

Election and Reprobation #5 Concerning Jacob and Esau

by John Calvin

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking spiritual benefits over physical satisfaction and the dangers of profanity, highlighting the examples of Esau and Jacob.

Duration: 59:56

Scripture: Genesis 25:29

Topics: "Greed And Deception", "Seeking God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the sin of greed and the importance of seeking the kingdom of God above all else. He uses the story of Jacob and Esau from the Bible to illustrate how greed can lead to deception and harm towards others. The preacher emphasizes that those who seek to take advantage of the poor and vulnerable will not find protection or justification for their actions. He concludes by urging the listeners to tremble at the thought of being estranged from God and to pray for His guidance and protection against greed and selfishness.

Transcript

The sermon we'll hear read today is the Fifth Sermon of Jacob and Esau from the minister John Calvin from the book titled Sermons on Election and Reprobation based on the Old Paths Publications edition of 1996. And the minister takes for his text the book of Genesis, chapter 25, verses 29 through 34. Now as Jacob was seething pottage, Esau came out of the field and was hungry.

Wherefore Esau said unto Jacob, Suffer me to keel forth of this pottage so red, for I am weary. Therefore everyone called his name Edom. But Jacob answered, Sell me now thy birthright.

And Esau said, Behold, I hasten to death, and what avail this birthright unto me? To whom Jacob said, Swear unto me this day. Who swear unto him? So he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he did eat and drink and rose up and went his way.

And Esau contemned his birthright. He said previously that God approves and ratifies his election when he governs his children by his Holy Spirit and that he makes them to strive up to the heavenly life and gives them in holy affection to despise the world and to look up more high. Conversely, that he discovers what man's nature is when he lets loose the bridle to those that are reprobates so that they become as it were

brute beasts looking to nothing but this brittle and temporary life.

We have the confirmation of this doctrine in the history which Moses here recites. For on the one side he sets Esau before us who returning out of the fields from hunting was as a starving wolf. He desires nothing but to eat and moreover is content to sell his birthright with an oath.

And here he renounces his birthright so that he may have wherewith to fill his belly. He then esteems the pottage so highly that his birthright was nothing to him in comparison thereof. Now let us mark as it has already been touched before and as we shall see more fully that this was not an earthly privilege namely that he should have a double portion and that he should be advanced in his father's house.

But it was to be the chief of the church of God waiting till our Lord Jesus Christ should appear for the salvation of the world. Now although this was a thing of such importance yet Esau prefers his belly and he cares for nothing so that he may have meat. On the other side Jacob although he had made ready his dinner or his supper though it was his meal and that he had an appetite to eat yet he chose rather to abstain and deprive himself than to let slip the occasion of getting the birthright.

We see then that Esau was brought as a beastly man who sought nothing but to be fed and nourished. Yes and to be greedily fed. Jacob is a weak man subject to hunger and thirst yet he restrains himself and looks up higher than to this world and forgoes bodily meat to obtain a spiritual benefit which was of more value than a hundred yes than ten thousand lives.

Mark briefly what we have to learn of this history. Now it is very true that a man might think at the first blush that this was but a childish toy for what wrong was it in Esau after that he had labored and taken great pain yes to bring venison to his father if he was weary if he was hungry and should demand to eat.

It seems that this should not be imputed to him for a fault and again on the other side someone might say what cruelty was there in Jacob seeing his brother in such need not to help him at the least with half of his meal for he should not have put off his brother's complaints till he had cried for hunger but rather ought frankly to have offered him of that which he had prepared for himself for if he had seen but a stranger to be so needy so weary and so weak he ought to have given him some refreshment and food but behold his own brother for they were both born in one belly yet he leaves him in this case and will not grant to give him one spoonful of his pottage one might say therefore that Jacob was too rude and again why should he compel him to sell his birthright for here he put the knife as it were to his throat and we know that bargains are always of no force when there shall be any violence offered if men do anything by constraint or if they promise anything by compulsion rationally they are not bound to keep it but see Esau who was hungry he could do no more he was so far past himself that he knows not what his birthright means so then besides the cruelty of Jacob there was an immediately obvious oversight and when he bargained what whatsoever came between yet this ought not in any case to hold by any right or reason well notwithstanding all this this is not recited to reprove Jacob as though he had committed any fault or offended either God or his brother but to the contrary the Holy Ghost gives him here testimony that he shows us the way how to search after heavenly things and first of all we must seek the kingdom of God and renounce our own desires or else somehow captivate and bring them under that they hinder us not from looking always to that which is most important and conversely the example of Esau is set before us to the end as the apostle shows us in Hebrews 12 verse 6 we should not be profane as he was that is to say that we should be given to the earth but that we should think that which is promised us is belonging to eternal life so then we must not judge of this history after our natural opinion but we must wait to what end and purpose it is here

