

Esau's Birthright

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[0:00] And I'd like you to open up your Bibles to the book of Genesis.

We will be at the end of chapter 25 in the book of Genesis this morning. For those of you who have not been with us over the last several months, we have been going through the middle section of the book of Genesis in a series that we call the Patriarchs, as we look at the lives of Abraham and now Isaac and Jacob, his son.

And as we walk through the lives of these Patriarchs, of these fathers of the faith, we are seeing and learning what God is revealing to us about himself in the midst of the stories of the lives of these men.

And so last week we began to look at these twin brothers, Jacob and Esau, to look at the distinction that God made between them before they were born, before, as Paul says, they had done anything good or bad, God choosing Jacob over Esau.

And now this morning we're going to continue to look at the story of these brothers as we turn our focus a bit to the focus of the text at the end of this chapter, primarily to Esau. And see Esau's role in all of the events as they unfold here, and then as they will continue to unfold in the chapters that lie ahead.

[1:30] So we are actually, our text for this morning begins in verse 27, but we are going to back up and pick up in verse 22, so we have a little bit more context, and read down through the end of the chapter.

So I invite you to stand with me in honor of God's word, as we read together, starting in verse 22. The children struggled together within her, and she said, if it is thus, why is this happening to me?

So she went to inquire of the Lord, and the Lord said to her, two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided. The one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger.

When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau.

Afterward, his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents.

[2:39] Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted.

And Esau said to Jacob, let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted. Therefore his name was called Edom. Jacob said, sell me your birthright now.

Now, Esau said, I am about to die. Of what use is a birthright to me? Jacob said, swear to me now. So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob.

Then Jacob gave Esau bread and a lentil stool, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. Father, thank you for this story that reveals not only the character of these men, but also reveals your character to us, and shows us your hand at work throughout the history of your people.

Encourage us and challenge us and convict us by your word, we ask. In Christ's name, amen. You guys take a seat. There's a lot of talk these days, and it's usually sort of a hot-button political issue, about privilege.

[3:50] About who has certain innate privileges because they're born with particular skin color, or they're born into a certain economic class, or they're born into a certain ethnic group, and those political issues are important issues.

Because it's clear to us as you look around, you can look and see in the world around you that there are advantages to being born into a certain social class.

There are advantages to being born with a lighter skin color in our culture and in many others. Those are real issues that we would have to spend time thinking through and processing and wrestling with to come to some firm conclusions on.

But this morning what I want us to talk about is a more pressing issue of privilege. That there is a greater privilege that some are born with and some are not that far outstrips any privilege that you might have by virtue of your race, your ethnicity, your social background, your economic standing, your parentage, your education.

It far outstrips all of those avenues of privilege. And that is the area of spiritual privilege. As we look into this passage, we are looking at the birth and early details from the life of two men, Jacob and Esau.

[5:11] But both of these men were born with incredible spiritual privileges. They are the son of Isaac who is in turn the son of Abraham. They are from the promised line to this family and to this family alone out of all of the families of the earth at this time.

The promises have been given. God has made Himself known to Abraham. God makes Himself known to Isaac. He will make Himself known personally to Jacob.

But they are a part of an incredible spiritual heritage and they have great spiritual privilege because they have been born into this family. Imagine for a moment the grace of God restricted to this one family in the entire world.

There are whole nations. There are whole groups of people. There are continents not talked about and mentioned in the Old Testament or in the Bible at all. And sometimes we think, what of all those people?

We think in terms of that today. We think sometimes, what of those people who don't have any missionaries? What of those people who've never heard the Gospel? But imagine, imagine being the place of Jacob and Esau where not just far-flung peoples in these hidden corners of the earth don't have the privilege of having heard the good news about God and the Savior that He would send into the world.

[6:39] But their neighbors have never heard. Their relatives back in Haran have never heard. No one in the world save for Abraham and his family has really heard and understood in fullness the promises that were given to Abraham.

No one is a part and privileged to be a part of the line that would lead to the offspring promised to Adam and Eve after the fall in the garden. The offspring who would crush the head of the serpent, who would set all things right upon the face of the earth.

This one small family has received God's revelation of Himself and what He's going to do in and through the offspring who is to come, whom Paul tells us is, in fact, Jesus Himself.

Talk about spiritual privilege. It's unparalleled the spiritual privilege that they have. And again, we sometimes scratch our heads and think, but what about...

