

Genesis 27

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[0 : 0 0] I'm sure every one of you has heard of the very sad story which is the diary of Anne Frank. And as you're aware, it concerns a young Jewish girl and her family living in Holland during the Second World War.

Anne was born in Germany, but when Nazis rose to power in Germany, they fled to Holland, hoping to be safe there. And they were for a little while until, of course, the German troops invaded and occupied Holland.

And when that began to happen, they went into hiding in July 1942 in some secret rooms that were hidden in Anne's father's office building.

They were there for two years living this hidden and secret life. But then, sadly, they were betrayed and handed over to the Nazis and taken to a concentration camp.

Within just a matter of months after that arrest, Anne herself died of typhus in the Bergen-Belsen camp within days of her own sister, Margot.

[1 : 0 9] Her father was the only one who survived. And he returned to Amsterdam and found her diary and strove towards it being published not long after the war.

While they were hiding, they were safe. When they were out of hiding, they were in great danger. Everybody needs a hiding place.

Everybody needs a place of security and protection. Anne needed that hiding place from the hands of evil men. But we need a hiding place from a holy God.

We need a hiding place from a holy God. She had to hide simply because of her race. She was Jewish. We need to hide from God because of our sin.

For her exposure and coming out of hiding meant certain suffering and probable death, in her sense, in case it was death.

[2 : 1 3] But for those of us who are not hidden and are exposed to a righteous and holy God, there is something even worse than death that faces us.

There is a terrible cry that will rise up from all the people of the earth when the Lord God comes in judgment on that last day.

Revelation chapter 6. We are told that the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, every slave, every free man, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.

They called to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath has come and who can stand?

Hiding from God because of sin. But then who can hide from God? Where can we possibly hide from God?

[3 : 1 6] He sees everything. He sees everyone. There is nowhere to hide from his searching sight. In Hebrews chapter 4, the apostle writes this, Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.

Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give an account. If we are ever to escape, as it were, to a place of hiding from God's righteous judgment against our sin, it has to be some place which is unconventional.

It has to be something more than an ordinary hiding place. It has to be somewhere supernatural, somewhere special. And the wonderful truth is this, that there is a place for us to hide.

Whoever we are, whatever our sins, whatever our situation, there is a place for us to hide. It's not an underground bunker or a secret room. It's the perfect hiding place because it's the place that has been given to us by God himself in which we might hide.

We read there at the very start of our service of that hiding place. Psalm 32. You are my hiding place, says the psalmist of the Lord God.

[4 : 36] Proverbs chapter 18, verse 10 says, The name of the Lord is a strong tower. All who run into it are saved.

It's God himself who is our hiding place. Seems paradoxical. Doesn't seem to make sense, but this is the truth. We are to hide from God's justice and righteous judgment against our sin, but God has provided us the hiding place in himself.

And that truth which comes out through the Old Testament in so many ways finds its perfect understanding and fulfillment in the New Testament in one of Paul's favorite phrases for describing a Christian.

It's two words. In Christ. In Christ. It's repeated over and over again in the New Testament to describe that spiritual position with which the Christian is in relationship with God.

And one verse that particularly stands out to us and one that we often rejoice in is in Ephesians chapter 1. For there in verse 3 we read this.

[5 : 47] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

And that telling phrase in Christ is why we are looking at Isaac and his sons in Genesis 27.

Because hidden in the Old Testament we find a wonderful silhouette of what it means to be hidden in Christ. We have a shadowy picture as it were.

For just as Jacob received those blessings from Isaac his father, because of the way in which he was hidden in Esau his brother.

So too the reality is that we receive all spiritual blessings from God our heavenly father because we are hidden in his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[6 : 44] But before we get to that and I want to draw out just a few thoughts from that and similarities there that point us to Jesus. There's something of course we have to notice and that's the dissimilarities between this story and the truth that we are in Christ.

Whenever we are in the Old Testament, as I say, we are in a shadow land in that sense. The truth is there. The reality is there in the Old Testament. Everything is true in the Old Testament.

But it's always looking forward. It's casting, in one sense, a shadow forward to point us to Jesus in the New Testament. And so we've got to be very careful that we don't try to read more into a story here than we should see.

