

Foundation Doctrines

Lesson Th122 – 17 Laying on of Hands: Imparting a Blessing

The wedding had been a beautiful event. Everyone had worn their finest clothes and the bride was breathtaking in her wedding garb. Family and friends had gathered together for a time of celebration and feasting. But before the guests began to eat, an elderly man made his way to the front of the celebration and stood before the bride and groom. It was the bride's grandfather. Everyone bowed their heads with respect as he placed his hands upon the bride's and groom's heads. Then he began to pray: "In the name of the Father, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and in the name of the Son Jesus Christ..." The patriarch of the family began to bless them and their marriage.

The tradition of imparting a blessing through the laying on of hands can be traced back into ancient history. The tradition of the father blessing his son is common in many cultures to this day. It is an important rite in a young man's passage into adulthood. This is the first lesson of the fourth foundation doctrine: Laying on of Hands. It will discuss the laying on of hands to impart a blessing.

We read about a father imparting a blessing to his sons in the book of Genesis. There were two brothers who desperately wanted their father's blessing. The extremes that they went to reveal how important they felt this blessing would be.

Now Rebekah had given her husband, Isaac, twin sons. Although the two boys were twins, they were nothing alike. The elder brother had been born just minutes before the younger. Esau was everything a father would expect in an elder son. The boy grew into a strong man who loved to hunt and do things that typically would make a father proud. His younger brother, Jacob, was not big and strong nor interested in hunting. Rather, Jacob enjoyed spending time with his mother, cooking and doing things around the camp. As you might imagine, Isaac grew to love Esau and Rebecca loved the younger son, Jacob. This caused a lot of tension between the two boys.

Now it came about, that Isaac grew old and his eyes became too dim to see. One day he called his older son Esau and said to him, "My son. Behold now, I am old and I do not know the day of my death. Now then, please take your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt some wild game for me. Prepare the meat for me in the way I love. Then bring it to me that I may eat, so I may give you my blessing before I die."

Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau. He is going to give your brother a blessing before he dies. Now my son, go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats. I will cook them and prepare a meal that your father will love. Then you shall bring it to your father that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death."

But Jacob was afraid and said, “Esau my brother is a hairy man and I have a smooth skin. Perhaps my father will touch my arm and discover my deceit. He will then curse me.”

But his mother said to him, “Your curse be on me, my son. Just obey my voice; go and get them for me.” So he went and got them, and brought them to his mother. She made some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which she had in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck.

So Jacob, wearing his brother’s clothes, with goat skin on his hands and neck, took the food to his blind father saying, “My father.”

And Isaac 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. Get up, please. Sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me.”

Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?”

And Jacob replied, “The Lord your God gave me success.”

Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come close, that I may touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.” So Jacob came close to Isaac his father who reached out and felt him then said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” Again Isaac said, “Are you really my son Esau?”

And Jacob said, “I am.”

So he said, “Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son’s game, that I may bless you.” So Isaac ate the food and drank the wine that Jacob had brought him. Then Isaac said to him, “Please come close and kiss me, my son.” So Jacob came close and kissed him; and when Isaac recognized the smell of Esau’s garments, he blessed Jacob and said,

See, the smell of my son
Is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed;
Now may God give you of the dew of heaven,
And of the fatness of the earth,
And an abundance of grain and new wine.
May peoples serve you,
And nations bow down to you.
Be master of your brothers,
And may your mother’s sons bow down to you.
Cursed be those who curse you,
And blessed be those who bless you.

Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, he went out from the presence of Isaac his father. Just then, Esau came in from his hunting. After preparing the food

he went in to his father saying, “Father, arise and eat of your son’s game, that you may bless me.”

Isaac said to him, “Who are you?”

And he answered, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.”

Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, “Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.”

When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me, *even* me also, O my father!”

Then Isaac said, “Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing.”

Then Esau pleaded, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Please bless me also, my father.” So, Esau lifted his voice and wept.

Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling,
And away from the dew of heaven from above.
By your sword you shall live,
And your brother you shall serve.
But it shall come about when you become restless,
That you will break his yoke from your neck.

So, Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him (Gen 27:1-41).

With our mouths, we can either bless or curse. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit our words have meaning and carry with them power. The apostle Paul tells us to “bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.... Do not repay anyone evil for evil....Overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:14, 17, 21).

We should always follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. We should never be quick to lay hands on anyone and give them a blessing. Rather we should be led by God’s Spirit. When he leads us to lay hands upon a person and speak a blessing into their lives, we are speaking the words of God. God’s words will accomplish what he desires and achieve the purpose for which they were spoken (Isa 55:11).

This story is **important** because it shows how God views speaking blessing into another person’s life, by the laying on of hands.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that at times the Holy Spirit may lead you to lay hands on a person to impart a blessing upon them. God will give you the words to say and will also fulfill the purpose for which they were spoken.

Let's **review** a few points from this lesson:

1. How can we impart a blessing to another? [Pause 5 seconds]
 - A. If you said that we can lay hands on them and speak a blessing over them, then you are correct.
2. Whom did Isaac bless? [Pause 5 seconds]
 - A. If you said that Isaac pronounced a blessing on Jacob and Esau, you are correct.
3. Why should we be careful in laying hands on people and pronouncing blessings? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that words are powerful and that we should be led by the Spirit, then you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to this lesson as many times as is necessary to learn the story. Then, pray and ask God to lead you by His Holy Spirit to find someone to lay hands upon and to speak a blessing into their life.