Maybe there's someone out there who gets it. Maybe there's someone out there who's never had a missionary sent to them or perhaps there were people groups alive at the time of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob who somehow, perhaps through general revelation, through nature, maybe they got it and they were worshiping the true God.

[7:58] And yet, the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans that in response to God's revelation of Himself through nature to all people upon the face of the earth, he says uniformly, all together have turned aside.

He says, in fact, that all of us, all of humanity, apart from the special revelation of God, all of us have rejected what God reveals about Himself in nature.

And he says, because of that, all peoples are without excuse as they stand before the judgment seat of God. There's not a hidden pocket of people who've never heard the gospel who somehow have figured out the gospel.

There's just not. It's not a biblical idea and it's not to be found anywhere in the world. So when we talk about privilege, consider the vast spiritual privilege that Jacob and Esau are able to partake of simply by being the sons of Isaac himself.

And as the story of these two men unfolds, what we will find is that one son, one son receives those promises, they become his very own promises, the other son spurns those things.

[9:14] And we are tempted to think, if you think back to last week's sermon, and you look back at the verses that we read just a moment ago, we are tempted to think that certainly Esau is not responsible for his rejection of the good news.

After all, verse 23, their mother is told, two nations are in your womb, two peoples from within you shall be divided, the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger.

So their course is in a sense set. And so we are tempted to think that Esau could not possibly be responsible for how his life unfolded.

It was already decided before he had been born. Paul says before he had done anything good or bad, it had already been decided. And yet we find Esau, as we read through this story, being held fully responsible for his rejection of the great privileges that were his to begin with.

Now I realize that that can be confusing to us. It can be frustrating to us to try to reconcile these ideas of God's absolute sovereignty over all things and our full responsibility for all that we do.

[10:27] I realize that those are two poles that are difficult to pull together. And what we need to be able to say is it's not our job to resolve all the tensions that are present in the Bible.

It's simply not. Church councils have been held. Debates have been had. Books have been written over some of these issues. And yet, the best of all those writings and disputations at the end of the day say we will uphold all of these truths that the Bible presents to us even if we don't know in our limited finite understanding how to bring them all together.

There are in fact two results that we can clearly see unfolded throughout Scripture of God's words that He gives to Rebekah.

There are two results of this phrase the older will serve the younger. On the one hand, there's what we might call the national result of that. That is, two nations are in fact in her womb.

The nation of Israel and then on the other hand the nation of Edom. You may not be all that familiar with the nation of Edom. The Edomites, they are the descendants of Esau himself.

[11:41] And they live just outside of the promised land in an area called Mount Seir. That's the area that they live in and they are mentioned over and over and over throughout the Old Testament.

They are a thorn in the Israelites' side as the Israelites are wandering through the desert and nearing the promised land. They will not allow them to come into their area. They will not allow them to refresh themselves.

So there's tension there. There's almost battle there. Later on in Israel's history, just as was predicted, the Edomites come under the control and are even enslaved under the kingdom of David himself.

But of course, the kingdom of David did not last forever. After his son Solomon died, the kingdom split into two. And over the decades that followed, the kingdom continued to go downward until finally God sent in the Babylonians to wipe out what was left and what was remaining of the once mighty kingdom of Israel.

And when that event happened, we are told in the Old Testament that the Edomites, just on the border of the land of Judah, the Edomites who should have come to the aid of their brothers, did not.

[12:52] They did the opposite. Those who tried to flee from the Babylonian army, the Edomites captured and turned over or they tortured themselves. The Edomites were a thorn in the side of the Israelites throughout their history as it's recorded for us in the Old Testament.

So much so that the prophets, after the exile to Babylon, looked back on those events and they rained down curses upon the descendants of Esau. God Himself curses Edom because of their role in doing great harm to the Israelites, to the people of the land of Judah.

So there's the national outworking of this pronouncement of a kind of curse upon Esau and his descendants. But there is also the individual element to it that Esau himself is unable, he finds himself outside of the covenant promises of God.

He finds himself rejected ultimately and the Apostle Paul speaks to that individual element. In fact, I want you to hold your place here. We turned here last week, but I'd like to turn to Romans 9 again so that we have some understanding of how the New Testament looks back on these events and interprets them.

In Romans chapter 9, Paul wrestles with what for him would have probably been one of the most painful issues of his life. More painful than all of his beatings and imprisonments, more painful than almost anything else that he experienced.

[14:27] In Romans 9, he's wrestling with the reality that his Jewish kinsmen, his fellow Israelites, have by and large rejected the good news of Jesus Christ.

