

Finishing Well

Lesson #39 Despising The Inheritance Nov. 30, 2022

Costly Consequences of Yielding To My Coveting Flesh: Death in Valley of Achor
Loss of Inheritance

Ps. 119:36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

Anselm, Benedictine monk, said,

"I have had men confess to me every known sin except the sin of covetousness."

Achan's crime was the first recorded act of disobedience after Israel had crossed the Jordan. His death was the first divinely commanded punishment in the new land. God made it clear that corruption in His family is damaging and disastrous. God will not tolerate disobedience. The sin had to be identified, judged, and purged. The punishment in the Valley of Achor was severe.

The Deception of Sin: In the midst of a miraculous victory, Achan was enticed by a robe, some silver, and some gold.

Achan was imagining in his heart what it would be like to own all that treasure. Certainly, none of that compares with the power of God he had just witnessed. The imagination is the "womb" in which desire is conceived and from which sin and death are eventually born.

➤ We KNOW our own hearts can be just as easily swayed.

James 1:14-15 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

Another aspect of sin's deception: It promises a benefit it just can't deliver. The stolen items did Achan absolutely no good; he couldn't spend the money, and he couldn't wear the clothes. What seemed of great worth to him was actually worthless, buried in a hole in the ground while guilt festered in his heart.

Achan's sin becomes even more odious when you stop to realize all that God had done for him. God had cared for him and his family in the wilderness. He had brought them safely across the Jordan and given the army victory at Jericho. The Lord had accepted Achan as a son of the covenant at Gilgal. Yet in spite of all these wonderful experiences, Achan disobeyed God just to possess some wealth that he couldn't even enjoy.

Key Point: The root of Achan's sin grew out of the soil of dissatisfaction.

He was dissatisfied, impatient, and self-reliant. He believed, trusted and used his own protective strategies to get what he wanted out of life.

Achan was dissatisfied with his lot in life because he failed to rest his life in God's providence and goodness. His failure to walk by faith led to seeking satisfaction, security, and significance in the material world. Lusting after things, he chose to take the things under the ban.

It was this spiritual condition of dissatisfaction and independent living that led him to take matters into his own hands, believing he could meet his wants by his own solutions. Ironically, God was in the process of taking all of Israel into the land where each man would have his own land, house, and abundant blessings. Had he waited just a day or two, he could have gathered all the spoils he wanted from the victory at Ai!

Key Point: Dissatisfaction caused by failure to find his happiness in the Lord produced impatience which caused him to covet and run ahead with his own solutions.

Consider: Our failure to find our contentment in the Savior and His love and grace is surely the cause of a great deal of our own self-made misery and sinful behavior.

Context of Hebrews 12: Running The Race Of Faith: Run Strong > Finish Well

The 5 warnings in Hebrews admonish us to press on and obtain all God has promised to the faithful Overcomer. These warnings represent the very real possibility of the loss of privileges or rewards offered to the believer. These warnings concern the possible negative consequences for the unfaithful believer. The results will be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Heb. 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

12:5b-6 My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives.

12:10b-11 but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

The Enablement of God's Grace: As we run the Christian race, what is our goal?

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

- Follow = diōkō, means to continue to pursue
- The pursuit of peace and sanctification is not optional; it is mandatory.
- Holiness is not something we can set aside in order to pursue our own pleasures.

Christ not only died to forgive our sins; He died to bring peace and to make us holy.

These two goals remind us of our Lord's high priestly ministry in Heb. 7:1-2.

- King of Peace and King of Righteousness

Heb. 12:11b ...nevertheless afterward it [chastening] yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised [trained] thereby.

II Tim. 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

II Pet. 3:13-14 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. ¹⁴ Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Consider: Apart from peace with all men - apart from holiness before God - NO MAN shall see the Lord in us. [Note: It doesn't say you won't see the Lord. No man watching you.]

Col. 1:27 "Christ in you, the hope of glory." If men are ever to see Christ, if they're ever to see the glory of God, where are they going to see Him? In you. Without peace, without holiness, no man can see the Lord in you; no man can see the Lord in me. You must reveal Christ.

Gal. 4:19 - "My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

Heb. 12:15-17 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;
- 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.

It requires diligence to run the race successfully. The 3 dangers before us are illustrated by Esau's decision which was irrevocable even though he regretted it later.

Spiritual Failure is seldom an explosion. It is usually an erosion.