But we must also be careful that we don't fail to see what is hidden here for us, for our encouragement and comfort and strength. And three simple things that the story in the Genesis 27 is dissimilar to the reality that we are in Christ.

The first, of course, is this, that in Genesis 27, Isaac the father is old and blind. Now God is not blind. I've already said that.

[7 : 50] We've seen in Hebrews in chapter 4, haven't we? Everything is seen by him. Every secret sin of your heart and mind. Everything that you do. Everything that you think.

Everything that goes on around this world. Whether it's in the deepest, darkest cave and dungeon. God sees it. So God is not blind. He knows all about us.

But this way of hiding our sin is the chosen way. In which he has sought to save and rescue us. The second thing, of course, is this. God is not fooled.

You can't pull the wool over God's eyes. We might think that we can. We might think, well, because nobody knows about what I got up to when I was away at uni. I don't know what people got up to.

I'm not saying that they did anything. But nobody knows about it. My parents don't know about it. God won't know about it. Yes, he will. We can't fool him.

[8 : 47] We can fool ourselves. We can fool one another. We can deceive ourselves. John's first letter, he says, If anyone says they don't sin, they're deceiving themselves. If you think that you're right with God, if you think you're an okay, nice person, and that you've never sinned or done anything wrong, so that God should be angry with you, then you're deceiving yourself.

You're pulling the wool over your own eyes. You can't pull it over God. This was his plan before the world was made, that we should be hidden in Christ. And thirdly, there's no cheating with God.

How can I put it this way? There's no loopholes with God. There's no getting out of things with God. God doesn't, as it were, as Jacob does, deceive and cheat his way to the blessing.

God doesn't do that with us when he places us in Christ. God's righteousness is fulfilled. His justice is fulfilled. He doesn't bend the rules for us or turn a blind eye for us.

His justice is carried out completely. God does punish our sin properly and fully. So don't think, again, some people think, well, God turns a bit of a...

[9 : 58] He just doesn't notice these things. He doesn't really bother about the small sins. He sort of brushes them under the carpet. No, he doesn't. There's no cheating with God. What he has done to save us, he has done in perfect and complete righteousness, in perfect and complete law keeping.

So those things are important for us to recognize. When we look at the story, we're not looking at an exact parallel. We're looking at a shadow. But it does have so much to teach us, so much that we can see and understand.

So in what ways are we in Christ hidden so that we might know God's blessing upon us as when Jacob approached his father Isaac and was blessed?

There's three things here that Isaac recognizes and by which he accepts Jacob as his favorite son.

Three things. The first thing he recognizes are the hands of Jacob. Look there. In verse 21, Isaac said to Jacob, Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.

[11 : 18] Jacob went close to his father who touched him and said, The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. Did not recognize him for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau, so he blessed him.

There were these two brothers, twins. One smooth, one hairy. One a great hunter, one a bit of a mummy's boy. One was the favorite of his father, one was the favorite of his mother.

And they were completely poles apart, different in every sense of way. And Jacob rightly, when his mum puts before him this scheme for him to get the blessing, says, You know, My father's not that blind and stupid.

He's going to feel my hands and they're smooth. And Esau's are hairy. I mean, I don't know how hairy he must have been, but put it this way, if they had the skin of a goat on his hands and he felt it, he must have been pretty hairy, mustn't he?

And I doubt if he waxed. These were the four, male grooming, you know, where you have waxing and shaving and all those sort of things that some of these men do for themselves now.

[12 : 24] He just had hair going everywhere. In his ears, I should imagine, as well, and all over the place. Anyway, it's his hands, isn't it? His hands that the father recognises.

He looks and he touches his hands. And because of his hands, he accepts him. Christ's hands bear those distinctive marks of his crucifixion.

His suffering, his atoning death, his sacrifice for our sin. They're the abiding testimony that he went to the cross and suffered in the place of his people.

Those marks upon the hands of the Lord Jesus are still there. They were there after his resurrection, weren't they? On Easter day. There's that occasion when he comes to Thomas.

And Thomas, a week earlier, had said, well, unless I see his hands and I place my fingers in the holes in his side, I won't believe. And Jesus reveals himself, says, here you are.

[13 : 32] He showed him his hands and his side. Put your fingers here. Put your hand there. And of course, Thomas overcome with conviction over his unbelief, says, my Lord and my God.