rehearsed to the end we may the better make our profit of it now I have already said in the first place that God would as it were seal his election here in the person of Jacob and that he has showed also in the person of Esau that he was of the number of those that were cast off from him it is very certain that if Jacob had not been governed by the spirit of God he would have been altogether like his brother Esau but we must see how the spirit of God was rather given unto him than unto Esau we shall not find this diversity but in the only free goodness of God so then let us know that Jacob was led with an holy affection for as much as God had held him of the number and company of his children as also St.

Paul says in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 that we are the workmanship of God created to good works the which he hath prepared he speaks there not of all men in general it is true that God has created us all without difference but there is a new creation in those whom God reforms and whom he purges from their wicked lusts to the end that he may bring them to himself and conform them to his righteousness so that they desire nothing more than to honor and serve him purely mark therefore a second creation which God works in his children so then let us know that if God reach out his hand to us to show us the way of salvation if he give us courage cheerfully to march forward and strengthen us also to continue therein that then he shows that his election is not in vain and frivolous but has its

full effect and strength to conclude when he abandons us and that we are as strays throughout all our life that we forget the salvation of our souls let us know that in this he declares his curse upon us and so let us learn to tremble as often as we see men doled in beastliness so as they know not their own state and condition neither to what end they were created nor wherefore God has placed them in the world when we see this it is fit and proper for us I say to tremble and to pray to God that he will not suffer us so to be estranged from him but that he will always hold us in and keep us and that he will imprint in our hearts such an assurance of the hope which he has given us that we may bear therein the right mark of his election as if men spread a little wax upon a seal the form of

the seal will remain perfect but the wax has the shape and image thereof so when our Lord engraves his fear in our hearts by his Holy Spirit and such an obedience towards him as his children ought to perform unto him this is as if he should set upon us the seal of his election and as if he should truly testify that he has adopted us and that he is a father unto us for as much as we have the pledge of his free adoption that is to say the Holy Ghost but now let us come to that which is here handled particularly it is said that Esau being returned he asked of his brother Jacob that he would give him of that red potage and of that meat he says it but this was as a war in contempt and yet in this we see that he was not so delicate and fine mouthed but he could do no more he was so weary that

he knew not what he did and therefore he asks nothing but to be satisfied and hereupon he says give unto me as if he should say it is all one to me whether I eat brown bread or white so that I may fill my belly admittable but with acorns it is all one to me a man might here find some color to excuse Esau and it seems that this might well have been pardoned him but what? so much the more in this must we behold that our desires how natural and lawful soever they are are yet nevertheless to be repressed when there is any question of the heavenly life for then we must bring under every consideration and rather loose life and hundred times then go out of the path of salvation it is not enough therefore that men abstain from those acts that are altogether dissolute and wicked and whereof they

may be ashamed but yet whatsoever desire they shall have yes permitted unto them of God which is not altogether condemned yet must they tame them when there shall be any comparison with spiritual benefits but hereof we shall yet entreat more at large in the meantime it is necessary for us to note this point that

Esau sought not after great dainties he saw the pottage whereof mention is here made and he asks nothing but to be satisfied with it now Jacob asks of him his birthright in payment if he had asked him through ambition and that it had not belonged to him undoubtedly it had been no bargain on the other side the malice which he had could by no means have been excused and farther this was to commit an outrageous and thievish act so to hold his brother's throat shut up as to say if you

will not forego unto me all that belongs to you I will not give you one morsel to eat rather you shall perish and to what extremity would this grow but Jacob demands nothing of Esau but that which was before given him for he was taught that before the two children were born now already this sentence was pronounced that God had declared that it must needs be that the elder must serve the younger Jacob then in respect of God possessed already through faith the birthright it is true that that stood him in no stead in the judgment of the world but the question is here of the right title that he knew that God had appointed him to be the firstborn and had declared that the birthright belonged unto him so then he robs not Esau of anything that was his but he rather asks again that which was his

