

All For A Can Of Soup

At one point last year I mentioned being unable to find a particular kind of soup. Like everyone else, apparently the Campbell's soup plants had shut down due to Covid and they were struggling to get production back up. After mentioning it in a sermon, several people asked what kind of soup we were needing. It was chicken gumbo for a particular recipe Paula used. Someone finally found it and bought us a dozen cans. I suppose, knowing how much I wanted soup for that recipe, someone could have done a little price gouging. "I've got Chicken Gumbo for \$20 per can." Luckily our friend was kind and generous and gave us the soup. The question was, just how much did I want that soup? (Mulligatawny. Jambalaya. No soup for you.)

The bible tells a story of twin brothers and some drama over a bowl of soup. Turn to Genesis 25. Verse 19 says "This is the account of Abraham's son Isaac." Isaac married Rebekah but they were unable to have children. Isaac prayed and the Lord answered his prayer and Rebekah gave birth to twins, Esau, the first born and Jacob. While the twins were the result of the Lord's miraculous intervention, they didn't get along. In fact, before they were even born they were fighting and jostling for position. When Rebekah sought the Lord about the difficulty in her pregnancy, the Lord told her **"Two nations are in your womb, and two people from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other and the older will serve the younger."**

Before they were born we are told there was going to be a dispute between the two and the older will serve the younger. Sure enough, **"When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. After this his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob...the boys grew up and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. Isaac who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, 'Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!' Jacob replied, 'First, sell me your birthright.' 'Look, I am about to die,' Esau said. 'What good is the birthright to me?' But Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright."** Genesis 25:23-34

Two very different twin boys. Esau was impetuous. Based on what the bible tells, Jacob was quiet and rather devious, scheming. Esau, as the firstborn son, was entitled to both the birthright and the blessing. Birthright confers upon him the headship of the clan, it makes him the moral and spiritual leader of the family. Blessing bestows upon him, as the firstborn and possessor of the birthright, a double portion of the physical inheritance, the land, money and possessions, etc.

In the story we just read, Esau comes in from hunting famished. He's not dying, he's not starving, but you've been there and said that, "I'm starving to death." It's that impetuous nature of Esau. "I want what I want and I want it right now. Give me some of that bean soup you're cooking. Quick! I'm dying!" Jacob sees an opportunity and tells him he will give him the soup in exchange for the birthright. "Sell me your birthright." Esau says, "what good is the birthright to me if I starve to death." So he swore an oath and sold the birthright to Jacob. The bible says, "So Esau despised his birthright."

We read this and think, is it really all that serious? According to the bible, yes it is. The writer of Hebrews says of Esau, "**See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.**" Hebrews 12:15-18

The bible says Esau was godless. He sold his inheritance and forfeited the blessing of Isaac but he also forfeited the blessing of God that would have been upon the firstborn son of Isaac. It was no small thing Esau did, not just in selling the birthright, but in having such little regard for the blessing and plan of God for his life that he would sell it for a bowl of soup. Why was he considered godless? Unlike God? Why was this such a big deal? Let me suggest a couple of things.

He saw only the immediate. I said Esau was impulsive. He wouldn't look any farther than his stomach, his immediate need. "I'm about to die. What good is a birthright? That's for something years down the road. I'm hungry today, right now, and today is all that matters." Esau was godless because he only cared about satisfying his stomach, his flesh, and not the things of God, the things of the Spirit. The godless, the foolish care only about their immediate desires while the godly can see there is more to this life than food, more than just the moment.

We live with eternity in view. What we do and how we live now matters for eternity. Esau saw only the immediate.

Esau failed to value what God valued. The birthright was a gift God had given to him. As the firstborn he was to inherit the birthright and blessing, but instead of recognizing God's plans, instead of exploring the purpose of God for his life, he rejected and disregarded the plan of God. He placed no value on being Abraham's grandson, Isaac's son, on being part of the people that God promised to use to bless all the nations of the earth. "Who cares about God's plans? I just want to please myself. Who cares about the old man and his religion?"

Some of you were raised in a godly family and household. You were raised in church, but at some point, at some age you stopped valuing what God valued, you disregarded the blessing of God. "I just want to get out of here and live as I please." "I don't care that God gave me Christian parents, a youth pastor or church that cared about me." Your values shifted. Let me remind you what Hebrews says about Esau. **"Afterward, as you know when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears."** Later in life, when he gained some wisdom and perspective, he realized he had valued the wrong things. He had preferred a can of soup, a bowl of beans, over the blessings of God and family. He had chosen soup rather than the spiritual inheritance God had for him and he was having to live with the bitter consequences. Examine your values, your priorities. What is it you value most today? Are you valuing the things God values or are you selling out for a can of soup?

