

Bless Me Father

by Alan Redpath

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recovering the birthright of a Christian, which includes the power to reproduce life, communicate Holy Spirit life, and experience fullness in our lives.

Duration: 48:02

Scripture: Genesis 25:28, Psalm 51:5, Matthew 6:33, John 15:5, Acts 3:19, Romans 8:32, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Blessing"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of seeking spiritual recovery and not making false steps in life. He uses the story of Esau from the Bible as an example of someone who despised his birthright and later regretted it. The preacher warns that there are irrevocable consequences for every false step and that opportunities and youth cannot be recovered. He encourages the audience to prioritize the will of God over temporary desires and to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Transcript

Just a prayer together. We do thank Thee, dear Lord, for all that Thou has been saying to us tonight already in this meeting. In word and in song, our hearts have been strangely moved as Thou has spoken to us.

Continue, we pray Thee, the gracious working of Thy Spirit, till all of us are all together under Thy control. Make this to be a momentous evening for the Kingdom of God, an evening which, in Thy mercy, it can turn the tide. And at long last we see the tide of Thy blessing begin to flow in.

O wind of God, come, bend us and break us. Revive Thy church to meet this hour. Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.

Speak just now, some message to meet my need, which Thou only dost know. Speak now through Thy holy word and make me see some wonderful truth Thou hast to show to me. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. I would like to read to you just a few verses in the twenty-fifth chapter of the book of Genesis. Genesis twenty-five and verse twenty-eight.

Genesis twenty-five and verse twenty-eight. And Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob sawed pottage, and Esau came from the field, and he was faint.

And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage, for I am faint. Therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die. And what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day. And he swore unto him, and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentil, and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. And over in chapter twenty-seven and verse thirty-eight.

And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. I believe that we meet in this convention at a most momentous time in the history of the church in the United States.

I don't think there's ever been a time when pressures upon the church have been so heavy as they are right now. Pressures from outside and pressures from inside. The external pressure of sheer defiance of the Christian church on the part of the world, which has resulted in many cases in martyrdom of Christian people.

A missionary magazine reports that this generation has seen more people give their lives for the cause of the gospel than any other generation in the history of the church. That all seems incredible, because thirty years ago we were saying that that kind of thing doesn't happen anymore. But pressures from without are accompanied by pressures from within.

The tremendous drive toward church unity at any cost. Not because we want to get together because we love each other, but because of the fear if we don't get together we'll be exterminated. But you don't create church unity by adding a heterogeneous mass of unbelieving people to a redeemed society.

Church unity doesn't start from the circumference, it starts from the center. And that's what this Keswick Convention stands for, that we're all one in Christ's unity. But it would be very foolish for us who are so-called evangelicals to assume that all is well in the evangelical camp.

We know it isn't. For we live in the midst of a generation which has discarded Christian standard, and where every man's conscience is his only judge as to what's right and what's wrong. And somehow we find ourselves strangely inadequate to meet the challenge of this day.

And the confusion in the minds of some regarding the so-called charismatic gifts of the Spirit successfully diverts us from the priority task of the church of rescuing this generation from hell. We're strangely lacking in power, lacking in authority, lacking in conviction. I wonder if we're not here tonight, many of us, almost bewildered, wondering what in this situation we ought to be doing.

But you see, the great enemy of the adversary of soul is the Holy Spirit, and he doesn't float around in the atmosphere. He is not anywhere except resident in the hearts of men and women like you and me who are born again. So that the adversary of the devil is a man indwelt by the Spirit of God.

And that's what Keswick's all about, to seek to adjust our relationship to God, the Holy Ghost, to inquire as to why it is we're lacking in power and lacking in conviction. And I wonder if these words of our text don't find an echo in your heart as they have in mine today. Hast thou but one blessing, O my Father? Bless me, even me also, O my Father, if we admit that something's wrong.

And I scarcely can believe that anybody here would deny it. Then maybe one of the surest ways of entering into blessing is to try to discover the root of the trouble. And bravely, no matter what it may cost us, to face it for ourselves personally.

Never mind about the people next to you in the church this evening. Never mind about your friends. But don't think it's selfish to pray, bless me, even me, my Father.

