



Isaac Blessing Jacob by Govert Flinck

**Foundations: Jacob I--BEING BLESSED
Genesis 27:25-34 (9/10/17)**

We have funerals to remember and express gratitude for people's lives, faith, love, and service to their families and church. We offer our prayerful support to families as they deal with their loss. We are also reminded that one day it will be us being remembered.

Often the Bible tells us what we should do. It also shares true stories of people (who ought to know better) in order to demonstrate for us what NOT to do!

Genesis 27:25-34

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. 26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me." 27 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.

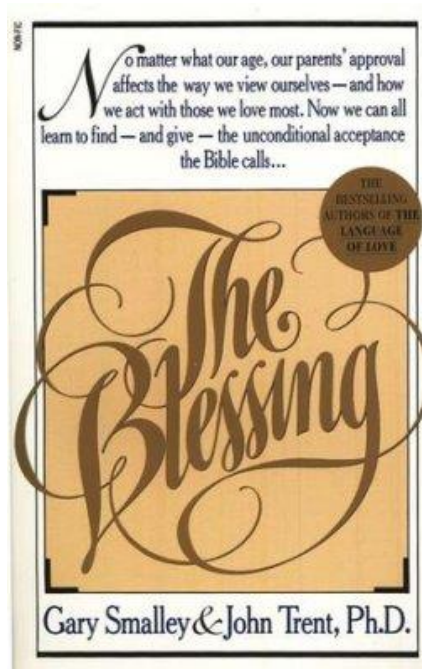
28 May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness—an abundance of grain and new wine. **29** May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed."

30 After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. **31** He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, "My father, sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing." **32** His father Isaac asked him, "Who are you?" "I am your son," he answered, "your firstborn, Esau."

33 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!" **34** 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!"

The importance of the blessing was enormous. The leadership of the family was conveyed to the son who received the father's blessing, along with a double portion of the inheritance.

Dr. Gary Smalley wrote a book entitled, *The Blessing* (Image and quote)



"The blessing contains four ingredients that ought to be present in every home today. And when these four ingredients are present, and practiced consistently, then our children grow up solid, secure, and confident of themselves, able to go out into the world and function normally."

I. BLESSING OTHERS THROUGH A MEANINGFUL TOUCH.

Blessings are bestowed by touching--the laying on of hands, a kiss, an embrace--something that physically conveys affection. People brought children to Jesus so that He could touch them and bless them.

II. BLESSING OTHERS WITH COMPLIMENTS (PRAISE)

There should always be room for advice and discipline and even constructive criticism; but it's even more important to communicate affirmation: "You matter to me. I'm glad you're part of my life."

III. BLESSING OTHERS BY BUILDING THEIR SELF-ESTEEM

As parents, we should help our children develop positive self-images. The greatest tool we have for doing this is to teach our children: "You are loved and valued—not only by me—but also by your Heavenly Father." As followers of Jesus, this is the message we seek to convey to all people.

IV. BLESSING OTHERS BY SEEING THEIR POTENTIAL

Isaac wants his son to know that his future can be bright—which every parent should want to convey to their child.

As children grow, we help them discover what they do well. We try to help them find their interests and aptitudes--what they're best equipped to do in life.

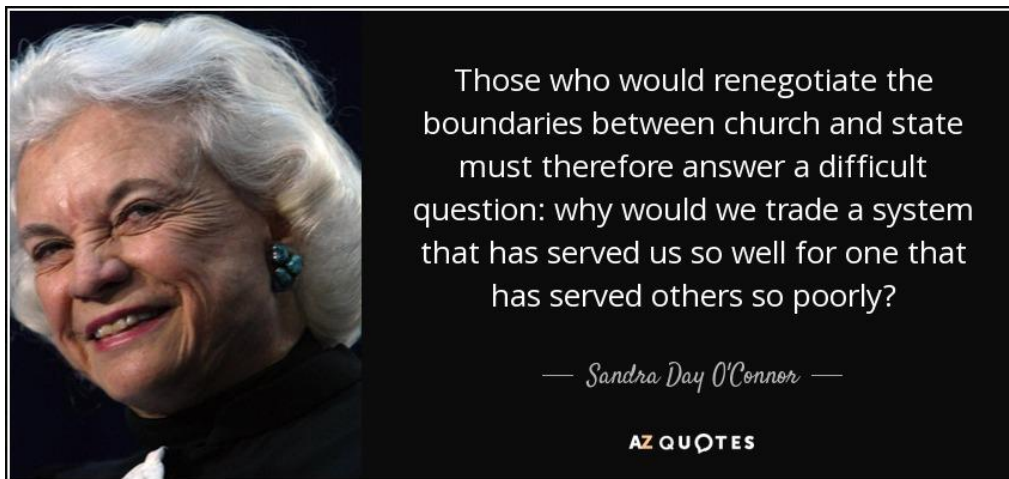
the little girl named Sandra (IMAGE)



Her fondest memories are of the times (IMAGE)



Today, we remember this woman as Sandra Day O'Connor (IMAGE)



As parents, we help our children see themselves as they are and get them prepared for the future God has in mind for them.