It is constant spiritual oversight by each one of us of our own lives. Be on guard!

The Route Of Any Failure Is A Progression Involving Three Stages.

1. Failing to appropriate God's Grace

Appropriation does not necessarily mean to gain something new but to set aside for our practical possession something that already belongs to us.

Heb. 12:15a "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God."

"Looking diligently" = searching out carefully or minutely

The Hebrew Christians were going through trials, testing and facing persecution BUT they had failed to appropriate God's grace so they could stand firm.

Thus, they were living defeated lives. They had failed of the grace of God.

C.A. Coates: It is appropriation that tests us. How often we stop at admiration.

Consider: Know what I have in Christ > See my need of it > By faith receive it

This brings us from childish meandering into a responsible, specific walk of faith.

Takes me from a "help me" attitude to that of giving thanks; from a begging attitude to appropriation.

H.F. "We are plunged into new tests where only a fresh supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ will meet our need. As our need is met, as we prove the sufficiency of Christ to meet our inward need, so there can be a new showing forth of His glory through us."

Truth: Whatever God brings into our lives, He will give us grace to overcome it rather than to be overcome by it. We experience overcoming victory. Many promises for the overcomer.

II Cor. 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Consider: If I fail to appropriate God's grace, I will react according to my sin nature. God's grace does not fail, but we can fail to take advantage of His grace.

I Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

Gal. 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Truth: Only the Holy Spirit of God can control the flesh with its sinful desires.

The tragedy is that thousands are trying to control and eradicate it in their own strength.

2. Bitterness In The Heart

Heb. 12:15b Looking diligently... lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you., and thereby many be defiled.

Bitterness in the heart leads to murmuring with the tongue. Murmuring is one of the most dangerous sins because it always affects others and leavens the whole camp.

When I fail to appropriate grace, there will be a root of bitterness in my heart against God who has allowed this "trouble" to come, and it will ultimately come out in my speech.

In Deut.29, Moses reviews the covenant between God and Israel. In this context, he says, 29:18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turns 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 [poisonous fruit] and wormwood; This particular "bitter poison" is idolatry in defiance of the covenant.

In the OT, the Hebrew word translated "bitter poison" refers either to the unfaithful [Deut. 29:18; Amos 6:12] or to their punishment [Jer. 8:14; 9:15; 23:15].

The "poisonous root" is the person who introduces others to idol worship.

A root of bitterness doesn't exist unto itself; it's a corrupting factor.

New Testament: Another reference to the destructive power of bitterness.

While rebuking Simon the Sorcerer, Peter tells him to repent of his wickedness, with an added insight: "I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin" [Acts 8:23].

Simon's wickedness was his desire to buy the power of the Holy Spirit, essentially treating God as a commodity to enhance his own career as a magician.

So, the "bitter root" in Hebrews refers to a source of evil or wickedness within the church.

A root may be small and slow in its growth, but, if it carries poison, it is malignant; it is dangerous. Sin in the church must be diligently rooted out; the result of tolerating wickedness is that "many" will be defiled.

How God dealt with a "root of bitterness" in the early church - see the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. Obviously, God considers pulling up such "bitter roots" to be critically important to the health of His church.

The author now turns to Esau, a descendant of Abraham, who lived in close proximity to those whom God would favor with the blessings promised Abraham and his descendants. But in the end, living in close proximity to God's blessings is not the same as entering into them.

3. Open Contempt Of What Is Our Responsibility Or Our Privilege

The sole place in the NT where the loss of the "birthright" is mentioned specifically is in Heb. 12:16. Esau's story is brought forth as a warning to believers of the possible loss of the birthright. The writer encouraged his readers to depend on the grace of God by urging them to look BY FAITH in 3 directions.

Look Back To Esau Heb. 12:16-17 Looking diligently...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.

Profane = a common person, one who lives for the world and not God

Gen.25:29-34 And Jacob cooked a stew: 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 stew; 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 lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

Note: When Esau was willing to give up his birthright for a mess of beans, he was faint or weary. What was the author's exhortation in Heb. 12?

Heb. 12:4 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. [Spiritual failure is a gradual erosion.]

Remedy for faintness or weariness:

Isa. 40:29-31 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail;

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.