Because right there, when you pray that prayer, there's an acknowledgement in your heart that there's a tremendous need for God this evening. Now I want you just for a minute to consider with me who it was that came with this plaintive cry to Isaac, having made a rejection that was final, an exceeding great and bitter cry, says verse 34. You know him well.

His name was Esau. And in the closing verses of the 25th chapter of Genesis, which we have just read, we saw the story of the tragedy of this man's life. He was the man who despised his birthright, a man with splendid qualities of character, many of them, yet one who, as the Bible says, was a profane person, who cared little for spiritual truth, who thought not much of things that are unseen and are eternal, who put priority upon things that are seen and temperable.

He cared nothing for the promises which were given to his family through Abraham. He cared nothing for the spiritual tone of his household. To him, a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush.

The immediate mattered far more to Esau than the future. The gratification of the flesh meant much more to him than life in the spirit. And he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.

Now, let us bear well in mind that he didn't do that on the impulse of a moment. A man who sells his birthright publicly on the open market does so many times in his own heart beforehand. He belittles it, cheapens it, despises it, at any rate to himself, long before he puts it for sale in public.

Public breakdown is always preceded by private bargaining. Esau had shown his contempt for his birthright many times before now. Everybody knew, who knew him well, that it was up for sale.

And the simplest thing in the world would be for somebody to make a bid for it. Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob all knew that he cared nothing for it. They'd heard him probably jesting about it, talking lightly about the blessing.

Yes, he had often given it away before he actually took the fatal step. And then one day the deed was done, and as the word says, he ate and drank and rose up and went his way. The consequences in his life were immediately revealed.

More and more he entered into the company of the heathen community who lived around the people who looked for a city whose builder and maker was God. Presently, he entered into marriage with two women who were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. And it wasn't long before he lived to regret his choice, put side by side the picture of Esau's animal contentment at the moment when he ate his meal of pottage.

And the wail of despair that came from his heart, hast thou but one blessing, my father? He found out his mistake. A sense of the preciousness of the things that he despised hit him, but hit him too late. My friend, there are irrevocable consequences of every false step in life like this.

Youth has passed for many of us, and we can't alter that. Opportunities have gone which can't be recovered. Habits have been formed.

Association, reputation, position, character are all determined. And as the writer to the Hebrews says, you know how that afterward when Esau would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected. For he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Does that seem very remote from a Keswick convention in Birmingham in 1968? Perhaps it does to you. But in a very real way, God has burnt into my heart today that there's the clue here to what is wrong in the church. But don't let us talk about the church as a whole.

Let us search our own heart personally, as he has done mine when I was preparing this word for this meeting. We've thought together about a rejection that Esau made, which was final. Let me draw your attention, my dear friend, painful though it may be, because it's been painful to me, to think about the riches that you and I have forfeited.

Have we sold our birthright? What is the birthright of a Christian? I don't think it can be expressed more adequately than, for instance, in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Roman church, Romans 8, 32, He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Or again, you have it in Ephesians 1 and 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ. But again, you have it in Peter, 1 Peter 1, verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath forgotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. May be a bit difficult to define it in a few words, what is the birthright of a Christian, which has been purchased for him at the price of the precious blood of Christ, and which introduces him to an area of blessing absolutely untold, by which alone he is able to fulfill his function as a child of God, his God-intended function of communicating Holy Spirit light to the generation in which we live.

In the magazine Christianity Today, published some time ago, an issue, I saw this statement. I wouldn't know quite where these statistics were obtained, but they shocked me because they made me feel uncomfortable. It said, on the average evangelical church role in the United States, five percent of the people can't be found.

Ten percent don't exist. Twenty-five percent never attend church. Fifty percent have no missionary interest and don't contribute a penny.

Seventy-five percent are never at a midweek prayer meeting. Ninety percent never communicate light to someone else. If that's true, the whole pattern of New Testament Christianity is in danger of breakdown.

It was in World Vision, I believe, of which Dr. Paul Rees is the editor, that the statement was made that God has no grandchildren. You and I may have spiritual grandchildren. It's a wonderful thing when, if you lead someone to Jesus, to find that person leading somebody else.