All of us have opportunities to be a blessing to others—
Let's make this our prayer: Lord, make me a blessing!



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Genesis 27:25-34 (9/10/17)

Today is September 10, 2017. On September 10, 1995—22 years ago to the day—I preached from this pulpit for the first time as your pastor.

Of course, I had preached here on one other occasion, but that was while I was still on trial—as in “Trial Sermon!”

But falling under the category of “What a way to begin a new pastorate!”—on that first Sunday, I had already conducted three funerals here as your Pastor prior to my first sermon. And those first three have been followed now by approximately 700 more.

Why do we have funerals? **We have funerals to remember our departed saints and to express gratitude for their lives, faith, love, and service to their families and friends, and, in many cases, service to this church.** Funerals are also a means of **offering our prayerful support to families as they deal with their loss.**

But there’s another reason why memorial services are important. You and I need **to be reminded that one day it will be** our names affixed to those grave markers. We will be the **ones being remembered.**

When that day comes, we can only hope that somebody will be able to testify concerning our lives, “He or she was a blessing to me. They were a blessing to their family, their church, and their community.”

Our topic today is “Being Blessed.” Our text is found in Genesis 27:25-34. We continue our study of the patriarchs by focusing on Jacob.

His father, Isaac, is now old and blind. He’s bestowing the family blessing on his son--only it’s not the son he had intended to bless.

We don't have time to read the whole story. Most of you are familiar with it; but, if not, I encourage you to read Genesis 27 and 28.

There you will find all the sordid details of what happened and what resulted from it. It's a sad story, really, filled with sibling rivalry and a Dad and Mom who unfortunately play favorites among their children.

Often the Bible tells us what we should do—what's best. At other times, though, it shares with us true stories from the lives of people who ought to know better in order to demonstrate for us what NOT to do—and this story today would be a case in point.

Hopefully, the blessing of Jacob will serve as a warning to us and point toward some ways that we can do better in our relationships and, in fact, ways in which we can be blessings to those about us.

Genesis 27:25-34--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. 26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me." 27 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.

28 May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness—an abundance of grain and new wine. 29 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."

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You see why these were such troubled times in Isaac's family. The blessing was intended for the older son, Esau, who also happened to be Isaac's favorite son.

But through a cruel deception planned by Isaac's own wife, Rebekah, the blessing went instead to Jacob, who was her favorite son. Of course, Jacob had to go along with this or it wouldn't have happened.

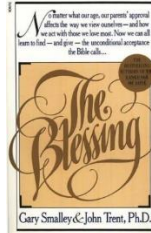
Our patriarchs were hardly perfect people, friends. They were a lot like us. Why did this even matter, though—this blessing?

Well, **the importance of the blessing in that day was enormous. The leadership of the family was conveyed to the son who received the father's blessing, along with a double portion of the inheritance.**

So, once again, we have an ancient story with a very contemporary ring to it. Like so many families today, this one is fractured by the sins of jealousy and greed. And, like today, this prevented anyone in the family from feeling truly blessed!

This was not Isaac's intention, though—he meant this blessing for good. So, let's learn from this story as we consider how you and I can be a blessing to our children, certainly, but also how we can be a blessing to all the important people in our lives.

Dr. Gary Smalley wrote a book entitled, **The Blessing (Image and quote)**. In it, he examines this blessing that Isaac bestows upon his son, Jacob, and he makes this observation:



"The blessing contains four ingredients that ought to be present in every home today. And when these four ingredients are present, and practiced consistently, then our children grow up solid, secure, and confident of themselves, able to go out into the world and function normally."

I want to share with you these four ingredients that Dr. Smalley identifies, and then apply them not only to our children, but to other important relationships as well. We'll start with this:

I. BLESSING OTHERS THROUGH A MEANINGFUL TOUCH.

Earlier in this story, verse 22 of Genesis 27 says, "Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him." Verse 26 says, "Then his father Isaac said to him, 'Come here, my son, and kiss me.'"

This is not an isolated event in the Bible. **Blessings are bestowed by touching--the laying on of hands, a kiss, an embrace--something that physically conveys affection.**

The 10th chapter of Mark's Gospel says that **people brought children to Jesus so that He could touch them**. Jesus took them in His arms and held them; the Bible says, "He **blessed them.**"

Jesus knew what children needed to feel loved and accepted. He held them in His arms, and He blessed them.

This is so important. When children are small, you can't communicate love with words only because they may not understand words. The best way to convey love to a little child is by caressing them and holding them close.

Now, Jacob was 40 years old when his father, Isaac, pulled him near, and kissed him, and bestowed on him the family blessing. So, whatever a person's age, it's important to communicate love and acceptance in some meaningful way. This often involves a caring touch or a loving embrace. Now, a second component:

II. BLESSING OTHERS WITH COMPLIMENTS (PRAISE).

Listen again to what Isaac says to his son, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed." (v 27b)

Now, I'm not sure it would be as effective today to tell someone that they smell like "dirt"--but it was a compliment back then. For an old outdoorsman like Isaac, who thought he was speaking to his outdoorsman-of-a-son, Esau, the smell of a field about ready for harvest was a rich and wonderful aroma. It was a compliment intended to communicate love and admiration.

