

10.11.26

Genesis

Chapter 26 - God's Blessing to His Beloved Children The Way Man Subverts Blessings (vs.34-35)

Genesis 26:34-35: When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite; and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

It doesn't seem like much to go on, but some marvelous truths. As you go through Scripture, you realize that the Old Testament gives us vivid examples of oftentimes what to do, as Romans 15 so clearly puts it; that these things in the Old Testament were given as examples that we should not give up hope and we should persevere. So, Romans tells us that we have paragons that give us these examples. Although, 1 Corinthians 10 says that we also have examples of those that are doing wrong, and so it tells us of things that we shouldn't do. As Paul writes to the Corinthians, "I write to you these things, and I give

you examples that you might not do the things that they did." And he begins to describe the things that were destructive in their lives. The way that he literally put it was that they craved evil things. We know that we shouldn't do certain things. We hear it over and over again. And we read about it and we hear many sermons about it. But oftentimes, we don't see the ramifications of those things. And what the Old Testament does is it takes us on the journey. How did a person get there? We perceive ourselves oftentimes as victims. You know, something happens to us, therefore we become angry or we become bitter. And this was because something happened to us. And Scripture says you don't have that excuse.

So, as we go through this particular example that is given to us, that is to say Esau, we realize that God has given us this person, in some ways, a group of people that take on the persona of Esau, Edom, the Edomites. And the thought is that perhaps some might even feel that Esau has good reason to be angry because his brother ultimately did try to take away things that were his. And

so, he becomes a victim of sorts, but as we follow through his life, he becomes embittered. And Esau, as well as the whole nation of Esau, which are the Edomites, become embittered against Israel, against his brother, Jacob. And so, we see this embitterment going through the Old Testament, even at the time in which God rescues the Israelites out of Egypt. It was the Edomites that tried to hold them back or tried to take advantage of them. And the Book of Obadiah, the small prophet of Obadiah, begins to relate the fact that a brother is actually wishing ill upon a brother; that this grudge would carry so many years, hundreds into the thousands of years and ultimately to the time of Christ where we have a man by the name of Herod who was of the lineage of the Edomites, still trying to kill the son of Jacob, the Christ who was to come.

How does somebody get so embittered? How does this root of bitterness take hold of somebody? Hebrews 12 tells us, take care that you don't get this root of bitterness within yourself, this poison that comes in your system that causes you to think with hostility and hatred towards

those around you. It's the inability to let go of things, and we even see this as you go a little bit further as Esau bears a grudge against his brother.

If you look in Genesis 27:41, it says,

"So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him..."

In other words, he robbed him of something. And so, because of that, he bore a grudge. There's an interesting word that is used within the passage, "*śāṭam*," which makes reference to somebody cherishing animosity. In other words, they have this love for hatred. Kind of bizarre, isn't it? It's kind of dichotomous when you think of it.

But holding on to that bitterness, he actually comforted himself, if you look at the end of verse 42, with the thought of, "Someday, I'm going to kill him." That's comforting, isn't it?? And so, how people take comfort in their hatred begins to be the picture of Esau. How did this come into being? How does somebody become so hateful and so disdainful of things? Well, as we followed Esau, and really, it's interesting because Scripture just gives us

snapshots, but those snapshots are enough to actually tell us about the journey of Esau.

And if you go all the way back to the beginning of where he is born in Chapter 25, you see that it begins with a birth thing. And remember, they are twins and they're in their mother's womb and Esau comes out first, but Jacob is grabbing the heel, and we realize that there's going to be some kind of dissonance between the two. But that is not what separates them. Although, God says,, "These are two very different young men that are coming into your life," we begin to see things that are embraced. And it is that which begins to cause the bitterness within Esau.

If you look with me within the passage, the description is, (Genesis 25:27) "When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents."

