

## Genesis 25:19-34

19 These are the descendants of Isaac,  
Abraham's son:

Abraham was the father of Isaac,  
<sup>20</sup>and Isaac was forty years old  
when he married Rebekah,  
daughter of Bethuel the Aramean  
of Paddan-aram,  
sister of Laban the Aramean.

<sup>21</sup>Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife,  
because she was barren;  
and the LORD granted his prayer,  
and his wife Rebekah conceived.

<sup>22</sup>The children struggled together within her;  
and she said,

'If it is to be this way,  
why do I live?'

So she went to inquire of the LORD.

<sup>23</sup>And the LORD said to her,

'Two nations are in your womb,  
and two peoples born of you shall be divided;

one shall be stronger than the other,  
the elder shall serve the younger.'

<sup>24</sup>When her time to give birth was at hand,  
there were twins in her womb.

<sup>25</sup>The first came out red,  
all his body like a hairy mantle;  
so they named him Esau.

<sup>26</sup>Afterwards his brother came out,  
with his hand gripping Esau's heel;  
so he was named Jacob.

Isaac was sixty years old  
when she bore them.

<sup>27</sup>When the boys grew up,  
Esau was a skilful hunter,  
a man of the field,  
while Jacob was a quiet man,  
living in tents.

<sup>28</sup>Isaac loved Esau,  
because he was fond of game;  
but Rebekah loved Jacob.

<sup>29</sup>Once when Jacob was cooking a stew,  
Esau came in from the field,  
and he was famished.

<sup>30</sup>Esau said to Jacob,  
'Let me eat some of that red stuff,  
for I am famished!'  
(Therefore he was called Edom.)

<sup>31</sup>Jacob said,  
'First sell me your birthright.'

<sup>32</sup>Esau said,  
'I am about to die;  
of what use is a birthright to me?'

<sup>33</sup>Jacob said,  
'Swear to me first.'

So he swore to him,  
and sold his birthright to Jacob.

<sup>34</sup>Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew,  
and he ate and drank,  
and rose and went his way.

Thus Esau despised his birthright.

### **Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

That same day  
Jesus went out of the house  
and sat beside the lake.

<sup>2</sup>Such great crowds  
gathered around him  
that he got into a boat  
and sat there,  
while the whole crowd  
stood on the beach.

<sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables,  
saying:

'Listen!  
A sower went out to sow.

<sup>4</sup>And as he sowed,  
some seeds fell on the path,  
and the birds came and ate them up.

<sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground,  
where they did not have much soil,

and they sprang up quickly,  
since they had no depth of soil.

<sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose,  
they were scorched;  
and since they had no root,  
they withered away.

<sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns,  
and the thorns grew up  
and choked them.

<sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil  
and brought forth grain,  
some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

<sup>9</sup>Let anyone with ears listen!

... ..

18 'Hear then the parable of the sower.

<sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom  
and does not understand it,  
the evil one comes  
and snatches away  
what is sown in the heart;  
this is what was sown on the path.

<sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground,  
this is the one who hears the word  
and immediately receives it with joy;

<sup>21</sup>yet such a person has no root,  
but endures only for a while,  
and when trouble or persecution arises  
on account of the word,  
that person immediately falls away.

<sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns,  
this is the one who hears the word,  
but the cares of the world  
and the lure of wealth  
choke the word,  
and it yields nothing.

<sup>23</sup>But as for what was sown on good soil,  
this is the one  
who hears the word  
and understands it,  
who indeed bears fruit  
and yields,  
in one case a hundredfold,  
in another sixty,  
and in another thirty.'

### **Reading Torah this Week**

I'm off on study this week,  
online with a prof out of Yale, teaching in Vancouver,  
self-identified as Chicano

The course is on Deuteronomy,  
but the lens is 'racial/ethnic worldviews'  
applicable to at least the whole of Torah

The lectionary starts into a new cycle of legends,  
the stories of Jacob-Israel, father of 12 sons/tribes  
the origin stories of the tribes of Israel

This week is the *toledot* of Isaac  
more than a genealogy of one family,  
the names applying to places, peoples, events, relationships

Remembering Rebekah's Aramean roots  
we're given the origins of 2 nations of Israel and Judah,

and their neighbour to the south, Edom

With whom do you identify in the story  
as a reading strategy – as a prayer -  
and to avoid liberal academic distancing?

If we tell this story in David and Solomon's time,  
we're acknowledging tensions to result in civil war  
and divided kingdoms after their 2 generations

If we retell this story in exile,  
Israel 750 BCE to Assyria, Judah 600 BCE to Babylon  
hindsight of the tensions changes our perspective

In later retrospective, what is the word,  
to acknowledge fraternal tensions,  
not simply personal but ethnic or racialized,  
and their tragic consequences?

Perhaps you'll get hints,  
from the preacher(s) online this Sunday,  
who follow this text from the lectionary!

### **Reading the Gospel this Week**

We're continuing Jesus' Galilean ministry in Matthew,  
with Matthew's version of the parable of the sower  
the first part 1-9 matching Mark 4:1-9 and Luke 8:4-9

The lectionary cuts the next 'post-it' note  
which doesn't match Mark and Luke next bits as cleanly,  
then returns to 'interpretation' of the parable

If you have memories from the last century,  
modern liberal preachers and Sunday schools,  
you'll know the 'interpretation' better than the parable

One level of the tradition,  
the evangelists a generation after Jesus  
are already adding allegorical and metaphorical reading  
or at least amplifying it

Other parables near this one in Matthew, and in other gospels,  
don't get the 'explanation', and stand on their own,  
as *mashal* simply presenting contrasting elements,  
inviting reflection on paradox, difference

What if we only had a parable,  
without its metaphorical and allegorical 'interpretation' –  
would you hear a different word?

I'm spending the week in Stratford,  
watching plays I've seen before, others from books I read –  
I'm increasingly struck, over decades,  
by how production, direction, casting and acting matter –  
not to mention the audience and context of any staging

It's the same with scripture... isn't it?  
that's why I keep asking about your mental movie,  
and increasingly, 'what would you preach'?

anyhow, see what the online preacher(s) make of it,  
those who use the lectionary this week,  
while I'm on holiday in Stratford...

See you again next week, online Thursday, onsite on Sunday!