

## FAMILY VALUES

Gen 27

### FAMILY RULES

- Children must be in bed by 8pm
- Muddy boots must be taken off at the door
- Mum does the cooking
- Dad does the washing up
- **Always tell the truth**

Essential rule. If people lie then family members cannot trust each other  
No security

### STORY: THE TWINS PART 2

Ian was angry. His twin brother Duncan had tricked him into giving Duncan a valuable antique car and he felt cheated.

Duncan thought that he had got one over on his brother. But Ian could not forgive the underhand way in which Duncan had gained possession of the old Morris.

Time went by. Bad feelings festered. But then their father, Stan, told Ian that he had changed his will and left the family house to Ian. He was to keep it a secret. Nobody was to know, especially his mother Elspeth and brother Duncan. That made Ian feel better. He would be the winner in the end.

About that time Elspeth was going through some of Stan's papers, trying to tidy up the lounge drawers when she came upon Stan's will. She knew he had drawn up a will a few years back. Stan had told her that everything would be divided equally between Elspeth and the two sons.

She opened the will just to satisfy her curiosity about the details and was surprised to find that Ian would inherit the house. Elspeth would be able to stay on in the house, but it would belong to Ian. This alarmed her because she knew the reckless way in which Ian treated his money and possessions. She decided to take matters into her own hands. She rang Duncan immediately, told him about the will and asked him if he could do something about it.

Duncan told her that a codicil was all that was required to change the details of a previous will. But he knew he would never get his father to sign an codicil bequeathing the house to either his mother or to him.

Elsbeth, however, thought she could see how it could be done. Duncan attended to his father's paperwork because Stan had inoperable cataracts and glaucoma and was now too blind to read. What if Duncan prepared a codicil and asked Stan to sign it? Stan would not know the details of what he was signing. Duncan would say it was simply an amendment to leave the old kitchen sideboard to Stan's sister Doris who had developed a keen eye for antiques. There was still the problem of the witness of course but the local postie, Davie, could be asked to sign while having his flycup in the kitchen one morning. Davie was an obliging old soul who would do anything to help people out.

At first Duncan was afraid that he would get into trouble. He thought that maybe he would be found out, that Stan would see something suspicious in his actions. However Elspeth persuaded him that the plan was fool-proof.

And so together they wrote the codicil wording it carefully to leave the house in the sole possession of Duncan. Stan was then asked to sign it one morning in the presence of Davie the postie. Just before he signed it Stan asked Duncan to read the codicil, just to make sure that everything was in order. Duncan's hands went clammy and he could feel the blood rushing to his face. What was he to do now? Should he own up to the deception? He decided instead to make up the wording concerning the sideboard as he went along, pretending to read them. When he was finished Stan said that it all sounded fine to him and then he signed on the line where Duncan indicated. Davie then witnessed Stan's signature and the conversation soon moved on to the recent exploits of Stan's favourite son Ian.

A year later the storm blew up. Stan died and Elspeth, Ian and Duncan were at the solicitors for the reading of the will. Ian was completely taken by aback. His father had told him he would inherit the house. He couldn't understand why

Stan had changed his mind. And then the truth dawned on him. He had been tricked once again. He was very angry and threatened to bring a court action against Duncan.

Elsbeth was distraught. She felt the only way out was for Duncan to get out of the way for a while, to go as far as possible from Ian. Maybe in time he would forget what had happened. She had a brother in Australia, a sheep farmer with thousands of acres of outback where Duncan could lose himself in for a few years until the heat had died down. And so Duncan booked the next flight and set off for Australia.

### **JACOB'S FAMILY Gen 27**

Isaac is old and nearly blind

Rebecca and Isaac have lost the love they once had for each other

Esau & Jacob grown men.

Jealousy developed into hate

**Family values** were selfish values. ***"Look after your own interests"***

### **ISAAC**

May not have known that Esau sold his inheritance for a hot dinner 20 years before. But he did know that God had promised his blessing to Jacob

***Gen 25:23 "The older will serve the younger"***

Esau was his favourite son so Isaac tried to bypass God's plan

The blessing of his elder son should have been publically witnessed, like the making of a will.

He should have had a blessing reserved for his other son too

Instead he took Esau aside and arranged to give him all the blessings he could think of

He did it secretly, privately, before the others had a chance to complain

## **ESAU**

Esau did not object to this

He had been planning for a long time to get his own back on Jacob, so he went along with Isaac's plan, even though he knew the inheritance was no longer really his

But Jacob was too quick for him and stole the blessing while Esau was out hunting

When he realized he had been tricked Esau decided to kill Jacob

## **REBECCA**

Notice how Rebecca was listening at the keyhole as Isaac talked to Esau

When truth goes from a family no one trusts anyone else

She could have reminded Isaac of God's promise

Instead she hatched a plan of her own. She took advantage of Isaac's blindness to obtain the blessing for Jacob, her favourite son

If she had trusted God's promise, Jacob would have been blessed anyway

But Rebecca used trickery to try and make sure

But Rebecca paid dearly for the deception. She never saw Jacob again

## **JACOB**

Jacob was quick to fall in with his mother's plan. He wasn't worried about the lies he had to tell

He didn't mind deceiving his father or tricking his brother

He was only worried about what would happen if he got caught out (v.12)

Esau was right when he pointed out the Jacob's name meant "deceiver" (v.36)

Jacob got his father's blessing but the cost was high

He had to flee for his life

Perhaps if they had learned to really trust God they would have been able to learn to trust each other

Last week we saw how the problems started with favouritism and greed

Add to that secrecy, deceit and hatred

The end result was the breakup of the family

Jesus came to set people free from destructive patterns of behaviour  
First by offering us forgiveness so we don't need to be stuck in the past  
Second by giving us his Spirit living within us to give us the power to change from the inside

**Ep 4:22-32** we see how this works out in practice

Like getting rid of old clothes and putting on new clothes

#### **OLD CLOTHES**

Lies

Anger

Steal

Harmful words

Bitterness

Insults

Hateful feelings

#### **NEW CLOTHES**

Truth

Resolve disagreements

Honest work

Helpful words

Kind

Tender-hearted

Forgive

#### **STORY: THE TWINS**

Could the story have had a happy ending?

What could the family members have done differently?

Stan, Elspeth, Duncan, Ian

#### **JESUS GIVES US NEW FAMILY VALUES**

Whether in the home, the church or in society, values can change from "look out for your own interests" to "look out for one another's interests, not just your own"

Jesus teaches us how to be a family

Loving one another with the love that he gives

#### **Ep 4:32**

***Be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ***