I don't know if you caught it or not, but one is described by his ability and his prowess; the other is described by his demeanor. What it's telling us is that there is an inclination by one to pursue certain things. And it is that inclination that he begins to embrace. With Esau,

Scripture begins to describe these inclinations as skilled hunter. The Hebrew word that is used for skilled is fundamentally the word "knowing". He was well knowledgeable in these things and he had therefore great prowess in him. But Jacob is known for his disposition. Scripture tells us that he was peaceable. One is disposition, the other is skill. We begin to watch this inclination and this desire of Esau take hold of him. Now, once again, we talked about this a while back, inclinations by themselves are not bad or evil things. The fact that he wanted to go hunting was not a bad or evil thing. But when inclinations begin to take center stage or our abilities begin to overshadow things like character, things like dispositions, begins to creep in, in that regard, what begins to happen is that it begins to rule every decision that we make. That is to say, the inclination, the desire that we have. We become really good at something and we begin to define what is important in accordance with our prowess. If you're a really good football player, you begin to think in terms of, "Well, these people aren't good football players." And so, you begin to judge everybody according to your standards based on your ability and

based on your inclinations. These are things that are important to you, but it doesn't mean they are necessarily things that are of the greatest importance. These inclinations begin to take us into a realm in which we begin to feel cavalier and perhaps, I would say, even flippant and contemptuous about any other thing or idea other than ours. We come from a particular perspective, and we say, "Well, they don't think like me, so therefore it's not important."

This takes us into the realm of the birthright. If you remember, Esau had been out hunting and was now famished, and he needed some food. What was important was what he was doing. And so, he was willing at that particular juncture, as his brother was fixing this "red stuff," as Scripture calls it, he didn't know what it was, but he was so hungry that he didn't care. It wasn't necessarily some great meal that would allure him, but it was something that would appeal to his appetite because he was starving; he was famished. And so, he allows his appetite and his inclination to take control, and he sells

his birthright. The point of the matter is, he looked contemptuously upon that which was of great value.

In fact, if you look at the end of Chapter 25,

(Genesis 25:34) "Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way..."

Watch the end phrase in the text.

"... Thus Esau despised his birthright."

What it's talking about within the passage is that he dismissed or he disdained that which was not important to him. The birthright became insignificant because he only saw things from his perspective. It was his inclination that had taken control and his appetite and his cravings, that which was impulsive in his life and he was drawn to those things. It creates a reckless life; it creates a careless and thoughtless life. And quite frankly, you don't care about anything but what you're doing. Esau is focused on that mentality, and it is this passage that really piggybacks on that way of thinking. Because he begins to do things that, quite frankly, who cares how it affects anybody else?

Now, when I make reference specifically to him, I would like to have you turn to the Book of James because James is reminding us that these are examples and he describes it in a very different way in James 1. He talks about the word of God and how it mirrors things. Turn with me to James 1 and James is very concerned that there are people in the body (of Christ) that are deluding themselves. They're going through difficult times, they're going through hardship, and they're becoming angry over it. "Okay, I know why I'm angry. Somebody did something to me. That's why I'm angry." And Scripture says, "You have no excuse. It has nothing to do with them. It has to do with you." Well, we don't like hearing that. The Scripture talks about this delusional thinking that we have because we're all victims, right? That's the way we perceive ourselves.

And so, James 1 talks about the fact in verse 22, (James 1:22) "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves."

(James 1:23) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror."

Now, what the word of God does for us is it gives us examples of individuals. And as you begin to see these individuals, you go, "I identify with that." And you can just see that mirroring in your face. You go, "That's me, that's me." And God goes, "Okay, we've got to take this a step further. We've got to change you, see." But oftentimes, we read a passage like this in the Old Testament, and go, "Yeah, that's me, that's me, that's the kind of person that I am."

But then it goes on and says in verse 24,

(James 1:24) "for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

(James 1:25) But one who looks intently at the perfect law..."

I would put it another way- the law of perfection; the law that perfects; which would be God's law.

More specifically,

"...the law of liberty..."

