

Series: **Stronger**

Topic: **Strength to Change Your Story**

Date: **Sunday, 7th January, 2018**

Our lives always look like a narrative, a narrative that may be attached to where you are from, the experiences you have had, the kind of education you have received, the places you have worked at and such other circumstances. Sometimes we think we have to stick with the narratives surrounding us but God specializes in changing narratives and a good time for such a shift is when seasons are changing; the New Year, for instance, is a good time to ask what element of your narrative you need to change. Bear in mind that in 2018, you must not treat the word of God with laxity but you should regularly read, study, meditate and declare it because stocking up on the word of God is vital to gaining strength.

Genesis 25:22-40, 27, 32 & 33:1-18 is a powerful showcase of how stories can change when God is involved in a person's narrative. It starts with a struggle...

“But the children struggled together within her; and she said, “If all is well, why am I like this?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her: “Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.” So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob...” – Genesis 25:22-26

Verse 23 shows us that there are different kinds of people on earth – the weak and the strong or the strong and the stronger. This message also meant, by implication, that her older child would be the weaker of her two children and Rebecca kept the message to heart, willing to play a part towards ‘helping’ the word come to pass.

As we explore the personalities of Esau and Jacob, we see distinct differences; Esau knew he came out first, in a time where the firstborn had the birth right, inheriting all of his father's properties, with an attached blessing. Many of us have to reject the Esau mentality; Esau knew he had both of these powerful privileges and became complacent while Jacob stayed on his toes looking for how to get a piece of the pie. While Esau was complacent, Jacob kept his mind alert to possible opportunities to *better* his lot, with a sudden opportunity presenting itself one day while he cooked a lentil stew (Genesis 25:29). The lure of Jacob's red stew was so strong for Esau that the matters of birthright and destiny were of no importance to him at the time. In fact, Esau's younger brother knew him well enough to risk negotiating for his birthright (verses 31- 34).

“Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.” - Hebrews 12:16

Esau was called a fornicator because of his action of ‘selling’ his birthright; he exhibited a bad case of irresponsibility. We each need to take responsibility for the fulfilment of our destinies by understanding and doing the things that need to be done and actively working the talents and gifts in our possession.

The fact that it is a new year does not mean that all things automatically become new, you have to make it new, to push for newness to happen in your life. Esau was so complacent, Isaac had to be the one to call him to do certain actions that would provoke his blessing upon him as the firstborn son (Genesis 27:1-4) when he should have been alert to the possibility and pushed for its happening; he could have actively put himself in the flow of receiving what should have been his by being prepared. His complacency and irresponsibility made him waste time in the bush, thereby missing out on a wonderful and powerful opportunity (verse 5). May you not be in the bush when your opportunities come knocking and may God capacitate you for your opportunities every day of 2018.

Esau missed his second opportunity at entering into his greatness (verses 24-30). It is when you are not sensitive to purpose, destiny and the things of God that such things can happen. The good thing is that when Esau realized his missed opportunities, things began to change:

1. Esau started to realize that he could rewrite his story (verse 34); similarly, in spite of your mistakes, you can rewrite your story and the fact that your life is headed in a direction does not mean you cannot change it.
2. Esau developed a hunger and passion for new opportunities (verses 34-37); that complacency he had been exhibiting was broken and he refused to settle for nothing. Thank God for the fact that opportunities abound with God, in spite of past mistakes, if you return to and trust God you will get opportunities to rebound and recover what was lost.
3. Esau realized and started to develop respect for little things, as seen from the way he repeatedly asked his father for a blessing (verse 38-40) – any blessing; he was willing to take the crumbs of his father’s blessings to at least give him an edge and not leave his situation completely hopeless. In 2018, there will be no agonizing cry in your life because you will not miss your opportunities. Isaac indeed started to pronounce a blessing on his son Esau. Do not be carried away by the possibilities of the blessing however, because the ‘fancifulness’ or ‘beauties’ of a blessing do not guarantee a change; an online search for instance will reveal the ‘natural resource curse’ where the poorest nations of the world are blessed with natural resources but are still in debilitating conditions. The real deal in Isaac’s declaration over Esau was the statement that would lead to the desired change (verse 40), that when he became restless he would break free from his yoke of servitude. The root word for ‘restless’ in Hebrew means ‘to move to and fro, be uneasy, continually moving, eager for change, to have dominion, to take charge and take control.’

You need to be mindful of the yoke you carry, that burdensome situation that restricts you and controls your life’s direction, such as the irresponsibility and complacency identified with Esau above, or some unlikely things such as a wrong belief system, a prevalent mindset, predetermined paths (the son of a pastor or doctor expected to become a pastor or doctor when it’s not in line with purpose), a bad experience or current realities like indebtedness, an underprivileged background.

Through all these, remember that there is a stronger reality with God and that ‘what is written is more important than what is happening or what people say’ (Matthew 4:4). It is extremely important that we understand that we can change our stories. May the strength of God come on you to break every yoke and restart you on a better path! In Genesis 33 we see that all turned out well; as Jacob left his father-in-law to head home with his family and possessions, he eventually met with his brother and we see that the yoke of servitude on Esau was already broken (verse 9).

Prayer

Lord I receive strength to change every negative narrative in my life, grace to be restless and stay on my toes, alert for new opportunities, and grace to be watchful and control my appetite; I will not let go of what you have given me, I break away from negative predetermined paths; I also break free from every yoke and change my narrative for the best.