The hands of Jesus still bear the wounds of the cross. And even in heaven, now that he's raised again, now that he's risen to the Father's right hand again in heaven, he bears the hallmarks of one who is a lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.

The angels and the elders and the people in heaven worship and bow down to Jesus because we're told that when John looks, he says, I saw a lamb looking as if it had been slain.

He was a bloody lamb bearing the marks of slaughter upon him. And when we are united with Christ, when we are brought into this union with the Lord Jesus, when we are one with him, so it is that God sees the hands of the Lord Jesus and sees our sin atoned for and sees that our sin has been dealt with once and for all at the cross.

Paul is able to say, wasn't he, in Galatians chapter 2 verse 20, I have been crucified with Christ. That's when we talk about the Lord's Supper and say, unless we can believe and know that we too died with Jesus, that we were the ones whose sin was taken upon the cross there with him, then we can't eat of it.

[15 : 09] It's only that real faith. It's got to be that real faith that it's mine. I own this and I own him. So in one sense, because we are so united with Jesus, it's almost as if our hands are in the hands of Christ or our hands bear the resemblance of Christ to the Father.

We are real partakers in his death. We celebrate baptism. Baptism is a picture, a symbol. It is, it's telling us that we are united with Christ in his life, in his death, in his resurrection, in his ascension, in his coming again.

Romans chapter 6, if we have been united with Christ in his death, we shall be united with him in his resurrection. That wonderful spiritual union that has taken place in our lives.

The penalty's been paid for on our behalf. The wrath of God has been completely satisfied on our behalf. We are justified and we are free from all guilt and shame.

Romans chapter 5 and verse 1, therefore having been justified by faith. Made right with God by faith. And so, Father sees the wounds of the Son, sees the hands of the Son, and sees that we are accepted in him.

[16 : 43] The second thing that Isaac recognizes as being of his favorite son, Esau, the second thing he recognizes is the clothing that Esau was wearing.

Verse 15, this is what the mother said, Rebekah. Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau, her oldest son, which she had in the house, put them on her younger son, Jacob.

And we see there that as Jacob draws near to Isaac, Isaac, we're told, caught the smell of his clothes, the smell of my son, like the smell of a field.

We'll come on to the smelling bit a bit later on, but he recognized the clothes. They weren't his own clothes. They weren't Jacob's best wear, they were Esau's clothes.

And he wore them and put them on himself. And that was that which made him acceptable to the father, to Isaac. When we become Christians, when we come to faith in the Lord Jesus, when we come united with him, we're united with him in his death for us.

[17 : 54] But we're united with him in his righteous life as well. Paul and the New Testament Christians often were spoke of being a Christian as someone who's been clothed with Christ.

Again, that's what baptism is, is also to remind us of. We're clothed with Jesus. in Galatians and chapter three and verse twenty seven.

Paul writes these words. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

And that refers to his righteousness. You see, in the sense of righteousness, being right with God, doing the things that right in his sight.

But the reality is that we are naked before God. We have nothing to cover ourselves with. We're just like Adam and Eve in the garden when they sinned. And they recognized they were naked before God.

[18 : 56] So we are naked before God. We have nothing to cover over our sin. And we've got nothing to bring to him that he should accept us. In fact, worse than that, the Bible says, that when we try and cover ourselves, when we try to do those things which we hope will make us acceptable to God, all that we're doing is covering ourselves with stinking rags.

This is Isaiah 64 and verse 6. All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts, in other words, all our religious actions, all our good deeds, which we try to do to make ourselves favorable to God, all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

So when we think that we can somehow win God's favor, when we think that if we can only do those things that will make us right with God, we try to, as it were, undo the balance of our sin by good acts, do you know what we're doing?

We're actually making it worse for ourselves. Instead of coming to God naked as we are and say, Lord, I'm naked and there's nothing I've got to cover over my sin, we're actually trying to cover ourselves under filthy rags.

So we're making ourselves more abhorrent to God. That's the great tragedy of man-made religion. Man-made religion does not bring a person closer to God.

[20 : 20] Man-made religion, which is based, as all man-made religions are, upon works and trying to win God's favor, actually alienates us even further from God. Such a covering like that cannot hide our shortcomings.