Why does he define it as the "law of liberty"? Well, that's a good question because what he's making reference to is the law of "want to." In other words, until you really want to do something, you're not going to do it. Until you really change. If somebody tells you have to do it; this is the whole argument of the Book of Romans, "Somebody tells me to do something, I actually want to do the opposite. But when the Spirit of God comes within me..." As Paul will write to the Corinthians, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there's liberty." And what he's talking about is that the Spirit of God changes your desires and causes you to want to do the right thing. Until that comes into your life, you're just going to see it as something interesting to read or maybe an interesting reflection about yourself, but you'll soon forget about doing any change. But if you look at this with the eyes of God, which says, "I want to change you. I want to change you into My image. You need to fix yourself up." You'll change because you're looking in the law of liberty.

It goes on and says this,

(James 2:12) "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty."

Scripture tells us that God's going to judge the secrets of men. He's going to bring to light the motives of men's hearts. In other words, we realize that God is more concerned about our hearts than He is about the external manifestation. There are times in your life where you might say to yourself, "Yeah, I'm not really mad. I'm not really upset." Yeah, God sees your heart. And the bottom line is that you're not an effectual doer. You're just saying words that make you feel better, and you put on airs and you put on maybe something that perhaps makes you feel better, nevertheless it doesn't change who you really are.

As you come into the Book of James, James really parallels in many ways to what we're talking about with Esau. Because the journey that we're following Esau in is a journey of bitterness. This is why Hebrews will say, "Don't have this root of bitterness that was in Esau." It's going to take hold, it's going to poison everything, it's going to

poison you, it's going to poison the people around you, this root of bitterness.

I mean, how is it that people start off okay, and at the end, are so embittered and so hateful? They just have this within themselves. Where did that come from? The tendency is, and if you look at the beginning of James 1, the tendency is to think that it's God's fault, "God tempted me. He brought things into my life. He brought hardships into my life. And it was those hardships that were brought into my life that caused these things to happen."

James 1 reads this way,

(James 1:12) "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

(James 1:13) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God" ..."

"It's God's fault. I mean, God's sovereign, right? He should never have let those things come into my life. He should

have never let that person do what he did to me. He should have never let this happen to me. It's God's fault."

"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

(James 1:14) But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."

Okay, so just stop right there. What's the problem? You. You're the problem. "No, it was a circumstance. It was a situation. It was a thing that happened to me. That's what caused me to be angry." He says, "No, it's you. You've actually been tempted and carried away enticed by your own lust."

(James 1:15) "Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

(James 1:16) Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

(James 1:17) Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above (God) ..."

Now, this is written in the context of trials, of testing, and the thought is that "The trial is what caused me to be

upset." Now, let's put this in the situation of Esau. Esau's brother is going to actually take the blessing. He's going to be deceitful. It's down the road. It's going to happen. The interesting thing about this particular passage that we're looking at in Genesis is that it has not happened yet. This is the key point- Esau is demonstrating certain qualities or the lack thereof before the crime actually happens. The reason why Scripture is revealing it this way is it's letting you know this was not the crime that caused him to be bitter; this was Esau that caused him to be bitter. He was the culprit in the scenario because the initial start is that he's distracted by his own inclinations, and his inclinations begin to take center stage. And once the inclinations of his heart take center stage, then it's all about him. It's all about what he wants. It's all about what's important to him and everything else has really no value to him. He's willing to let his birthright go for soup. He disdains it that much because it can't be important. I mean if it's not important to him, if it's not important to what he desires or what he likes, then it must not be important.

I see this all the time. People, you know, have other things they're doing. "Why don't you come to church?" "I have other things that are important." "But what about God?" "That's not important to me." It's perceived as insignificant. Dedication to the body, that's insignificant. It's not of any value. Why? Because you're following your inclinations and you become distracted by your inclinations and in that distraction, you become dismissive of any other standard, any other value system, even if it comes from God. It can't be that important. You go, "I don't even understand how that can cause somebody to become embittered." Because now, you're in the realm of pride and selfishness, and you're only thinking about yourself. And when that begins to happen, now you've opened the door to anger, because once somebody crosses you from getting what you want or something that you feel like you deserve, now they're the enemy. It's not that God is sovereign in your mind. You don't perceive that because His sovereignty is not an issue to you. It's everything from your perspective and how you see things. And so, Esau begins to do what he wants to do, and he pursues that. Now, what Scripture does for us is it gives