But God has only children. And the Christian faith is always one generation removed from total elimination. And there's a complete breakdown today in the New Testament method of communicating Holy Spirit life.

Right at the heart of the birthright of the Christian is that, that tremendous inheritance, the power by the incarnate Holy Spirit in you to reproduce life. Now, at the heart of the birthright of a Christian, upon the

enjoyment of which most other blessings of Christian living depend, are three which the Keswick Convention seeks to proclaim as the secret of a victorious and useful Christian life. The first of them is a life of constant cleansing in the blood of Christ.

If we walk in the light, says 1 John chapter 1, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, goes on cleansing us from all sin. If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

You see, it is what we confess and are willing to forsake that God cleanses. But the tragedy is, instead of being willing to forsake sin, we have become used to living with it. And such sin God never forgives.

He only forgives us when we're willing, out and out, with 100% repentance, to turn from it and forsake it in the power that he can give us. And what God forgives, he cleanses. And what God cleanses, he fills.

Not for our own enjoyment, merely, but for the purposes of communication. As Jesus himself said in John chapter 7, verse 38, he that believeth in me, as the scripture hath said, out of his innermost fleeing shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because the Jesus was not yet glorified. And the experience of his fullness in our lives, with the ability resulting from it, to communicate Holy Spirit life, leads to a life of communion with God. John 15, verse 7, if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. Now you see, my friend, the Christian birthright here, the cleansing for his youth, lead to communication for his glory, and to communion for his enjoyment. May I just repeat that? The cleansing of my life for his youth, lead to the communication of that life for his glory, and that leads to a life of communion with God.

That's the very heart of the Christian's birthright, the secret of his authority and his power for the glory of God and the salvation of others. But these blessings are not held for us on a plate, to help ourselves when we think it's convenient. If we hunger and thirst after them, we'll be filled.

Oh, that thou would bless me, my Father! If there's longing and desire and hunger for him, he will meet with us. If we thirst for fullness, we shall find it, because the test of healthy living is a good appetite. Isn't it just here that we have despised our birthright? Food was Esau's downfall.

Refusing food in the wilderness when tempted by the devil was the victory which Christ won for us. If thou be the Son of God, said the enemy, command these stones that they may make bread. And the reply he received from the master was, Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

So, listen, Jesus refused to satisfy a legitimate physical appetite in an illegitimate way. God had permitted him to go into a wilderness for testing there to be hungry. He was hungry in God's will, and he refused to satisfy that hunger outside of God's will.

Food, and the desire for it, and the physical appetite for it, was Esau's downfall. And it was for that that he sold his birthright. It was cheap because he was physically hungry.

It was refusal to satisfy a physical appetite outside the will of God that won for us a birthright, a victory, an inheritance, which you and I can know every day of our lives. But we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. How many of us here tonight, if we're honest, look back over years that have gone, and have to confess, sadly, and retrace the bitter fruits of experience of moments when we've hungered and thirsted for something outside the will of God, and grabbed at it and satisfied ourselves, when the present mattered more to us than the future, when the temporal and the seen mattered far more than the thing that is unseen, when the fascination of the flesh meant more to us than the life and the spirit.

Perhaps it was some sin that leapt out of us one day and took us off our guard, and attracted by its fascination, we succumbed, long since we thought it had been tame, long since we imagined that it would never attack us again, and suddenly, in an ungodly moment, it came at us, and the gratification of the fleshly desire was much more vital than life in the Holy Spirit, and we then died. Maybe it wasn't that with you, but a slow, steady drift into worldliness, becoming like Esau, a profane person, which simply means worldly-minded, beginning to talk lightly of Christian things and the Christian way of life, and your absence at the prayer meeting of your church has been noticed for a long time, and what's the harm in it has become your dangerous motto. Or maybe it was the appeal of an affluent society which tempted you into the spirit of carnality, of which we've heard tonight, that made us careless and prayerless as we lost our taste for the Word of God, and we found ourselves, like Peter, warming ourselves at the enemy's fire.

