

Bridgeway Community Church  
Pastor Dr. David Anderson  
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## I Saw Esau

### Let Go of Your Bitterness

Question: “How do you stay connected to God in the midst of so much anger and turmoil.”

National Suicide hotline: 800-273-8255

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Jacob and Esau were twin brothers.

Jacob, the younger of the two, swindled Esau out of his “**birthright**” and then he deceived his father, Isaac, at the behest of his mother, to steal Esau’s parental/generational “**blessing**” as well.

As a result, Esau was angry with his brother.

Genesis 27:41 NIV84

Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, ‘The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.’

“Esau had a right to be MAD as heck! But murder is too far!  
He had the right to be ANGRY! But premeditated homicide is too far!”

Question: “Do you know the difference between being mad and being angry?”

- Mad is being upset in the moment...but it subsides after the incident
- Angry is being upset beyond the moment....and sustains beyond the incident...It stays with you

When “Mad” and “Angry” have a baby it’s called BITTERNESS!

Bitterness is that small seed of anger that is nurtured in the womb of our hurting souls causing us to harden our hearts toward someone for an extended period of time until they are finally locked in the dungeon of our unforgiving hearts.

<b>Sermon in a Sentence - BITTERNESS BIRTHS All-Kindsof BAD</b>
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1. Bitterness gives birth to bad **Behaviors**
2. Bitterness gives birth to bad **Attitudes**
3. Bitterness gives birth to bad **Decisions**

1. **BEHAVIORS**

Hebrews 12:15

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

In other words, when bitterness takes root in your spirit, it will grow up and cause lots of trouble in you and will also affect others around you! Bitterness can have a harmful effect on you for sure, but it can also have a harmful effect on the people around you.

- A bitter mother can produce a bitter child who learns negative behaviors that have been modeled before the child. If parents model bitterness, children can pick those habits up as well.
- If parents model grace, kids can pick that up too.
- If you are single and bitter, marriage will not cure that! You’ll just be married and bitter.

“Circumstances don’t change bitterness. It can temporarily mask it but circumstances don’t change bitterness.”

Hebrews 12:16

See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.

“The writer of Hebrews is saying that Esau’s appetite for food caused him to lose his inheritance and the same can be true for us. We can allow our appetites, and in this case our sexual appetites, to rob us of our birthright. So, it is incumbent upon us to resist being godless and acting out sexually or emotionally because of bitterness.”

Question: Did you know that if you're stuck in bad behavior, the root of it may stem from bitterness?

“...because of the bad that has happened in your life, and because of your own sinful desires for revenge, deep down inside your heart and your mind is a root of bitterness.”

“If you attack the root, you will arrest the bad fruit.”

## **2. ATTITUDES**

“Bitterness can affect our heart attitude and sour our spirit.”

Proverbs 14:10 NIV84

The heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger does not share its joy.

Psalms 73:21 NIV84

My heart was embittered and I was pierced within...

“The attitudes of our hearts are affected by deep pain. If that pain is not properly mourned and healed, it can affect the attitude of our hearts.”

Esau’s heart was broken. He was so very hurt by his brother, and his mother, and even his father.

Genesis 27:38 NIV84

Esau said to his father, ‘Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father! Then Esau WEPT ALOUD.

“Anger comes after hurt...to deal with the hurt we become angry and then we want to do something to somehow to help the hurt go away by covering it with anger. ”

Many who are mean or angry have a deep root that comes from being hurt.

Romans 8:26-27 NIV

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Again, if not properly and healthily mourned and healed, that pain can turn into anger and affect the attitudes of your heart.

Proverbs 13:12 NIV84

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

“Esau’s hope was not just DEFERRED, it was DENIED!! It was DASHED!! It was DESTROYED!!”

“As a result, he allowed his HURT to turn into ANGER. From anger it metastasized into BITTERNESS.”

Question: Are you hurt? Are you in pain? Has something been taken away from you that you cannot get back?

“I’m so sorry. I can’t even imagine the lost and the hurt that you feel.”

