

ISSUE

19.48

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

November 26,  
2017

## Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

### Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Jeff Nunn

### Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Arend Gressley

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Brady McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Rusty Scott

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

### Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



## The Carnality of Esau

By Kyle Pope

Jesus' statement, in Matthew 26:41 aptly describes the character demonstrated by the Old Testament patriarch Esau: indeed, his *flesh was weak*. Let us consider how Esau's tragic carnality was shown in the choices he made in life.

**"A man of the field."** Genesis 25:27 tells us that Esau was "a skillful hunter, a man of the field" (NKJV). While this "outdoorsman" lifestyle endeared him to his father (25:26), it also left him unmindful of his parents' wishes (28:8) and unprepared to attend to his own domestic needs (25:29,30). Many a Christian man has found enjoyment in wholesome outdoor recreation. There is nothing wrong with spending time outdoors fishing, hunting or camping. Yet, sadly far too many men, like Esau, have allowed their love of "the field" to lead them to neglect their

relationship with their wife, their responsibilities in the home or their duty to God.

### **“What is this birthright to me?”**

Esau’s neglect of his own domestic provision led to one of the most flagrant demonstrations of his temporal and carnal view of life. Scripture tells us that Esau, on one occasion after coming in from the field was weary and

pleaded with Jacob to give him some lentil stew which he had cooked (25:29-30). Jacob took advantage of the situation and told Esau that he would give him of the stew if he would sell him his birthright for it (25:31). Esau responded, “Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?” (25:32). In ancient times, the birthright of the firstborn was very significant. Tablets from the Mesopotamian city of Nuzi, contemporary with the patriarchs, record that the firstborn was entitled to a double portion of the inheritance (*The Ancient Near East*, James B. Pritchard, Vol. 1, pg. 168). The same practice was in place when the Law was given (Deut. 21:17). Esau was willing to surrender his greater portion of the inheritance for a bowl of stew! The Hebrew writer calls Esau a “profane person” (Heb. 12:16) for making such a choice, using the Greek word *bebelos*, which refers to the “unhallowed” and “common” (Thayer). How many people, like Esau, have allowed their own unwillingness to delay gratification to lead them to fornication, lust and immorality? How many have sold away an eternal inheritance to fulfill the fleeting desires of the flesh?



**“He took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite.”** Although the distinction and segregation of Jews from Gentiles did not exist until after the giving of the Law, the character of Canaanite women led Abraham’s offspring to return to Haran to find wives from their Mesopotamian countrymen (24:3-4; 28:1-2). Esau disregarded this practice and married Hittite women in Canaan (26:34). This was “a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah” (26:35). Scripture makes it clear that Canaanites throughout history were immoral and idolatrous. When the Israelites conquered Canaan they were not to intermarry with Canaanite women lest their hearts be turned to idolatry (Deut. 7:3-4). Esau’s interests were shortsighted and carnal. His choices set the stage that would produce the idolatrous Edomite nation which descended from him (2 Chron. 25:14). Few choices influence our spiritual life more than our choice of mate. This choice can unite us with an encouraging partner on our journey to heaven, or an ever-present source of temptation to turn from the Lord.

**“I will kill my brother Jacob.”** Although Esau had already surrendered his birthright, he still hoped to receive a good blessing from his father. The blessings given by a patriarch to their children were more than just statements of best wishes, they were binding declarations of the child’s status in the family. Cyrus Gordon called them “irrevocable last wills and testaments” (“Biblical Customs and the Nuzu Tablets”, *Biblical Archaeologist*, 3.1 (Feb. 1940), 1-12). In addition to this they were also prophetic in nature. The inspired patriarch declared what God revealed to him



about his offspring (e.g. Gen. 49). Before birth God had told Rebekah “the older [Esau] **shall serve the younger** [Jacob]” (25:23). This knowledge may have motivated her, as Isaac succumbed to age, to instruct Jacob to deceive his father into

thinking he was Esau in order to receive the better blessing (27:6-10). Jacob did as his mother instructed, Isaac gave Jacob the better blessing and Esau received the lesser (27:11-40). When

Esau learned of this, “Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, ‘The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I **will kill my brother Jacob**’” (27:41). It is a carnal soul indeed that will allow jealousy of a brother to lead to murder! Although his attitude softened as the years passed (33:8- 16), his hatred was but another example of a weak heart that was controlled by the flesh. .



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## *Welcome Visitors*

**We are so glad that you joined us today.  
Please come again.**

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**