

What is Your Attitude Towards Spiritual Opportunities

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- [0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Take your Bibles if you would now and turn to Genesis chapter 25.
- Genesis chapter 25. And we're going to talk about what's your attitude towards spiritual opportunities. What's your attitude towards spiritual opportunities?
- Genesis chapter 25. Let's have a word of prayer and then we'll scan Genesis chapter 25. And I will try to get you out.
- It's Father's Day. I'll try to get you out. It looks 18 or 20 minutes here. How about that? Father, I love you and I praise you. And I thank you for the wonderful opportunity that we have to serve you.
- And I pray now tonight that you would be magnified and that we would honor you and raise you up. I pray, God, for the Watsons that you would hurry them to the field. I pray for Papua New Guinea that people would be saved.
- [0 : 5 4] The Bible would be translated in the many languages that do not have it. And, God, I thank you for their willingness to leave very secure jobs to take off and do something for you. And I'll give you praise for it all.
- In Jesus' name, amen. Read with me, if you would, Genesis chapter 25. Genesis chapter 25. And we're going to scan this one again because of the length of it and the lateness of the hour.
- But in Genesis chapter 25, verse 1, Abraham takes another wife and her name is Keturah. And she has a bunch of kids with him. Verse 5, Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.
- And he gives us gifts to everybody else and sends them all away in verse 6. So he's got all these kids and he gets rid of them. Because everything is going to go to Isaac.
- In verse 7, he lived 175 years. In verse 8, he died at good old age and full of years. And in verse 9, his two oldest sons come together.
- [1 : 5 6] And they meet with him, or they meet together to bury him in the cave that we saw purchased not long ago. And Abraham was buried there next to Sarah, his wife. And God blessed Isaac, his son.
- In chapter 25 and verse 12, then Ishmael's story is told. And he has 12 sons, 12 princes. And he dies an old man.
- And in chapter 19, verse 19, Isaac now is 40 years old when he took Rebekah to be his wife. And Rebekah couldn't have any children. Verse 21, and he prays to God and says, God, would you please let my wife have children?
- And God answered, and his wife had children. And while she was pregnant, the kids were doing a whole lot of jumping around and fighting in her womb. And she didn't know what was going on.
- And so she asked the Lord. And he said, well, lady, there are two nations in your womb. There are two types of people in your womb that will be separated. One and the older one will serve the younger one. That's verse 23.

[2 : 55] And they were twins. And one of them came out red and hairy. Red and hairy. And he belonged out on the wild, wild west and belonged out there hunting and fishing and all that.

His name was Esau. And in verse 26, his brother was born Jacob. And Isaac was 60 years old when she buried him. So 20 years have gone by. Verse 28, Isaac loved Esau because he ate his venison.

But Rebekah loved Jacob. Verse 31, it comes a day when Esau's been hunting. And he's tired and he comes in and Jacob's been cooking up some beans.

He got a little bean stew going there. And Esau comes up and says, I'd like to get a bowl of those beans if you don't mind. And Jacob says, well, if you want the beans, you'll have to give me your birthright.

And I'll let you have a bowl of beans. And Esau said, well, I don't really guess it makes any difference because if I die, I can't have the birthright anyway. And so in verse 33, he sold the birthright to Jacob.

[3 : 56] So verse 34, God gives his opinion about how Esau handled a great spiritual opportunity. He said, thus Esau despised his birthright.

So if you would, I want to go through this chapter with you. I want to talk to you about opportunities that God gives us. But we'll try to hit the major things. Abraham has eight sons, three wives, and then grandchildren.

At the funeral, the two older brothers get back together and at least they make a little bit of peace. Ishmael will prosper. He'll have 12 sons that become princes and are men of great influence.

The Muslims will trace their heritage back to Abraham through Ishmael. There's drought times in the story. Isaac's a man of God. Isaac's a chosen man. He has to wait 20 years before he can have the blessing that God promised him of even having a child.

And tonight, one of the things I want to talk to you about just briefly is this. How do you handle the down times? How do you handle the drought times? How do you handle the times when God doesn't seem to be working in your life?

[4 : 57] How do you handle it when it seems like God said he was going to do something and he's not doing it? When you read the Bible, you probably get the idea, boy, everything just seems to happen. They pray.