us, I would say, little hints about how we're going the wrong way. And it's the graciousness of God in His Word that says, "Okay, We're going to take you on this journey. We're going to keep you from bitterness but let Me show you where it starts." So, once again, it starts with clearly somebody being distracted by the things of the world and then becoming dismissive of the things that are really important; seeing himself as clearly the one deserving of the best of things, much like Cain. He can come and he can bring that which is not valuable before God, but if God rejects it, then now he's angry. And he's angry at his brother because he brought something better.

As the passage reads, if you look with me in Genesis 26, (Genesis 26:34) "When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beer..."

There's an interesting contrast in this text. The contrast is that we have "*b^a'ēr šebā'*," the well of promises that Isaac pursues. Isaac pursues that which was valuable to his father; he pursues the tradition of his father; he pursues the God of his father. He goes to this well, he goes to this place, he has his men dig in this particular area, "Let's find

the promises of God.” And you can see his desire not only to have a relationship with God and going to the well of promise, but you can see his desire to help others by digging a well, because it was going to bring benefit to all his people. There are those that look for ways and opportunities to bring benefit because they know that their actions actually bring consequences and actually have an effect on those around them. You're affecting people around you, whether you want to or not, you are. And the things that you do are going to affect them for the good or for bad. Isaac is doing it for good. We can see the blessings of God. In fact, even the Philistines come up to Isaac, and they go, “We can see you're blessed of God. The blessings of God surround you.”

This is not true with Esau. Esau goes to another well. And thus, the daughter of Beeri, which means “well”. So, he chooses a daughter from another well. He goes to another source to find some kind of refreshment. And what's the source? The source is the Hittites. What we know about the Hittites is that they're sons of Heth. And what we know about sons of Heth is at this particular

juncture, even historically, they had a great empire. Many other people were coming down and they were great warriors, which is probably one of the reasons why Esau was drawn to these women. They were polytheistic, that is to say they had many gods, so it would be inappropriate to go and marry somebody that comes from this particular realm. But he was drawn by inclination. So, they're known for their warrior ability. These are people that had the iron weapons. These are the people that built iron chariots. And so, they were clearly perceived as great people. They were also perceived as great people by virtue of their trade. And we know that they were good hagglers. They did it with Abraham as he came to try to find a place of burial for Sarah. And it was the sons of Heth or the Hittites that owned the property. And they knew where the soft spot was, and they knew how to get the most out of it. Nothing personal, just business. And once again, who is it that Esau's drawn to? These are individuals that are not necessarily those that are thinking on a spiritual level in the sense of care and concern for others. These are people that are looking out for

themselves and have that only in mind. Well, birds of a feather flock together, and so Esau is drawn to these.

The passage reads this way as it begins to describe the Hittites and Basemath, which seems to be a reflection of somebody who just plain smells good,

"... the daughter of Elon..."

That is to say, "the great and mighty one."

"... the Hittite."

Which Scripture wants us to remember that this is true.

The problem is, in verse 35, that they made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah. "So what? I mean, who cares?

Who cares about what I do? It's my life and I can do whatever I want to." Remember we're actually going on a road to bitterness. The perception is that it's fundamentally innocuous to think of yourself. That it's your own business. If you want to think about yourself, you want to do whatever you want to do, that's just your own business. That's not true because it breeds a sense of arrogance and entitlement that continues to grow. "Don't cross me. I'm thinking about myself." It is this heart that

comes within him and this cavalier attitude towards how any decision he makes affects others. And by the way, this is a warning to you. If you find yourself caring less about how your life affects others, you're heading down the same road. Because you're heading down the road of, "just me". It's your inclinations that are in control that's leading the bus, and you hopped on it. Your pursuit is, "I view everything by the visual of my inclination. And if it doesn't match that, then it's not important. And quite frankly, if you don't like it, you can "lump it." Doesn't matter to me."