They have rejected God's Messiah and so now they themselves, who had once been those who received the covenant, are outside of the covenant blessings. In fact, they are under God's condemnation.

Look in verse 2 of Romans chapter 9. Paul says, I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

You feel sort of the anguish of the Apostle Paul as he thinks about the reality that his kinsmen are cut off from Christ. They are accursed, which is another way of saying they are under God's wrath.

It's painful for Paul. But it also brings up a question for Paul that he cannot ignore. And that is, if God had given such great promises to his people in the old covenant, these very people that are now under God's curse, is God's word unreliable?

[15:43] Did God's promises fail to come to fruition since the vast majority of the Jewish people in Paul's day lie under God's hand of wrath because they rejected Christ?

That's the question that he has to wrestle with. So that he says, verse 6, no, it's not as though the word of God has failed. And he gives examples.

He first takes the example of Isaac and Ishmael. He says, consider Isaac and Ishmael. They are both physical descendants of Abraham. And yet God chose Isaac. Ishmael did not receive the covenant promises.

And then he says, let's take another example, a better example even. Jacob and Esau, their twins, same father, same mother, born at the same time. And yet, God chose Jacob over Esau.

Look at verse 10. Not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing, either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works, but because of him who calls.

[16:48] She was told, the older will serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. In other words, there are not only national implications for God's words to Rebecca about her unborn children, there are personal, individual outworkings of that that result ultimately in Esau being outside the covenant and what we would call lost.

And Jacob, nothing that he had done but God's great hand of mercy and grace upon him throughout his sometimes twisted tale.

This is sheer mercy and sheer grace on God's part. But when we hear that, we naturally think, it's not fair.

Why didn't Esau have a chance? Why didn't Esau have an opportunity? And what we are doing is twofold in our minds. On the one hand, we are imposing upon God some necessity and that cannot be done.

God is not bound by any of our thoughts or opinions of what is just or right or fair. God binds himself by his own character and his own word. God is not hemmed in by our expectations of how he ought to behave or what he ought to be like.

[18:09] He won't be and he cannot be. So Paul goes on to say in Romans 9, but some of you will say to me, then why? Why does God still judge?

He goes on to say that you will say that's not right, that's unfair. Paul's reply is sobering. Who are you, O man, to talk back to God?

Shall what is molded say to him who molded, why did you make me like this? In other words, Paul is saying God can't be brought to trial by his creation.

He does as he wills among the heavens and on the earth and no one can hold back his hand or say to him, what have you done? This is who he is.

So those questions of ours and those protestations of ours that this is unfair in the life of Esau, they first of all butt up against the wall of God's sovereign rights.

[19:12] They can't push any further. But then, on the other hand, they also run into the issue that God's word reveals to us over and over that his sovereign hand in the lives of people does not negate those people's absolute responsibility for all of their own choices and decisions.

Our choices are our choices. Our decisions are authentically our decisions. So that we choose to do evil that's on us.

Though God and his sovereignty has accounted for all. And God and his sovereignty has arranged events to work for what brings him most glory.

We are responsible for all of our choices and decisions. And I think following, no pun intended, but immediately upon the heels of the birth of Jacob and Esau, I think following upon that, this story of Esau's rejection of his birthright is meant to remind us Esau, as this story unfolds, he is responsible for everything that he does.

He is responsible. So let's take a look at this passage and I want to show you why I think that is the case. But first, we have to acknowledge that Jacob and Esau from the very beginning are very different men.

[20:36] They are not like one another. They are polar opposites. And maybe you've experienced that among your own siblings. Or maybe you can look at your children if you have multiple children and you can recognize at times that they can be polar opposites raised in the same family.

DNA from the same parents. And yet, they are so different from one another. That's the case here with Jacob and Esau. Look at verse 27. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field.

He's a hunter. He's a man of the field. That's already been foreshadowed by the fact that he's called Harry when he's born. He's pictured from his birth even as being a man's man. That's who he is.

That's his identity. In fact, we are told at his birth that he was red all over. And we sometimes scratch our head at that and say, what's the point of that detail?

What is he talking about there? The only other person in the Bible that's described as being red is King David. And I know that Joe has argued in favor that that's about David being a redhead.

[21:40] And the redheads among us want to team up with Joe and say, yeah, King David was a redhead. But if that's saying that about King David, it's also saying it about Esau. Then in reality, the red of Esau is not describing his hair.

And the word red as we sort of picture it in our heads is usually this bright, almost like an apple type of red. That's probably not the red. It's most certainly not the red that's in mind here. The word, the Hebrew word for red, it has a broader sort of range to what we might think of as red.