They ask. God does it. But can I just remind you, Isaac had treated the Lord for his wife to have a baby, but they got married and it is 20 years before the baby is born and he's a 60-year-old man.

So if you want to take notes, the first thing I want to talk to you about is dying after a full life. Dying after a full life. Verse 8. I mean, can I just tell you honestly, you know, I think about dying almost every day of my life.

I think about dying almost every day of my life. Probably too morbid for you. But look, if you would, at verse 8 and it says he died in a good old age. An old man full of years and he was gathered to his people.

Abraham had walked with God for a hundred years. He was the friend of God in James chapter 2 and verse 23. And getting old in the Bible is not a bad thing if you're serving God.

[5 : 57] In Proverbs 16, 31, the Bible says the hoary head is a crown of glory if it's found in the way of righteousness. Abraham died in faith. This is a man of God.

He has lived a Christian life or a godly life. He's not called Christians yet. But he's lived a godly life. He served God all the way through. And he dies full of years.

Look at verse 8. It says full of years. And that means a whole lot more than just having a whole bunch of years. If you know your Bible very much, people lived a lot longer before that. It has to do with the quality of his life.

The idea of a satisfying life. In Psalm 92, 12, the Bible says the righteous shall flourish like a palm tree. He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Those planted in the house of God shall flourish in the courts of God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age. Look at that. They shall bring forth fruit in old age.

[6 : 53] They shall be fat and flourishing to show that the Lord is upright. He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness. That is a young church. So this message won't fly anywhere tonight.

I'm probably the third, fourth, fifth, fifth, sixth, seventh. Look around. I'm the seventh oldest guy in the room. Look at here. Most old people have regrets when they look back.

They have fear when they look forward. They have complaints when they look around. But we want to have a different attitude. Did you hear what I said? Somebody else's quote. They have regrets when they look back. Fear when they look forward.

And complaints when they look around. We want a different way of thinking and acting. We want to be thankful to God for his goodness to us. And his grace. In spite of our mistakes.

We want to be rejoicing in him and all that he's done. And not in ourselves and not in our successes. Nor whining about our failures. Death is no threat to us.

[7 : 54] Death is no threat to us. We are the children of God. And as you get older. And so Hugh and Warren. I'll talk to you.

Alright. So I get the only old people in the room. Rest of you young whippersnappers. Just listen up. One of these days you'll grow up too. We ought to use our old age as a chance to share with the younger generation.

In Psalm 48 13. The Bible says. Mark ye well her bulwarks. Consider her palaces. That you may tell it to the generation following. Tell it to the generation following.

In Psalm chapter 78 and verse 6. That the generation to come might know. And can I just tell you. And all of us that are a little bit older in here. And did you know that the New Testament sure taught that the old women ought to be teaching the younger women.

If our young girls come up in a different generation. And a different attitude. And maybe they don't know how to take care of their husband. And maybe they don't know how to take care of their wife. And maybe they don't know how to cook enough food. Maybe they don't know how to take care of church potluck suppers.

[8 : 55] Do you know where the responsibility lies? Lies it lies with us old people. Say amen. Because the older people are supposed to tell the young people. The older ladies are supposed to teach the younger ladies. And we have a responsibility.

Something happens. They don't respect us enough. And we don't respect them. And we don't care about sharing it with them. And we have a bad attitude. About what's going on. By the way Abraham had a will.

Abraham had a will for you old people. He had married Keturah. Chapter 25 and verse 1. He had more children than grandchildren. But he only gives them gifts. And he sent them away while he was still living.

Because he wanted to make sure what he wanted to happen took place while he was alive. He left everything to Isaac in verse 5. He got rid of that family while he was still living. In verse 6. What sort of preparations are you making to die?

What sort of preparations are you making to die? Are you sharing your wisdom with others? Or have you decided to hold it all in yourself? You made it the hard way and you want them to have to do the same thing.

[9 : 57] Are you sharing what you know with the younger guys? What are you leaving for those that come behind? What you leave is so much more than money.

Abraham is going to leave a whole lot more than that. If we had time we could talk about it. Abraham is leaving a godly witness. Abraham is leaving a story, a testimony, a life, a lifestyle.

Abraham is leaving a whole lot more than just money and goods. Second thing. Look at verse 11 if you would. By the way, let's die right. How's that for you?

