

American Evangelicals' Esau Moment

August 5, 2016

The story is told in Genesis of the two twins who had very different approaches to life. Jacob was a shepherd and the favorite of his mother. Esau was the one born first, was hunter and the apple of his father's eye. Because Esau was delivered first – he was considered the heir, the one with the blessed destiny, the one with the birthright.

Fast forward a couple of decades: Esau is out hunting and he comes into the family encampment after a long day out hunting and scavenging and his brother was brewing some stew. Esau came in, completely exhausted and famished from the toils of his day and he asks his brother for some stew. Jacob was devious and he devised a plan to take from Esau was what his by birth.

In that tired, exhausted, hungry moment, Esau decided to sell his “birthright” to Jacob to satisfy the longing of the physical desire that he had. In a moment of weakness and in a moment he would later come to regret, he forsook the heritage, the promise and the blessing. All because he was hungry and, according to the Scripture, ***“Esau despised his birthright.”*** (*Genesis 25:34*) In a moment of impulse, he changed his destiny for the remainder of his life – all because he wanted something that would be satisfying in the moment.

Now, let us pause and reflect on the current political climate we are in. On July 21, 2016, Rev. Jerry Falwell, Jr, Pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church and President of Liberty University, spoke at the GOP convention in support of Donald Trump for President. He spoke for many evangelicals (conservative, Bible believing, evangelistic focused Christians) who are supporting Trump for President quite extensively.

The Washington Post reports that 76% of white evangelicals in July of 2016 are in support of Trump. I recently was watching NBC and their poll showed 69% of evangelicals supporting Trump with less than 15% supporting Hillary Clinton. I understand the hunger among American Evangelicals to support a candidate that will endorse their opinions and values.

Many evangelicals want a pro-life candidate who will uphold the views of traditional marriage; many want a return to the “greatness” of our American culture when it was presumed to be a Christian country. Many Christian voters are concerned about a conservative Supreme Court, a strong military presence throughout the world, leaders who espouse traditional values and a grounded in biblical faith.

However, I am concerned that the hunger for revival of Christian values may create conditions where we become the modern Esau.

Consider this:

American Evangelicals are supporting a person for president who has said that he has never asked God for forgiveness because he hasn't done anything God needs to forgive.

American Evangelicals are supporting a person for president to uphold traditional marriage, who is in his third marriage; whose previous marriage was with a person with whom he violated the fidelity of his first marriage and, who in the 90's famously boasted about his popularity with women.

American Evangelicals are wanting to support a pro-life president are choosing to endorse a man who until only recently (as recently at 2008) was vocally and publically supportive of an unrestricted right of a woman to choose to abort her baby.

American Evangelicals are supporting a person for president who rarely, if ever, before running for president, attended a church or professed any sort of orthodox religious belief.

American Evangelicals, who are so desperate for a conservative voice in politics, are willing to support a person for president who demonstrates in his language a misogynistic, homo-phobic, racist, isolationist attitude which runs completely counter to the mindset of ministry to the least of these that Jesus calls Evangelicals to.

It is sense that in the quest for power, political influence and cultural authority that Evangelicals are about to abandon their birthright.

Esau was motivated by his physical passions and impulsive desires and he ended up doing something he later regretted. I argue that American Evangelicals are just about to do the same thing – motivated by a desire to exercise influence over our culture and impulsively supporting anyone who is not Hillary Clinton.

This is our Esau moment. The question that faces American Evangelicals is this: Will we be true to our spiritual heritage and our biblical commitments or will we sell out to a person who is arrogant, brash, corrupted, base, and, in my humble opinion, a vile public figure.

I am not certain who I will vote for yet...But I know I will not allow my birthright to be sold to Donald Trump for a bowl of stew for the next four years!