



Daring the dream – Birthright and blessings
A message from
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I want to talk about birthrights and blessings. An assumption in the Bible and in Mike Slaughter's book is that God already has a dream for you to accomplish, we just need to discover it.

Have you ever noticed that what we label people tends to shape people? We grow up with an image of who we are by what we hear others say about us.

A few years ago, our 2-year-old grandson was staying at our house and one day when Liam was walking into the kitchen Nana casually said to him, "Here comes trouble."

Little Liam looks at her thoughtfully and said, "I'm not trouble. I'm Liam!"

This 2½-year-old child rejected the label, because he already knew who he was. Now the rest of the story is that Nana came across a t-shirt a few days later that said, "Here Comes Trouble" and bought it for him! That is how she came to be labeled "naughty nana"

Labels and names are powerful. Some kids grow up convinced they are trouble, and they spend their life fulfilling it. Some grow up being told they are stupid, or worthless, that they will never make much of their life and they carry that identity that shapes their life.

The story of Jacob and Esau is an interesting story if for no other reason because of their names. God had promised their grandfather, Abraham, to multiply his descendants like sands on the seashore and bless the world through them, but Abraham had just one son named Isaac and now Isaac is married to Rebecca and guess what, they can't have kids. For two generations this promise of producing many descendants to bless the world is super slow.

If God always fulfills his promise, why is it that so often it appears that God has chosen the wrong family?

Has anybody had that feeling that God has mistaken your identity and is knocking on the wrong door? I know I sure have. But God never makes a mistake in choosing those to fulfill his purposes.

So Isaac and Rebecca plead to God for kids and Rebecca conceives. Now in those days they didn't have ultrasounds so the first indication that something is different is that it feels like there is a war going on inside her belly. So Rebecca goes to the Lord to ask "what is going on?" God reveals three things to her about the future: 1) She's got two boys inside her. 2) They will be leaders of two rival nations. 3) The older will serve the younger.

When the twins are born the first-born comes out. His body is covered in hair. Not cute baby fuzz, but long reddish hair all over his body. He looks like a wolf baby. This kid is shaving by the time he is two. He is already a man's man. So guess what they name him? Hairy—the Hebrew word **is Esau**.

The second comes out and the first thing they notice is his little hand grasping a the heel of his brother. So they call this one Jacob, which literally means heel grabber or pull the heel. It is where we get our saying: "pulling my leg." The name means trickster, **deceiver**. So here you have the twins. Hairy and Deceiver. For parents who wanted kids really bad, you would think they would have spent a little more time in the "Most Popular Baby Names" book.

The two of them grow up living up to their names. Harry is a hunter and becomes Daddy's boy. Jacob the Deceiver is more refined and even a momma's boy. He likes to hang around the tent and cook but he is a schemer. He is a self-centered little guy who grows up to be a self-centered young man. And one day he pulls off his first deception:

One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry. Esau said to Jacob, "I'm starved! Give me some of that red stew!" "All right," Jacob replied, "But trade me your rights as the firstborn son." Genesis 25:29–31 (NLT)

What was his "right" as the first-born son? The birthright was a double portion of the inheritance that went to the oldest son.

Jacob was pulling a fast one on his brother. He knew Esau was all about instant gratification. He takes advantage of his brother's weakness and allows him to forfeit his future to satisfy his immediate hunger.

We look at Esau and we think, what a foolish man. The truth of it is that we have all done the same thing at times in our own life, haven't we? We see that car that we really don't need, and spend money we really don't have, to impress a neighbor we really don't like! We risk tomorrow so we can have it all today.

Did you know that God has given you a birthright? There is an inheritance waiting for you who are followers of Jesus;

"Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan." Ephesians 1:11 (NLT)

By definition, an Inheritance, a birthright, is something we don't earn. It is ours just because we were born.

In Christ, when we come into God's family, we have been given a birthright.

But like Esau and Jacob, we can choose to squander it or misuse it. You see, just like Jacob and Esau, God created you with a design and a plan to bless the world and to honor God with your life!

You can choose to live this life for instant gratification and your personal desires, or you can claim your birthright to fulfill your calling and purpose that God created you to fulfill.

You will learn later in this series that God changed Jacob's name to Israel. Israel literally means: "He fought with God and God Won"

Isn't that a great name? Jacob was far from perfect; he messed up big time in his life. But God won!

And here is my question for you today. What is your name? Is it the label your parents or your naughty nana gave you? Is it the name your environment has put on you? For some, the label you wear come from the worst moment in your life. The moment you are ashamed of, and you believe that identity has branded you forever?

I believe God wants to rename you today. Your new name is "I Fought With God And God Won!" That's your birthright. Would you claim it with me in a holy moment with God?

Oh God – if we could only see ourselves through your eyes, how different would we feel about our purpose and our worth? Remind us of our inheritance we have received by being accepted into your family through Christ. Help us to believe that, like Jacob, you chose us in advance and you make everything work out according to your plan. There are some listening to this message who believe they have messed up their life so bad that they have forfeited their birthright. God, help us to hear and receive our new name. "I have fought with god – but god wins." Amen

