



Holy Trinity Church Lent 2020 Expect More

SMALL GROUP NOTES Week 3 – ‘The Red Stew’

Read together Genesis 25.10-34

As you read this passage together, **what immediately jumps out to you?**

How do you react to the story?

Isaac had a soft spot for his son Esau – verse 28 tells us that ‘he loved him’ - in this patriarchal Old Testament time Esau, as the first born, had the ‘Birthright’ – he was to be the new head of the family, the new alpha-male upon the death of his father. And this Birthright was a big deal - the first born male in each family was set apart. He was seen as the ‘sign’ of his father’s strength and received honour and rights particular to that role. He was due to receive a double portion of the inheritance and all the judicial authority of the father passes to him. The Birthright was a big deal.

So why does Esau give up his birth right so easily?

When a ‘Birthright’ was so important and not usually given up, what insight does this give you into Esau’s state of mind at this moment?

It is interesting that he is described as ‘famished’ – driven by intense and desperate feelings of hunger – an overwhelming feeling of longing, desire and need. It is in his famished state that Esau ends up making foolish decisions with long term consequences.

Most of us have never been so hungry that we think we’re going to die, but do we know what it’s like to be ‘famished’ as a state of mind in other ways – to experience ‘intense and desperate feelings’, or ‘famished feelings’? Famished feelings that can, if left unchecked, lead people to make equally regrettable decisions.

Looking at the story of Jacob and Esau and the dysfunctional family dynamics – in what other ways could they be described as having ‘famished feelings’?

Think about these following scenarios – in what ways could the person be described as ‘famished’ and what regrettable outcomes might that lead to?

- 1) When someone’s week is bad at work and they don’t feel valued, appreciated or affirmed – passed over for promotion again.

- 2) When someone feels very lonely and it's the weekend – the whole day stretches ahead of them with no plans, no friends and they are feeling very low.
- 3) When someone is unbelievably stressed – work is a pressure cooker, family life is challenging with teenage kids and little time to spend alone with their partner.

There are always ways out – God is a God of possibilities – for Esau, the tragedy of the story is that his father would have been close by, and had he been able to walk past the red stew and on into his father's presence, all his needs would have been met. But in his famished state, he had forgotten about the father who loved him and could only see the quick-fix solution right in front of him.

Read Luke 15.20-24

In the parable of the lost son we see the father's love in action as he runs to meet his son and prepares the celebratory feast. So often, the answer to famished feelings is to run to the Father. To remember his love and that he is always enough – and so much more fulfilling than any quick-fix solution.

Take another look at the three scenarios – in each case – **how could the knowledge that the Father is close by and that he is 'enough' help in each situation?**
Very practically what could we do in each situation to help?

Response

Take a moment to be quiet and reflect on times when perhaps you have felt 'famished' – it might be right now. In the silence be honest with God and ask him to show you that he is enough.