

We return to our series this morning on, "The Call to Faithfulness in our Day!" I would like to speak this morning on "**A Careful Seeking for Salvation.**" This is our 13<sup>th</sup> sermon on the call to faithfulness in our day. We have established 5 things from our text-Rev.3:1-6:

- I. **THE REPROOF** (vss 1 & 2)
- II. **THE REPENTANCE** (vs 3)
- III. **THE REMNANT** (vs 4)
- IV. **THE RECOMPENSE** (vs 5)
- V. **THE RESPONSE** (vs 6)

Under our third point on the Remnant we are considering A Firm Purity which has taken us to Hebrews 12:14, "*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*" What precedes and follows this text we have been considering. We are coming to our last application in Hebrews 12 in verses 16 & 17, "*Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*" We shall speak on **A Careful Seeking For Salvation.**

We spent two weeks speaking on "Coming a Day Short of Salvation", a very sobering yet needful warning in our day of water down gospels messages. Verse 15 says, "*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*" We must submit to and obey the gospel and make sure that we are not of those who come a day short of salvation. We don't want to be as those who Paul said would have a root of bitterness springing and creating trouble. Remember Paul is quoting from Deuteronomy 29:18, "*Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood.*" There were many in the time of Moses who turned their hearts away to serve the false idols and gods of Egypt and from other nations. We said last week that the more a person drinks of this intoxicating poison, (metal & mental idols) the more they are drunk with it. Many, who were professed followers of God, have been become intoxicated and drunk with the world in its awful bitterness. Idols and idolatry are described as poisonous plants, which if it takes root; it begets a harvest of poison that is deadly to themselves and others around them. Moses warns those who thought they could thumb a nose at God in verse 19, "*And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.*". God answers in verse Deut.29:20, "*The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from*

*under heaven.*” Don’t play games with God, don’t think you can put God in the back burner and all is well. So Paul takes this warning of Deuteronomy 29 and applies it to those who were departing from the faith and returning back to the world. Now, those who had not truly believed, but were mere professors, or if you wish tares that were mingled in the church with the wheat, that is, tares masquerading as wheat, returned to their awful wickedness. What sobering and fearful warning to those who depart from the only way and means of salvation.

But the writer of Hebrews does not stop here, he continues with another sobering warning and example to hopefully capture the hearts of others who were thinking of returning back to the world, because they thought that this Christianity thing was too hard. Remember our Lord Jesus Christ also warned us on the importance of counting the cost. The warning that the writer of Hebrews uses next are the actions of Esau in Hebrews 12 verses 16 & 17, “*Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*” The last phrase, he sought it carefully with tears, gives us our 8<sup>th</sup> and last point here in Hebrews 12, A Careful Seeking, thus I would like to speak on: **A CAREFUL SEEKING FOR SALVATION.**

Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is led to use Esau as an example to all who are at crossroads with Christianity. Of all the warnings to use, Judas, King Saul, Cain, Lot’s wife, foolish Nabal, Delilah, Pharaoh and others the writer of Hebrews is led to use the example of Esau. May God take us, shake us, break us and awake us to this important fact that there is an awful judgment coming to all those who die without Christ. This is the goodness, mercies, kindness and longsuffering of God, to warn us of this awful impending doom. He does not have to warn us, but in compassion He does! Remember in Ezekiel 18:30-32, it says, “*Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. **Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.** Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? **For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.**”*

Many misread and misunderstand the sovereignty of God in dealing with certain situations in the Bible and one of them is of course is the one with Esau. Many say, if what is said is true in Romans 9 and other places regarding Esau then Esau didn’t have a chance. It is not my interest to deal with this subject at present, but I will say this, Esau was a responsible man before God. Many, who misunderstand and interpret wrongly God’s decree regarding predestination, fall into the awful deception and danger of fatalism. We serve a Sovereign God not a fatalistic God! I purposely share this to warn everyone of the utmost importance regarding responsibility and duty to repent and believe the gospel. Esau had every opportunity to repent, he was given much light and instruction, but he preferred a wicked lifestyle instead of subjecting himself to the light and instruction given to him as he was growing up. He sold his spiritual inheritance for a wretched bowl of stew.

The writer of Hebrews describes the character of Esau:

- A Fornicator.
- A Profane Person.

