

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.

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Worship This Week March 10, 2024

SCRIPTURE – Genesis 27:1-40

MESSAGE – There's a saying that "those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Anyone know that? The logic is that we are invited to "live and learn" or "learn from our mistakes." It's one of my favourite pieces of wisdom. Our failure to do that is a major reason why wars continue to happen and why we have so much pain in the world. It's a major theme in the Bible. The lesson is that if we put God first in all areas of our lives and seek His will, His hands will protect us. That may be simplistic, but the truth is that life is more enjoyable and we will have more strength and joy if we are living for God rather than for ourselves.

The same person who wrote that also said "The family is one of nature's masterpieces." George Santanaya recognized the beauty and significance of the family unit. Families are not merely necessary to bring new life into the world and raise them into adults. Families exist for multiple generations. In the same way that animals form packs and colonies for protection and cooperation, humans establish families for love, support and togetherness. They are an integral part of nature's grand design. Our identity, roots and shared experiences come from our families. It's biological, natural, cultural and spiritual.

But reality is often much different. For every perfect family – if there even is such a thing – there are 99 other families that are less than wonderful. I don't know of a single family that is not broken in some way. Isaac and Rebekah's family is a perfect example. The powerful union of Isaac and Rebekah was inspiring – this was a couple which was devoted to God. They had a firm foundation. And yet they are so broken. Mother against father, mother against son, father against son and one son wanting to kill the other. It was horribly broken.

Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau are hardly a masterpiece. What went wrong? The short answer is that they substituted scheming for believing. They took their eyes off the Master. Let's look at them one by one.

Isaac's biggest sin was refusing to obey God's command that the youngest of the two sons would rule the eldest. (Gen 25:23) Isaac would have been well aware that Esau had already given away his birthright. On top of that, Esau had disqualified himself by marrying women who were not believers. Isaac somehow forgot the great effort that was taken to find a wife for himself (Rebekah) from his own people. What made him think that God would bless an

unbelieving man such as Esau? Secondly, notice how Isaac refused to trust God. He relied on his senses of touch and smell to discern the identity of the son who presented himself. His human senses let him down. He lived by the natural instead of the spiritual.

Rebekah stopped living by faith. She chose to play games instead of trusting. She gave in to the temptation of eavesdropping into the conversation between Isaac and Esau. She gave into the temptation of scheming and deception. This is soap opera behaviour. It's also Satanic. The devil is the deceiver (2 Cor 11:3). Had she and Jacob spoken to Isaac while Esau was out hunting, the father might have been set straight. In the same way Isaac was depending on his physical senses, Rebekah was depending on the wisdom of the world, which teaches that the end justifies the means.

Jacob went along with mom's plan. His only concern wasn't that it was wrong – it was, how do I get away with it? Jacob's story was filled with lies. He even brought God into the deception by saying it was the Lord who put the game in my path – that's why I'm back so soon.

Esau – the grief he expressed was hollow. This is the same man who willingly surrendered his birthright for a meal and married two pagan women. He wanted the blessings but he wasn't willing to keep his end of the deal. And then he vowed revenge by planning to kill his own brother.

Once the deception was revealed and Jacob's life was in danger, Isaac, Rebekah and Jacob went into damage control. Get out of Dodge – it's too dangerous here. Jacob the home boy is now without a home. He would be gone two decades and missed the final years of his parents' lives.

I truly believe that Santayana was correct – the family is a masterpiece. But only if it's centred on the Master. At some point in their marriage, Isaac and Rebekah turned from The Master. We saw their lack of faith in moving to Gerar during the famine and Isaac trying to pass his wife off as his sister and then forgetting his deception and getting caught and being thrown out of the country. We saw manipulation by Jacob stealing his brother's birthright for a bowl of stew – even though he had no power to do that. Why did he play games when God had already told them his older brother would serve him. And then Rebekah's plot to steal the father's blessing – even though the human blessing actually had no real power. They refused to trust in God. They took their eyes off The Master and took matters in their own hands. And they paid the price with brokenness. In the end, God wins. If you can sum up the history of humankind, that's it. What pain we suffer when we turn our eyes from God. It's nothing short of amazing that God puts up with us. Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau are far from perfect and we're not much better.

Despite the brokenness of this world, God sent the rainbow as a reminder that never again will the floodwaters destroy all life (Gen 9:15). This is the purest form of love. God loves us so much that nothing we can do will cause him to destroy us. God continued to love the broken family of

Genesis 27. God continues to love his people and is preparing a place for us in heaven even though we are not worthy.

