

**LIVES THAT REMIND US ABOUT GOD - Meeting Yourself In The Sacred Text - Part two - Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
**Pastor Don Horban - Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, ON**

**Esau - The Danger of a Profane Mind**

**Genesis 25:29-34 - "Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. [30] And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.) [31] Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." [32] Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" [33] Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. [34] Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. "**

Esau is still known as the prime example of a person who made one of the poorest trades in recorded history. He gave away something very precious for something very cheap. But he doesn't **see** how poor this choice is when he makes it. Here we have a tremendous message for the Church today.

- 1) **ESAU ILLUSTRATES VIVIDLY THE DECEPTIVENESS OF OUR DESIRES - 25:32 - "Esau said, 'I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?'"** - Esau was convinced that if he did not get what we wanted ***right away*** he would die. True, he was hungry. But he would not have died while getting something else to eat.

***The intensity of the desire did not justify the foolishness of his actions.*** Esau gave in to the ***exaggeration of his hunger*** because it seemed to ***justify what he wanted to do.***

Esau allowed the ***pressure of the moment*** to ***twist his perspective*** and make his decision seem more urgent. We all experience similar situations - the ***apparent urgency of the need for love and companionship is allowed to crowd out the need for a marriage ceremony and license*** - the ***urgency of the desire for revenge makes us justify our meanness and cruelty***. It is difficult for most of us to remember that our self-centred desires seem more righteous and more urgently in need of gratification than they really are.

It is the nature of all of human corruption since the Fall of mankind that our desires lie to us. They draw us by ***counterfeit happiness***. Paul makes this point abundantly clear in **Ephesians 4:17-24** - ***“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. [18] They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. [19] They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. [20] But that is not the way you learned Christ!— [21] assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, [22] to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”***

One of the first marks of a renewed mind is the capacity to recognize that our own desires are liars inside our own skins.

- 2) **THE SIN OF ESAU - Hebrews 12:16-17** - “(See to it) **that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. [17] For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.**”

The writer uses two words to describe Esau's character:

- a) **“sexually immoral”(12:16)** - Though sexual immorality is not specifically linked to Esau in our Genesis text, the writer of Hebrews knows he is leading up to the example of Esau, and no sin better typifies the danger of giving in to desires that feel immediately compelling than sexual ones. Esau is ***all body and no soul*** in his thinking. And sexual immorality is the inevitable outcome of such a mind-set.
- b) **“unholy”(12:16)** - This comes from a Greek word literally meaning **“basis”** of **“threshold.”** It refers to something below standard - God’s standard. This is the prime characteristic of Esau. He allows his own desires to silence all other standards of judgment.

This happens. What we **know** is frequently no match for restraining what we **crave**. Desires unguarded will trump the clear will of God for those who haven’t **trained themselves** in Godliness and discipline.

- 3) **ESAU GIVES NO THOUGHT TO THE FUTURE - 25:31-32** - “Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright now.” [32] Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?””

You want to scream out, "Esau, what about tomorrow, when you are hungry all over again and your birthright is forever gone? What part of your soul do you give up next?" But Esau doesn't care about the future. All he can think about is his stomach and a bowl of soup. Jacob knows this and preys on the *present tense* - "**Sell me your birthright now....**"(31).

You have disarmed much of Satan's power when you remember he works exclusively in the *present tense*. Sin is always acute *short-sightedness*. Our fallen desires are always going to be urgent for immediate attention. That's because the spirit of the age knows he only has a limited amount of time to steal our hearts - **1 John 2:15-17** - "**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. [17] And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.**"

This passage is all about the deceitfulness of our own desires. Notice carefully that there isn't a single command about what we *do* in these verses on the perils of sin. It's all about what we *love*. And those desires have a very short shelf-life.

In Jesus we see modelled the exact opposite of this love for the world and the present gratification of desires. And His example is specifically held up for us to copy - **Hebrews 12:1-2** - **“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”**

That joy Jesus looked forward to wasn't experienced in His earthly life. He pressed His heart into the future, eternal realm in the face of His darkest hour and trial.

- 4) **THE PRICE ESAU GOT FOR HIS BIRTHRIGHT -25:34** - **“Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”**

Esau's life can be summed up in the words of this one verse. **“He ate, and drank, arose, and went his way”**. This man is **Abraham's great grandson!** Think of all that has been invested in his family line. How important for each one of us to remember that one day very soon we will be dead and off the scene. How many Christians do you know who will leave little more of importance of their lives behind for others to see than that they **“ate, drank, arose, and went their way”?**

All Esau got for his birthright was **one square meal**. The price you get may vary but the real value doesn't go up all that much. **The smile and approval of friends**, more **money in the bank**, a **better car** or **bigger salary**, perhaps eventually a **mortgage free house**. None of these will count a hoot the day after we're with Jesus.

- 5) **THE DAY CAME WHEN ESAU REGRETTED HIS TRADE - Hebrews 12:17 - “For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.”**

These are truly fascinating words. We should ponder them deeply. It's not that God becomes *unforgiving*. That's *not* what this verse says. It's that *repentance* is out of our reach. This is the final price of building a world-view - a reference point - without God. Such thinking becomes habitual. It moves beyond your control to turn on or off. Bad choices don't just *enter* your system and *leave*. Sin isn't like a bowl of soup. Sin *changes* you permanently inside.

How easy it is to think that we all have the power to turn to the sins we commit and say *"Now, be gone. I am finished with you!"*. But they turn and say to us, *"Yes, but I am not finished with you."* Eventually what Esau wanted back more than his *birthright* was a *repentant heart*. So it is in all of our lives. They pass with blinding speed. Bad choices are so much easier to make than good ones. We need to gear our actions toward eternity. We need to make each day count for God.

Remember **Romans 13:11-14** - **“Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. [12] The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. [13] Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. [14] But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”**

How different Easu's life could have been if he had those words on a cheat-sheet that hot afternoon when he smelled Jacob's soup. Paul says it's not daytime quite yet, but get ready for it. Choose today with your eyes on the dawn of God's eternal righteousness, not the whining, pressing demands of your passions for immediate fulfillment.