

Beginnings: How's Your Appetite?
Genesis 25

Esau and the Tragedy of Immediate Gratification

- Rebekah, Isaac's wife, conceived and bore twins, Jacob and Esau, after decades of barrenness.
 - Their miraculous birth was another signal for Israel that their origins were supernatural.
 - According to God's plan, the promise of blessing would proceed through the line of Jacob.
- Esau plays out the script of God's design by giving in to his own desires and so becomes a cautionary tale for us.

- Notice that Esau was susceptible at this point.

- Esau sinned in his exhaustion.
- Esau's exhaustion was not an excuse or justification for his sin, but it was a condition that led to his tragic, sinful choice.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. (Prov 4:23)

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11)

- Notice that Esau was snared by his own desires.

- Esau was a hunter, but here the hunter becomes the hunted.
- By giving into his desires completely, Esau was reduced to a beast.

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:13-15)

- Notice that Esau was tragically short-sighted regarding fulfillment and blessing.

- As Christians, we should take seriously the high stakes of sin in terms of final reward and final judgment.

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; ¹⁶ that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was

*rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.
(Hebrews 12:15-17)*

- Be very careful about the allure and attraction of worldly applause.

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:36-38)

Abraham and the Glory of Eternal Satisfaction

- Desires alone are not the problem.
 - The great problem is not the strength of our desires.
 - The great problem is *the weakness of better desires.*

The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. (C.S. Lewis)

- Abraham shows us a better way than Esau.
 - Abraham had received and realized great promises in the course of his life.

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

... you shall be buried in a good old age. (Genesis 15:15)

- Yet Abraham still looked forward to greater fulfilment of God’s Word.
 - Abraham’s trust in God was not exhausted or extinguished in death.
 - There was and is more for Abraham (and us) than this earthly life could ever grant.

But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9)