“All for a Bowl of Pottage”

Genesis 25:25-34

11/29/98



Introduction:

Hebrews 12:15-17

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; [16] Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. [17] For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

*** Don’t trade what God gave you for a “bowl of soup”!**

Some Spiritual Lessons from the “Profane” man – Esau:

I. The “profane” man lives for the <u>gratification of natural</u> <u>appetites</u> with little or no regard for God’s will.

II. The “profane” man relinquishes things of <u>lasting value</u> for <u>momentary pleasures</u>

III. The “profane” man acts on <u>impulse</u> with <u>no patience to wait</u> for God to meet his needs in His way and in His time.

IV. The “profane” man makes <u>hasty decisions</u> without considering the <u>long-term ramifications</u> of his choice.

V. The “profane” man lives for the <u>present</u> (“the Now”) not for the <u>future</u> (the temporal over the eternal)

VI. The “profane” man esteems the <u>physical & visible</u> over the <u>spiritual & invisible</u>

VII. The “profane” man walks away <u>unconcerned about the consequences</u> of his actions, but in the end reaps a bitter reward.

"All for a Bowl of Pottage"



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Introduction: vv.25-34-

A Sunday school teacher asked if any scholar recollected an instance in Scripture of anyone making a bad bargain.

"I do," replied a boy, "Esau made a bad bargain when he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage."

A second said, "Judas made a bad bargain when he sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver."

A third replied, "Ananias and Saphira made a bad bargain when they sold their land and then told Peter a falsehood about it."

A fourth observed. "Our Lord tells us that he makes a bad bargain who, to gain the whole world, loses his own soul."

—Children's Friend

v. 25
Everything about Esau was **"red"**. He had a reddish, hairy body, ate red lentil soup, would later be named *"Edom"* (which means red), and the country of Edom was a red, mountainous area with a rose-colored rocky city called Petra.

v. 26
"Jacob" means "heel grabber" or "conniving trickster."

It is amazing how even from birth tendencies about character are evident.

v. 27
One son (Esau) enjoyed the rugged <u>outdoors</u> while the other (Jacob) was a cultured <u>domesticated</u> type.

"Esau is the sportsman, rough, wild, free, boisterous, and exciting; Jacob is the settled man, stable, quiet, thoughtful, and civilized." (Ross, p. 448)

v. 28
Warning to parents: Beware of showing <u>favoritism</u> toward any of your children.

Isaac favored Esau because of the benefits he derived from him. He ate of his deer-meat.

We should not love our children based on the personal benefits we derive from them. Self-gratification and natural senses formed the reason why Isaac loved Esau.

v. 29
"Sod pottage" – boiled a thick soup of red lentils.

v. 30
"Feed me" – It conveys the basic idea of "gulping down food" (Ross, p. 450).

v. 31
While Esau is called a "cunning hunter" (v. 27), this passage really shows "the superior hunting ability of Jacob. The (so-called) cunning hunter fell into a better hunter's trap, becoming prey to his own (animal-like) appetites." (Ross, p. 449)

Jacob seems prepared (ready) for the business deal; it seems he "cooked up" this scheme prior to Esau's return home.

He laid the trap and Esau fell into it.

Jacob takes advantage of his brother's desperate desire for food and offers a trade: a meal in exchange for a birthright [not an even exchange].

Define "birthright" –

BIRTHRIGHT
A right, privilege, or possession to which a person, especially the firstborn son, was entitled by birth in Bible times. In Israel, as in the rest of the ancient world, the firstborn son enjoyed a favored position. His birthright included a double portion of his father's assets upon his death <Deut. 21:17>. Part of the firstborn's benefits also were a special blessing from the father and the privilege of leadership of the family <Gen. 43:33>.
The inheritance rights of the firstborn were protected by law, so the father could not give his benefits to a younger son <Deut. 21:15-17>. The firstborn himself, however, could lose the birthright. Because he committed incest with his father's concubine <Gen. 35:22>, Reuben lost his favored position <1 Chr. 5:1-2>, while Esau sold his birthright to his younger brother Jacob for a stew of lentils <Gen. 25:29-34>, or for "one morsel of food" <Heb. 12:16>.
Jesus was both the firstborn of his heavenly Father <John 3:16>, and his earthly mother, Mary <Luke 2:7>; so he enjoyed the rights and privileges of the Jewish birthright. A 1 Christians are His brothers, sharing in His spiritual inheritance <Rom. 8:17>. They are counted as "firstborn" by God's grace <Heb. 12:23>.
(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)
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v. 33
"Swear to me" – Vow with an oath. Oaths were very serious promises, which meant a lot more in those days than one's promises do today.

Our society does not respect words like they did; an oath to them was an irrevocable vow.

v. 34

“Despised” (*baza*) – to treat it as worthless or to hold it in contempt.

“Thus Esau despised his birthright” – In such a manner Esau thought lightly of his spiritual privilege. He traded in a life-long blessing for a bowl of soup!

“There are no winners in this encounter, even though Jacob comes away with the birthright. Neither man is exemplary. On the one hand, we have the profane man, Esau, who considered the spiritual heritage of little value and traded it for the lentil soup. On the other hand, we have the shrewd man, who, although he regarded spiritual things highly, made the cause serve him through manipulation” (Ross, p. 447)

The omniscient God, who knew that Esau would sell his birthright, foretold prior to the birth of the twins that the “elder would serve the younger.” Esau would be subordinate to Jacob.

