

Selling Our Birthright

Introduction. The story of Esau and Jacob is a fascinating one (Genesis 25:27-34). Esau sold his birthright for the gratification of fleshly lusts (Hebrews 12:14-17). We would not think of selling a heritage left to us by our parents, yet many of us are selling a far greater and more precious heritage, the birthright given to us by God.

Like Esau, we are selling our birthrights for earthly pleasure. The story of Esau's rejection of his birthright is an example that God's choice of Jacob over Esau did not run contrary to the wishes of either. Esau "despised" his birthright, while Jacob went to great lengths to gain it. Esau, though he had the right of the firstborn, did not value it over a small bowl of stew. Thus, when in God's plan Esau lost his birthright and consequently his blessing, there was no injustice dealt him. There are some very pertinent points to be made from this story.

I. ***The Inheritance Of Christians***

A. How is this inheritance obtained?

1. By being members of God's family (Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 4:7).
 - a) One is born into God's family by obeying the gospel (John 3:3-5; Galatians 3:27; Romans 1:5).
 - b) When one is in the family of God, one is also in the church (1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:15).
2. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).
 - a) Salvation is a spiritual blessing and we have just seen that we are baptized into Christ and into the church at the same time.
 - b) Therefore, salvation is in Christ and in the church, since they are tied together.

B. Christians have the greatest birthright.

1. "Inheritance" relates to the prospective possession of a Christian.
 - a) This inheritance is one that God gives to us and which is the object of our hope. So our hope is based upon this inheritance.
 - b) The inheritance is God's in that it comes from Him as its source of origin (Acts 20:32; 26:18; Ephesians 1:11, 14, 18; Colossians 1:12; 1 Peter 1:4).
2. Not only do we have a hope of heaven but we have several very important blessings now in this life.
 - a) The privilege of prayer (Philippians 4:6-7).
 - b) The providential protection of God (Matthew 6:25-34).
 - c) The encouraging fellowship of Christians (Hebrews 10:24; 2 Peter 1:1).
 - d) The memorial of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16).

II. ***How Christians May Sell Their Birthright***

- A. By lusting after the world (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15; 5:19).
- B. By turning from God and trusting in riches (Luke 16:10-15).
- C. By exchanging our good influence for evil (John 18:18).
- D. By ungodly and unrighteous living (Luke 15:11-32; Titus 2:11-12; James 1:27).

III. ***How To Keep Our Inheritance***

- A. We need to hunger for spiritual food (Matthew 4:4; 5:6).
 - 1. Esau was tempted because he was weak with physical hunger.
 - 2. The best opportunity Christians have for spiritual food is worship.
 - a) A lot of Christians are consistent in work, school, buying food, haircuts and exercise. Why are they not consistent in their worship to God for the sake of their souls?
 - b) Christians will treat worship as being in the presence of Christ. They will be attentive, have the appropriate attire and behavior. This is a reverent occasion to be held in high esteem.
- B. We need to love God and trust Him more (John 14:15; Matthew 22:37; 6:33).
 - 1. A lot of Christians would be more diligent if they had a deeper love for God.
 - a) Love for the Lord should cause us to exert great effort in being faithful.
 - b) When Christians are negligent, they are showing that they do not love God.
 - 2. A lot of Christians would be more diligent if they had a deeper faith in God.
 - a) Because they do not fully trust the Lord, I have known of Christians who will take jobs which keep them away from worship.
 - b) If they truly believed in the above passages, they would have the confidence that God would provide no matter what the circumstances.
- C. We need to seriously consider the importance of our inheritance.
 - 1. Esau said, "I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright do to me?"
 - 2. I do not doubt that Esau was hungry, but was he really going to die?
 - a) We face the same challenges as God's children. Temptations arise because the devil is always active. The flesh acquiesces to the mind's desire. The family name is sullied. Our birthright or blessing as His children is casually sold.
 - b) The "stew" may take a variety of forms: virginity is lost, a drink is taken, an angry, hurtful word is spoken, a fist strikes, gossip is

repeated, a mate is forsaken, a child is abandoned, a lie is told, or the conscience is ignored.

Conclusion. I have thought a lot about Esau over the years: the birthright, the blessing, the stew, the sacrifice of long-term gain for short-term gratification, the desire to regain what was bartered, the tears and the rejection. It is not, as the saying goes, a pretty picture. Esau was profane. But what about Christians who sell their birthright? A traitor is obnoxious and reviling. Are we traitors to God?

Sometimes the damage done often cannot be undone. Yes, we can be forgiven (1 John 1:8-10). Through repentance and confession, we can save ourselves from an eternity in hell (Mark 9:44, 46, 48). Thank God that is true. But remember two points. First, the consequences of our deeds may well last a lifetime -- our lifetime and the lifetime of those we affect. Second, our Father deserves something better from His children. Let us always have the strength to follow after what is right and good.