own as he should have said because you are first come out of the womb you despise the sentence that God has given both concerning me and yourself but yet that must stand which God has declared it cannot be called back again for myself I always remain in this hope that I shall obtain that which was promised unto me but for your part this is to the end that you should understand that I set more store by the service of God than by my own life and therefore sell me your birthright we see here briefly that Jacob would not get the good of another by deceit or malice neither compelled his brother to spoil himself of that blessing which belonged to him but he demands that that which God had given him might be approved and ratified among men lo then the sum of that which is spoken here and

therefore they who will use so great rigor to get the substance of another and to entice themselves with the loss of their neighbors have not with which to make them any buckler here as we shall see very many who will spy out occasions that if a poor man be in any extreme necessity it must needs be that he be robbed lo then they will pray and violently grate upon him for then they will bargain with him when they see him in this case and oh say they who live upon spoils as hawks do upon the prey this man must pass through my hands lo then a poor man who shall have but one field or one meadow if he be indebted or fail to find money to pay if he come to some usurer he will say unto him lo there is no remedy I must needs sell you such a piece oh I have no money says he at this time and yet in

the meantime he will keep his money in his purse watching that occasion which is as a robber for as much as he seeks the means to deceive his neighbor this is commonly seen that he that shall be pinched with any misery he shall be eaten even to the bones of such as only have the means to help those that are in necessity but if such wicked wretches as I have said will cloak their iniquity in the person of Jacob it is too vain for Jacob sucked not another man's goods unto himself nor he sought not to enlarge himself to the end to lessen his brother but he remained in the possession of that which God had given him the birthright was his own already indeed not according to the order of nature but because it so pleased God inasmuch therefore as he deceived none did wrong to no man neither used

any rigor or excess to draw another's good unto himself we must not take any pattern and patronage from hence of those same thieveries and oppressions which commonly are exercised among men and for as much as the question is here of a spiritual benefit that Jacob seeks not riches he seeks not his conveniences nor any earthly honor to advance himself above his brother he forsakes all this this is all one to him but he would have that which God had promised him that is that though he be small in this world

though he be afflicted tormented and devoured and that men do him many injuries it is all one unto him so that this inestimable treasure be reserved unto him that is to say that of his race shall come the salvation of the world and that with this he is made of the company and fellowship

of God's children touching Esau his answer we see already that which the apostle says and that which we have also alleged that he was altogether a profane man I haste to death to what purpose he says shall my birthright serve me in saying that he hasteth to death and that his birthright served him to no purpose we see that he was altogether dull and block headed and that it was all one to him so that he might pass this present life and lo also what this word profane imports for it is contrary to the word holy and what means this word holy to be holy is when we are separated and put apart to serve God for all the world is full of filthiness and iniquity as Saint Paul says and when we shall have our conversation here beneath after the common manner this is to defile ourselves with all

filthiness but to the end we may be held for the children of God it is necessary that we be separated even as Saint Paul speaks thereof in the first chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians it is necessary that God gather us unto himself for if we walk among thorns that is but to scratch us every minute if we go through dirt and clay that is to defile disfigure us it is necessary then that we be separated but as I have said the word profane is contrary and opposite to this what then must we do this is it that a man take good heed to himself yes even to his body for even like as there are two parts in us namely the body and the soul so the spiritual life is when we know where unto God has called us and where unto he daily bids us namely that we should be heirs of the kingdom of

heaven see what it is to sanctify ourselves as it is said purify yourselves yea all you that bear the Lord's vessels and Saint Paul alleging this place says having therefore such promises that is that God accounts us for his servants and children let us take heed that we cleanse ourselves from all filthiness as well of the body as the soul but behold Esau who has no care but for his belly and that he shows very well when he says behold I haste to death and what shall this birthright avail me yes but it was for everlasting life it was for a heavenly inheritance he has no regard to all this so then we see that he did eat as a dog or rather as a hog that had his nose always in the swill trough and sought for nothing but meat behold them the disposition of Esau which is declared to us in

these words and so the exhortation of the apostle ought well to be practiced of us when he says in Hebrews 12 verse 16 let us not be profane men as Esau was for see what is the cause that makes us to forego the hope of that salvation that God has given us when we are snared in our own sense and in our carnal desires it is certain that we are quite out of taste with that which appertains to the salvation of our souls that has no favor with us so that there is neither word of God nor promise nor anything which we do not lightly esteem when we are so profane now then let us take good heed when we are provoked with some desire to think hey God has not placed us in this world to perish as asses and horses he has given us a soul wherein he has engraven his own image so then it is necessary for

