ESAU’S BIRTHRIGHT & OUR’S
(Genesis 25:21-34)

A. The importance of birthrights is apparent in the Bible.

1. “Any right or privilege to which a person is entitled by birth (inheritance).”

B. In the Law of Moses (Deut 21:15-17):

1. The oldest son inherited a “double portion” over his brothers, & was viewed as the leader of the family.

C. But long before the Law, this custom was in effect (as we see from our text).

1. By its design, a birthright brought immediate honor, & in some cases, great personal wealth to a son.

2. That would have been true in Esau’s case.

[There are some notable exceptions to the firstborn inheritance rights in the OT: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim & David were not firstborn sons, but by God’s design & providence they each received firstborn rights.]

I. ESAU’S RIGHTS AS FIRSTBORN

A. Esau’s BIRTHRIGHT made him heir to Isaac’s wealth.

1. Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac (Gen 25:5).

2. Abraham came into wealth by God’s providence.

   a. An Egyptian Pharaoh (Gen 12:16), & Abimelech, an ancient Philistine king (Gen 20:14), gave Abraham sheep, oxen, donkeys, camels, servants.

   b. Esau was first-in-line to inherit that all that wealth.
B. Esau was also first in line for a BLESSING from Isaac.

1. But God, foreseeing Esau’s unworthy character, forbid it (Read Gen 27:27-29; 38-40).

Mal 1:2-4 – “I have loved you,” says the LORD. “Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’ Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” Says the LORD. “Yet Jacob I have loved; 3 But Esau I have hated, & laid waste his mountains & his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness.”

Esau’s descendants weren’t any better. They were the perpetual enemies of God’s O.T. people.

4 Even though Edom has said, “We have been impoverished, but we will return & build the desolate places,” Thus says the L ORD of hosts: “They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, & the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.

2. What was so important about the BLESSING?

a. If you received the BLESSING, then you were in line to receive the PROMISE that God made to Abraham (Gen 12, 15).

b. In addition, God spoke directly to you, which made you a mediator, advocate, priest & lawgiver on behalf of your family (Heb 1:1).

[The privileges of Isaac’s birthright & blessing combined would have brought great honor to Esau’s name & house for many generations.

If Esau had been a godly man, we would be talking about Abraham, Isaac & E SAU – instead of Abraham, Isaac & JACOB.]

II. ESAU WAS DENIED HIS BIRTHRIGHT

A. “Esau despised his birthright” (Gen 25:34).

1. “To regard as unworthy of special attention.”

B. How did Esau despise his birthright?
1. He considered satisfying his appetite to be more important than the gift he was to receive from his father.

2. I suggest to you that he failed to appreciate his birthright long before he actually lost it.

C. In Hebrews, Esau is described as “profane.”

1. “Irreverent toward God & sacred things.”

2. He did not consider the long-term consequences of His choice.

3. He did not consider the extreme high value of his legal & spiritual right.

4. So he fulfilled the longings of his body, & thus allowed his spiritual reward to slip away.

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Heb 12:14-17 – Pursue peace with all people, & holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, & by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

[Well, maybe you see where all this is leading]

III. CHRISTIANS HAVE A BIRTHRIGHT

A. Our birthright began with Jesus’ birthright:

1. Jesus received His birthright after His resurrection (Heb 1:4-5; Ac 13:33-35; Psa 2:7).

   a. That is when God officially stated, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten you”.

   b. At that point in time Jesus became “the firstborn among MANY brethren” (Rom 8:29).
B. Do His brethren receive a birthright? When?

1. As Jesus received His birthright after His resurrection.

2. His brethren [Christians] received their birthright after their resurrection from the watery grave of baptism.

   a. We are “born again” (1 Pet 1:23-25; Jn 3:5).
   
   b. We are “born of God” (Jn 1:13).
   
   c. We become “children of God” (Gal 3:26-27).
   
   d. We enter the “house of God” (1 Tim 3:15).
   
   e. We receive “every sp. blessing” (Eph 1:3, 7).
   
   f. We become “heirs of God & joint heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17; Gal 4:6-7).

3. The blessings of this birthright are infinite & immeasurable: Christians are “joint heirs with Christ”.

   a. Apart from Jesus being the Divine Son of God, everything that He has He is going to share with His brethren.
   
   b. No second-born son ever had it that good!!!

C. But we must be careful not to do something foolish with that birthright.

1. Like Esau, the prodigal son (Luke 15) was foolish, but when he repented, he was fully restored back into his father’s house.

   a. That is the difference between living in Esau’s time (Patriarchal age), & living in our time (Christian age).
b. When Esau repented, it was too late to get back his bless/birth!

c. But when we act in such a way as to despise our birthright & blessing, & later repent, we still receive the same birthright & blessing that we had before we sinned – That is truly merciful & gracious!

IV. HOW TO KEEP FROM LOSING OUR BIRTHRIGHT

A. Hunger for spiritual food (Matt 4:4; 5:6)

1. Esau was tempted to part with his birthright because of physical hunger.

2. Christians who are spiritually empty are at high risk of losing their spiritual birthright.

B. Love God more than life itself (Matt 22:37; Matt 10:39; 16:25; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24; 17:33; Jn 12:25).

1. Esau loved his WAY OF LIFE more than his PROMISED LIFE.

   a. He had no vision.

   b. His birthright & blessing were too far into the future for him to get any pleasure from them, so he lived for the moment.

2. What do you love about your life?

   c. Is what you love about your life interfering with a clear view of your birthright?

   d. “You may barter your hope of eternity’s morn, for a moment of joy at the most. For the glitter of sin & the things it will win, have you counted the cost?”
C. **Get used to** self-denial.

*Titus 2:11-12* – For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, *denying ungodliness & worldly lusts*, we should live soberly, righteously, & godly in the present age,

We ARE NOT to love this world (*1 Jn 2:15-17*), OR the love of the Father is not in us; we at odd with God in that condition (*Js 4:4*).

D. **Love your fellow** heirs to the birthright.

We ARE, however, to love the brotherhood (*1 Pet 2:17*); AND to love one another as Jesus loved us (*Jn 15:12*).

We are to occupy our time tending to the fatherless & widows, & to keep our lives unspotted from the world (*Jas 1:27*).

CLOSING

A. **We need reminding** about this birthright of ours.

1. We can be “profane” & lose it just like Esau.

B. **If you’re not** a Christian, have you to considered the high value God has placed on your soul.

1. He wants to give your soul an eternal birthright.

2. That birthright cost Him the death of His Son.

3. He simply wants you to appreciate the value of what He offers.

4. Eternity is too long & Heaven is too wonderful to miss for refusing to see what blessings are ever before you.

C. **Have you counted** the cost of selling or refusing your spiritual birthright?

1. You will not get—in exchange for it—near what it is worth.
   a. If you have it, strive to keep it!
   b. If you do not have it, strive to possess it!
   c. Sell all that you have to buy that pearl of great price…to buy that field in which is buried that wonderful treasure.

God’s Plan For Our Salvation:

- **Hear the gospel of Christ:** Acts 2; 5; 13; Rom 10:17
- **Believe Jesus to be the Son of God, Savior, Lord, Christ:** Jn 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31
- **Repent of sin:** Acts 2:38; 17:30; 1 Jn 3:4; Acts 3:19
- **Confess faith in Christ:** Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10
- **Baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins:** Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3-4; Acts 2:38
- **Be Obedient to Christ:** Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 Jn 9; Rev 2:10; Jn 12:48