

Go To The Father • Genesis 28:6-9

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Not Too Bright*

1. In several recent science fiction movies, actors are seen jumping great distances, from the top of one building to another. These leaps often span an entire city street.
2. Of course they're done with special effects; computers and wires and such.
3. That didn't deter a 22 year old British man named Marc from trying to duplicate the feat on Sept 29th of last year.
4. He and a friend decided they would attempt to leap from the top of their office building to the parking garage next door.
 - a. it didn't matter that it was 20 ft. away
 - b. and that the top of the garage was 40 ft. lower than their office building.
5. They'd seen it done in the movies – and so, Marc got a good running start and leapt – to fall several stories to the ground between the buildings.
6. Needless to say, he didn't make it.[\[1\]](#)

B. *Poor Fool*

1. Of course there are many similar such stories of people who's choices we look at and can only scratch our heads in wonder at their utter foolishness.
2. Consider the man from Renton, Washington who on February 3, 1990 tried to commit a robbery. [\[2\]](#)
 - a. it most certainly was his first attempt as he had no previous record and his method was less than skilled
 - b. his target was a gun shop and it was full of customers, in a state where a substantial portion of the adult population is licensed to carry concealed handguns in public places.
 - c. to enter the shop, he had to step around a marked Police car at the front door.
 - d. the officer in uniform was standing next to the counter, having coffee before reporting to duty.
 - e. upon seeing the officer, the would-be robber announced a holdup and fired a few wild shots.
 - f. virtually everyone in the store drew their guns; the officer and a clerk both opened fire.
3. This morning, we're taking a look at a similar act of foolishness –
4. It comes to us in the story of Esau –

II. TEXT

A. *Set The Scene*

1. Isaac & Rebekah had twin sons – Esau & Jacob.
2. While Esau was the firstborn, and so by tradition the favored son who would

- receive the birthright & inheritance, God had told Rebekah even before the boys were born that the order would be reversed.
3. The younger would receive the inheritance and the elder would serve him.
 4. As the boys grew, even though they were twins, it was obvious they couldn't be more different.
 - a. Esau was a real man's man; a hunter, a man of the field and forest
 - 1) why, he was even hairy.
 - 2) thus his name – Esau = hairy.
 - b. Jacob was the quiet, domestic type who liked to stay at home.
 - 1) he was an observer who was always angling for position and seeking to gain the advantage.
 - 2) even at their birth, though Esau emerged first, Jacob came next, grasping his brother's heel
 - 3) and so was named "heel-catcher"; a name which conveyed the idea of a conniver, a manipulator – scoundrel!
 - 4) and sure enough, Jacob lived up to his name as we've seen so clearly in our Wed. night studies over the last couple weeks.
 5. We don't have time to go into the story this morning but there came a point at which the enmity between Esau and Jacob became so hot, Esau began to plot his brother's death.
 6. Isaac & Rebekah decided it would be best to send Jacob away, so they told him to travel the nearly 500 miles to Rebekah's hometown and stay with his uncle till things cooled down.
 7. There was another important reason why they sent Jacob there.
 - a. Jacob had no wife and was well into the age where he ought to marry.
 - b. but Isaac and Rebekah knew that as the son to whom the promise of God to Abraham would pass, Jacob could not take a wife from among the local Canaanite women.
 - c. he would need to do what his father Isaac had done, and that was take a wife from his relatives in Mesopotamia.
 - d. you see, God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham & his descendants through Isaac, and now Jacob.
 - e. neither Isaac nor Jacob could marry a Canaanite woman because that would mean their children were also Canaanites and that would allow the Canaanite peoples a claim to the Land.
 - f. Rebekah, was from Mesopotamia; Jacob would also need a wife from there.
 - g. so Rebekah and Isaac called Jacob to them and gave him a strict charge NOT TO TAKE A WIFE from among the Canaanites.
 - h. rather, he should look for one among his relatives back in Padan Aram.
 8. Jacob took his parents counsel, packed up and took off.

B. Vs. 6-9

6Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," **7**and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. **8**Also Esau

saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac.