A trial is going to come. The trial that's going to come is going to be his brother is going to rob him of the blessing. That's down the road. That's what we thought will cause him bitterness. But that's not what caused it. What caused it was the selfish heart. Something happens or somebody does us wrong, we know, as Romans 12 so clearly puts it, that God is sovereign. God will vindicate us. God's in control of all these things, and He's brought these things into our life to draw us closer to Him. We know this to be true. Unless of course you're egocentric,

then everything that happens that you don't like, that doesn't pertain to your perception of your standards, everything at that point becomes a threat to you. And because it becomes a threat, you become extremely angry and hostile towards anybody in any way that blocks your desires. This is Esau. And in a way, this was the concern of James as he writes those that have gone through trials. Now, the truth of the matter about the trial is that the trial itself is a blessing. And that's what James is going to prove to those that are going through the trial. Because the thought is, "The trial is the thing that made me mad." And James says, "No, it's not the trial that made you mad. The trial revealed that you were mad. The trial revealed that you're an angry person. The trial revealed that you're a selfish person." And what the trial does is it brings it to light. Because up to that point, you've suppressed it, and up to that point, nobody can see it. You just in many ways perhaps are even doing passive aggressive acts by saying, "Well I'm going to marry whoever I want to marry. It doesn't matter what the folks think." Well, I mean, what's the harm of following inclinations? What's the harm in just following your own

desires? Well, you just hurt somebody. "Well, it does it really matter if I hurt somebody." Why? "Because it didn't hurt me. It didn't bother me. And my standards are based on how I see things." So, James writes to those, and he goes, "Okay, I just wanted to let you know that the trials are the blessing because the trials do the cleansing. The trials do that which reveals these things, and it brings these things to light. And so, what you need to do," he goes on to say in Chapter 1, "is you need to receive the word of God with humility and believe that God is doing a work in your life." Unfortunately, much like many of us, like Esau, we begin to get angry and upset over the things that are happening because it's happening to distort our desires.

If you look with me in 1 Corinthians 8, you begin to see this aspect and a concern that Paul has for the Corinthians. The Corinthians' perception as they begin to go down this trail, down this path, of selfishness and selfish desires... As Christians, I think sometimes we think this way, "Well, I know what the truth is and I know what's right and I know what you can do and I know what

you don't have to do." And then God just stops you, and He goes, "Yeah, but how is it affecting the people around you?" And we say, "What does it matter? I can do whatever I want to do." Paul will say, "Yeah, you are free to do stuff. There's no doubt about it. But are you not going to care about the people around you?" Now, when you say, "I don't care about the people around me," once again, the perception is that's not hurting you. It is. Because once again, this is where the root of bitterness comes from. Once you begin to think only of yourself and never of others, you begin to foster poison in you. His concern is, "Don't you understand that by doing something that could cause offense to somebody that you could be hurting them?" We go, "Yeah, it's their problem."

1 Corinthians 8 talks about this.

(1 Corinthians 8:7) "However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."

(1 Corinthians 8:8) But food will not commend us to God..."

And you can come from a clear academic perspective. It's innocuous. It's just food.

"... we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat.

(1 Corinthians 8:9) But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

(1 Corinthians 8:10) For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?

(1 Corinthians 8:11) For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died."

What Paul is doing is awakening that sense of care for somebody else. Once you stop caring for others, it's just another step to bitterness and anger, and hostility for the rest of your life.

(1 Corinthians 8:12) "And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ."

Something as insignificant as food, if eating the wrong food or eating in a place that you shouldn't would cause my brother to stumble, it doesn't matter if in fact you can rationalize that it's okay to do that. The question is, are you hurting somebody by doing it? You say, "Well, it doesn't matter." It does.

(1 Corinthians 8:13) "Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble."

Paul will go on in Chapter 9 of 1 Corinthians, and say,

(1 Corinthians 9:4) "Do we not have a right to eat and drink?"

Isn't that what he says? Basically, "Am I not an apostle? I have an authority."