It covers everything from very brownish with slight reddish hues to very light yellowish with slight reddish hues than in the middle to what we would consider to just be sort of red. It covers all of that range.

And so it was not uncommon in the ancient world, and this is the case among multiple civilizations, it's not all that uncommon for these sort of heroic figures to be described as having a reddish complexion.

And while I don't know, I think perhaps that has something to do with these being men of the outdoors. And so they're men who are out in the sun. They are strong men. They are burly men. They are out there.

[22:48] They're capturing the prey. They're hunting it down. And so that's how they're often pictured these heroic figures. And so it's somewhat ironic that Esau begins to be described as if he might be the hero of the story.

And yet we know he's not because he's the oldest and the older will serve the younger. So from the very beginning of the story of these two men, there are ironies present. Esau is the one who physically looks like the hero of the story.

He's a man's man, not only in his appearance, but in his activities. He is a hunter. He is a skilled hunter capable of going out and capturing his prey and bringing it home for food.

That's who he is. That's how he's described. Jacob, on the other hand, we're told, is a quiet man dwelling in tents. Now the word quiet is actually a little bit confusing here because it doesn't actually mean quiet.

It usually means perfect. But that doesn't make sense in this context. And so what most commentators think is that it carries the idea of him being sort of complete in and of himself.

[23:52] In other words, he doesn't really need anybody else. Or it may carry the connotations of him being a sort of more civilized, individualistic type of person as opposed to his wild brother Esau.

So he's the more refined one, perhaps. He's the one who lives in tents, so he stays near the home. He may have been some sort of shepherd where he would have been nearer to the home most of the time.

That's who he is. The polar opposite of Esau, his manly brother. That's who the two men are. And those personality types influence the way that their parents treat them.

We are told that Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game. Isaac had an affinity for Esau because Esau could bring him the meat that he wanted.

Esau could go and get what Isaac wanted. By reading through the story of Isaac, there's no indication that Isaac was like Esau. There's no indication that Isaac was a man's man. If anything, he was probably more like Jacob.

[24:57] So he placed this value upon Esau's ability to do things that certainly Jacob couldn't do and probably Isaac himself wasn't gifted at.

So he places this value upon Esau. And then we're told, on the other hand, that Rebekah loved Jacob. We're not told why. I would presume that it's probably because she remembers God's word about them.

It would be very difficult as a mother to not favor the one that you know is going to be blessed by God and avoid the heartbreak of favoring the one that you know is not going to be.

We're not told. We're left to sort of guess at the cause of her preference of one over another. But we know that in every area of their life, these two men are presented as the polar opposite of one another.

And that brings us to this event in their lives. early on in their lives that results in an even greater fracture between them and it foreshadows the events that are to come in chapter 27.

[26:05] So let's take a look at exactly what happens. We are told that once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field. He's been out doing his thing.

He's out hunting. And yet he's not been successful, apparently. Comes in exhausted. In fact, as it goes on, the picture is of Esau so exhausted he feels himself at least to be on the verge of death.

Whether or not that's the case, we don't know. But that's how he feels. And Esau comes in and he sees his brother at home, of course, in the tents, cooking his stew up. And Esau says, the ESV says, let me eat some of that red stew for I am exhausted.

Now, it's a little bit more humorous in the original Hebrew because what he really says is something like, let me gobble up that red, red stuff.

That's the word that he uses for eat here. It's fitting for Esau because the only other place where we can find this word used in Hebrew writings is in the later writings of the rabbis.

[27:10] And it's only used to describe an animal devouring the other animal that it has just killed. So it's an appropriate term to describe Esau. Esau is saying, let me have this stuff.

He doesn't call it stew. He calls it this red, red stuff. That's how he names it. Ironical in that Esau himself has already been called one who is red.

There are ironies all through the story. But he's desperate and he doesn't even have the words to say what it is. Just give me the red stuff you've got. Let me have it. He's on the verge of passing out perhaps.

And in this note, therefore he was called Edom. Edom is very close to the Hebrew word for red. You would think that his descendants, the Edomites, would be called the Edomites because of his red complexion.

But no, Moses wants us to know that they are called the Edomites because of this low point in his life where he allowed his own weakness to cause him to act like a fool. That's why they are called Edom.

[28:13] Jacob who we're not given any real judgment calls upon his behavior in this passage. Jacob is not presented in a positive light. It's just that the focus is not upon Jacob.

