

Coach House Church

BEACONS

SOUP

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Over the last year some of us have had the great pleasure of bringing you inspiring and encouraging messages. Some of these have been very personal, some have been amusing, some have drawn on topics of the day or events in our lives. One thing that has been constant throughout all of them has been that they have all been hugely beneficial in helping to keep us spiritually refreshed at this difficult time.

One of the difficulties for those preparing these messages is that no sooner have you recorded one message and you have to start thinking the next one and sometimes this is not as easy as it sounds. This week in particular I couldn't think of anything I wanted to share so as the deadline approached I had to just look around for something to inspire me.

Well I had a day at home and although I had work to do I had agreed that it would be my turn to make Dinner. The day before we had a Turkey thigh, which I had slow cooked for 8 hours, so we had a big bowl of stock to use and it made perfect sense to me to make a soup. I will leave it to you to guess what was added to the soup but I can assure you the result was well worth the effort.

So all this is very interesting but what about the bible story? Well it won't come as too much of a surprise that it involves soup; actually it was stew but there isn't that much difference between soup and stew.

So this story is about two brothers, Esau, the older brother, and Jacob, the younger brother, the two twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah and can be found in the book of Genesis, chapter 25.

" As the boys grew up, Esau became a skilful hunter. He was an outdoorsman, but Jacob had a quiet temperament, preferring to stay at home. Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed eating the wild game Esau brought home, but Rebekah loved Jacob. One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry. Esau said to Jacob 'I'm starved! Give me some of that red stew' 'All right' Jacob replied ' but trade me your rights as the firstborn son' 'Look I'm dying of starvation' said Esau 'What good is my birthright to me now' But 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. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal and got up and left. He showed contempt for his rights as the firstborn”

So on the face of it we can see two brothers, two very different people, I imagine that, even before this event, the brothers would have been competitive. Perhaps Esau regularly got `one over` on his brother. When we see how Jacob behaves in other stories we can see that he was quite a scheming character, always looking to turn situations to his own advantage. I don't think there was much love lost between the brothers.

Despite the fact that both brothers had certain questionable characteristics there is one very important difference between them. Jacob was destined to put his trust in God, whereas Esau had no regard for the thing of God. Esau had been born first (albeit only by a minute or so) and this gave him all the rights to inherit not just the family fortunes but also the promise that God had given to his granddad, Abraham. But Esau wasn't bothered about this, he just wanted to do his own thing. He wanted to be out enjoying himself, in truth all he was really doing was avoiding his responsibilities. His father didn't exactly help the situation, as he enjoyed the fruits of Esau's misguided labours. In those days there was no priesthood and so it was the duty of the head of the family to fulfil the role of priest. Isaac would have been offering sacrifices to God and passing on the bible stories to the next generation. Esau should have been working towards that day when he would take over his fathers spiritual responsibility for the family.

On that fateful day when everything changed Esau was his usual impulsive self. All he could think of was food. His own efforts had failed and now he was reliant on someone else to feed him. This, of course, reflected his spiritual situation, because of his neglect of his duties, he was unable to feed himself spiritually as well as physically.

In the letter to the Hebrews, in the New Testament, the writer uses this as an example of why we should make it our goal to live peaceful lives. Here's what he wrote,

“Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many. Make sure that no one is immoral or godless, like Esau, who traded his birthright for a single meal. You know that afterwards when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears”

Now this rejection is not about people who don't know Jesus. These words were written to people who had accepted Jesus as saviour but were wavering in their commitment. The trials of life were dragging people in, making people

spend more time in things of the world and less time in the things of God. Put into modern day terminology, not enough bible study, not enough prayer, preferring to spend time on social media instead. (I use this as an example as there are many other things that draw us away from God)

For Esau there was no way back, he could not regain his birthright. Likewise, if we drift away from God there is no way back.

This scripture says that we should "Work at living a holy life" Doing things for God does not just happen, it isn't natural or automatic just because we profess Christ as Saviour. We actually have to work at it. And keep on working at it. You can't rely on someone else to do God's work for you, if you do they may give you a bowl of soup when you need it but they will be the one who takes the blessing.

Lets close with a few verses from Proverbs 4 and the Psalm 119.

Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil. Guide my steps by your word so I will not be overcome by evil.

The soup was very good but the fact it reminded me to keep pressing on in the things of God even better.



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