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Weekly Letter – 12 July 2026

Genesis 25:19-34 – Esau and Jacob

Isaac marries Rebekah and prays for her because she hasn't had children. They conceive and she has a terrible pregnancy (no Gaviscon then). She enquires of God why this is happening to her. Whilst Isaac prayed for children, God answers Rebekah's question: the turmoil of the babies within will shape their lives and the lives of their descendants.

Rebekah has twins, but not identical: Esau is a hairy, outdoors type, loved by Isaac (and people still say hairy babies cause indigestion in pregnancy). Jacob is a mammy's boy, loved by Rebekah.

I wonder whether God's 'prophecy' was read backwards as a reflection of how their lives turned out, or whether it was more like, 'these babies are kicking so much they will be footballers!' I wonder how much the way things turned out depended on the expectation created by the word from God, or by their looks, or by the favouritism shown by their parents?

Whichever it is. Esau puts satisfying current needs above living up to future promise, and Jacob uses that to get his brother to give up his birthright. Esau means 'hairy' or 'rough' and Jacob is derived from 'heel' which carries both the idea of following on behind or supplanting and taking over. Jacob is the younger but becomes the line of promise: he becomes Israel, and the ancestor of the 12 tribes of Israel.

There is so much human life in these stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We still know the anguish of infertility, the tensions within families, and the balance of present need and future hope. There is the assurance that God is with us in all those things and can even take up the twists of circumstance into the divine unfolding purpose. Share with God your concern for your family, or families you know. Pray that God's blessing will continue to be passed on despite our failings or manipulation.

Simon

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am led by Rev Dr Noel Davies

Bible Readings: Matthew 13.1-9: Isaiah 55.1-13: Matthew 13.10-23.

Cycle of Prayer in the Region – we will pray for Hall Street, Llanelli

Prayers for every household – St John's Road nos. 2-60

Tuesday, 14th July – Tea and Chat – 2-4pm – Wimbledon afternoon tea.

CONFESSING OUR HUNGER FOR PEACE

(Genesis 25.19-34 and Psalm 119.105-112: Isaiah 55.10-13 and Psalm 65.(1-8): Romans 8.1-11: Matthew 13.1-9,18-23)

Gracious God, we confess that our needs and wants,
universally human though they are, can cause us to act impulsively –
the allure of instant gratification cloaking the consequences of our actions,
and often proving irresistible

Forgive us, when we seek the ultra-processed food
of quick fixes and fleeting comforts, when inadvertently,
we snub what you have already promised,
a birthright of deep nourishment and wholeness.

May we recognise that you have already provided enough for all,
so that our grasping of heels might give way to the healing of conflicts
between us and within us, in relationships, bodies, minds and spirits.

Shine your light so that the pathway to wholeness
might be revealed in your ways of mercy and grace.
May your living Word, a lamp unto our feet, guide us to your shalom,
where peace flourishes and hearts are restored. **Amen.**

Jonnie Hill (URC Prayer Handbook)