us always to labor and to aspire to this heavenly immortality and especially to enforce ourselves to fight against all our affections and not to be so held here below that we strive not always to break and undo these cords that hinder us that we cannot come directly unto God mark then what we have here to learn that we be not like Esau saying I haste to death and where to shall my birthright serve me what shall we do such dishonor to the dignity and nobility which God has placed in us for as much as he has given us immortal souls that we say we are not of this world our place is above and our right is above and in the meanwhile shall we rest and be entangled here so then though we should perish a hundred times yet let

us know that God has reserved a better life for us and that there is

our sovereign good that we ought to esteem and though we lack and have need of temporary benefits which only serve to maintain us here beneath yet let us bear it patiently and let us always mark if I die not to say I perish or I am utterly lost and cast away for this is but a passage by death to go from one life to another we must therefore look up to that place and this is the sum of what we have to mark here but howsoever it be we see here how God has laid open the beastliness of Esau and has shown that he was already forsaken of him and was not governed by his Holy Spirit as the wisest of the world albeit it seemed they pierced through the clouds yet are they so dull and block headed that they regard nothing but that which is present unto them and to that they wholly give themselves we

shall see therefore are they wittiest and those whom men so greatly magnify which look to nothing but to build their houses now I say not only to build goodly palaces but also to get great revenues for their children to advance themselves and to become great states to live up to be feared and honored and that all the world may be constrained as it were to pass through their hands and in the meantime as for God they do not much remember him and they are in such a way unthankful that it were much better to be a hog or an ass than to be like unto them and why so a hog has but his natural appetites when his belly is full he will sleep or he will wallow in dung and he is well contented with it but men what desires have they it is certain that there can be found no greater grief to torment them

with more cruelty than their own appetites so then for this cause they are in continual aggravation and torment in as much as they respect nothing but this life and if they once die why with them it seems all is dead likewise we see in all the reprobate that they have not any taste of the heavenly life and therefore we must so much the more pray unto God that he will open our eyes to the end we may always see beyond these present things and that we may keep ourselves therein in such a way that we be not held here beneath but Jacob contents not himself that Esau has simply sold him his birthright but he will have another Esau swears this is all one to him and in this we see how God threw him under his feet for although that hunger oppressed him so hardly that he was constrained to renounce

his birthright yet when he came to swear and that the name of God was taken to witness and protested that God should be his judge and punish him if he were sworn and disobedient and kept not his promise when all this was done and he not ignorant what his birthright was worth it must be said that the devil had altogether blinded him but hereby we are admonished that when we when we have once begun to start away and to turn our backs to God it must needs be that so much the more we be second hardened to have no more understanding of God than brute beasts and when we have after a way renounced the inheritance of salvation it shall come to pass that we shall renounce it a hundred and a thousand times yes the devil will find a hundred ways in one day to plunge us in the gulf of perdition out

of which we shall never be able to help ourselves mark then what we have yet to observe upon this place but by the way we have to consider Jacob's abstinence behold an example of true fast and not as the papists imagine, it is true that fasts are commanded unto us in the holy scripture for various reasons for they serve to tame our carnal affections and we must so cut off our drinking and our eating that the temperance which God requires of us may be as a continual fast for the whole time of our life but yet it is often times required that we should lessen our portion and why so? to the end we may be the better disposed to prayer and again when we are afflicted there is no question then of banqueting and making great cheer if God threaten us that he will show us some sign of his wrath as

he says by his prophet I then call you to mourning and weeping and if we loose the range to our desires it is as if we should bid him battle treat him with contempt and provoke him to anger mark then how fasting serves to humble us before God and to make us as wretched malefactors acknowledging that we have offended him moreover the fast word I have mentioned is made here is that which causes a man to abstain yes from eating and drinking if the same hinder him from serving God and which makes him rather to forsake his own life than to be turned away from God's will for as we have already said Jacob suffered as much as his brother Esau it is very true that he had not traversed and run so far that day in the fields and woods he had tarried in the house after his accustomed manner but

