

Parish of Ferndown
Study sheet for week commencing 3rd November 2008
The Life of Jacob (1) “Parental Foundations”
Gen 24:56-67, 25:19-34

If you missed the sermon, take 5-10 minutes to familiarise yourself with the texts above, which give a background to the choice of wife for Isaac, his grief after his mother's death, the birth of his children (Esau and Jacob), and the way the two boys related to each other and their parents.

BIBLE APPLICATION

Let us remember that as we delve into the story of Jacob, we are also focussed on Jesus, and our own spiritual journey. “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...” (Heb 12:2)
Some of the huge themes and questions to un-pack from this story are:-

FAITH & TRUST

- What evidence is there that Rebekah was a woman who trusted God? (24:57-58)

GRIEF AND LOVE

- Isaac was still grieving for his mother when he married Rebekah. If you have lost someone you loved, what impact did it have? (or does it have?)
- What evidence is there that Isaac had not fully left behind his mother's love and fully cleaved to Rebekah? (24:67)
- What complications arise when people do not put their husband or wife before their own parents or wider family ties? Or when they compare the love of a spouse with that of a doting parent?

RAISING CHILDREN

- Even in the womb Jacob and Esau were jostling for supremacy. What happens in families where one child tries to control or dominate the other?
- Jacob and Esau were very different physically and in temperament. When Isaac and Rebekah favoured one child each, why was that dangerous and wrong, both for their children, and for their marriage? Have we experience of any of these issues?

SIN AND GRACE

- What were some of Esau and Jacob's flaws? Did that stop God using them?
- If God can use human beings that are flawed, why is that good news?
- If we know we are flawed, should we fatalistically say “that's just how I am” or should we seek to be changed by God? How can we change?

Prayer Time – Huge issues arise from this story. In a time of sharing and prayer, offer to God one area of your life that is flawed (or where you hurt from the past), and ask God to reassure you of his love, and transforming power. Please read Romans 8:31-39 in the prayer time.