This is a person raised in a Christian home, where he heard about God often. His father was Isaac, the promise son of Abraham, given to Abraham by God Himself. Esau, heard about God, heard his father prayed, heard his father share the blessings and mercies of the goodness of God. He heard Isaac pray over their food. He heard the devotions Isaac shared with him and his brother Jacob. He was blessed immensely by God. Esau was given great and mighty privileges by God, especially being born into the lineage of Christ. But he is described as a fornicator and a profane person.

- The NIV reads: *“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.”*
- The NASB reads: *“that {there be} no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a {single} meal.”*

It clearly describes his character as being sexually immoral and a godless irreligious person. What a description of a person with great spiritual privileges! The Greek word for fornicator is “ pornos.” We get our English word pornography from this. The Greek word for profane is “ bebelos,” which basically means to disregard that which to be kept sacred or holy. The word profane is derived from the Latin, “ profanus,” which means outside the temple, that which is not sacred. This word gives the connotation of that which is void or empty of any connection or relation with God. You see a godless person is one which has no respect or regards for God, life is centered only on that which has physical pleasures. In the life of Esau we see that he had no time or regards for God. He had no faith, no reverence for God, no ethics, just completely worldly and profaned. What is seen in the life of Esau is that he had no regards for the birthright of a godly lineage. He put no value and interest in the glorious blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant. What Esau did not understand was that he was in an household blessed by God. Look at Proverbs 3:33, *“The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.”*

Esau is a description of a godless person who has no interest in God. What an awful warning by Paul to those who had professed faith in Christ and now were reverting back to the world. He is saying don't fall in the foot steps of Esau, who for a bowl of stew sold his soul. If you are outside Christ this morning, what are you willing to sell your soul for? Especially if you have been blessed with spiritual privileges. What will you exchange for your soul. Remember even Christ asked a similar question in Matthew 16:26, *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* Esau exchange his soul for a bowl of sod pottage. What are you willing to exchange your soul for? There is not one thing in

this world that will profit you, if it costs you, your soul. What a sobering warning to help you put your priorities in order, that is, nothing is more important than a relationship with Jesus Christ. Let look at why this writer of Hebrew used the example of Esau.

Turn to Genesis 25. We don't have time to look at every aspect of the live of Esau nor in chapter 27 where he also lost his blessing. In Gen.25, Esau's father takes Rebekak for his wife. Look at verses 19-26. Thus, twin boys are born to Rebekak, Esau and Jacob. Verse 27 tells us that the boys grew and it gives somewhat of a description of the boys, "*And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.*" What a contrast between the two boys. Esau was a cunning hunter qualified by, a man of the field. He was a worldly man, this can be seen by the word field. He was roving everywhere, restless unless he was in the field because his interest was only in the things of the world, he had no time for God or Christianity. He enjoyed frequenting the streets, he was very seldom at home. His whole life was consumed with the affairs of the world, he was a man of the field, his life was built upon a foundation of sand, that is, sinking sand! Jacob on the other hand, was just a plain man dwelling in tents. Jacob was plain, he had no tattoo's, no ear rings, no pierce body parts, no colored hair, no sagging pants, he was just a PLAIN man. He was very respectful and enjoyed being at home. Not being lazy at home, but being very resourceful as he busied himself with some sort of responsible vocation. Dwelling in tents represents a more noble character than Esau.

I don't have time to deal with verse 28, but in verses 29 - 34 is the reference that the writer of Hebrews makes reference to. "*And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: 30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.*" If anything comes out of this story, is the fact that Jacob had a gratitude for spiritual privileges. He had a high regard and desire for the birthright. No question this was noble, but the way he got it was ignoble. Jacob saw Esau's condition and capitalized on it. Esau might have been a cunning hunter, but Jacob was cunning deceiver. Instead of helping his brother in need, he capitalized on it. Apparently Esau came from the field was not in a good condition, he was faint. The word faint basically means to be weary especially from a journey, it also means exhausted to the point of languishing. Now, whether Esau exaggerated his condition of being near death we don't know, but he was willing to exchange his physical life for an eternity separated from God. Read verses 29 - 32. Verse 32 again, "*And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and **what profit shall this birthright do to me?***" What disdain and contempt for spiritual things. Just, by how the last phrase reads, shows that before he sold his birthright he rationalized about it. He reasoned about it. He evilly rationalized about the worth of his birthright. What profit shall this birthright do to me? He saw no value in the birthright, he thought it was of no use for him, especially in his present condition. Why? Because it did not and would not satisfy his physical appetite.