1. Earlier we read that Esau had married two Hittite women, Judith and Basemath.
2. We're told that these two gals were a serious grief to Isaac & Rebekah. [26:34-35]
3. The relationship between a woman and her mother-in-law can be a difficult thing.
 - a. in this case the relationship was complicated by the fact that Rebekah and Isaac saw Esau's marriage to these two women as one more sign of his unfitness to be the son of blessing.
 - b. you see, Esau knew the family history well.
 - 1) He'd heard the story of how his grandfather Abraham had sent his servant to Mesopotamia to get a wife for Esau's father Isaac.
 - 2) how Abraham had charged his servant to make sure he DIDN'T secure a wife from the Canaanites.
 - c. Esau's union to these two women was a sign of his lack of care for the family heritage and legacy.
 - d. Esau's flippant attitude toward the things of God had been proven time and again.
 - 1) it was seen when he sold the birthright to his brother Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew.
 - 2) and his union to not one, but two Canaanite women, was the icing on the cake of a whole life of foolish choices.
4. Esau knew his marriages weren't in keeping with the plan and path of God, but he pursued them anyway – because he was a carnal man.
 - a. his present fleshly desires weighed more heavily on him than the spiritual promises of God's blessing to come.
 - b. we see Esau's outlook on life summarized perfectly by his foolish comment when bargaining with Jacob for the bowl of stew.
 - 1) he had just come in from a long day of hunting and was famished
 - 2) Jacob was at the fire, stirring a pot of bean soup
 - 3) Esau was hungry and the smell of the stew heightened his sense of hunger and desire. So he asked Jacob for a bowl.
 - 4) now, Jacob ought to have simply given him a bowl, but he's Jacob!
 - 5) so what does he do, he sees an opportunity and he knows how rash and impetuous Esau is, how he lives only in and for the moment.
 - 6) so he makes an offer – a bowl of stew if Esau will give him the birthright; in other words, sell him the honor of the position of being the firstborn.
 - 7) this is an utterly absurd offer; one which Esau should have laughed off and said, "You've been sniffing the fumes!"
 - 8) Esau could have easily taken the edge off his hunger with other food at hand.
 - 9) but the smell of the stew right in front of him has him trapped, because he was a carnal man – and a carnal man is one who's present desires take control.

- 10) so he said to Jacob, “Look, I’m about to die of hunger; so what good is the birthright?” [25:32]
- 11) the trade was made; Esau got his bowl of soup by giving up his rights as the firstborn.
5. As we come to these verses in chapter 28, Esau has matured a bit and looks back over his life with regret.
 - a. the rashness of his earlier days has cost him dearly
 - b. his lack of concern for the things of God has led to a series of choices that have cost him the respect of his parents.
 - c. he used to be his father’s favorite, but he’s fallen far from that place and it aches.
 6. And though Esau has regret, he hasn’t repented.
 - a. he’s still a carnal man; he’s still driven by his immediate desires.
 - b. when he sees that Jacob has taken the direction of his parents and left for Padan Aram to secure a wife, he decides to make his own attempt to return himself to their favor.
 - c. if what they want for their son is a wife who’s a relative, then by golly, he can do that too.

9So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

7. Mahalath was the daughter of Ishmael, Isaac’s half-brother.
8. Esau figured, “Okay, my folks are ticked that I married a couple Canaanite women. They wanted me to marry a relative.”
 - a. “Mesopotamia is too far away, but Uncle Ishmael isn’t, and he’s got some daughters. I’ll go and marry one of them.”
 - b. no doubt Esau proudly presented Mahalath to his parents, thinking they would shower appreciation and blessing on him.
9. But Mahalath, as one of the daughters of Ishmael, was also exempt from being able to be in the line of the promise of God to Abraham and his descendants.
 - a. Ishmael was the son that had been cast out, excluded from the promise.
 - b. if the Canaanites were exempt, Ishmael and his descendants were doubly barred from receiving the promise.
10. Ishmael was the result of Abraham and Sarah’s carnal, their fleshly attempts to help God.
11. I guess it’s fitting that carnal Esau, in his attempt to regain his parents’ favor, ends up uniting with such a lineage.

C. *The Abiding Lesson*

1. There’s an important lesson for us to learn from Esau’s foolish choices.
2. Esau wanted a good and commendable thing – he wanted his parents love and respect.
3. As he’s now older and more mature, he can see that the rashness and impetuosity of his younger days has led him to make some foolish and regrettable choices.
4. Those choices have combined to cost him the position and affection he once had with his father.

5. When he hears of the charge his parents have given to Jacob, he sets out to do the same – but in his own way!
6. And that’s the crucial point for us to glean here – He did it his way; Esau’s way, not the right way.
7. Esau ought to have gone to Isaac and said, “Dad, I realize now that I’ve made some really poor decisions. My flesh keeps getting the best of me and I always seem to let my passions dictate my choices.”
 - a. “I married Judith & Basemath because they are really something to look at.”
 - b. “But now I realize they ought to have been off limits because of where they come from.”
 - c. “Dad, what do you want me to do? Tell me, and I will do it because I know I’ve gone about life in the wrong way, trusting myself and my own desires and just doing what comes naturally.”
 - d. “I see now that that’s the wrong way to live and it’s cost me deeply. Tell me what to do.”
8. That’s what Esau ought to have done – Gone to his father.
 - a. if being restored to favor and respect was what he was after, then he ought to have asked for the path back.
 - b. but he didn’t – he did what he’d always done; he felt a need, and grabbed the most obvious and simplest route to it’s end.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Any Esau’s?*

