

"The Walk of Faith"

Part 14

11:1-40

Introduction: Tonight in our study of Hebrews we have come to a very interesting verse that begs for our full, undivided attention.

Notice Hebrews 11:20

The writer has been pointing back to those of the Old Testament who walked by faith and was examples for others to follow. He has pointed to Abel, Enoch, and Noah all who were from the pre-flood era. Then the writer pointed to Abraham and then Sarah who were from the age of the Patriarchs. Tonight in our study the writer stays with the Patriarchs and now he lifts up Isaac as an example of walking by faith. But if you know anything about the blessing of Isaac upon Jacob and Esau you know that there seemed to be no faith involved at all. So based upon what the writer of Hebrews says concerning the faith of Isaac and how things appear in *Genesis 27* this entire account calls for our earnest study to understand what really happened.

I. **The Examples of Faith**

Part 11

A. **The Faith of Isaac**

The majority of Isaac's life is recorded for us in *Genesis 26-27*. He was a man whose life began very brightly but it ended in the shadows. Isaac is a man who never reached his full potential. He is much like so many other believers who get saved and begin like flaming torch but they finish like a smoldering coal.

Notice Genesis 27:1

Here we see that Isaac was old and "his eyes were dim". We know that this is speaking of his physical sight and we shall see this in the text that is before us when he will struggle to distinguish between his 2 sons, Jacob and Esau. But there is far more here which the Holy Spirit desires for us to see besides his physical sight. Let us first of all contrast Isaac with Moses when they were the same age.

Deuteronomy 34:7

⁷ And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

This is an interesting statement. When Moses died his eye sight was great and his physical strength was not diminished at all. At 120 years of age Moses would have been able to work alongside the younger men of his day and ours. Now there is more here also which the Holy Spirit desires for us to see.

In both Isaac and in Moses there is a spiritual meaning behind each of these statements along with a description of their physical condition.

In Isaac we see a man whose spiritual discernment was blunted and in Moses we see a man whose spiritual discernment was sharp. But the question is < "What was the difference in the 2 men?" They are both saved men but there was something within their lives which contributed to the dimness of Isaac's spiritual sight and the sharpness of Moses spiritual sight. Let me show you the difference.

1. Moses

Moses had made a decision before God ever called him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Hebrews 11:24-27

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Moses made a choice that he would not live for the riches and the pleasures of this world. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. He desired the spiritual riches over the earthly riches. **He disciplined himself to deny the desires of the flesh and he therefore turned his back on the pleasures of sin and he forsook Egypt.** We need to also understand that Egypt had much to offer to Moses. He is believed to have been groomed by Pharaoh to be the next Pharaoh. His life would have been very comfortable. He would have had the wealth of the world at his fingertips. He would have

been surrounded by entertainment and worldly pleasures. But instead he chose to forsake all of the pleasures of sin and he enlisted in God's army. He was willing to deny the lusts of the flesh and this was the key.

2. Isaac

Isaac was the opposite of Moses. Let us look at the birth of Jacob and Esau.

Genesis 25:21-23

²¹ *And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

²² *And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.*

²³ *And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*

Rebekah was pregnant with twins and they struggled within her. Now we have talked about this before but I need to remind you that these 2 babies are a picture of the 2 natures within the believer. Esau is a picture of the sin nature and Jacob is a picture of the Divine nature. With that said let me remind you that Isaac favored Esau over Jacob.

Genesis 25:28a

²⁸ *And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison:*

Now let us pull all of this together and see the picture. In Isaac we see the picture of the believer who has never disciplined themselves to deny the appetites of the flesh. In Isaac we see the spiritual state of the believer who does not abstain from the fleshly lusts which war against the soul. The end result is that the believer's discernment is blunted. With the case of Isaac "HIS EYES WERE DIM".

Notice the words of Pink:

"Discernment is a by-product, the fruit and result of the denying of self, and following Christ."

Pink continues his thought by quoting John 8:12.

John 8:12

¹² Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Moses was a man who denied the lusts of the flesh and he had sharp spiritual discernment until the day he died. Isaac is the picture of a man who favors the sin nature and has not mastered the desires of the flesh and so in him we see that for this believer the discernment is blunted and he makes poor decisions. Let me show you again the words of Pink:

"He who yields to the lusts of the flesh injures his spiritual instincts, and opens wide the door for the Devil to impose upon him and deceive him with his lies!!"

Let us now get back to Genesis 27.

Notice Genesis 27:1-4

Isaac desired to give the blessing to Esau which was completely contrary to the will of God. Now we need to understand that there were 3 elements to the patriarchal blessing.

1. The right to the family progenitorship. This meant that the one who received the blessing would carry on the line of the Messiah. It would be through the one who received the blessing that Jesus Christ would be born.
2. The right to the position of priest within the family. He would be the spiritual leader that would represent the family to God.
3. He received the right to a double portion of the family property.

Now this blessing was never intended for Esau for he despised that which was spiritual. This was announced before he was born.

Genesis 25:21-23

²¹ And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

²² And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

²³ And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and **the elder shall serve the younger.**

Esau was the ELDER and here we see that the Esau was to be in submission to Jacob. This meant that Jacob would receive the patriarchal blessing. Now the question is, "Did Isaac know this?" I believe he did know this to a certain extent. Let us remember that he is a man who favored the "OLD NATURE". Believers who have not mastered the old nature and who give into the lusts of the flesh are not "deep" believers. Therefore they may have head knowledge of spiritual Truth but they do not prayerfully search into the depths of the Truth. I believe this was exactly what happened in the life of Isaac. He knew what God had reveal to Rebekah before his sons were born but he did not prayerfully consider the meaning behind the announcement and so he opened himself up to be influenced by Satan who desired to stop the line of the Messiah. He should have known that Esau was not worthy of the blessing for he would have known that he was a profane man.

Hebrews 12:16

¹⁶ *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

Isaac would have known this but a carnal believer is not someone who will take a firm stand against his family so he tried his best to give the blessing to Esau. But Rebekah would not allow it to happen.

Notice Genesis 27:5-8

We do not have time to examine the entire passage but we do know that Rebekah dressed Jacob to appear as his brother and Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac and Isaac gave the blessing to Jacob and not Esau. But after the blessing was given to Jacob, Esau returned.

Notice Genesis 27:30-40

Both Jacob and Esau were blessed that day and this is what the writer of Hebrews is pointing to.

Hebrews 11:20

²⁰ *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

Now I want to raise another question, "How can this statement be a positive influence for the Hebrew believers whom the letter was written to considering all that had happened?"

The focus here is on the FAITH of Isaac. The focus is NOT on what Isaac did and how he attempted to give the blessing to Esau. Regardless of how this all unfolded Isaac still

believed in the promises which God had made to Abraham his father and to him and he blessed his sons concerning things to come. Here are the words God spoke to Isaac.

Genesis 26:2-6

² *And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:*

³ *Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father:*

⁴ *And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed:*

⁵ *Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.*

⁶ *And Isaac dwelt in Gerar:*

Conclusion:

Now let me try to help us to see how great the FAITH of Isaac really was.

At the time he pronounced the blessing on his sons he did not own one acre of land in Canaan. All he had was the burial ground his father had purchased. But there is even more that shows the depth of his faith. At the time he pronounced the blessings there was a famine in Canaan and he was in Gerar! There was NO VISABLE EVIDENCE that God's promises were going to be fulfilled. He was living by FAITH and NOT sight.

This was the message to the Hebrews. As they faced the persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ they could see no evidence of the promises of God being fulfilled. But they were not to rest in what they could or could not see but they were to rest in Jesus and the promises of God. So are we!