conceding the fact that he had made ready his dinner he was hungry and had an appetite to eat but howsoever it was he liked better to abstain and to captivate himself and to renounce his dinner and as it were his own life than to lose this occasion which he had that his birthright might be confirmed unto him so then we have here to make a comparison between Jacob and Esau and to make our profit of the exhortation which we have alleged that is to say that we be not profane but to the contrary it is said of Esau that he did eat and drink and rose up and went his way the speech here at the first sight is simple but it carries much with it for it was not enough that he had said that Esau without any further thinking of the matter had emptied his dish and was gone but Moses says that he did

eat and drink that he took his nourishment wholly at his ease and that he was well filled as though his birthright had been nothing unto him and this is the conclusion which he sets down that he condemned his birthright but before we come to this it is said that he did eat that he drank and rose up and went his way whether it is showed that Esau was embarrassed at nothing but he was a dog that did nothing but shake his ear after he had eaten and drunk that he went his way and pleaded not the matter against his brother as they which repent themselves are better advised when they have done any unadvised act they consider alas what have I done what shall become of me how far have I overshot myself Esau thinks nothing of all this but he leaves his brother after he was full he rose up and had

no care of anything now therefore we have here to behold how the devil when he has taken possession of a man makes him so senseless and block headed that he has no feeling of sorrow in himself no remorse nor scruple although he see that he be as it were cut off and banished from the kingdom of God yet he is not one bit moved with it but this is which I have touched before for a time is yet better expressed that is that always we fall from one evil to another and when the devil has gotten us into his snares he so entangles us in them that we can never bring it to an end but we must gather this general doctrine of this history that is that we always think upon that which is said by our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew chapter 6 verse 33 that first of all we seek for the kingdom of God and that

the rest shall be cast unto us now when he speaks of the kingdom of God this is not only to be understood of life everlasting but this also is comprised in it for the kingdom of God is that God be glorified in us that he be served and worshipped that we be his people as also he has mutually sanctified us as he has spoken thereof by his prophet Isaiah sanctify the Lord of hosts and he will sanctify you and will be your strength when we shall therefore seek that God may be honored and that we labor to dedicate ourselves to him and to be as it were living sacrifices then shall all other things be given unto us that is to say as Saint Paul also has declared God will show himself a father as well of our bodies as of our souls for he says unto Timothy in 1st Timothy chapter 4 verse 8 that if we

walk in the fear of God thinking more upon heaven than upon the earth we have the promises how so ever it be of this present life as well of the life to come it is very true that the promises belonging unto this

present life are accessories that is no other than that which follows and depends there upon but it is so much that if we lean upon the bounty of God and strive there where he has called us that is to say to the salvation which he has so dearly purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ God will not only become the father of our souls but also of our bodies we are thoroughly assured of this and ought to be resolved in it but now how so ever it be if we must be ready to renounce this present life and all the conveniences which are here if we must renounce our own life by a stronger

reason we must renounce to live now we cannot live here without eating and drinking but yet it is necessary that we be ready to suffer hunger and thirst rather than be turned away from our calling and not only this but when the question shall be of death we must offer our lives to God doing him this homage and always desiring rather a precious and blessed death before him than all the lives that might be imagined in this world which he shall accurse behold then the rule that is given to all Christians and whereby they are tried if they be the true children of God and that is when the world hinders them not to serve God that they always march on forwards by that path which is showed them by the Holy Scripture when I say that the world hinders them not I understand not only those wicked

lusts as drunkenness, whoredom, covetousness and such like but also those desires that are not utterly condemned as eating and drinking when it shall be permitted us of God and if eating and drinking shall hinder us from serving God then we must so strive that our desires may be tamed now this will be better understood by the common experience we have there is a man which may live in delights and pleasures he has to eat to the full yes of all manner of dainties and delicates and exquisite meats but he must hang his conscience as they say upon the rack or rather be profaned with the wicked world for there are a great many conditions offered to many which are as the enticing baits of Satan there upon they will think oh if I were in such a place I might rather a great deal of, I might gather

a great deal of good and afterwards I should be in great honor all the world would crouch unto me in the mean season I should have my table well furnished I should have with which to nourish me to my desire yes and in my old age when I should have gathered together my livelihood and rents I should be assured to live at my ease but I cannot attain unto it but to where tends this even hitherto that I cannot do this without being in great danger to bring myself to great wickedness yes and without utter estranging myself from God howsoever it be I cannot serve God purely as He has commanded me but if any man be tempted with this it is certain that he is like unto Esau if he make choice of this condition which shall be more agreeable to the world and in the mean time shall forsake the means he

