allow this to happen?
 - What is the point of this feud?
 - Who is right and who is wrong?
- These maybe similar questions that you ask when you consider your family feud.
 - It’s easy to point out the faults in others and then stand back and wonder “Why is there no reconciliation?”
 - Purpose of today’s message
 - There’s a good chance that this sermon is not going to resolve all your family feuds
 - Hopefully it encourages you to take some steps toward reconciliation.
 - Provide you with peace in the midst of what you may not be able to reconcile.

Stay Focused on What is Most Important

¹ www.hobbylark.com “Family Feud Quiz: Free Questions (and Answers). Author: Sam Mendoran. Updated June 2, 2016. Accessed September 19, 2019.

- Basic issue
 - Two twins: Esau and Jacob
 - Esau is older than Jacob by seconds
 - In the culture of Esau and Jacob, the older brother receives the inherited blessing from the father
 - This inherited blessing wasn't just any blessing- it was a blessing that had been first given to their grandfather, Abraham from God.
 - The blessing was, "I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing (Genesis 12:2, ESV)."
 - Oh and by the way, this blessing happens to be the most important promise throughout the entire Bible, because it finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ who will eventually save the world!
 - The main conflict in the story is that Esau (the older brother) sells his birthright to Jacob (the younger brother) and when Jacob receives the inherited blessing, Esau wants to kill his younger brother. Hence, a family feud!
- There's a lot more to this story, which we will get to, but for now just consider the significance of the promise that God intends to be passed from one generation to the next.
 - This is the most important part of the story.
 - How will God fulfill his promise?
 - I'm going to repeat the following statement throughout this sermon
 - This is not a story about who is right and who is wrong.
 - It's not a story about who is better or more deserving.
 - It's a story about God's sovereignty despite the sin of humanity.
 - Remember from last week: God always gets the last word!
 - What does that have to do with your family feud?
 - We often get caught up in who is right and who is wrong
 - *Sexual Abuse, Physical Abuse, and Verbal Abuse are exceptions!!! There is no reason under any circumstances that these acts are permissible!!!*
 - We often allow our pride to get into the middle of conflict
 - When what really needs to be at the center is God's sovereign promise despite our sin and the sin of anyone else involved in the conflict.
 - When God's promises become the most important focus in our conflict, it provides the opportunity to look beyond ourselves and our own desires to see God's will.
 - If we respond to God's promises in faith, there's a good chance that reconciliation can take place within our family. But, even if reconciliation doesn't occur, God can still provide you peace despite the conflict.
 - There are some family feuds that you can't solve or resolve. You can do your best to forgive. You can do your best to offer reconciliation, however you aren't responsible for how others respond.
 - BUT if you can keep God's promises at the center of everything, you can find peace in God's sovereignty.
- **Genesis 25:21-28**

- Isaac prayed
 - This is the key to the whole story
 - Isaac understood that the promise of God ran through his family.
 - Just like his father Abraham, without a son, it would be difficult to pass on the blessing.
- Twins and the conflict can be felt long before they are born
 - Rebekah asks why?
 - God's response: the older will serve the younger
 - This approach to service is thematic throughout the Bible
 - David and Goliath
 - Israel, the smallest nation
 - Jesus serves despite being God
 - There is a greater purpose here, which is why faith in God's promise has to be our focus!
- Favoritism
 - Isaac loved Esau
 - Just like his father
 - Just trying to fulfill God's will with promise
 - Rebekah loved Jacob
 - Knew something Isaac did not
 - Doesn't appear to share this information with Isaac
 - And you thought the conflict in your family was complicated!
 - This is why faith in God's promise has to be our focus!

What are you doing with God's promise?

- **Genesis 25:29-34**
 - Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for food
 - Esau doesn't seem to appreciate the covenant promise that is inherited from God by birthright.
 - Anytime that we sell God's promise for something else, it is going to create conflict in our life and in our relationships!
 - If we need to stay focused on God's promises especially through conflict, then what are you doing with God's promises?
 - In part, this goes back to what we have talked all along with this series—telling the story of God to your family. It's not just what you believe but how you live it.
- **Genesis 27:5-10**
 - Rebekah knows God's will, but she seems afraid as if she has to take it upon herself to ensure that it is fulfilled.
 - Rebekah's answer: Deception
 - Maybe Rebekah was justified in her approach, but it doesn't necessarily make it right.
- I thought you said this was not a story about who was right or wrong or who is better!?!
 - When we consider our family feuds, we need to consider what we bring to the feud.

