

**“NOT 4 SALE”**

**A SERMON BASED ON THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOK OF GENESIS (25:19-34) AND PRESENTED FOR ORLEAN UMC ON JULY 12, 2020----- (THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF AN ELEVEN WEEK SERMON SERIES THAT WILL TAKE US THROUGH SOME OF THE MAJOR THEMES IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS)**

**ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT SIDE EFFECTS OF LIVING THROUGH A GLOBAL PANDEMIC OF HISTORIC PROPORTIONS --- AS WE ARE --- IS AN UNPRECEDENTED AND HISTORIC UNEMPLOYMENT RECORD AND FOR MANY OF THOSE STILL ON THE JOB THE PROSPECT OF LAYOFFS AND REDUCED HOURS LOOMS CONSISTENTLY.....**

**AS A RESULT---MANY ARE NOW PARING DOWN  
ON NONESSENTIALS----- ONLINE AUCTION AND  
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SITES SUCH AS EBAY  
AND CRAIGSLIST ARE FULL OF ITEMS FOR SALE  
- STUFF THAT FOLKS FIGURE THEY CAN PART  
WITH IN ORDER TO SNAG A FEW EXTRA BUCKS.  
FOR DEAL SHOPPERS, IT'S A BONANZA. FOR  
SELLERS, WELL, IT CAN BE MORE THAN A LITTLE  
PAINFUL.**

**PERHAPS YOU MAY EVEN BE AWARE OF OR  
KNOW PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD TO SELL A  
BELOVED HOME ---MAYBE EVEN AT A STEEP  
LOSS -----BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T AFFORD TO  
PAY FOR IT ANYMORE.**

**THE PROLIFERATION OF ADS OFFERING PEOPLE CASH FOR THEIR GOLD SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE SELLING OFF JEWELRY, MAYBE EVEN HEIRLOOMS, IN ORDER TO MAKE IT THROUGH ANOTHER DAY. CARS, BIKES, VACATION HOMES - YOU NAME IT, AND SOMEONE IS SELLING IT SOMEWHERE. EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE NEGOTIABLE. THAT BEGS A QUESTION, THOUGH..... ARE THERE SOME THINGS YOU'D NEVER SELL, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES? -----**

**IF YOUR SITUATION BECAME SO DIRE THAT YOU WERE BETWEEN ROCK BOTTOM AND A VERY HARD DECISION, WHAT WOULD YOU ABSOLUTELY HOLD ON TO, REGARDLESS OF THE COST?**

**OF COURSE, WE AREN'T JUST TALKING ABOUT MATERIAL THINGS HERE - PRECIOUS FAMILY MEMENTOS, FAVORITE POSSESSIONS AND THE LIKE..... IN A FALLEN WORLD, WHERE SIN DEHUMANIZES PEOPLE INTO COMMODITIES, A LOT MORE THAN GREAT-GRANDMA'S WEDDING RING CAN BE AT STAKE.....**

**SELLING YOUR CHILDREN, FOR EXAMPLE, IS  
REPREHENSIBLE AND FOR US UNTHINKABLE-----  
AND YET THAT HAPPENS IN CERTAIN PLACES  
AROUND THE WORLD EVEN TODAY..... SELLING  
ONE'S OWN BODY HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN A  
RESPONSE TO BAD ECONOMIC CONDITIONS,  
WHICH IS WHY PROSTITUTION IS KNOWN AS THE  
"OLDEST PROFESSION." -----IN MANY PLACES  
AROUND THE WORLD, THE SEX TRADE SELLS  
PEOPLE, MANY OF THEM CHILDREN, INTO  
SLAVERY ON A DAILY BASIS. SELLING ILLEGAL  
DRUGS PUTS PEOPLE AT RISK OF THE SLAVERY  
OF ADDICTION..... WHEN HUMAN LIFE IS JUDGED  
ONLY BY ITS DOLLAR VALUE, THEN VIRTUALLY  
NOTHING IS OFF THE TABLE.**

**SOME THINGS SHOULD JUST NEVER BE FOR SALE..... INTEGRITY, FOR EXAMPLE, OR CHARACTER OR LOVE SHOULD NEVER HAVE A PRICE TAG, AND NEITHER SHOULD ONE'S BODY. YOU CAN PROBABLY THINK OF QUITE A FEW ADDITIONAL THINGS THAT SHOULD NEVER BE ON THE MARKET.....**

**IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, ONE ITEM INCORPORATED NOT ONLY MATERIAL THINGS BUT A PERSON'S IDENTITY AND A WHOLE LOT MORE - THE BIRTHRIGHT..... SELL THAT, AND YOU WOULD HAVE SOLD OUT COMPLETELY.**

**THE BIRTHRIGHT WAS THE SPECIAL PRIVILEGE GIVEN TO THE FIRSTBORN MALE OF ANY PATRIARCH..... THE BIRTHRIGHT'S ECONOMIC VALUE WAS, DEPENDING ON THE FATHER'S PROSPERITY, OFTEN ENOUGH TO SET UP THE FIRSTBORN SON FOR LIFE..... AT HIS FATHER'S DEATH, THE ELDEST SON RECEIVED A "DOUBLE PORTION" OF THE INHERITANCE, OR DOUBLE WHAT HIS BROTHERS WOULD GET. THE INHERITANCE WASN'T JUST ECONOMIC, HOWEVER (THE CURRENCY IN THOSE DAYS CONSISTING LARGELY OF FLOCKS, HERDS AND SLAVES); IT WAS ALSO ABOUT LEADERSHIP.**

**HAVING THE BIRTHRIGHT MEANT EXERCISING LEADERSHIP OVER THE FAMILY, REPLACING THE FATHER AS THE PATRIARCH..... THE HOLDER OF THE BIRTHRIGHT MADE THE DECISIONS AND RULED OVER HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND THE FAMILY LINE WOULD BE CONTINUED THROUGH HIM..... IN SHORT, THE BIRTHRIGHT WAS DESIGNED TO ENSURE THE FUTURE OF THE FAMILY..... SCREW IT UP, AND YOU SCREW UP THE FAMILY..... SELL IT, AND YOU'VE SOLD AWAY THE FUTURE.**



**GENESIS TELLS US THAT ISAAC'S TWIN SONS WERE ALREADY VYING FOR POWER AS SOON AS THEY EXITED THE WOMB (25:24-28)..... THE OLDER SON, ESAU, WE LEARN, WOULD SEEM TO HAVE BEEN THE PROTOTYPICAL LEADER, GIVEN THE DESCRIPTION OF HIM AS RED AND HAIRY ---- -READ THAT I BELIEVE AS "VERY MANLY".**

**JACOB, WHO COMES OUT OF THE WOMB HOLDING ONTO ESAU'S HEEL, WAS QUIET, SOFT AND INTERESTED IN "LIVING IN TENTS" -----READ "WITH THE WOMEN"----- RATHER THAN LIVING AND WORKING IN THE FIELDS..... AS A RESULT, ESAU WAS CLEARLY DAD'S FAVORITE, WHILE JACOB WAS CLEARLY MAMA'S BOY (VV. 26-27).**

**THE BOYS COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE DIFFERENT..... REBEKAH, THEIR MOTHER, HAD ALREADY BEEN WRESTLING WITH THE TURMOIL BETWEEN THEM IN HER WOMB WHEN SHE "WENT TO INQUIRE OF THE LORD" ABOUT HER PAIN OF HAVING TWINS..... GOD TOLD HER THAT THE TWO BOYS STRUGGLING WITHIN HER WOULD EVENTUALLY COME TO EMBODY THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN TWO NATIONS (ISRAEL AND EDOM), AND YET THEIR ROLES WOULD SOON BE REVERSED..... "THE ONE SHALL BE STRONGER THAN THE OTHER," GOD SAID, "AND THE ELDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER" (V. 23).**

**WE'RE NOT SURE IF THAT'S WHY JACOB, THE YOUNGER, WAS HER FAVORITE, BUT LATER WE'LL SEE THAT SHE IS MORE THAN GLAD TO HELP THIS PRONONCEMENT COME TRUE!**

**WE ALSO DON'T KNOW IF JACOB KNEW ABOUT THE ORACLE ON THAT DAY WHEN HE WAS COOKING UP A STEW (V. 29)..... BUT IT'S PRETTY CLEAR THAT HE WAS ALREADY WORKING ON A DEAL TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS STRONG BUT PERHAPS NOT OVERLY ASTUTE OR AWARE AND IMPULSIVE OLDER BROTHER..... WE GET THE IMPRESSION THAT JACOB WASN'T JUST MAKING STEW; HE'S MARKETING IT.....**

