

Reflection Wednesday 11th November

Genesis 27:1-5a, 15-29

When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called his elder son Esau and said to him, 'My son'; and he answered, 'Here I am.' He said, 'See, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me. Then prepare for me savoury food, such as I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may bless you before I die.'

Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, Then Rebekah took the best garments of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob; and she put the skins of the kids on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she handed the savoury food, and the bread that she had prepared, to her son Jacob.

So he went in to his father, and said, 'My father'; and he said, 'Here I am; who are you, my son?' Jacob said to his father, 'I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, so that you may bless me.' But Isaac said to his son, 'How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?' He answered, 'Because the Lord your God granted me success.' Then Isaac said to Jacob, 'Come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.' So Jacob went up to his father Isaac, who felt him and said, 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.' He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. He said, 'Are you really my son Esau?' He answered, 'I am.' Then he said, 'Bring it to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you.' So he brought it to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, 'Come near and kiss me, my son.' So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said,.....

Two weeks ago we had the result of an inquiry into anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, on Saturday the former chief rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks, died aged 72 about a month after being diagnosed with cancer.

What have these two events got to do with this reading?

This passage has been used in the past to support anti-Semitic positions.

I do not want to get into such a dialogue now but if you want to know a little more read Wednesday's "A Word in Time" bible study on the Methodist Church website.

I want to focus on receiving a blessing from God. How much do we desire a blessing from God? I cannot condone Jacob and Rebekah in their actions – I was not there and do not understand the things of God that were going on. How different would things be if Jacob had not had the blessing from Isaac?

Regardless of what was going on there was a desire to be blessed by Isaac, it was valued and life changing.

To be blessed by God, by Jesus, is a life changing experience. To know his love in our lives and his purpose in our heart transforms us. It begins when we ask God to allow us into His Kingdom, when we acknowledge the poverty of our Spirit.

There are occasions in the Gospels we are told that Jesus reached out and blessed children, but most often the word comes in what we call the Beatitudes. Blessed are the from which I have just quoted.

Today, being Armistice Day "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the Children of God." The child bears the likeness of the parent. God is the God of Peace, Jesus the Prince of Peace, we are to be peacemakers for in so doing we reveal the family likeness. In so doing we are blessed.

Wherever there is tension; animosity and conflict a peacemaker is needed – can you ever be the one?.

Mr Allingham, one of the last British Veterans of the 1st World War, said, "War's stupid. Nobody wins. You might as well talk first, you have to talk last anyway."

If only there were the peacemakers who can talk first and be listened to by all.