“But what I can do is give you a practical application and appeal from your pastor and your friend:”

**PLEASE GET HELP! Don’t COMPOUND your HURT with bitterness. Get counseling.**

A national resource for counseling: [eHOMEGROUP.COM](http://eHOMEGROUP.COM)

B.A.D. - **B**ehavior, **A**ttitudes, **D**ecisions

### 3. **DECISIONS**

Back to Esau, turn to Genesis 28 and observe what major life decision Esau made out of his bitterness. Esau made a choice to marry a woman out of bitterness and anger against his father

Genesis 28:6-9 NIV84

Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded him 'Do not marry a Canaanite woman,' <sup>7</sup> and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. <sup>8</sup> Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac. <sup>9</sup> so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had.

“Because of his bitterness, Esau actually married someone to spite his father. He married outside of his tribe not for love, but out of spite.”

Question: How likely is it that some of the things that we do that we know we shouldn't do are motivated by bitterness, spite, and contempt within our hearts?

Vengeance costs us because of bad decisions!

Esau was so bitter that he would marry a Canaanite woman just to flip off his father.

- Some of you may be dating the wrong person just to flip someone off
- some of you may have chosen/choosing the wrong career just to flip someone off
- making major moves just to prove something to someone else out of bitterness

These decisions may not be made out of passion, but out of pain!

Question: “How do you get out of that? How do you get out that instinctual decision making that is motivated by the way you feel about your father? Or the way you feel about your mother? Or the way you feel about your parents? Or the way you feel about someone in your life who you feel like they have hurt you so bad that you're willing to make life decisions in order to counteract the very thing they did to you?”

There is only one way to cut out the root bitterness out of your life.

“You’re not going to like it. You may even be mad at me for saying it, because it doesn’t seem right. It doesn’t seem fair. It doesn’t seem just. That’s right...the ‘F’ word.”

## **FORGIVENESS!!**

“If you can forgive and slowly move on, you can stop yourself from being victimized all over again by your own vengeance.”

If you can forgive, you can live again

But, if you hold a grudge..you will discover that the grudge is actually holding you

Notice that I said, forgive and move on, maybe even slowly. I didn’t say, “forgive and forget.” In fact, I don’t think we should forget, I don’t like that phrase. I like this better: “forgive and remember.”

Forgive and remember that you forgave because forgiveness is not a one time act, it’s a process. Your anger is going to be triggered by hurt all over again and you will have to forgive again.

“Every time you are triggered again to be angry because of what has happened, you have to forgive and remember that you forgave.”

Question: How do you know that forgiveness is working?

“One of the ways you know forgiveness has taken root is that you no longer desire to take revenge against that person. That may not happen right away. You no longer want bad things to happen to that person because of what happened to you.”

“Send the person who hurt you to the cross. Let Jesus deal with them. Forgive them and ask Jesus to forgive you. We forgive others as we have been forgiven.”

It takes work to hang on to that anger; let it go!

Jacob was fearful of Esau because he knew that his brother wanted to murder him. In fact, Jacob had been on the run for decades at his mother’s urging. Jacob prayed to God for safety from his brother’s revenge:

Genesis 32:11 NIV84

[Jacob praying] Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children.

Esau was blessed with wealth and a life that was manageable. When he would finally meet up with his brother, Jacob, again he didn't kill him. Guess what he did?

Genesis 33:1-4 NIV84

Jacob looked up and there was Esau coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two maidservants. <sup>2</sup>He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. <sup>3</sup>He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. <sup>4</sup>But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.

THIS is a picture of Forgiveness AND Reconciliation!

You never know what God is doing in the life of the other person!

Somehow, some way, God blessed Esau and as a result Esau was able to let go of his bitterness!

Question: What about you? Do you have a root of bitterness that needs to be uprooted?

"Dear God, it's in the power of the Holy Spirit, that I am inviting you and asking you and pleading with you God to do an amazing, miraculous work in the hearts of the people... like you did in Esau. Somehow Lord you were able to change his anger...into being able to embrace his brother and to forgive and to reconcile. I pray that spirit of Esau would now be in each person...I pray God that whatever hurt they have that you would be healing in them even through this prayer. God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, I pray that a spirit of forgiveness would drop all over the land, that the spirit of forgiveness to let people go from whatever it is that they have done and send them to the cross so that you will handle them and free us up. I pray that throughout all the world...whatever continent they're on, whatever country they're in...I am praying by the power of the Holy Spirit that the blood feud that took place on the cross would cleanse them of their sins and free them from the bitterness and the hate in their hearts. It is by the power of the Spirit that I pray this prayer, in the name of the only one that can actually break the chains and free us, in the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.