has to serve God and to live in the peace and tranquility of a good conscience for he considers not I am a weak man and have much to do to hold myself in the fear of God although I be every day exhorted unto it yes and though I do give myself wholly unto it and enforce myself thereunto and what shall become of me when I shall have no word of God that I shall not be exhorted to do my duty and that I shall be entangled with many business and affairs of the world if a man think not of all this and that be make choice of a good table that is to say if he rather choose an estate whereby he may enrich himself it is certain that he shall be resembled unto Esau to the contrary when we shall think hey it is true that we shall be at our ease if we will forsake God or rather depart from him and will

decline be it never so little from a good way but what the devil will by and by find new slice to bring us wholly to wickedness in such a manner that we shall be as a desperate people but let us prevent such a danger and rather let us love hunger and thirst yes and to feed properly and not to have any great pop and great superfluity let us choose rather I say not to have so great an estate and hold ourselves in sobriety

than to be rich and wealthy notwithstanding to forget ourselves and to have all our joy here beneath when we shall so behave ourselves in this lo how we follow the example of our father Jacob but as I have said already the question is not only of forsaking our ease and convenience but also when need shall be of our own life for if so be we must die to make confession of

our faith such as God requires of us and to glorify the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and must pass that way we must likewise also forsake our own life and that which belongs unto it and if we do it not we show that we know not what it is to have tasted of spiritual blessings but that we have lost all taste of them for as much as the devil has made us drunken with his poisons and has bewitched us and made us senseless and block-headed we see here by the way how profitable this history is unto us for besides that which we have said already that God has ratified his election and has discovered that which was in Esau and Jacob here our father Jacob reaches out his hand unto us and shows us that all the pleasures of this world ought to be nothing unto us no not our very nourishment when there

shall be any question to be as poor starved people that we rather forsake to eat and drink when all shall be made ready yes especially when the smell shall have provoked us that we imagine to have the morsels already in our mouths and to have swallowed them down when we shall come so far nevertheless that we enter into such a combat with us against ourselves that we renounce our natural inclination and especially that which is not utterly condemned among men if it prevents us from coming unto God if it hinder us or entangle us here beneath in any corruptions behold what we ought to do and moreover that we take good heed on the other side that we be not like unto Esau and that we allege not this and that as many say oh we must live we may well make our excuses before men but when we shall

come to render a reckoning before that great judge who has declared unto us that he will have us to set such price upon the treasure of our salvation that he has offered us in the gospel that we learn to withdraw ourselves from the world and that all that is in it be nothing in comparison of it but this thing is practiced after various ways and manners for when a Christian man shall have plenty if he be sober in eating and drinking and do not so gorge himself that he loose both his sense and memory but be always disposed to praise God to execute the charge where unto he is called and to employ himself to that which belongs to his estate and vocation if a man be so temperate he is like unto Jacob for he forsakes to eat and drink not because he does not use the benefits that God has put

into his hand but he forsakes them in bridling his desires to the end not to exceed measure and after he always lifts up himself on high regarding the service of God and preferring it before any worldly thing again if it be necessary that he which was rich should be poor and that God had rather be poor yes if it were but to eat roots if need should be rather than to be alienated from God and that always he remains steadfast in it saying for as much as I am an heir of the world I ought to be well contented and now if I endure hunger or thirst if I bear any necessities and miseries I will pray unto God that he will give me patience and this is the reason why St.

Paul also says in Philippians chapter 4 verse 12 that he had learned he left that he had learned in the school of our Lord Jesus Christ to be hungry and to be full that is to say when he had had enough he left not to hold himself in and when he had nothing he was patient in his necessity he had recourse to God and chose rather to have many wants in respect of the world than to have that with which to grow and enrich himself and yet to be empty of heavenly benefits for it is certain that Esau had his soul buried in the pottage he saw there he smelt them and to that he laid his snout and why because he had no other consideration than of this present life lo his soul which was buried therein now we may be compassed

