

Sermon Series: The Strong Family —Lord of Life Lutheran Church—5/21/2000

Title: “When brothers and sisters battle”

Text: Genesis 25: 20-34

Introduction: ILLUS.: FAMILY FEUDING

Theme: Feuding in the home is inevitable because of our fallen, sinful nature. Yet, committing to live together in the reconciling power of Jesus helps to heal the wounds and cement the bonds of relationships.

• ***Three Scriptural principles that apply to family combat in the home***

1. No family is unique when it comes to the presence of sibling rivalry
 - “Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah. . . Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. When the children inside her were struggling with each other, she said, “If it’s like this now, what will become of me?” Gen. 2: 20-22
 - Avoiding the dysfunction of guilt in dealing with sibling rivalry when it rears its ugly head
 - Remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience.” 1 Cor.10: 13a
2. No family is immune from sibling rivalry
 - So Rebekah went to ask the Lord. The Lord said to her, “Two countries are in your womb. Two nations will go their separate ways from birth. One nation will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.” When the time came for her to give birth, she had twins. Gen 25: 23-24
 - “If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into sin.” 1 Corinthians 10:12
3. We need a solution outside of ourselves to survive and escape the destruction of intra-family warring
 - Jacob and Rebekah prayed about everything early on but later got lazy in their prayer life and paid price
 - What is your family’s devotional and prayer life like?
 - When the “*peace of Christ rules in our hearts*” and “*the word of Christ richly dwell among us*”(Col.3:15,16) many of the harsh attitudes and actions are softened by the convicting and convincing presence of Christ

• ***Recognizing and addressing the warning signs of unhealthy competition among the family***

1. Valuing one family member’s set of traits or skills with a higher acceptance than another
 - The first one born was red. His whole body was covered with hair, so they named him Esau . Afterwards, his brother was born with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, and so he was named Jacob. They grew up. Esau became an expert hunter, an outdoorsman. Jacob remained a quiet man, staying around the tents. Gen. 25: 25-27
 - Every family member is a unique and special creation of God’s family, Christ’s family, and your family
2. Picking favorites based upon selfish or unrealized life fantasies
 - Isaac was 60 years old when they were born. . . Because Isaac liked to eat the meat of wild animals, he loved Esau. However, Rebekah loved Jacob. Gen. 25: 26, 28
 - Avoiding generational sin (*I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children on the third and fourth generation of those who hate me. Exodus 20:5*)
3. Forming unholy alliances within the home
 - However, Rebekah loved Jacob. Gen. 25: 28
 - **ILLUS.: TORNADO JONES**
 - But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another. Gal. 5: 15
4. Green-eye syndrom begins to take root within the home
 - Once, Jacob was preparing a meal when Esau, exhausted, came in from outdoors. So Esau said to Jacob, “Let me have the whole pot of red stuff to eat. . . Jacob responded, “First, sell me your rights as firstborn. . . swear an oath,” Jacob said. So Esau swore an oath to him and sold him his rights as firstborn. Then Jacob gave Esau a meal of bread and lentils. He ate and drank, and then he got up and left. Gen 25: 29-33
 - **ILLUS.: WASTED ENERGY**
5. Devaluing of your spiritual base
 - “I’m about to die.” Esau said. “What good is my inheritance to me? . . .This is how Esau showed his contempt for his rights as firstborn. Gen 25: 32, 34

• ***Remembering God’s perspective, plan, and promise to find a solution to family feuding***

1. Taking on **God’s perspective**--see each family member as redeemed members of Christ’s and your family
 - **ILLUS.: REMEMBERING WHO THE ENEMY IS**
2. Waiting on **God’s plan** to play itself out in your life journey and that of your family members
 - Unlike Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, and Jacob—“Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him, and he shall act.” Ps 37: 5
 - Always giving your brother or sister or family member more grace than you need yourself—**limitless!**

FAMILY FEUDING

Clovis Chappell, a minister from a century back, used to tell the story of two paddleboats. They left Memphis about the same time, traveling down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. As they traveled side by side, sailors from one vessel made a few remarks about the snail's pace of the other. Words were exchanged. Challenges were made. And the race began. Competition became vicious as the two boats roared through the Deep South.

One boat began falling behind. Not enough fuel. There had been plenty of coal for the trip, but not enough for a race. As the boat dropped back, an enterprising young sailor took some of the ship's cargo and tossed it into the ovens. When the sailors saw that the supplies burned as well as the coal, they fueled their boat with the material they had been assigned to transport. They ended up winning the race, but burned their cargo.

God has entrusted cargo to us, too: children, spouses, friends. Our job is to do our part in seeing that this cargo reaches its destination. Yet when the program takes priority over people, people often suffer. How much cargo do we sacrifice in order to achieve the number one slot? How many people never reach the destination because of the aggressiveness of a competitive captain?

[In the Eye of the Storm by Max Lucado Word Publishing, 1991 Page 97-98](#)

WASTED ENERGY

Stan Mikita, a professional hockey star, used to get into a lot of fights during games. He stopped when his eight-year-old daughter asked a very grown-up question: "How can you score goals when you're always in the penalty box, Daddy?"

REMEMBERING WHO THE ENEMY IS

A couple of navy stories may help illustrate the sad result of internal strife and the positive result of unity. Two battleships met in the night and began to attack each other. In the conflict, a number of crewmen were severely wounded, and both vessels were damaged. As daylight broke, the sailors on the ships discovered to their amazement that both vessels flew the English flag. Many years earlier, just before the battle of Trafalgar in 1805, the British naval hero Lord Nelson learned that an admiral and a captain in his fleet were not on good terms. Sending for the two men, he placed the hands of the admiral and the captain together. Then, looking them both in the face, he said, "Look--yonder is the enemy!"