Esau made his appetite his god. Esau was considered godless because he made his belly his god. He chose to appease and please his own desires rather than pleasing God and obeying the Lord. It wasn't just food. Esau went on to marry multiple women, including a Canaanite woman that he knew was displeasing to his parents and a sin against God. Esau didn't just disregard his birthright, he disregarded the plan of God, the word of God.

Esau sold the eternal for the temporal. He sold something of eternal value for a bowl of soup. He sold the lasting for something he consumed in a moment of time. He sold his legacy, his future, his name and reputation for a fleeting moment of pleasure. No wonder the bible says he was godless. He disregarded the valuable, the eternal for a can of soup.

I like to watch the Antiques Roadshow and American Pickers. I'm an estate sale kind of guy. It's that hope you find something of great value, a treasure, among all the junk. It's that

moment on Antiques Roadshow when they ask, “Do you remember what you paid for this?” “Yeah, \$15.” “Well, for insurance purposes, I would place the value at between \$25,000-\$30,000”. And somewhere there is a guy watching that just starts weeping. “I told you we should have had someone look at that thing!”

What’s the value of your life? Your soul? Your spiritual life? Your marriage? Your family? How do you place a value on that? Here is a can of soup. \$1.50. “Can I buy your car for a can of soup? You’re hungry and it’s good soup. I’ll give it to you if you’ll give me your car with the title.” It’s silly isn’t it? What will you give me for this can of soup? Yet people do something this stupid every single day. Every day people sell things of inestimable, eternal value, for the equivalent of a can of soup. They sell their family, business, reputation, their future, for a thrill, for this high, this pleasure, this sin. All for a can of soup.

Esau surrendered to the insanity of sin. Esau was considered godless because he surrendered to the insanity of sin. That’s what it comes down to. Nothing about the transaction in this story makes any rational sense. Selling your family birthright for a can of soup when Esau could make soup, or convince his mom to make it, or he could have just taken the time to roast whatever he had killed on the hunt. But sin doesn’t make sense.

“I’ll trade you...this can of soup for your life.” That’s nonsense! It’s Jeff Bazos asking me for soup. “I’m starving. I just got back from my first space flight and I’m famished.” “Tell you what Jeff, I’ll give you this delicious can of soup for controlling interest in Amazon. Deal?” “It’s a deal. I love soup!” That’s insane!

You know what else is insane? Selling your soul for a can of soup. Walking away from your wife and your children, your husband and your children, for someone else’s spouse. Walking away from God, from your church, from Jesus, the one who gave his life for you to save you, walking away from him because you want what you want. Choosing to live in sin, committing adultery, sexual immorality, because you figure you deserve it somehow. You’re choosing the insanity of sin. You’re choosing a can of soup over the blessings of God.

God had a plan and purpose for you, but you decided to go your own way. He gave you a family to bless, to lead, to mentor and teach to love God, but you are throwing that all away for what, a can of soup? For a little momentary pleasure? Surrendering to self and pleasure rather than surrendering to God. That’s mighty expensive soup!

We sell our relationship with God for soup, to satisfy our sexual desires, for more money, better job, career advancement, to win the attention of some boy or girl, man or woman, we compromise who we are, our values and priorities, we choose anything and everything ahead of God and serving him, and for what? A can of soup? It's gone all too soon, but the scars, the regret, the shattered and broken lives, that's what's left, all for a bowl of beans, a can of soup.

It's insanity all right. Esau for a single meal, sold his birthright and disregarded the blessings of God. Adam and Eve chose one bite of forbidden fruit over the pleasure of walking with God in Eden's paradise. We've made the same kind of insane choices, throwing away the blessings of God for the pleasures of sin, but there is hope. For Esau, there was no blessing even though he wept bitter tears, but for us, there is hope. In fact, the remedy is found in that same passage in Hebrews 12. It is a striking parallel in the original language.

“Esau, who for a single meal sold his birthright...” Hebrews 12:16

“Jesus, who for the joy set before him endured the cross.” Hebrews 12:2

The insanity of sin has infected us all. Adam and Eve, Esau, all of us. We are all afflicted with the insanity of our preferring sin to God, but there is a remedy for us. It's found in Jesus, who for the joy set before him endured the cross. The joy set before him was knowing by his sacrifice we would be saved. We could have eternal life with him. He paid the debt for us, he purchased salvation for us. He restored the blessing, the birthright we sold, the inheritance we forfeited by our sin. Now, through repentance and faith in Jesus, we can be restored, we become heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. **“He saved us...so that having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:5-7**

“...you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father’. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.” Romans 8:15-17

If you sold your birthright for a can of soup, there is hope for you. Come to Jesus! In him the birthright is restored. Through him we become part of his family, heirs of God. God created you to walk in his blessing, in his mercy and grace. He has a blessing to bestow but you have to choose to walk with him. Don't sell out for a can of soup. Surrender your life to him!