Waiting = Live For Him Look To Him Listen To Him Long For Him

The birthright and its significance to Esau can only be understood as one understands that this was not merely being heir of flocks and herds, and Esau rejected this. This is not the issue. God's covenant with Abraham stated: the covenant promise would be fulfilled through Isaac's heirs. Esau, being the firstborn of Isaac, would have received the honored privileges of the firstborn's inheritance.

Firstborn son assumed the father's authority and responsibilities - leadership role

The blessing of the firstborn placed him in a special covenant relationship with the LORD.

Firstborn son inherited a double portion of the father's estate

Firstborn son had priestly duties in the family.

Consider: Esau should have clung tenaciously to his status. It included the privilege of being the vehicle of God's promised blessing given to Abraham for all.

Waiting is one of the most difficult disciplines of life.

Heb. 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through

Faith and Patience Inherit The Promises.

Esau had neither faith nor patient endurance.

➤ He was cut off by one act from the place of blessing.

By the time of Jacob and Esau, none of these promises had been realized. They were not even on the horizon. Esau's attitude was, "Hey, I'm hungry. What good is some vague future blessing if I starve to death?" He wasn't interested in the future promises of God.

He lived for the here and now. So he sold his birthright for a bowl of stew, wiped his mouth, and went his way without a thought of regret at the time [Gen. 25:34].

Esau despised his birthright = LXX = paltry; a mere trifle; thought it was of NO value

Preferred gratification of the flesh rather than the blessing of God

Gave up all his spiritual privileges for a temporary gratification of the body.

Surrendered for himself and his descendants the covenant promises of God for one meal.

Gen. 27:30-40 Jacob also receives the 1st born blessing of the father.

³⁴And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. ³⁵ And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. [Esau lived as though his firstborn birthright meant nothing. NOW he comes before the father for the blessing.]

³⁶ And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

³⁸And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also,

Heb. 12:17 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.

The man who despised his birthright and married two pagan women now wept and cried out for his father to bless him. No place of repentance: The father could not change his mind.

No amount of tears and remorse could alter the father's decision though he sought the blessing diligently with tears. It was too late.

Esau lost the inheritance that would have been his as the firstborn.

He realized the value of his inheritance...too late.

Recall: If Achan had obeyed at Jericho, he would have been able to take the spoil at Ai.

He couldn't wait. He yielded to his coveting flesh.

I John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Am I Guilty Of Selling My Birthright?

Living to the passing pleasures of sin

Lusting after the things of the world

Walking after the flesh, rather than the Spirit.

Principle: These desires, lust patterns, illustrate the various lust patterns we all face and which, if not dealt with in faith, can dominate our lives. They include things like desire for position, power, prestige, pleasure, possessions, praise or applause, and recognition, but they are nothing more than human solutions or protective strategies we use to find security, significance, and satisfaction apart from God. Jeremiah calls them broken cisterns.

Jer. 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

The Lord warned the disciples against:

storing up treasures on earth and worrying about the details of life—drink, food, and clothing.

He defined the pursuit of the details of life at the expense of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness as a simple matter of not truly trusting in God's supply.

Matt. 6:30-31, 33 But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith?

Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or

'With what shall we clothe ourselves?'" But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and

His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The author of Hebrews warned the readers: Do Not Yield to transitory pressures and forfeit their inheritances. You would ultimately regret the foolish step and might find their inheritance privileges irrevocably lost as were Esau's.

Hold On To Your Birthright Inheritance

Heb. 12:14	Pursue peace and holiness
Heb. 12:15	Do not fall short of God's grace
Heb. 12:15	Deal with roots of bitterness
Heb. 12:16-17	Value your inheritance and birthright
I Tim. 4:6-8	Exercise discipline and godliness

We are not immune to failure:

- We fail to appropriate God's grace for the situation or trial.
- This leads us to have bitterness in our hearts to God for allowing this hardship or difficulty to come upon us.
- What is in our hearts ultimately comes out and it defiles others.
- We settle for the temporal rather than the eternal; for the here-and-now rather than the hereafter; and for the material rather than the spiritual.
- God's grace does not fail. We fail to depend on God's grace. We fail to patiently endure.

Heb. 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Heb. 10:36 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Heb. 11:24-26 By faith, when he grew up, Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to enjoy sin's fleeting pleasure. He regarded abuse suffered for Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for his eyes were fixed on the reward.

II Cor. 4:16-18 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Spurgeon: Seek ye first the Lord, and then He will provide for you everything that is profitable for you in this life and He will crown it with everything that is glorious in the life to come.

I Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.