The focus is upon Esau and what he has done. But Jacob's not presented positively. Jacob should have responded by wanting to help his brother. Get him what he needed. Help him on his way.

This is his twin brother for goodness sake. No, Jacob's going to take advantage. Verse 31. No details. No, are you okay? What's happening? No. Verse 31.

Jacob said, Sell me your birthright now. Give it to me. You want this? Give it to me. Esau said, I'm about to die. What use is a birthright to me?

It doesn't mean it good to have this. I'm not even going to live past the day. I'm not going to get this birthright. Now the birthright itself is the right of inheritance. It is, in the ancient world, we mentioned this last week a bit, the oldest son had the rights to, if not all, then the vast majority of the property of his father.

[29:22] The law of Moses tried to curb that a little bit, tried to sort of hedge that in so that the other sons were allowed to have something. And so the Old Testament law of Moses says that the oldest brother gets twice as much as any of the other brothers.

But he doesn't get everything. But sometimes in ancient cultures, the oldest brother got everything. So there's a lot at stake here in the birthright. It's important. It's not the same as the blessing that Jacob will steal from Esau in chapter 27.

They're two distinct things. The birthright is the inheritance. The blessing are the good things spoken over the child by the father. And in the case of the patriarchs, it's the passing on of the covenant promises.

Here it's inheritance issues. But it is closely tied to the blessing. After all, to Abraham was given the land and he has a piece of it already.

He owns the cave where he owned the cave where he was buried. And now Isaac owns that cave. So the birthright is not just stuff, but it's stuff that's loaded with theological meaning.

[30:31] Jacob says, give it to me. Esau's response is, fine, I'm about to die. Now in reality, he's probably not about to die. After all, he's managed to stumble his way back there.

He's managed to not just grab the stew and eat it. He's managed to ask for it to make a request. But nevertheless, he feels that way. Verse 33, Jacob said, swear to me now.

Notice the back and forth. Jacob said, Esau said, Jacob said. This is not a friendly, brotherly conversation. It's just quick succession, one after another. Jacob said, verse 33, swear to me now.

So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew. Now the irony here is the fact that initially Esau saw this red, red stuff and it looked like a hearty type of stew.

In fact, it turns out to be a very common, cheap lentil stew that he could have gotten anywhere. How Jacob managed to make it look so savory what he put in it to turn it red, we don't know.

[31 : 34] To make it look like something that Esau would greatly desire but it turns out to be nothing but your common lentil stew. Think, I don't know, ramen noodles. Okay? You need sustenance.

You think there's a beef stew on the pot. You beg for it. You give up your entire inheritance. They give it to you. Ramen noodles. That's not going to fill you up for long at all. This is terrible news for Esau.

But he takes what he's got, gobbles it up, he goes on his way. He leaves. And then we come to what I think is the most significant statement in this entire story.

At the end of verse 34, thus, Esau despised his birthright. There's his role.

This whole story is moving toward that one statement. There is Esau's role. He despised his birthright.

[32 : 31] He set it aside. He gave it no care and concern. He just set it aside as if it were nothing. And it's everything. It's everything.

And it's gone now. Because in his foolishness, he preferred temporary satisfaction over something that would have lasted him his entire life and his descendants beyond into eternity even perhaps.

He chose momentary, fleeting sustenance in place of his lasting birthright.

He squandered the great spiritual privilege with which he was born. And if you're wondering, is that the point of the story? Is that what we're supposed to notice here?

I think it's confirmed for us in the New Testament. Turn over toward the back of your New Testament to Hebrews chapter 12. I want you to see this.

[33 : 38] How the writer of the book of Hebrews under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, how he looks back and he interprets this event from the lives of Jacob and Esau. Verse 15 of chapter 12. See to it.

This is a warning. He is speaking to presumably a gathering, a body of believers. He's speaking to a local church. In fact, many scholars believe that Hebrews originally was a sermon preached to a church.

So like this. Like what we're doing here. And so that's what he's doing. He's warning people who have gathered together on a Sunday perhaps to hear the Word of God. He wants to warn them.

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God. In other words, don't fall short of the privilege of the grace that you've already had offered to you and you've already received.

The fact that you're here, the fact that you're hearing this, is great spiritual privilege. You have the Word of God opened up for you. He says, See to it that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble and by it many become defiled.

[34 : 50] Now, verse 16. That no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau who sold his birthright for a single meal.

He's called unholy because of that. He's called sexually immoral, I think, because against the wishes of his father, against the later commandments found in the law, he married Canaanite women and they were, we are told that they were, a thorn in Isaac and Rebecca's side all their lives.