How quick we are to criticize. A child hears, "You were so stupid to spill your milk." A spouse is told: "I can't believe you were so careless that you wrecked the car!"

Political leaders hear: "How incompetent you were not to see this calamity coming and fix it in advance." None of this really accomplishes anything, does it? Yet we're all guilty of it at times—life's frustrations and disappointments can do this to us.

There should always be room for advice and discipline and even constructive criticism; but it's even more important to communicate affirmation—to use words that say, "You matter to me. I'm glad you're part of my life." I don't know what I'd do without you. I really appreciate you."

We need to find ways to communicate these messages--even when those around us stumble and fall. Now we come to this:

III. BLESSING OTHERS BY BUILDING THEIR SELF-ESTEEM.

Notice what Isaac says in v. 28, "May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness--an abundance of grain and new wine."

He's saying, "I think you deserve the best that God has to give." We're often reminded **as parents that we should help our children develop positive self-images**, and that it's our responsibility to build up their self-esteem. And certainly we should.

The greatest tool we have for doing this is to teach our children: "You are loved and valued—not only by me—but also by your Heavenly Father."

Of course, **as followers of Jesus, this is the message we seek to convey to all people**. What a blessing this will be in their lives—just as it is for us when someone sends this message our way!

But don't forget--we have to earn the right to bestow the Father's love on someone. Let's think about our children as an example. How often do they get the message that we are too busy for them? We're too focused on the TV, computer, or checkbook to hear what they're trying to tell us.

When a child comes to talk to you, or maybe it's your spouse or friend, try to turn off the distractions and focus on them. Look them in the eye.

Listen to their words, and listen also to the deeper messages behind those words. They may have important things they're anxious to tell us if we'll only look at them, listen, and show that we care!

When we do this, it says, "You're valued. I'm glad God brought you into my life. Whenever you need to talk, I'm here to listen." That's a wonderful way to bless someone—and we can all do this if we choose to! Here's another way to be a blessing to others:
IV. BLESSING OTHERS THROUGH SEEING THEIR POTENTIAL. Isaac says to his son, "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."

Now, I know this sounds archaic to us, but it's very much in keeping with the customary role of the eldest son in that day. Remember, Isaac thinks he's bestowing this blessing on Esau.

Isaac wants his son to know that his future can be bright—which every parent should want to convey to their child.

This can be an important part of other relationships as well.

The proverb says, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." We usually apply this spiritually: "Teach your children the things of God so that when they're older, they won't forget them."

But there's another important way to apply this wisdom. We're to help our children find their niche, to discover who they are and

why they're here. God made each of us special, unique in some way, gifted for some particular role or responsibility.

As children grow, we help them discover what they do well. We try to help them find their interests and aptitudes--what they're best equipped to do in life.

Sometimes people who are all grown up are still searching for direction, and they might also be open to some wise counsel.

We have opportunities to bless others through our advice, at times, and always by way of our encouragement. I don't mean that we insist that anybody simply becomes what we think they should be. Our aim is to help them discover God's plan, not ours!

Maybe you've heard the story about **the little girl named Sandra (IMAGE)** who was raised on a cattle ranch in a very rural section of Arizona. I've read that her family had no electricity or running water. They had to drive 200 miles in order for her mother to be in a hospital when Sandra was born.



Because they were so far removed from any schools, Sandra's parents taught her at home at first. They ordered a variety of magazines to give her some exposure to the outside world. Later, she went to live with her grandmother so that she could attend a school that was located close by.

Her fondest memories are of the times (IMAGE) when mom and dad took the whole family on vacation to—get this—they went to visit state capitols. They went to every capitol building west of the Mississippi, and she remembers climbing the domes that sat on top of all those buildings.



When Sandra was sixteen years old, she was accepted into Stanford University. She graduated with honors, and then continued her studies at Stanford Law School.

Today, we remember this woman as Sandra Day O'Connor (IMAGE), the first woman to ever become a justice of the United States Supreme Court.



She reached her potential in large measure because of her mom and dad's blessing, her grandmother's too. They cared enough to help her see the gifts and abilities God had given her; and they encouraged her to fulfill her potential.

Not everyone is that intelligent or gifted, of course; but our responsibility **as parents is to help our children see themselves as they are, and to get them prepared for the future God has in mind for them.**

If they find and follow God's will for their lives, it will be good. Whatever it turns out to be, they will know God's blessing!

This is not just about parents and children, though. **All of us have opportunities to be a blessing to others**—through a caring hand on the shoulder or perhaps a helping hand up; or through our sincere words of affection and encouragement, comfort and hope.

Someday--and none of us knows when--but someday, friends—again--it will be us. Don't you want others to remember your life as a blessing—your children, your spouse, your parents, classmates, and co-workers. Don't you want to bless them?

Let's make this our prayer: Lord, make me a blessing to someone—through my life, my words, my witness and service, make me a blessing in someone's life, I pray! Amen.