He talks about in verse 5,

(1 Corinthians 9:5) "Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

(1 Corinthians 9:6) Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?"

Talk about all these rights that you have. Once you start talking about rights, what are you talking about? Your inclinations. Now, that's become the focus and now that inclination is running your life rather than caring for somebody else. It's going to create a root of bitterness and it's going to cause a hatred towards not only people but God.

If you look in Chapter 10, Paul's going to remind them, and as we quoted this earlier in 1 Corinthians 10, he writes this as he talks about those that were in the wilderness in the Old Testament.

He says in verse 6,

(1 Corinthians 10:6) "Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved."

So, as we're looking at Esau, what is it giving us? An example that we should not crave evil things; that we should not pursue the things that we want. "Hey, it's a pretty girl, she smells good." God says, "Did you think about your parents? Did you think about how it might affect others? Did you think about how it might affect Me?" Because we know the Hittites were polytheistic; they had many gods; in fact, from what I understand, thousands of gods. Did you think about that? "No, all I can think about is my inclinations, desires that I have." You become selfish and self-absorbed.

Paul will write this in 1 Corinthians 10:24,

"Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor."

Scripture's not saying that you need to acquiesce to everything your neighbor wants you to do. But what it is saying is that your actions will somehow influence them in some way. You need to be cognizant of that. You need to be cognizant of the way that it affects their lives. Because your hope is that you're going to draw them closer to the Lord.

He writes in verse 31,

(1 Corinthians 10:31) "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

(1 Corinthians 10:32) Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;

(1 Corinthians 10:33) just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved."

In other words, is this bringing them to a saving knowledge of Christ? That's a different kind of concern, isn't it? It's a different kind of walk. James is writing to a group of people that are embittered. He reminds them, "Your embitterment is not because of your trials. It's because of your heart. And the trials are revealing your heart. Now, let's get your heart right. Let's work on this. Because this attitude that is in you is destructive. It's like cancer. It comes into your life. It destroys your life. And quite frankly, it causes harm to everybody, everyone around you."

What Esau has done is he has dismissed and disdained family blessings and values. He's traded it in for his own personal inclinations and his own desires. He sold it for a

bowl of soup. His appetite, his cravings, his impulsive, impetuous, reckless behavior has taken control. And now, he finds himself in anger. It didn't just happen. It wasn't his brother. It was Esau.

There's a book called Obadiah. If you look there in Scripture with me, it's one of the minor prophets. It makes reference specifically to this individual, that is to say, Esau.

It says within the passage,

(Obadiah 1:1) "The vision of Obadiah..."

This is a small book.

"The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom..."

Edom, we know is the nation of Esau that came from Esau. In fact, Esau will be made reference to within the passage.

It reads this way in verse 1,

(Obadiah 1:1) "The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom—

We have heard a report from the LORD, And an envoy has

been sent among the nations saying,

“Arise and let us go against her for battle” —

(Obadiah 1:2) “Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You are greatly despised.”

Why would God say that? Because they despised Him. They despised that which was significant.

(Obadiah 1:3) “The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, You who live in the clefts of the rock, In the loftiness of your dwelling place, Who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to earth?’

(Obadiah 1:4) Though you build high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down,” declares the LORD.”

Robbers are going to come in. Thieves are going to come in. And why is that true? Why would God punish Esau?

It says this in verse 8,

(Obadiah 1:8) “Will I not on that day,” declares the LORD, “Destroy wise men from Edom And understanding from the mountain of Esau?”

Why?

(Obadiah 1:10) “Because of violence to your brother Jacob, You will be covered with shame, And you will be cut off forever.

(Obadiah 1:11) On the day that you stood aloof...”

Talk about passive aggressive behavior. Does your brother have a need? Scripture tells us that a brother is born for adversity. That means that during the times of trial, you step in to help. That's why you were born. That's why you have that brother. God made you that person's brother to be a helper in time of need. You're not always going to be the best of buddies, but you're there to help. And if they need you, then you need to be there.

“... you stood aloof...”

I oftentimes talk with people and they say, "Well, you know, I didn't do anything bad." "Did you help him?"