You see, our Lord Jesus Christ, by his perfect life, because he kept God's law perfectly, completely, on our behalf, has won for us, gained for us, righteousness.

Gained for us what we could not gain for ourselves. 1 Corinthians in chapter 1 and verse 30, the apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians there reminds them of this truth, that our Lord Jesus Christ has become for us, righteousness and holiness and redemption.

Everything that we need, he's attained. So it wasn't just his death for us, that one for us forgiveness from sin, but his perfect life. That was why it was necessary for him not just to come into the world and then immediately die.

It was necessary for him to be born as a human being, live out a full and complete human life, and keep God's law perfectly, because he also on our behalf kept the law that we failed to keep.

[21 : 41] But because his death was the death of the infinite Son of God, it can cover over the sins of an infinite number of people, and because his life was the life of the infinite unlimited Son of God, so his righteousness can be attributed and given to an infinite number of people.

So we can be clothed with Jesus, with the good things that he's done, with the beautiful clothing that he's won for us. There's a lovely illustration of that in Isaiah in chapter 61.

Isaiah 61, it says this, verse 10, I delight greatly in the Lord. My soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.

So instead of coming to God naked, instead of coming to God naked, instead of coming to God in rags, we come to God in the beauty and the splendor and the majesty of Jesus' righteousness.

one final thing then here in our little story, in our silhouette of what it means to be in Christ. I've already made mention of it, but it needs just drawing out a bit for us as well.

[23 : 12] We notice that Isaac not only recognized the hands of his son, and the clothing of his son, but he recognized the smell of his favorite son, Esau.

And it's clear, isn't it, of course, that that smell of his son was something which pleased him, which he delighted in. Notice how he responds, Ah, ah, bistro.

No, he didn't smell a bistro, but ah, the smell of my son, like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. There's certain smells that, a smell is a very strong sense, isn't it?

It's some of the ones we sort of forget, but it's a very strong sense. I'm sure it's happened to you many times. You smell something and it triggers a memory in your brain about something that's happened years and years ago, or a person.

Very, very occasionally I'll smell a certain smell that reminds me of my grandmother who died 15 years ago or so, and it's that same smell. It may be somebody else who smells a bit like my grandmother, when she, you know, the soap she used or the perfume she used, or something like that, isn't it?

[24 : 18] But we attribute smells to some things, and of course some smells can be so wonderfully pleasant, you can be sort of walking down the high street, you can smell Copeland's, can't you, the bakery, pasties and sausage rolls, you know, and you walk past the flower shop, you can smell some freesias or some roses, these smells are pleasant, aren't they?

And they can lift, a smell can really lift you, can't they? Make you feel, feel good. Now God has a sense of smell. God has, just as he sees and he hears, so he smells.

There's that lovely picture of that in Genesis and chapter 8. Noah and his family come out the ark, which God had saved them, and in thanksgiving and praise they offered a burnt offering, a sacrifice to God.

And Genesis chapter 8 verse 21, sorry, verse 20, the Lord built an altar to the, the Noah built an altar to the Lord and taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.

Listen to what it says, the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart. Now God didn't smell the smoke, if I can put it that way, wasn't that God sort of, there was this smoke burning up and sort of burning and charcoal birds and wasn't that that God smelled, but he smelt the offering of their hearts, didn't he?

[25 : 41] He smelt their thanksgiving, he smelt their faith, and it was something that pleased him, something that pleased him, and he made that promise, that first covenant, as long as the earth endures, sea, time and harvest, and he put the rainbow in the skies, the sign of that covenant, promise, an agreement between God and humanity.

Now we bear to God the fragrance of Jesus. Isn't that marvelous? When God, sniffs us, if I can put it that way, he smells the Lord Jesus.

That's what Paul says, it's not my idea, Paul's idea. 2 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 15. For we are to God the aroma of Christ. We are to God the aroma of Christ.

We are a pleasing smell to God. He no longer smells, if I can put it that way, the stench of our sin. He often speaks about sin rising up before him.

That's something that's just noxious to him. He doesn't smell our sin. He doesn't smell our rotten hearts and our lives, but he enjoys the smell of Christ's obedience and loveliness.

[26 : 54] We smell to him of his beloved son and of our elder brother, the Lord Jesus. We're all tempted at times, aren't we, to, no, when I was younger, I'll speak just about myself, when I was a teenager, of course, I didn't like washing.