**HE KNEW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT HIS BROTHER WAS THE KIND OF KID WHO WOULDN'T LET HIS ALLOWANCE EVEN GET WARM IN HIS POCKET BEFORE SPENDING IT ON THE FIRST SHINY OR SWEET THING HE SAW IN THE STORE. ESAU IS STRONG AND MAYBE EVEN LIKABLE BUT HE IS ALSO FOOLISH....ALL JACOB HAS TO DO IS ADVERTISE, AND ESAU WILL BE QUICK TO MAKE A DEAL.**

**ESAU WAS "FAMISHED" WHEN HE CAME IN FROM THE FIELD..... HE SAW HIS CIRCUMSTANCE AS BEING ABSOLUTELY DESPERATE, THINKING HE WAS "ABOUT TO DIE" (V. 32).**

**IT WOULD SEEM HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ESAU WAS THAT BAD OFF AFTER HUNTING.....**

**BUT WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES ARE UNCOMFORTABLE HUMANS HAVE A TENDENCY TO EXAGGERATE THE EFFECTS OF WHAT'S CAUSING PAIN, AND THEY'LL DO ANYTHING TO ALLEVIATE THAT PAIN, BE IT REAL OR IMAGINED.**

**THOSE WITH HIGH ANXIETY USUALLY HAVE POOR IMPULSE CONTROL AND, THUS, RELY ON INSTANT GRATIFICATION TO TAKE AWAY THEIR PAIN, IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT.....**

**THAT LEADS TO AN ALL-OR-NOTHING WAY OF  
THINKING THAT AMPLIFIES EVEN THE SMALLEST  
INCONVENIENCE INTO A LIFE-OR-DEATH CRISIS.**

**EFFECTIVE MARKETING PLAYS ON THAT  
ANXIETY AND CAN CAUSE US TO BELIEVE THAT  
OUR LIVES WITHOUT THIS OR THAT PRODUCT OR  
SERVICE WILL BE DIMINISHED AT BEST AND  
THREATENED AT WORST..... WANTING IT ALL  
AND WANTING IT NOW IS THE FASTEST ROUTE  
TO BANKRUPTCY OF BOTH WALLET AND SPIRIT.**

**JACOB TIMES THIS PERFECTLY. -----YOU CAN  
ALMOST SEE HIM PAUSING LONG ENOUGH TO  
LET THE AROMA OF THE STEW MAKE ESAU JUST  
A LITTLE CRAZIER. "I'LL BE GLAD TO GIVE YOU  
SOME OF THIS 'RED STUFF,'" JACOB SAYS, "BUT  
FIRST YOU NEED TO SELL ME YOUR  
BIRTHRIGHT" (V. 31).**

**JACOB KNOWS THAT THE VALUE OF A BOWL OF  
SOUP AND THE VALUE OF ONE'S WHOLE  
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND FAMILIAL FUTURE  
AREN'T EQUAL, BUT HE ALSO KNOWS THAT  
ESAU, BLINDED AS HE ALWAYS IS BY ANXIETY,  
DOESN'T SEE IT THAT WAY.....**

**ESAU'S WILLING TO MORTGAGE EVERYTHING HE  
COULD POSSIBLY BECOME SIMPLY TO HAVE A  
TASTE OF STEW THAT HE HAD PROBABLY HAD  
MANY TIMES BEFORE. HIS STOMACH RULES  
OVER HIS BRAIN, AND HE SELLS HIS FUTURE  
FOR PRACTICALLY NOTHING. JACOB EVEN  
GIVES HIM A MINUTE TO THINK ABOUT IT,  
ASKING ESAU TO "SWEAR" TO THE DEAL.  
ESAU SIGNS ON THE DOTTED LINE AND EATS  
PERHAPS THE MOST EXPENSIVE BOWL OF SOUP  
IN THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY (VV. 33-34).**



**IS JACOB CULPABLE HERE FOR DUPING HIS  
VULNERABLE OLDER BROTHER? -----WELL-----  
THE BIBLE DOESN'T MAKE A VALUE JUDGMENT  
ON JACOB'S ACTIONS AT THIS POINT. LATER, HE  
WILL ALSO CHEAT ESAU OUT OF ISAAC'S  
"BLESSING," WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY THE  
PATRIARCH'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT AND  
CHARGE TO HIS SUCCESSOR.....**