Hebrews 12:15-17
Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; [16] Lest there be any fornicator, or **profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright**. [17] For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

> According to Hebrews 12:16
> Esau was evidently both a fornicator and a godless man (Gen. 25:27-34; 27:30-45).
>
> He married pagan, unbelieving Hittite women against Isaac and Rebekah's wishes, and no doubt had pre-marital sex.
>
> According to our world's standards, Esau wasn't so bad. He was a good hunter, a man who was congenial to his father, he may have made a fine neighbor -- but he was not interested in the things of God (Wiersbe, p. 142).
>
> ***"Profane" -*** irreverent, or godless; to live a secular life.
>
> To be worldly-minded; to be unconcerned about God's will and ways; to be uninterested in spiritual things.
>
> (The amount of time spent in God's Word and prayer is a barometer of how spiritual you are.)
>
> ***"For one morsel. . . sold his birthright" -*** For one measly meal (to satisfy his impatient appetite), Esau gave up his entitlement to a whole lifetime of privilege and blessing.

* Don’t trade what God gave you for a “bowl of soup”!

Some Spiritual Lessons from the "Profane" man – Esau:

I. The "profane" man lives for the <u>gratification of natural</u> <u>appetites</u> with little or no regard for God's will.

Esau exchanged the lasting benefits and blessings of his birthright for the immediate pleasure of food.

(Many people don't eat to live, rather they live to eat. How much does food mean to you? Obviously, we need it to survive but it should never be more important to us than God or His Word [Mt. 4:4].)

In his mind, Esau thought he was going to die if he didn't get that bowl of soup. He exaggerated his hunger and figured, "What good is my birthright when I am about to die!?"

"The pressure of the moment distorted his perspective and made his decision seem urgent. We often experience similar pressures. For example, when we feel sexual pressure, a marriage vow may seem unimportant. We might feel such great pressure in one area that nothing else seems to matter, and we lose our perspective. Getting through that short, pressure-filled moment is often the most difficult part of overcoming a temptation" (Life Application Bible note, p. 52).

What would it take for Satan to get you to quit reading the Bible and praying or coming to church?

The test of a man's character is determined by what it takes to move him from doing his duty.

II. The "profane" man relinquishes things of <u>lasting value</u> for <u>momentary pleasures</u>

Beware of the promise of:

--short-term pleasures
--immediate satisfaction
--"get rich quick" schemes
--sexual thrills without marital responsibility

How foolish it is to trade in. . .

- A life of marriage fidelity for a few moments of lustful pleasure in an adulterous affair.
- The pure virtue of virginity to gratify an impatient curiosity in pre-marital sex.
- A sound mind and healthy body for the cheap sensations of pot, cocaine, crack or heroine drugs.
- Sober thoughts and sound judgment for the life-dominating control of alcoholic liquor.
- Eternal life for love of worldly Vanity Fair.
- A good reputation and testimony for some immoral dainty.

III. The "profane" man acts on <u>impulse</u> with <u>no patience to wait</u> for God to meet his needs in His way and in His time.

IV. The "profane" man makes <u>hasty decisions</u> without considering the <u>long-term ramifications</u> of his choice.

--Take the <u>long look</u>.

--Consider the <u>future</u>.

--Think about the <u>ramifications</u>.

--Where will it <u>take you</u>?

V. The "profane" man lives for the <u>present</u> ("the Now") not for the <u>future</u> (the temporal over the eternal)

"Never sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate" (Dr. Bob Jones Sr.)

"He is no fool who gives that which he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose" (20th Century martyr Jim Elliot)

2 Cor. 4:18

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

VI. The "profane" man esteems the <u>physical & visible</u> over the <u>spiritual & invisible</u>

What concerns you more. . . ?

VII. The "profane" man walks away <u>unconcerned about the consequences</u> of his actions, but in the end reaps a bitter reward.

"He did eat and drink and rose up and went his way" – Esau is depicted as one who quickly satisfies his appetite, wipes his mouth, and leaves without giving much consideration to the ramifications of his decision.

Sin always . . .

1) Takes you farther than you ever thought you'd <u>stray</u>

2) Keeps you longer than you ever thought you'd <u>stay</u>

3) Costs you more than you ever thought you'd <u>pay</u>

Examples of people who acted on impulse and got what they wanted without considering the long range consequences of their choice:

1) Israelites who wanted meat
2) David who wanted Bathsheba
3) Judas Iscariot who wanted 30 pieces of silver (Mt. 26:15)
4) Samson who demanded to have the Philistine woman and broke every Nazarite vow (he touched the dead carcass, drank liquor, and allowed his hair to be cut)

I wonder how many are in a death bed with AIDS because of one quick fling with a loose man or woman; have become pregnant outside of marriage because they let down their guard and flirted with sexual temptation.

Hebrews 12:17- For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Sin can always be forgiven (as long as there is repentance). However, the after affects, scars, repercussions, results, etc. of that sin may not be removed.

Harvest still comes for wild oats sown.

Ex: Moses was forgiven for striking the rock, but was forbidden to enter the Promised Land, though he begged for a second chance.

EX: David was forgiven for his adultery, but the after-effect haunted him four-fold for the rest of his life.

Some people want God's blessings, but they really don't want God.

Conclusion:

Esau was very much like many men today. “They have everything that this world can give – wealth, money, natural powers, position—everything but God.” (W.H. Griffith Thomas, p. 234).