

Esau and the Stew

READ: Genesis 25:29-34

²⁹One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry. ³⁰Esau said to Jacob, "I'm starved! Give me some of that red stew!" (This is how Esau got his other name, Edom, which means "red.") ³¹"All right," Jacob replied, "but first sell me your rights as the firstborn son." ³²"Look, I'm dying of starvation!" said Esau. "What good is my birthright to me now?" ³³But Jacob said, "First you must swear that your birthright is mine." So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his brother, Jacob. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal, then got up and left. He showed contempt for his birthright.

REFLECT: What did Esau want when he returned from hunting? Why? (vs. 30)

What did Jacob want in return? (vs. 31)

"What is a birthright?" - A birthright is the right to be known as the firstborn son and to receive all the benefits that come with that position. The firstborn son would get twice the inheritance of other children and would take on the role of leader of the family when their father died. In Esau's case it was even more important since selling his birthright also meant losing the benefits and blessing God promised Abraham and his children (Gen 12:2-3). Now those promises would go to Jacob (Gen 28:10-15).

Now that you know what a birthright is, do you think Esau should have sold his birthright for a bowl of stew?

When Esau came back from hunting he could only think about what he wanted right away. He was hungry and wanted food. He wanted to satisfy his temporary desires and didn't care about later consequences. He greatly exaggerated his hunger (vs 30, 32) and foolishly gave his birthright away in exchange for a bowl of stew.

We are like Esau when we exaggerate how what we want will benefit us but don't think about the true cost. We trade the promises of God for things that will only satisfy us for a short time, then leave us feeling empty. This usually leaves us wanting something else that will never truly satisfy us. Only when Jesus is put first in our lives will we be completely content.

RESPOND: What was something you wanted because you thought it would make you happy? How long were you satisfied with what you got?

Ask God to help you so you don't turn from one thing to another looking for happiness and miss what is best. Turn your eyes on Jesus and love Him most.

Take some time to confess to God if something else has become the first love in your life and ask God to help you to seek Him first. Then thank God for his love for you and pray for someone or something.

Thank God for _____

Pray for _____