He was willing to part with that which had great spiritual privileges, for a meaningless bowl of pottage or soup. You see, this is what Satan whispers in the ears of many, he convinces them that the pleasures of the world are more important than where a person will spend eternity. Satan belittles the gospel message and sad to say many hearken to him. He convinces many that the present is more important than the future, that physical things are more important than spiritual things. 2 Corinthians 4: 3 & 4, "*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*" Esau believed the lie of Satan and exchange his soul for a mistily bowl of pottage. What fearful, yet profound words, "...**what profit shall this birthright do to me?**"

The birthright represents Christ. In his birthright is the lineage of Christ. How precious is that, how glorious it that birthright. We could be reading in our Bibles, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Esau, no we read, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of JACOB! To Jacob that birthright was precious and would do anything to obtain it. How about you, are you willing to do anything to obtain eternal life? Turn to Matthew 1:1 & 2, "*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and **Isaac begat Jacob...***" So you see it was no big thing, only a some meaningless thing that Esau gave up. So Esau thought in his heart. It was the lineage of CHRIST! For what? A BOWL OF STEW OR SOUP! How long does that last? A short amount of time. A few hours, but with Christ it will last all eternity! Are you willing to exchange your souls for a few hours, few days, few years of pleasure for something that will last as long as that bowl did? God is willing to bestow to you eternal life, but you rather have the world. You rather have a bowl of this world than the salvation of God? You're willing to exchange the world for your soul? Matthew 16:26, "*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*" This is what Esau did and what many do to the damnation of their souls. Exchange their souls for something of this world. It might be power, prestige, sex, wealth, a promotion, etc.

Esau was only interested in the present because God was not all in his thoughts. Thomas says, "*He was intent only on present gradification and set no value on Divine gifts. To him future blessings were intangible and unreal.*" He was willing to sacrifice the future for something of the present which was a bowl of pottage. He willingly and unhesitatingly sold his birthright for a bowl of pottage! Look at Moses in Hebrews 11:25-27.

Read very carefully in Genesis 25 and verses 32 – 34, "*And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he **did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way:** thus **Esau despised his birthright.***" He willingly did this, no one twisted his arm, he could of told Jacob no, but because he despised his birthright, he sold it to Jacob without blinking an eye. After he sold his birthright, there was no remorse, no repentance, no regrets only a

despising his birthright. How wicked is that? He had all the spiritual blessings and spiritual privileges of being raised in Isaac's household and he despised his birthright. There is no excuse, you might say, but Pastor Joe, he was dying? But that did not give him the right to sell his birthright. Maybe if he had trusted God and not sell his birthright, how do we know that maybe God would have sent some ravens to feed him like He did Elijah? There was no excuse and you can see it, in that he ate, drank and ROSE UP AND WENT HIS WAY as though it was no big deal, but it was a big deal, it cost him dearly. He ate, drank and went on his merry way, reminds of the person Christ spoke about in Luke 12:15-21.

Children don't take it for granted that everyone has the same privileges you do. I didn't. I don't know what it means to go to Sunday School as a little boy. I don't know what it means to go to church as a family when I was a little boy. Again, I'm speaking when I was a little boy. I don't know what it means to have my father or mother read to me the Scriptures. I don't know what it means to have my father or mother pray over my meals. I don't know what it means to have family devotions and when God was indeed mentioned in our house as a little boy it was in a disparaging way. I don't know any of those things, I am a first generation Christian. I did not have what many of you young people have. Don't sell you birthright for something of the world. Give you lives to Christ. Give your hearts to Christ. Come to Christ in repentance and faith, don't live and die as Esau. Don't make the physical more important than the spiritual. Remember Eve put more stock in the forbidden fruit than the Word of God. Esau willingness to sale the birthright, without question reveals what really was in his heart, it displays the awful spiritual poverty in his heart. And this is exactly what the writer of Hebrews is warning us not to have.

Lets read again in Hebrews 12:14-17, *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”*

When Esau saw to some extent what he had done, what he had forsaken, he thought that he would have a blessing, but even that was taken away from him by Jacob. He might have bitterly regretted his decisions but he did not repent. In other words there really was not a careful seeking for salvation, he took no interest in the things of God and at the end it damn his soul to hell. Don't be deceived, don't end up like Esau, come to Christ this morning, give yourselves to Christ, give Him your heart, give Him your life. Don't end up like Esau.

Again, this is what Christ challenged those of His day and likewise challenges us here in this 21<sup>st</sup> century: Matthew 16:26, *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Let's pray.