I think that may be what lies behind that. But he's called unholy because of the decisions that he made chiefly and beginning with this decision here. Who sold his birthright for a single meal.

For you know that afterward when he desired to inherit the blessing, now pause, we've moved from birthright to blessing. So the author of the book of Hebrews ties those two things together. We've got chapter 25 in Genesis, the birthright, the inheritance.

Chapter 27 is the issue of the blessing. But in the mind of the writer of Hebrews, he loses the blessing because he gave up the birthright. See? Now we know on a human level, it's Jacob and Rebecca's conniving and scheming that will obtain the blessing for Jacob.

[36 : 06] But the author of Hebrews is looking at it from a different perspective and he's saying that the loss of the blessing is tied to his giving up, his wasting away his birthright.

So he loses the birthright and then he loses something even greater because he was willing to give up the birthright. 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.

He desperately, when you read through the account in chapter 27, it's tragic. Esau, when he realizes that his blessing has been stolen by Jacob, Esau weeps and cries out to his father, don't you have something left over for me?

Do you have some kind of blessing? He is desperate in that moment. That's what the writer of Hebrews is referring back to. He wept and he cried out for tears, but there was no turning back.

There was no going back. There was no way to change the decisions that he had already made. He was already in a place of spiritual barrenness, having rejected the great grace that had been his since birth.

[37 : 21] Born with great privilege and wasted for momentary satisfaction. And I believe that that reality is an accurate portrait of what so many people sitting in seats and in pews like you're sitting in this morning listening to people preach right now.

I believe that it describes so much what we are seeing among so many people. Hearing the word of God on a regular basis.

Being brought to church maybe even perhaps by their parents from a young age exposed to the grace of God. Exposed to the gospel over and over and over. And yet they keep delaying and keep pushing off as if it can wait.

As if faith in Christ is something that you can handle later on in life and spurning the grace of God in the moment. Hearing Sunday school lesson after Sunday school lesson.

Hearing sermon after sermon. Being told by their parents over and over about the gospel. And rejecting it time and time again. Not saying I don't believe that.

[38 : 36] But just refusing to make any sort of decision to trust in Christ and to walk with Him. And it calcifies the heart. It calcifies the heart.

And there comes a point in time where and I've talked to so many adults who find themselves in this place where they look back and they say I was raised in church or I went to church for a long time and I didn't do anything with it and I kept thinking later on and later on I'll do something with it.

But they found their hearts hardening slowly over time and now they look and they say you know there's a part of me that wishes that maybe I had maybe I had done something then.

Maybe I had made some sort of decision but now I wish that I had a desire to do it but I have no desire to do that. I wish that there were a part of me that would want to do those things and be that kind of person but in all honesty it's just not there.

No place for repentance left in their hearts. It's not there. It's not there. At one time having great spiritual privilege exposed to the Word of God knowledgeable in the things of God and never trusting in Jesus.

[40 : 03] and now like Esau they've thrown away that privilege and yet the hope is that for those who are currently in the midst of that and who have that great privilege and who are being currently exposed to the Gospel and hearing the Word of God on a regular basis the writer of Hebrews is saying don't do what Esau did.

Don't do that. Don't despise your birthright. Don't throw away that great privilege. Don't do that. Don't fail to obtain the grace of God which is a way of saying don't fail to take advantage of the grace of God that is right there in front of you.

Trust in Christ and walk with Christ. Do it now the author of Hebrews is saying. And for some of you you have heard this message over and over.

You have been told that Christ died for sins. You have been told that if you turn from sin and trust in Christ you will be saved and you have heard that over and over and you believe that it's true but it doesn't do anything.

You've never trusted in Christ though you may agree with those things you've never trusted in Christ. And my plea to you would be the plea of the writer of Hebrews do not fail in this.

[41 : 29] Cling. Grab hold of the grace of God. Trust in Christ. Grab hold of His mercy and be saved through the blood of Jesus. We are not like Rebecca given insight into God's sovereign dealings with mankind.

In fact the Bible tells us that the secret things belong to God. He reveals to us what He wants and everything else belongs to Him. And He doesn't reveal those things to us like He does to Rebecca. So we can't fall back on maybe I'm elect maybe I'm not elect.

We don't fall back on any of that. The biblical message is believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. That's the command. The issue is those who have heard that command over and over and over will they fail to obtain the grace of God or will they trust in Jesus and be saved?

Let's pray.