How long has it since you spent 30 minutes alone with your Bible and in prayer? A week? A month? Three months? Or maybe years? We've despised our inheritance. The blessings which were won for us at such costs were treated lightly, and alas, like Esau, we rose up and went our way. The enjoyment of the present moment meant much more to us than the hope of the future, and though tonight many of us maintain, because of the sake of reputation we have to, an appearance that were evangelical and fundamental, and we maintain an evangelical basis of doctrine, there's no reality to it, there's no authority in it, there's no life behind our testimony, and the Holy Spirit has withdrawn.

Oh, he is still resident, but he is grieved in your heart, and the Word of God speaks with terrifying authority. As the writer to the Hebrews in chapter 10 says, he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden underfoot of inkindness? According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgression, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me for my sin.

My sin is ever before me. What shall we do? May I speak to you in conclusion, just a word concerning the recovery that we can find. I recently read an article in the Latin America Evangelist, a penetrating article, which was a tremendous blessing to me, written by Horace Fenton, the director of the Latin America Mission and the successor of the late Dr. Kenneth Strachan, a name which will live with us for a long time, for his remarkable work of evangelism in depth.

Mr. Fenton's article was headed, It's Not Too Late, and it drew a graphic picture of the last few days of the life of our Lord, when seemingly nothing could be altered, but it wasn't too late for Him to weep over the city. It wasn't too late for Him to cleanse the temple. It wasn't too late for Him to teach the crowd.

And in the mercy of God, if only the Holy Spirit would bring conviction into this convention, it's not too late for repentance on any of our parts, a genuine, wholehearted, all-out, broken-hearted repentance. For if we seek the place of repentance with tears, the wonderful contrast between Esau's experience and what will

be ours, for if I desire to possess Him in all His fullness, the desire ensures that I shall have Him. No matter how late it is in springing up in my heart, no matter how long we've suppressed it, we never go to our Heavenly Father in vain with Esau's prayer, Bless me, even me also, my Father.

To realize the truth about ourselves is the first thing for us all to set about. My dear friend, do you think it's easy for a man here as a speaker in a Catholic convention to say this and talk like this to you? I can assure you it isn't. This word has burnt its way into my own soul.

I want to tell you honestly as a preacher of the gospel that in the last three years since my illness, I have been absolutely overwhelmed by the revelation of the sinfulness of my heart. I have been tempted to thoughts which have poured into my mind of which I'm utterly ashamed. Habits of long ago have threatened an invasion of my mind constantly, and the temptation to give up has been immense.

If you only knew, oh, if you only knew, it's been the hardest thing of my life today not to get an air ticket and get back to Scotland away from this. The challenge of preaching this message which burnt its way into my soul, and knowing full well that the man who needs it most is the one who preaches it. But all this has overwhelmed me in recent years, only to show to me from the word of God, for he has said to me over and over again that that's the kind of person you will always will be, but for the grace of God.

The comfort I get is the knowledge that in me, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. I could preach a sermon on that theoretically with three points, all with the same letter, an introduction and conclusion. Fifty times three years ago, I can say only from the burning heart of the experience of years in the valley, far, far down, when the devils crashed into my life, I know that in me, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.

And in that knowledge burnt into my soul, I can say with a true heart tonight, Hallelujah! I'm glad I know it, because I look away from me to Jesus. And when I see myself as I am, in all the rottenness and sinfulness of my life, the blood of Jesus constantly goes on cleansing from all sin. Oh, bless me, even me, my father.

Would you pray that prayer tonight? Bless me. Oh, make it definite. He knows the blessing that I need and you need.

He knows the area in your life in which spiritual recovery is urgent, and time is not on your side. The Lord will be back soon. The age is winding up.

Oh, yes, I do believe, as Dr. Fleece said this morning, more in Holy Spirit revival than in the devil's apostasy. But nobody's going to get revival unless he's hungry. You can have revival now if you want it.

In your own heart, you can know the reality of the fullness of God's Spirit, if you long for him. Bless me, even me, never mind my friends at church, never mind my family, but me. Start with me, Lord, right here tonight.

For though I may have despised the birth rite for years, tried overboard, though I may have grabbed at something that was fascinating, though I have been drifting along in a worldly fashion, though I may have lost spiritual authority and spiritual tone in my ministry and witness, or in the mission field, or in my business, things won't go right. Whatever my sphere of witness may be, oh, Lord, restore the years that the locusts have eaten and bless me right now. Oh, bless me, even me, make it desperate.