HYMN – 312 God is love, come heaven adoring

NEW PRAYER

1. Cindy Brewer's friend Kelly, who has cancer, and friend Linda, whose husband Dennis also has cancer.
2. Betty Bradley discharged from Sarnia Hospital and is now at Bear Creek Terrace Long Term Care (formerly Fiddicks) in Petrolia as she recovers from a broken hip.
3. Bruce Stephens had his CT scan March 5. If his chest is clear then surgery to remove sarcoma and perform muscle and vascular transplant will take place March 18. Pray for all systems to be a go, for strength and encouragement.
4. Those who are struggling with the loss of loved ones.

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Health and healing –

1. Ellen Robinson – continued healing and strength from the loss of her husband Doug.
2. Colin Paterson, radiation therapy for prostate cancer
3. Rev. Mary Templar, brain injury: difficulty reading
4. For all those recovering from surgical procedures.
5. Becky Desjardine, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Karen Northcott, Tom O'Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Pegg, Julie Shaw, Sandra Whitson
6. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
7. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression

Seniors on the move – Jerome Ide moving to the Oaks. Park Street Place residents moving out to new homes.

Shut ins – Dianne Richards at Wallaceburg Retirement Residence, Jim Lusk at Oaks Wallaceburg, Lane Douglas and Ross Fuchs at Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg, Aubrey Butler at home.

Elders on session – Mark Labadie 519-359-4842, Cindy Brewer 519-683-4113, Sheila Eves 519-683-4148, Andrew Neely 519-359-8903, Mark Richards 519-809-9175 and Julie Shaw 226-627-1953, Bob Vriesema 519-401-8056.

Board of managers – Wendy Weston (chair), Will Brewer, Linda Malott, Jenn Mason, Von Parking, Mark Richards, Jodie Rich, Bob Vriesema and Mike Wicks.

WHAT'S UP:

A new way to support St. Andrew's – McBrayne's Feed & Supply is offering to donate back 10 per cent of sales made using the St. Andrews account. Some items that apply are peanuts, bird feed, sunflower seed, and grains. Make sure you let them know you would like to use the St. Andrew's account BEFORE ordering to ensure the church gets credit! The first purchase for this program was made yesterday so we are underway!

Tax receipts – If you are new to the congregation and would like a donor number/envelopes to receive income tax receipt, please let Wendy Weston know – westond@mnsi.net

Weekly email – Send announcements and new info to standrewspcdresden@gmail.com

Lambton Kent Mental Health has started a new Mobile Care Service that is a mobile unit that travels to smaller surrounding areas and they bring counsellors and other information of services available to those who may need assistance.

The next date is March 27 at 12-3 at Dresden Arena.

Free Community Meals – Please share this info with anyone in need:

North Dresden Community Church – first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

Dresden Christian Reformed Church – second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

DATES

March 13 – Noon. Lenten Lunch at North Dresden Baptist Church. Speaker Pastor Rob Elka.

March 17 – 7 p.m. Ministerial Celebration of Praise service at Dresden Christian Reformed Church. It will be a night of worship featuring a collective worship team from the Sarnia area.

March 20 – Noon. Lenten Lunch at North Dresden Baptist Church. Speaker Pastor Phil Sabine of Charlemont Free Methodist.

March 23 – Doors open 8 a.m. A Men’s Awakening – Chatham-Kent Men’s Breakfast at Chatham Christian School. “Taking steps in faith to move out of the back pew.” Matthew 14:29. RSVP ck316men@gmail.com

March 27 – Noon. Lenten Lunch at North Dresden Baptist Church. Speaker Fr. Chris P from St. Michael’s RC Church.

March 29 – Good Friday cross walk 8:45 a.m. at Rotary Park Dresden and worship 10 a.m. at Evangel Pentecostal.

April 16 – 2 p.m. Heather Club meeting in the Fellowship Room.

WAYS OF GIVING:

E-transfer st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. If required by your bank, our treasurer’s name is Linda Moore. Her number is 226-627-2727. If you are asked for a security question, please contact your local bank branch.

Bring envelope on Sunday or if you have a key, leave it in the treasurer’s mailbox.

Mail it to the church, PO Box 93 Dresden. NOP 1M0.

Gift Cards – You pay face value for the gift cards and the church buys them at a discount through Chatham Christian Schools. Cards will be available for pickup at the church or will be distributed in church. Gift card orders are on the website. <https://standrewsdresden.ca/> under the “giving” tab. Send e-transfer AND order forms to st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. Next deadline March 25.