

## GRAB GOD'S BLESSINGS AND DON'T LET GO

Genesis 25:30-34, Hebrews 12:14-17

By Raymond White

A woman once asked Jesus for a blessing and Jesus said no, (*Matthew 15:22-28*). But she persisted until he finally said yes. Another woman came for a blessing and she didn't even ask, she just took it when his back was turned (*Mark 5:25-29*). It's easier to get forgiveness, it seems, then to get permission. These women knew exactly what they wanted and would not be denied.

Does such persistence annoy God? Perhaps. But if it does, they still got their blessings and God did not complain. In both cases, Jesus responded, not with annoyance but with praise.

To underscore the point, Jesus told this parable —

*Luke 18:2 There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: :3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. :4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said withing himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; :5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.:6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. :7 And shall not god avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, thought he bear long with them?*

The squeaky wheel gets the oil. That adage is true for unjust judges and just as true for God. God gives to those who ask, and gives most to those who ask most.

I once taught a lesson on this parable and said to the class that Jesus is recommending that we “pester” God. Someone in the class took offense to my choice of words and recommend that I use a less offensive word. I've thought about that over the years (actually, decades) and I still think “pester” is the right word. I believe that had Jesus spoke modern English, he would have use “pester” instead of “troubleth.” But that's my opinion. The point is, you have to go after God, and keep after him, and, believe it or not, he wants you to.

Here is a bible story of two brothers. One brother had no regard for the blessing God had given him, while the other had a high regard for that blessing which belonged to his brother.

*Genesis 25:30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint...:31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. :32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? :33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. :34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.*

The really interesting part of this story is that God let it stand. Why did God let it stand? Because Jacob wanted it and Esau didn't much care. It's that simple. Above all else, getting requires wanting.

Actually, there may have been something else going on. Jacob later a fight with God (*Genesis 32:24-26*) and the bible gives no explanation. My thought is, maybe they were arguing about the blessing. God might have said, “But it's not yours.” And Jacob might have said, “But I won it fair and square.” Then since Jacob won in the skirmish, God acquiesced. Just a possibility.

People feel sorry for Esau — getting cheated out of his birthright. Yes, he got cheated, but it was his own fault. He didn't want it badly enough to keep it. Just like so many young people today who do not regard sexual purity as a thing of value. Or smokers who do not regard their lungs as a thing of value. But then later, when they wish they had their virtue back or their lungs back, they regret their earlier decision with tears.

*Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace and holiness...:16 lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. :17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

It may be easy to repent of smoking, it's not so easy to repent of lung cancer. It might even be easy to repent of sexual impurity, certainly easier than repenting of AIDS.

We need to see the value of a thing before it is gone. Like Jacob. His habit was to grab whatever was valuable.

Jacob had an eye for value. He not only finagled a blessing from Esau, but also from his father-in-law Laban (*Genesis 30:27-43*), and ultimately from God (*Genesis 32:26 I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*).

Jacob was a tough negotiator. And later, his son Joseph showed the same talent (*Genesis 47:15-20*).

Jacob was a greedy guy. He took every blessing he could get his hands on. But we shouldn't fault him because God doesn't fault him. Indeed, God said: *Roman 9:13 Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated*.

The bottom line is this: Know what's truly valuable and grab it. If you have it, keep it. Do not let God's blessing slip away from you. If you do, you have only yourself to blame. God wants you to take and keep every blessing that he offers.