- Everyone was accountable to the promise of God. What they did with the promise mattered!
 - Esau sold it
 - Rebekah was deceptive
- It's like watching a train wreck about to happen
 - We need to pump the breaks
 - Consider if what we are doing with God's promise
 - If we are not careful we may add to the conflict!

If you don't face the conflict it will usually come after you.

- The fall out of the conflict
 - Esau hates Jacob to the point that he wants to kill him
 - Rebekah sends Jacob away for fear that Esau will kill him
 - In other words, let's not deal with the conflict but hope it will go away if we avoid it!
- Example from Ohio Leadership Academy
 - Faculty member is a consultant for conflict management
 - Teaches class on how to handle and resolve conflict
 - Told a story from some graduates who she would not pass because they would do what she required for her course
 - Approach someone that you have a conflict with
 - Use the principles learned in the class
 - Record the results
 - Students not wanting to face conflict
 - Seems crazy that they would allow this to stop them from graduating especially considering all the work they had put in up to this point
 - Makes you wonder what we do with the truth that we learn; do we just soak it in? Or do we do something with it?
 - Remember: What are you doing with God's promise?
 - This is where the rubber meets the road
 - Personal experience
 - Conflict used to make me physically shake
 - Took a course of peacemaking and learned the skills
 - Never get comfortable with conflict, but I recognize what I need to do when it surfaces.
 - Confronted many of you with issues whether they be a concern you have or a conflict that has been created.
 - I don't consider myself an expert or better than anyone else, but if you don't face conflict there's a good chance it will come after you.
 - That's not only true within our families but our church family as well.
- Jacob and Esau don't speak for 20 years!
 - Esau marries a Hittite woman who is not part of the family line which creates heartache for both Rebekah and Isaac.
 - Jacob goes to his uncles house and marries within the family

- Genesis 31:3 (ESV), “Then the Lord said to Jacob, ‘Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred and I will be with you.’”
 - It is God who sends Jacob back to deal with his family
 - It’s time to face the conflict
- Genesis 32:6-8
 - Remember from last week: We don’t really know what kind of faith we have until it is tested.
 - Here’s where recalling/passing down God’s story becomes so important
 - Jacob has the blessing of God
 - God has instructed Jacob to return to his family
 - Esau has the greater army
 - What will Jacob do?
- Dealing with conflict requires faith.
 - Faith can be a double-edged sword
 - God’s promise
 - No idea how God will fulfill it
 - This is what Jacob is faced with
 - Jacob prays
 - Recalls God’s promise
 - Admits his weakness
 - God responds through a wrestling match
 - Revealing of presence
 - Determination of Jacob
 - Blessing of God
- If you don’t deal with conflict there’s a good chance that it will follow you.

Allow God’s Sovereignty to Work in Your Conflict

- Genesis 33:1-4
 - It’s as if nothing ever happened between these two brothers
 - Esau is just happy that he has been reunited with Jacob
 - Jacob is in shock that nothing is required to receive his brother’s acceptance
 - Both brothers have been blessed according to God’s promises and somehow that seems to be enough
- Suggested: The unfortunate part about this encounter is that Jacob never asks for the forgiveness of his brother. Instead he thinks he has to win his brother over with a bribe.
 - Possibly a learned habit acquired from his mother
 - Possibly an insecurity despite having the promise of God
 - It possibly Reveals a weakness in Jacob, and yet God’s sovereignty is still at work in this conflict
 - Allow God’s Sovereignty to work in your conflict
- If we still have questions as to why God allowed all of this to happen
 - It’s fair, because to some degree it seems unnecessary or unlike God

- However there are a lot of things in life that don't make sense, but in order to reconcile them in our heart or even in our relationships-we have to allow God's sovereignty to work in our conflict.
- The Apostle Paul provides some insight in Romans 9-reinforces faith in God's sovereignty as the dominant force over the way things seem they should work.
- It is not long before this crazy cycle of conflict resumes as Jacob seems to pass it on to his son, Joseph—and yet God's sovereignty is still visible there despite the brokenness of humanity.

Conclusion

- The purpose of this sermon was not necessarily to solve your family feud
 - Encourage you to take steps to confront the conflict
 - God is a God of reconciliation. He gave his life in order to reconcile the world. Yet God also understands that reconciliation is a two way street and that sometimes even after you have done everything you can do, your efforts may still be rejected.
 - Stay focused on God's promises
 - This story is not about who is right and who is wrong. It's not about who is better. There was plenty of blame to go around. This story is about God's sovereignty despite the sin of humanity.
 - Confront the conflict in your life, if you don't there's a good chance it will continue to be an obstacle.
 - Allow God's sovereignty to work within your conflict.
 - Provide peace whether your conflict is resolved or if you have done everything within your control and conflict still remains.