**JACOB, WITH REBEKAH'S HELP, THUS  
DECEPTIVELY, BUT IN A LEGALLY BINDING WAY,  
SEALS THE DEAL THAT WAS ORIGINALLY  
STRUCK AT THE SOUP BOWL (GENESIS 27:30-40).  
JACOB SEEMS TO HAVE SOLD HIS INTEGRITY TO  
GAIN WEALTH AND POWER.....**

**IT IS CLEAR THAT NEITHER SON IS A GREAT  
HERO....BOTH BROTHERS ARE GUILTY OF  
SELLING OUT IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.**

**THIS STORY IS A CONSTANT REMINDER TO US  
THAT SOME THINGS SHOULD JUST NEVER BE  
FOR SALE AND THAT ONE IMPULSIVE DECISION,  
MADE AMID AN ANXIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, CAN  
HAVE DEVASTATING RAMIFICATIONS FOR THE  
FUTURE.**

**THERE ARE LOTS OF EXAMPLES OF HOW THIS  
STORY GETS REPEATED THROUGHOUT HISTORY  
AND IN OUR OWN COMMUNITIES:**

**\* THE RESPECTED LEADER WHO SELLS AWAY HIS OR HER CAREER AND FAMILY FOR THE MOMENTARY PLEASURE OF AN ILLICIT AFFAIR.**

**\* THE BUSINESSPERSON WHO COMPROMISES HIS OR HER INTEGRITY BY POCKETING HUGE PROFITS AT THE EXPENSE OF FAIR WAGES AND TREATMENT OF THE COMPANY'S EMPLOYEES.**

**\* THE TEENAGER WHO WRECKS HIS OR HER FUTURE BY DABBING IN DRUGS JUST BECAUSE "EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING IT."**

**\* THE DRIVER WHO TAKES THE WHEEL AFTER AN EVENING OF DRINKING AND TAKES AN INNOCENT LIFE IN A CRASH.**

**THESE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES..... YOU CAN SURELY THINK OF MORE.**

**THE POINT IS IF WE SEE OURSELVES AS BEING VALUED BY GOD AND BLESSED BY GOD, THEN WE HAVE INHERENT VALUE REGARDLESS OF WHAT WE OWN OR WHAT OUR CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT BE..... DO WE ALLOW GOD TO DETERMINE OUR VALUE, OR DO WE LET ANXIETY DRIVE WHAT WE FEEL THAT WE NEED?**

**HAVE WE SOLD OURSELVES TO THE GOD WHO  
CREATED US AND CARES FOR US, GIVING US  
WHAT WE NEED, OR ARE WE STILL WILLING TO  
SELL OURSELVES SO CHEAPLY TO THINGS THAT  
DON'T MATTER AND THINGS THAT MAY  
ULTIMATELY HARM US?**

**WE KNOW THAT DESPITE THE DECEPTION AND  
EVEN BLATANT STUPIDITY IN THIS STORY,  
SOMEHOW GOD IS ABLE TO WORK IT OUT.....**

**THIS FAMILY IS TOTALLY DYSFUNCTIONAL BUT  
GOD WORKS THROUGH THEM ANYWAY!!!**

**GOD DOESN'T ABANDON JACOB OR ESAU, AND  
THEY WILL EVENTUALLY RECONCILE. JACOB  
BECOMES ISRAEL, AND A NEW NATION IS  
LAUNCHED OUT FROM HIS FAMILY.....**

**ESAU WILL BE THE FATHER OF ANOTHER  
NATION, EDOM, WHICH, DESPITE THE BROTHERS'  
RECONCILIATION, WILL ALWAYS BE AT ODDS  
WITH ISRAEL..... EVEN WHEN WE HAVE SOLD OUT  
TO THE WORLD, GOD STILL VALUES US AS HIS  
CHILDREN.**

**WE WERE "BOUGHT WITH A PRICE," WRITES THE  
GREAT APOSLE PAUL (1 CORINTHIANS 6:20).**

**MAY WE RECOGNIZE OUR VALUE!**

**PRAISE GOD AND MAY IT BE SO FOR YOU AND  
FOR ME.....AMEN.....**