round about with all the goods of this world but it is necessary that the

smell do not so allure us that we esteem not spiritual things far above them and always to prefer them mark then briefly how we ought to apply this doctrine unto our use and moreover let us mark well that which is spoken here that the wickedness of Esau was because he made no account of his birthright and therefore this is a sign that we despise and scorn the graces of God and as a man would say cast them to the ground and tread them under our feet when we are so much addicted either to this life or to our desires and when we can endure and bear nothing but will have all which is pleasant unto us after the flesh when then we will in such a way hold our lusts it is certain that we make right account of that heavenly inheritance for how shall that be esteemed of us it shall be esteemed of

us as I have already said when the world shall be unto us but an accessory and all that is in it shall go as at the tail end but the gospel and the promises which are therein contained whereby God testifies unto us how he has adopted us and likewise how he will have us to himself this must mount up above them and we must be ravished in them and now withstanding let us well advise ourselves for if once the devil gain this of us that we become beastly in our pleasures he will not put us in mind for not we shall seek after nothing but this passing short-lived life we shall do nothing but run up and down like poor beasts and have no mark where not to aim as it fell out with Esau I have said already that these words are not put in vain, he did eat, he drank he rose up and went his way and what

a company of such and such like do we see at this day for they which have their delights after the manner of the world will esteem us for beggarly fools and blockheads and they deride our simplicity well well say they let them have their gospel and not withstanding die for hunger and they be such as have not a rag to hang on their tail end and have nothing to chomp between their teeth or rather let them droop and hang their wings and be so miserable as none can be more and let them rejoice in their gospel as much as they will but we in the meantime will have our swing in this world we will have our desires and our table well garnished and above all these scornors of God which are at this day advanced into states and dignities it is well how they flout us, it is well known how they flout

us and bleed out their tongue if men speak unto them of the gospel and it seems to them that we are as mad men which cannot discern between good and evil and why so for they eat and drink they rise up and go their way yes the world does so hold them or rather Satan has in such a way possessed them that heaven is nothing unto them and they all together forget everlasting life we see this and yet it is to no purpose to pursue it for our Lord has set before our eyes that this is in horrible condemnation when we fall into such blockheadedness to prefer this life which is nothing but a shadow before that eternity to which God has called us so let us put the case that we should live a hundred years after our death and yet what is that if we make comparison as St.

Paul says with this world it is but a minute and a figure which passeth away and in some but a moment now conversely of what weight ought our immortality to be with us which is offered unto us in our Lord Jesus Christ and of which he has so well certified us and yet concerning this life who is it that can promise us one day for they who are well fed they grow therein and there cannot be a minute to uphold them and especially in temperance chokes very many and we see that men the more they have by which to do well they kill themselves and yet in the mean season we cannot content ourselves that like poor beasts we must seek for thou which has no certainty and in the turning of a hand all is lost we seek nevertheless for this and unto this we are given yes wholly addicted insomuch that we

discern not between thou which is permanent and thou which flits away for if we despise that which is everlasting where then do we go it is certain that the most wicked themselves will say that this is a madness but after they have said it they show that they are strayed and that they do not greatly pass for it and this is so common a vice and it is necessary that the most perfect especially fight against it and the apostle not without cause handling this matter says be not profane to the end to make us watchful and to make us think who we are and that we should not be so brutish as to rest upon this present life so then let us go further and that which is here given us let us apply for our help to make us run on the more swiftly but if there be anything that hinder us yes though it were

our very eye as our Lord Jesus Christ says in Matthew chapter 5 verse 29 that our eye may rather be plucked out and we rather desire to enter into the kingdom of heaven blind than having all our senses sound to go into everlasting destruction so then to conclude let us rather love hunger and thirst than to cram and stuff our bellies and in the meantime not to regard everlasting life for we must not be so snared in these corruptible and temporary things that we cannot always lift up our senses and affections on high to the end through hope to be citizens of the kingdom of heaven but now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God in acknowledging our offenses praying Him that it will please Him in such a way to make us feel them that it may serve to make us there to open them and

that we may learn in such a way to fight against all temptations that if we must endure many poverties and miseries in this world how so ever it be that this do not turn us to wickedness and make us to decline from the right path but that everyone may here resist both himself as also all his desires and all his passions and that we may serve our God in such a way that if it will please Him to prove our patience in leaving us destitute of means and of the conveniences of this world that we may bear all with a quiet and peaceable courage until we be received into this blessed inheritance where we shall not lack anything what so ever it be but there we shall have the fullness of all joy and happiness Amen This recording is copyright and was made with the permission of Old Towns Publications

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