

## Summer Singles Part 4: Selling Short - 06.24.12

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 25:29-34 NIV / **Video:** “The Real Me”

**Intro:** Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. We're quick to criticize until we realize that we often sell our birthright for a whole lot less than it's worth. You say you don't come from a rich family? You don't have an inheritance? Allow me to correct you. You are born an American. Therefore you have inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If you are a member of this church you have the right to love God and others and the expectation to be loved by your fellow church members. And as a Christian you have some of the greatest rights of all - forgiveness by God, the right of being co-heir with Christ, and God's Presence living with you eternally!

Perhaps it's understandable when you are struggling without a job, or frustrated in a relationship, or short of money, or in poor health, to think to yourself, “A lot of good that all does me!” Well that brings us smack into the middle of the story of Esau and his bowl of soup, when he's famished and says, “What good is the birthright to me?” **Leads us to...**

**Today's Big Idea:** It's easy to SELL MYSELF SHORT.

If I am not deliberate in my actions and in my thinking, I'll sell my birthright. Like Esau, I won't appreciate who I am and what God has done for me. We have a word for it... I sell myself short. I think less of myself and my birthright than what I should. I take it for granted or I forget about it all together.

**Illustration - Selling Short.** In the stock market business there is a special kind of order called a short sale. Usually we think of making money by buying a stock for a low price and selling it later for a higher price. But you don't have to do it like that. You can also sell a stock *that you don't own first...* hoping then to buy it back later. It's called selling short. You sell short stocks that you think will go down. In the same way we often *sell ourselves short... we put ourselves down, we undervalue our worth.* Like Esau we undervalue our birthright. **Today I'd like to talk about 4 ways that I might sell myself short.**

*I sell myself short when I ...*

**#1: Attempt to be like SOMEONE ELSE.**

My goal in life should be to find out who God made me to be and then to serve Him with the best me I can be! I can't do that if I try to be someone else. I can't preach like someone else. I can't write like someone else. I can't be a pastor like someone else. The same is true for you. Learn from others. Accept advice from others. Be humble in your self evaluation. Yet at the same time know that there is NO ONE ELSE LIKE YOU! God made you unique. He made you special.

“You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your Book.” Psalm 139:16 LB

This goes to the heart of your uniqueness. God created you differently than anyone else. And this is for a reason. He has a purpose for YOU!

“You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something.” Psalm 139:15 MSG

“The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me.” Psalm 138:8a NIV

Imagine how foolish it would be for us - know this about our unique creation for God's unique purposes - to attempt to live like someone else. We do it all the time. We see someone else who we think is cool, who has it all together, who has accomplished great things. We admire them and want to be like them. But God didn't make me like him or her... he made me like me! To try to be someone else will ALWAYS sell short my birthright!

## #2: Confuse who I am for WHAT I DO.

We do this all the time in America, right? When we meet someone new, one of the first things we ask is "What do you do?" We ask that because "what we do" often defines "who we are." We think to ourselves, 'if only I can get that job.' Or 'if I could just have that career.' Or 'if I could only get into that school.' We see the job or career or school as our ticket to become someone different than who we are.

We should first begin, though, with the WHO I AM and allow that to permeate through everything regardless of WHAT I DO. This Americanized focus on the WHAT I DO is nothing new. In fact Christianity is really the force that breaks through the WHAT I DO ceilings in defining WHO I AM. In the beginning Christians met as equals regardless of the class they came from. Paul appeals to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus:

"He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord." Philemon 16 NLT

James admonishes some in the early church for showing favoritism just because someone's status or wealth. Christianity is now not about the outside me, but the inside me. As a Christian everything is now upside down and inside out from the way the world sees life.

"Listen, dear friends. Isn't it clear by now that God operates quite differently? He chose the world's down-and-out as the kingdom's first citizens, with full rights and privileges. James 2:5 MSG

This goes both ways. Don't think more highly of yourself because of your job or your career or your education. Don't think less of yourself either. If your job is serving or supporting or considered by some to be lowly, know that you are in good company. Jesus Himself gave up his glory in heaven and "made himself nothing taking the form of a servant." Philippians 2:7 ESV.

## #3: My choices reflect a SHORT-TERM MINDSET.

We often sell ourselves short when we think only of the immediate gratification rather than of the long-term implications. In this we are just like Esau, who was famished. He wanted to feed *RIGHT NOW!*

"Look, I'm dying of starvation!" said Esau. "What good is my birthright to me now?" Genesis 25:32 NLT

We should underline that word "now" because it becomes the focus of why we make so many poor choices that ultimately sell ourselves short. In the moment we don't care about the long term importance of our birthright. We willingly give up this unique, beautiful person that God has

specifically designed for the short term “bowl of lentil soup!” Here are just a few examples:

Choosing convenience over CORRECTNESS.  
Choosing comfort over CHARACTER.  
Choosing safety over FREEDOM.

Jesus provided the ultimate short-term thinking choice for us when he asked this most profound question:

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”  
Mark 8:36 ESV

Consider the short-term vs. long term of this question. Even if someone could gain every thing in this world, every house, every career, every appearance, every desire... and yet lose HIMSELF, isn't that the ultimate loss? In fact, when Eugene Petersen translated this for The Message:

“What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you?”  
Mark 8:36 MSG

**And that leads us to the final way we sell ourselves short...**

**#4. Attempt to live without GOD'S PRESENCE.**

Many of us have been short-changed by our teachers and models - *who we follow!* We see the celebrities and famous and rich living for themselves, looking out for #1. It seems to be working for them. We think maybe it could work for us. But, living for self is a dead end!

“Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end. Attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life.” Romans 8:6 MSG

The truth is that as an American-born citizen, I have the birthright to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. There are no guarantees here that I will always live, that I'll always be free, or that I'll always be happy. Many have sacrificed for these rights, which many of us take for granted. But if we take them for granted we could lose them.

One choice that is mine and yours to make is the choice to choose to be born again. Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be born anew. The same goes for you and me. If you are a Christian, then you already know that. But just like it's possible to be born an American and take your birthright for granted, we can do the same with our 2nd birth rights. As a Christ follower, we have the birth right of being a co-heir with Christ and of having God's Presence live in us always. We cannot become the creature God created without God!

“It is God who directs the lives of his creatures; everyone's life is in his power.”  
Job 12:10 TEV

“For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible ... everything, got started in him and finds its purpose in him.” Col. 1:16 MSG

**Conclusion:** What about you? Have you sold yourself short? Have you been frustrated trying to live like someone else? Have you confused *who you are* with *what you do*? Have you been making short term choices that have sacrificed long-term living? Are you feeling LESS THAN God's beautiful creation? All of these things are so easy to do - *like selling your birthright for a bowl of soup*. Foolish! Silly! But so easy! If you want to become the best you you can be, the REAL YOU... then you'll need God's help and Presence in your life. **Let's pray.**