

Becoming

On Sunday, we continued our journey through the book of Genesis, exploring the story where Esau sells his birthright.

1. Warm-up question: Esau's story is about the temptation to yield to superficial impulses that drag us down. Tell us about a time this past week when you've faced temptation – nothing too heavy, just a little incidental temptation.
2. A wise person once said, "What you will be, you are now becoming." What do you think that means?
3. Read Genesis 25:19-34.
 - a. When her sons were in her womb, the turbulence Rebekah experienced was so great, so found herself wondering, "What will these children be like?" For those who've given birth, when your child was in the womb, did you find yourself wondering what they would be like? What did you imagine about your child?
 - b. Based on what Genesis 25 says, describe the personalities of Esau and Jacob as you imagine them. Describe the family dynamics as you imagine them?
 - c. In the culture of the time, the term "birthright" referred to the rights and privileges of the eldest son. He had the right, as firstborn, to twice as much of his father's estate as his brothers. He also had the right to rule the family. What do you think was going through Esau's mind when he cavalierly traded away his birthright for a Jacob's stew? What was he thinking?
 - d. With the benefit of hindsight, as you look back over your life, when have you acted in a manner reminiscent of Esau?
4. I Corinthians 10:11 tells us why God gave us the great Old Testament stories. "These things happened . . . to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the end of the ages have come." When we try to apply Esau's story to our own life, it raises two obvious questions: What is my "birthright," and how might I be tempted to fritter it away? Jeff suggested that, as children of God created in God's image, we have the right and privilege to live "in the Spirit." God is a Spirit being (John 4:24) and so are we. As spirit beings, our birthright is to live "in the Spirit," with all that implies.
 - a. I John 3:2 says, "Beloved, we are God's children now. What we will be [ultimately] has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when Christ is revealed, we will be like him. . . ." What does that mean? What are we destined to be and become?
 - b. A spirit being is someone who, by definition, has access to lots of numinous power. "Numinous" means unseen mystical power – spirit power, you might call

- it. Give some examples of the kind of numinous powers we might have access to as children of God?
5. The Bible gives us a wonderful example of how a spirit being sees the experiences of life differently than mere mortals. Read II Kings 6:11-17.
 - a. What do you think we're meant to learn from this story?
 - b. In your own life, have you ever experienced a time where you caught a glimpse of a greater spiritual reality that surrounded a concrete life situation?
 - c. Read Romans 8:9-14. This passage tells us that some people encounter life's experiences "in the Spirit," while others encounter them "in the flesh." What's the difference?
 - d. Give an example of a time when you saw someone respond to a situation "in the Spirit," rather than in the flesh. Tell us what happened?
 6. You've heard people talk about auras. Imagine we could see the aura of your spirit the way it is now and also the way it will look when you reach your full spiritual potential. Describe what we would see now, and what would see when you reach your spiritual potential?
 7. Some have suggested that the primary purpose of life on earth is to train us so we can reach our full potential as spirit beings for this life and the age to come. Viewed this way, life throws all kinds of experiences at us – the good, the bad, and the ugly – to give us the opportunity to practice responding "in the Spirit." People who see life this way argue that it explains why life is often so hard. It was meant to be – kinda like boot camp. Does that way of seeing life resonate with you? Why or why not?
 8. In Genesis 25, Esau became so preoccupied with the superficial circumstances of his situation – I'm so hungry I could die! – he completely missed the spiritual dimensions of what was happening. We're tempted to make that same mistake all the time.
 - a. Pick a situation you've experienced recently – any situation – where you feel you fell short of responding "in the Spirit." Tell us what happen. In what ways do you feel you were not "in the Spirit"? What would it have looked like for you to be more "in the Spirit"?
 - b. What are some ideas for how we can get better at responding to the ebb and flow of life in the Spirit, rather than in the flesh?