No boys like washing. So, if you smell a bit, you just get a bit of brute, wouldn't you? A bit of old spice, shake it on all over, cover over the smell, hide the smell, except you just smell worse.

You put B.O. and old spice together, it's really horrible. But that's not what God has done, has he? God doesn't just cover over our sin with something nice smelling.

He doesn't put sort of shake and vac over where the cats had a whoopsie on the carpet. He deals with our sin, he takes away our sin at the cross completely and fully and then he covers us with a beautiful raiment of Christ which bears the fragrance of his obedience and his beauty to the Father.

So when we come to God we are clean, we are well dressed and we smell lovely and it's all because of Jesus. It's all because we're hidden in Jesus.

[28 : 11] It's all because we're covered and clothed in him because he is that place of hiding for us. And so I have to ask you this evening dear friends, are you in Jesus Christ?

Are you hiding in him? Have you come to him to cover over your sin? You see only his wounds, only his wounds can give you peace to come to God as you are.

Only his perfect cloak of righteousness can give you the confidence to believe that God loves you and is with you. Only his perfume can warm your heart to know that you're a child of God's.

Are you hidden in Jesus? Here's our hiding place. Here's our safe refuge. Here's the place that we can flee to from judgment and guilt. Here alone is security.

Here alone is forgiveness and pardon. And you know, the wonderful thing is this. The way into Christ is open. The doors aren't barred.

[29 : 17] They aren't shut. One day they will be when Christ comes again. One day it will be too late to come and enter into Christ, that hiding place. But now, no matter who you are, no matter what you're saying, you can go in and be received warmly and gladly by your heavenly father who will do all these things for you, wash you and clothe you and make you sweet smelling.

And here you can rest in him. Dear friends, when we come into Christ, we can't get back out again. We don't want to get back out again, but we can't get back out again.

Once we're in him, we're caught up in his bare like embrace. Once we're in Christ, he's no ever going to let us go again. It's one way in and no way out.

There we can remain. There we can rest. No matter what our failings and faults, no matter how we may feel overcome, in Christ we're secure for now, forever, for eternity.

eternity. Let's pray together. Who could ever think of such a wonderful thing as putting a sinner in Christ except you?

[30 : 39] Lord, nobody would ever think of such a way of salvation. Nobody would ever come up with a way of sinful men and women being forgiven and made right with God, except that the plan that you, your Son and the Holy Spirit determined before the world was made.

That plan that you have been accomplishing and carrying out throughout the whole history of the world. That plan which found its climax and zenith in the life of Jesus, his death and resurrection for us.

Oh Lord, that plan which is now being outworked as you bring men and women and boys and girls to faith in the Lord Jesus. out of their sin and into his righteousness.

And Lord, you're going to keep on doing that and keep on doing that until every single one for whom Jesus died is gathered in. But Lord, we ask that even this evening if we are still outside of Christ, Lord, please bring us in.

Please don't let us rest where we are. Please don't let us be comfortable and content to remain outside of Christ in that place of grave and eternal and horrific danger.

[31 : 48] make our feet to run to you, to the safe tower that is the name of the Lord. Thank you for the promise that you've made. Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

We ask, oh Lord, that even here tonight, if any of us are in danger, that we would run to you, Lord Jesus, and we would be wrapped up in the embrace of your powerful arms, that we might know forgiveness for our sins and life everlasting.

Please, Lord, please, Lord, rescue men and women and boys and girls from the danger of judgment and of their sin and bring them in. And Lord, for those of us who are in Christ, may we not be those who, Lord, simply rest and remain in Christ in the sense of having no concern for the lost.

May it be that you will use us, as it were, in whatever way possible, as it were, to reach out our arms and to grab hold and take hold of those who are outside of your salvation and through our witness and our testimony and prayer, see them brought in.

Oh, Lord, this is our cry and our prayer again, that you will not allow those who are outside to remain there but to bring them in. And that, Lord, those of us who are in, that you would grant to us that ever, ever greater assurance and confidence that once in Christ, in him forever.

[33 : 06] And may we rejoice and give thanks for all that he is to us, for we are accepted in the beloved and we thank you for that. Amen.

Amen.