

Genesis 25:21-32

Have you ever given away something that you later regretted or discovered was very valuable?

Genesis 25:21-32 (ESV)

²¹ And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. ²² The children struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is thus, why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. ²³ And the Lord said to her,

“Two nations are in your womb,

and two peoples from within you shall be divided;

the one shall be stronger than the other,

the older shall serve the younger.”

²⁴ When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. ²⁵ The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. ²⁶ Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

²⁷ When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. ²⁸ Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹ 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.

God tells Rebekah that the wrestling of Jacob and Esau in her womb is a prophecy of things to come. Why do you think these two boys were at odds with each other?

- Have you ever struggled with a relationship that should have been easy?

We see in Genesis 25 that Jacob manipulates his brother into selling the birthright and later, in Genesis 27 he deceives Isaac into giving him the blessing. What do you think motivated Jacob to do this?

Given this insight into Jacob, what do you think the birthright meant to him?

What do you think it means when the passage says Esau despised his birthright? What may he have been thinking or feeling when he sold his birthright to his younger brother?

- What are ways that these same motives or feelings that Esau had, similarly influence us and how we respond to God in our lives?

Ephesians 1:4-8a (NIV)

⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—
⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us.

The birthright in Genesis is a shadow of the birthright given from God, through Christ, to believers. Through the gospel, what is the believer's birthright and blessing?

Because of sin our birthright has been forfeited. From this passage, how has Jesus reclaimed our birthright?

- Reflecting on this truth, how do we respond, as ones who have been reclaimed into God's family?

Hebrews 12:15-17 (NIV)

¹⁵See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. ¹⁶See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.

What were the consequences of Esau despising his birthright?

What do you think are the consequences of despising our birthright, given in Christ? Has there been a time in your life where you experienced these consequences?

- Have you missed opportunities to receive or pursue the blessing of our birthright because of these obstacles?

Esau sold away his intimacy with God for a cup of soup. Are there ways that you are selling your intimacy with God for something less?

In light of the redemption we receive through Christ, how can we be more like Jacob and pursue greater intimacy with God?

What is our community application of this passage?