The oh has gone out of our brain, may it come back again, as we realize that we can't go on as we are and say like Jacob, I won't let you go, except you bless me, my father. That's the dynamic of this prayer. You

see, my friend, the cross, the cross is the greatest leveler in all the universe.

It just cuts us right down to size and brings us on the left at the feet of Jesus. And it introduces us to a relationship in which you and I can say, even though we have despised the birth rite, my father. That's the dynamic of this prayer.

Nothing can ever break that relationship. I'm his and he is mine forever. And I will arise and go to my father and say to him, father, I've sinned and no more worthy to become, to be called thy son.

Make me, my father, bless me. Is that your prayer tonight? Will you make it yours? Listen. Are you here tonight with your husband or your wife, your friend, children, your family? Are you? May I suggest something? That when you go home tonight, your husband, wife, the family, your friend, you seek out a quiet place alone with God.

And in the early morning and perhaps late at night through the days of the week this week, you say, oh, Lord, bless me also, my father. And where two of you are agreed on earth as touching anything that shall be done of my father, which is in heaven. And though a lifetime of repentance cannot save you, the blood of Christ can right now.

The Holy Spirit always comes upon what God has cleansed. And the promise is sure, I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. And my brother, my sister in Christ, out of this experience of cleansing will come renewed ability to communicate life and renewed communion with God in heaven.

The verse of a hymn which we sing in the old country very frequently, which says, oh, breath of life, come sweeping through us, revive thy church with life and power. Oh, breath of life, come cleanse, renew us and fit thy church to meet this hour. Oh, wind of God, come bend us, break us till humbly we confess our need.

Then in thy tenderness make us revive, restore for this we plead. Oh, Lord, do it this week. Do it today.

Do it now in me and in you. Oh, bless me, even me, my father, so dry, so barren, so defeated, so worldly, so unfaithful regarding my birthright in Christ, having over and over again thrown it overboard in favor of. We're almost ashamed to say what, but in spite of it all, his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.

And he won't shut the door to you tonight because there's a savior there whose hands are pierced with nails and says to you, come unto me, all ye that labor under heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke fits and my burden is light. Let us pray.

Let us be silent before the Lord through the messages that have been spoken to you tonight in his name. God has convicted us of carnality and convicted us of the fact that time and time again we've sold a birthright. We've exchanged that life in Christ for something of which we're so ashamed.

But our prayer is, oh, bless me, even me now, my father. I wonder if in the closing minute of this meeting, as our heads are bowed, God has spoken to you in his word and there's an area where you know spiritual recovery is desperately needed in your life. And you are saying in that area, Lord, bless me right now.

Would you just rise to your feet very quietly? And then I'm going to pray, especially for all who stand in token of acknowledging that need, that you know that spiritual recovery is long overdue. Just quietly.

You've been out of fellowship and out of blessing.

Life has been so dry and monotonous and barren. But oh, you long, you long for all of him to fill your life, that you may be a channel to communicate Holy Spirit life to others. Just going to have a prayer together, especially for all who stand.

Are you acknowledging your need and your cry, Father, bless me? Well, just rise and let's pray. Cleanse me from my sin, Lord. Put thy power within, Lord.

Take me as I am, Lord, and make me all thine own. Keep me day by day, Lord, underneath thy sway, Lord. Make my heart thy palace and thy royal throne.

Oh, Lord, thou hast searched me, thou hast known my down-sitting and my uprising. Thou knowest my thoughts afar off. How wonderful thou art, that thou hast not despised or deserted me.

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. My moisture was turned to the drought of summer. Ah, but when I confessed my sin and was honest before thee about it, how graciously thou hast met and pardoned and cleansed.

Lord, tonight behold us in mercy, all confessing to thee and crying to thee from our hearts, to send a great revival and to bring it, begin it now in my heart, in our hearts. Lord, that the church in these days may rise to claim her birthright, her inheritance in arisen Christ, that again the people may say the Lord has done great things for them whereof we are glad. He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again, bearing his sheaves with him.

Lord Jesus, have thy way with our lives, and use us for thy glory. For thy name's sake. Amen.

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