Let's die right. Let's make up our minds that when dying time comes that we'll do the right thing. And let's make up our minds that we'll use our last years not to sit in Florida or Arizona, the waiting room for heaven, and instead use our life and our time to see if we can't bless others that are coming along behind us.

The church and so much more will do so much more if they can stand on your shoulders. I say that to everybody in here my age or 10 years younger. I go all the way down to you, Jeff.

[11 : 07] I say that to all of us. There would be no Solomon's temple if there hadn't have been a David who got it all ready and prepared everything and took care of another guy coming behind him. Elisha will do twice as many miracles as Elijah.

But Elisha got called under the ministry of Elijah. Number two. For the sake of time. The blessing is now passed to Isaac. Verse 11 says, It came to pass after the death of Abraham that God blessed his son Isaac, and Isaac dwelt by the well, Lahiro.

Isaac was a promise that God had given to Abraham. He was to be the spiritual leader. He is the spiritual leader. Abraham has other children, but he's given all the promises to Isaac.

I just want you to think with me just a second about something that the Lord did impact my life with in this passage, and that is this. It's amazing in the Bible how many times God makes his people wait.

It's amazing in the Bible how many times we've watched God make them wait, and how many times we know the story about God making them wait. They had to wait to have children. Abraham and Sarah waited 25 years for Isaac to be born.

[12 : 14] Joseph worked 14 years to get his wife. Joseph waited 20 years to be back with his family. You are not in charge of your life.

You are not in charge of the times. You will wait on God, the things you want, even if he wants them for you. Isaac prayed that God would give him a wife. He asked, and God answered.

But there's still a long time between. How are we handling? How am I handling? That was the real question for me. How do I handle the times that I seem to think, God, you've got this big plan for me, and God, you're working in my life, and you're doing these things, and God, I've seen you do great things in the past, and God, you don't seem to be bringing it to pass today, but I know that sometime you're going to do something.

How do we handle it? Sometimes God simply doesn't come through. You have the promise, but it isn't happening. Do you realize that between planting and harvesting, there's a lot of time spent waiting, praying, and anticipating.

I'll get to the real message in just a second. You know, Robert has planted a garden in his backyard. How many of you knew that? Say, man. He waited three months late to plant it.

[13 : 26] His corn is just now coming up. Any farmer in Ohio would have had corn six foot tall by now. But you know what? He planted that corn, and you know he was so excited, running out there to check, and the other day he came and said, I've got corn coming up out of the ground.

It's a long time between the time you plant it and the time it breaks through the ground. Isn't it, Robert? And you know what? It's a long time between the time you plant it and the ground, and it comes all the way to maturity, and it produces fruit.

And you may be in one of those positions in your life or those times in your life. I think I'm in one of those times where God puts some things in my heart, and God has a plan for me, and God's not doing everything I thought God was going to do.

And God is going to do some stuff, and my job is to wait. 25 years, 20 years, 13 years, God has waiting times built into our lives.

How are you going to handle it? How are you going to handle it? Well, back to chapter 25 and verse 22, if you would. The Bible says in verse 22 that the twins were struggling and fighting in the womb.

[14 : 27] And God told her that they were two nations. And God, and that the elder would serve the younger, God told her. Now here's your while. When I wonder if this is what makes her make Jacob her favorite, take him into the kitchen and make him a mama's boy.

She knew the little boy was going to serve the older boy. Did she think that she was going to be blessed, be more blessed because she took care of the one that was going to be the main one? I'm not sure about that, but it sure crossed my mind.

Esau and Jacob are born. Number three, they're born, and they're different from the day they're born. Esau was a hairy outdoorsman. Jacob was a scheming mama's boy.

And the parents made a great big mistake in the way they handled their children. Jacob was an old man, and he loved that his boy was all man.

He said, this kid likes to hunt. He likes to kill it and gut it. He likes to hang it up and get all the guts out and strip it and clean it and get it ready. And Jacob would get squeamish.

[15 : 30] Rebecca loves Jacob, but it doesn't tell us why. Maybe it's because of the prophecy. Maybe it's because Jacob didn't seem to be showing the right amount of love to Jacob. It doesn't matter why, but that special treatment, that special love for one, and that division causes great difficulties for years to come.

The boys will hate each other, and they will both break their parents' hearts. Can I just stop and say you ought to know, number one, your kids aren't the same. If you have two children, they won't be the same.

