

2022-06-26 ... 6.30pm Evensong Sermon ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt

Genesis 27: 1 – 40; Mark 6: 1 – 6

'Who do you think you are?'

Introduction ...

Who do you think you are?

A question that can be asked with a variety of different emphases and in a range of tones of voice. And it's a phrase that came to mind for both of our Bible readings.

Who do you think you are? Said with some hostility or sarcasm or astonishment ... very much the response in Nazareth to Jesus ... in our New Testament reading.

Who do you think you are? Said positively – perhaps by those who like that TV series in which celebrities find out about their family tree and the antics (good or bad) of some of their ancestors. And in a way that applies to Jesus too ... from our Old Testament Bible reading as his ancestors include both Isaac and Jacob. As dysfunctional a family as you're likely to find anywhere!

Jacob and Esau ...

The dysfunction did not start with these twins, but as tonight's passage showed – it certainly deepened with them. Their parents – Isaac and Rebekah did not help – they were divided by their favouritism – the father for Esau and the mother for Jacob.

Before this passage, Esau had already sold his birthright to Jacob for food when he was hungry ... yet he didn't seem to have taken in that consequences would follow.

Jacob – and his mother – were prepared to trick a vulnerable old man – and to manipulate him by lying and by speaking falsely about God.

In Jesus' human family tree there is a great deal of deception – perhaps most obviously in Jacob ... but before him – and after him – think of the way his 11 sons deceived him about the 12th – Joseph.

A **'Who do you think you are?'** programme on Jesus would probably take this ancient 'deception' as its main theme. But – if it did – it would miss the main point ... **God still at work amidst the deception ...** and sometimes even through the deception.

Jacob does often turn to God for help ... though does not always change his behaviour after receiving that help. God doesn't give up on Jacob and his family despite their family trait of deception.

Every Jewish person in Jesus' day ... and still today would be familiar with this part of their history ... and yet that human tendency to judge people ... on background, or education, or accent, or clothes ... hairstyle ... and so that tendency is hard to get rid of.

PTO

So hard that those people in Nazareth could on the one hand be astounded by the teaching of Jesus ... and on the other hand – be offended by him ... offended into unbelief.

Conclusion ...

What then, might God want to say to each of us from tonight's passages?

Perhaps something about our family of origin and about God's work within it or despite it?

Perhaps something about Jesus understanding what it's like to be criticised by those close to him?

Perhaps something about our attitude to others – recognising gifts may be done without full affirmation of the person?

Let's have a short time of quiet for reflection ...