1. There are some people here today who are very much like Esau.
 - a. they know there’s a God and that they ought to live to please Him
 - b. but they follow a route like Esau’s; self-designed.
 - c. they don’t go to the Father and ask Him what they ought to do,
 - d. they’ve designed their own path to God’s favor and blessing.
 - e. they think what God wants is that they go to church.
 - 1) or they think what will gain them God’s approval is to live a basically good and moral life.
 - 2) they think a 5 spot in the offering gains them a merit point.
 - 3) or that by doing some religious duty they’ve met the divine criteria for their lives.
 - f. God doesn’t want us to go to church – He wants us to BE the Church
 - 1) God doesn’t merely want us to do good, He wants us to BE good.
 - 2) He doesn’t want 5, 10 or even 20 dollars; He wants our wallets, our hearts, US!
 - 3) it isn’t about religion – it’s a relationship.
2. Think about Esau.
 - a. what he wanted was a good thing – his motivation was good; he wanted to be restored to favor with his father.
 - b. but when it came down to decision time – Esau reverted to form and defined the relationship with his father by his own terms.

- c. if only he had gone to Isaac and told him about his desire to be restored; about his longing to be pleasing to his father.
 - d. that single act would have been the most important step in the restoration.
 - e. Isaac's heart would have turned to his son right at that moment, before Esau had done anything except express his longing.
 - f. everyone of us who are parents know how absolutely true this is.
 - g. the moment the erring child comes to us, admits his/her failure and sincere desire to be restored, our hearts overflow with love, forgiveness, and acceptance.
 - h. if Esau had done that, simply gone to his father, Isaac would have bestowed on Esau what he was hoping for, and then would have shown Esau how to live a life that would safeguard that renewed relationship.
3. Twice in the book of Proverbs we find this – [14:12 16:25]

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

- 4. That's the way of Esau; doing what seems right, but never asking God Himself if it is right.
- 5. Hebrews 12 gives us some important commentary on Esau – [12:14-17]
 - a. the author of Hebrews tell us to be on the lookout for people who are part of the Church, who appear to be with us, but who in fact are falling short of a genuine saving relationship with God.
 - b. he says that we must look carefully for . . .

any . . . profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

- 6. Esau's tears weren't tears of repentance they were bitter tears of regret.
 - a. he didn't want to change himself, just his circumstances.
 - b. what he couldn't or wouldn't see was that it was his very attitude, his way of going about life that had led to those circumstances.
 - c. Esau's regret was the regret of the victim whose a victim of his own choices but who blames others for his misfortune and loss.
 - 1) it's the regret of the alcoholic who blames the clerk at the liquor store for selling him, a bottle.
 - 2) it's the regret of the woman with AIDS who blames the guy she had sex with for not wearing a condom
 - 3) it's the regret of the man who's wife is leaving him after 5 years of abuse he's heaped on her.
- 7. Yes, chances are good there are some Esaus here, maybe many.
 - a. people who started going to church however long ago because their life was a mess and they thought a healthy dose of religion would be good for them.
 - b. and now, church-going has become a part of your lifestyle.
 - c. or maybe you don't go to church – maybe you just listen to the radio on Sunday mornings and are hearing this message right now on KDAR.
 - d. I'm glad you're here. I'm thrilled you're listening – and please hear this: Go To The Father!
 - e. you don't need religion.

- f. what you need is to go to Him and ask Him what to do.
 - g. stop defining your life by your own wisdom & desires – that’s what got you into trouble in the first place!
 - h. Go to the Father! Tell Him you’ve made a mess of your life and ask Him what HE WANTS YOU TO DO!
8. If only Esau had done that instead of going and making matters worse by hitching himself to just one more wife that only added to the alienation and suffering of his already pathetic life.

B. God Or The Experts

1. Christian - hear me well, please!
 - a. the Father has given us ample instruction in how to live. It’s right here [Bible]
 - b. why then, do so many of God’s children, who say they want to live in God’s favor, turn to others for counsel and direction?
 - c. when they have problems at home, instead of simply turning to God’s counsel and saying, “Lord, by Your grace help me live this!”
 - d. [Marriages – Parenting = Experts / Dr. Phil, Oprah, Dr. Laura]

 - e. over and over I’ve heard from people when I challenge them to simply DO what the Father says, “But it’s so hard!”
 - f. that’s the cry of Esau! Esau is the one who always takes the easy way, the quick way, the self-indulgent way of excuse.
 - g. and it’s the sure way to pain, loss, and sorrow that looks back over life with nothing but tears of regret.
 - h. God’s way may seem hard – but it’s right!
 - i. and time will prove that compared to all other ways, it’s the easiest.
 - j. sin is the hard path, my friend – because it leads to death!

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

2. The Way of the Lord is the way of light and the blessed life.

[1] <http://www.darwinawards.com>

[2] <http://www.darwinawards.com>