You can have one that's really smart in math, and you'd say the next one ought to be smart in math, and the next one will be dumb as a rock in math. And you'll say, what's wrong with my kid? Well, they're just not the same.

At least you don't have a hairy one and a funny one. Amen. Shouldn't have said that. Esau has no interest in spiritual things.

I don't know what's going wrong with the boy, but from the time he's a kid, he has no interest. His first opportunity, when he had an opportunity to say, no, I want what God has for me, he said, it doesn't mean a bowl of beans to me.

[16 : 44] The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 16, lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright.

And I want to talk to you about spiritual opportunities. You see, Esau had before him that he was going to get the birthright. Now, God's got another plan, but by the way, God's holding him responsible for it because God names it right there in Hebrews chapter 12.

He names it again in Romans. It's a common thing. Esau, you were responsible. I tell you, you rejected what I had for you. And I just want you to realize Esau for nothing turned away something spiritual.

But maybe it's kind of like you and I and the way we handle things in our lives. We've come in from hunting. I can see the deer. I can hold the bow and arrow. I can cut the meat up.

I can eat the meat. I can feel satisfied when I've eaten. I can't see a birthright and I can't see spiritual leadership. I don't see where it's as important. Jacob is going to get God's blessing.

[17 : 54] It's already predestined. It's already planned. It's already been spoken. It's going to happen. But Jacob, like Austin, can't just accept God's got a plan and God's going to work out a plan in your life.

Instead of that, he's a conniving schemer. I don't know where he got the idea. Yeah, I wonder if maybe in the kitchen when he was a little boy and Esau was out hunting and shooting something and Jacob was in the kitchen.

I wonder if mama said, God told me he was going to be the one. God told me you'd get the birthright. The birthright's yours, buddy. I don't know if what happens seems to me like that might be what happened. So when he comes in and says, I'm hungry, Jacob says in verse 31, will sell me this day your birthright.

All Jacob needed to do was wait and see how God would provide and do what he said he was going to do. But like me, Jacob couldn't wait on God. He had to make things happen himself.

He will suffer the consequences of selfishly doing for himself what God was already going to do. He's going to suffer the consequences. He's going to have to leave his mother he loves so much.

[19 : 00] He's going to have to run for his life. He's going to have to serve another man who takes advantage of him. He's going to have to serve all those years to get his wife. I mean, the boy messed up his life over these silly things that all he had to do was wait on God.

But Esau despised what should have been his. The Bible says in verse 34, you could take it. You could say to me, well, it doesn't matter what Esau does. God already had another plan.

Well, that's just not what the Bible says. Sorry. It's not what the Bible says. The Bible says Esau, you shouldn't have despised it. Look, if you would, at verse 34, he said, Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he did eat and drink and rose up and went his way.

And that's how Esau despised his birthright. And I would question, I want to talk to you. My last point, the application, take it home with you.

How do you deal with spiritual opportunities that God gives you? Esau is so involved in this world that he places little or no importance on his birthright.

[20 : 01] He would rather live for the moment than think on future eternal spiritual things. He says in verse 32, I'm at the point of death.

What matters? What profit do I get if I get the birthright? What good will it do me? Jacob wants so badly that he will take by hook or crook what God has already promised him.

Esau is more concerned about living it up and having something to eat than the most important role that he was meant to play. In life. I don't really know what happened that day.

I hope you listen to me just a second. I don't know if he was teasing, playing, or being flippant. I don't know if he, I don't know if you'd have asked him later and said, Esau, buddy, you sold your birthright for a bowl of beans.

I don't know if maybe if we'd have gone into, I raised some kids, so I got a couple ideas. I don't know if maybe if you'd have said, Esau, you just sold your birthright. If Esau would have said, I'd really sell my birthright. He'd just be a punk.

[20 : 58] Like my little brother's a punk. He's always doing stupid stuff. I just did something stupid and I didn't mean it. But when God ended the chapter, he said, that's how he despised my birthright. I say that so you'll think about this.

Maybe he didn't mean it when he made the statement. No time to read the Bible. You can't make money reading the Bible.

You can't make money praying and you can't make money being at church. And let's just be honest. Would you rather have a bowl of beans or a Bible message? Truth is, God gets in the way a lot of times because we know all these spiritual truths.