"Well, no, I mean... No." You know, that's bitterness.

That's bitterness being fostered in your life. That's you taking the center stage.

(Obadia]ah 1:11) “On the day that you stood aloof, On the day that strangers carried off his wealth,

And foreigners entered his gate And cast lots for
Jerusalem— You too were as one of them.

(Obadiah 1:12) Do not gloat over your brother's day, The
day of his misfortune. And do not rejoice over the sons of
Judah In the day of their destruction; Yes, do not boast In
the day of their distress."

(Obadiah 1:13) Do not enter the gate of My people In the
day of their disaster. Yes, you, do not gloat over their
calamity..."

It's unfortunate, isn't it? And quite frankly, we'll just keep bringing it back to- "Well, I have a good reason to be angry because he took what was mine." That's not the reason you're angry. You're angry because you're a selfish person. And that's why you're holding on to the anger. That's why you don't let it go. I mean, Scripture tells us in Matthew 18 that Christ forgave you of all this. You can't let go of this little stuff? Let go. "I can't." Inclinations are on the throne. Esau has been written as an example for us that we should not crave evil things as he does. Because it is in the craving of evil things that brings us to that root of bitterness.

If you look with me in Hebrews. We'll end with that particular text that gives us that description of this one and I would say the warning that is given in Hebrews 12. By the way, this is in the context of "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful." That is to say that you're going to have trials. And let me just remind you, some of your trials are going to be people that are misusing you, abusing you, or in some way taking things from you. That's a trial. But Scripture will say, "Consider it all joy when you have various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith is producing endurance." And it's a doing a cleansing. And once again, this is what James is wanting to tell the people that are going through these trials. Because Chapter 5 of James is, people are withholding their pay and they're calling themselves Christians. But he says, "But you can't complain because you know this is God and this is God working in your life." If you and I are walking by faith, we are not victims of anything. God is sovereignly working in our lives to make us more like Him. And He's revealing things that are hidden that would be destructive in our lives.

So, his statement is, in Chapter 12,

(Hebrews 12:11) "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

In other words, wouldn't it be great to know that literally you are invincible when it comes to being a victim? That no matter what happens, you can rejoice because the Lord is in it, right? The goodness of the Lord.

(Hebrews 12:12) "Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,

(Hebrews 12:13) and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

(Hebrews 12:14) Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

(Hebrews 12:15) See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

(Hebrews 12:16) that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

(Hebrews 12:17) For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears."

He sought for the blessing, but had not the heart, and so it was unavailable to him. Scripture will say, "Do not harden your heart today. If you hear His voice, don't harden your heart." God is warning us. He's given us pictures. He's telling us things. He's drawing us to Himself. He's reminding us that we don't have any excuse, and quite frankly, when we begin to make those excuses, we just simply give ourselves license to continue to be in anger and hostility and hatred towards people. God wants to relieve us of these things. Titus 3 says, "You once were hateful. hating one another. But when the kindness of God came, it appeared to us and He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy." He was merciful to us. And it is

that gospel that begins to reverberate in our heart and cleanse our heart. And let me just say this, it will cleanse you from bitterness.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your love for us in that You give us these vivid pictures of those in the Old Testament that struggle with the same things that we struggle with. You tell us at the end of James that Elijah was a man with a nature just like our own, and we realize that we have the same nature, the same struggles in our lives, but that you've written these things that we might see how it plays out, we might see what the path leads to, and how the end of the journey goes.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. What we're asking you to do is reflect upon that which is true and do something else; not become a forgetful hearer but become an effectual doer. Scripture is telling you, "Change. Start doing the right thing." You have

unforgiveness in your heart right now. You can forgive. You can let it go. You can believe and walk by faith and trust that God will make things right. And though somebody might actually mean it for evil, God can turn it into good; that you and I, as we walk by faith, cannot be, will not be victims anymore. And so you **will** today rejoice over the difficulties and the trials as they have revealed some hidden problems in your heart and God is purging us so that you might not have poison inside of you.