Man, we saw great ones in Romans 8 this morning. But when it comes down to it, if I got to stack them up between the two, I'll definitely be at work. Nothing will stop me from making it to work.

I don't have headaches bad enough not to go to work. But I don't even have to have a baby headache to miss church. There's almost, almost, almost often an attitude of Esau in us.

[22 : 08] No time to read my Bible. No time to pray. No need to give offerings. Church always wants money. Good night. I mean, what about that? God wants you to give your money.

And we got this attitude. We sound like Esau. And then some of you might be doing it like this. Maybe he already figured out that it wasn't going to be his anyway. Maybe he'd already heard his mama tell Jacob that Jacob was going to get it so it didn't matter.

Whatever happened, he despised what God potentially had for him. You say, how do you know that? Verse 34 says, Jacob wants the blessing.

He wants the birthright. He might not have any idea what it really means, but he'll cheat to get it. Maybe his mother told him about it, but whatever he wants. Even if it means taking advantage of his brother, he's going to try to get it.

Now, the question is, how are you handling the opportunities that God gives you? Do you play and ignore them? Do you take advantage of them? Do you waste opportunities? How do you handle what God puts in your life?

[23 : 35] I really believe the day will come when every one of us will see the spiritual was more important than any job we've ever had. Any education our children ever got.

Any clothes they ever wore. Any food they ever ate. Any activity we ever had. The day will come when we will all know the spiritual was far more important. The day's coming.

It won't be long until Isaac is going to die and the boys will come in and Jacob will steal the blessing too. He got the birthright.

He's going for the blessing. He's a conniving, scheming scoundrel. He's going to get it. But Esau lightly takes wonderful blessings God gives him.

So I would call on you and I'd ask you when God lays before you things to do to serve him and to honor him and to put him first. What's your attitude? You shouldn't be a Jacob.

[24 : 32] We can wait on God. He can work in our lives. But we definitely can't be an Esau. And I'm afraid that there's an Esau syndrome in our ministry, in our lives, in our church.

And that is this. I think it's... I don't... I'm not talking about anybody in particular, by the way. If you think I'm talking about you, you are crazy. I'm not one soul in mind here. Except maybe me being the Jacob, a conniving schemer.

He gets upset. That's the only guy I'd be attacking right here. But I do think we flippantly take the things of God. I believe salvation is not viewed as important as it is. A bowl of beans or salvation.

I believe giving out a gospel track is seen like a light thing. I believe praying is often seen like a light thing. I believe that doing whatever we do for God is seen like it's not that important.

It's not that big a deal. I'd rather not lose a client if it costs me a bowl of beans. I would rather sell my character than stand on principle of the Word of God.

[25 : 33] So I ask you, how do you handle spiritual opportunities? And I know in my life, God's been working in my life all my life. I can see His hand all these little times in my life when He's shown me a little step I could take or a little thing I could do.

And He's given me an opportunity to take a stand, to do something. And I had a choice to be an Esau or to step out and do what He wanted. And there's another group of people in the room that real quickly I'll mention to you in real quick.

And that's me. That's who I am. This is my problem. I'm often a Jacob. Since I started Vision, I've tried my best not to be. But I've spent my life trying to make sure I get what I thought God wanted me to have.

And if it took hook or crook, if it took schemes and plans, if it took promotions, I'd do whatever it took to get what I thought God wanted me to have. And that's almost as bad as what old Esau does.

We trust God. And we count what God counts as worthy. We count it worthy. Unfortunately, don't sell spiritual opportunities for a bowl of beans.

[26 : 46] And this week, you will face a dozen opportunities for the bowl of beans. A chance when you could mention Jesus, bowl of beans.

A chance when you could give, bowl of beans. A chance when you could be at church, bowl of beans. A chance when you could do something, bowl of beans. A chance when the Lord speaks to you about something, bowl of beans.

How do you handle spiritual opportunities? Father in heaven, I love you. I thank you. I bless you. And I praise you. I pray your name would be glorified.

I pray you draw your people to you. And Lord, if in any way I got across what I think you said in this chapter, I pray you drive it home to our hearts. Forgive me for being conniving and scheming.

Forgive me for so desperately wanting sometimes what you were already going to give me that I would trick somebody with a bowl of beans. God, help me to trust you and wait on you and to believe you.

[27 : 46] God, help your people tonight to take serious spiritual things. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.