

It Happens

Hebrews 12:16-17

*See to it (v. 15) ... that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought **it** with tears (verses 16-17).*

These verses have caused great fear and doubt in many who have come to genuine repentance. To rightly understand this text you need to know about Esau and the blessing of the birthright. Esau is Hebrew, the firstborn son of Isaac. As the firstborn, he has the blessing of the birthright which is: (1) a double portion of the inheritance and (2) the family's spiritual and prophetic leader. In Gen. 25:31-34 Esau sells the birthright to his brother Jacob for the enjoyment of a single meal.

A few things can be said about Esau in light of his decision to sell the birthright: (1) **He was immoral and godless**, meaning, there was no sense of God or eternity within him. (2) **He was shortsighted**. All he could see was a *single* meal. (3) **He experienced pain**. He cried real tears. *The triumph of the wicked is short (Job 20:5). Their happiness turns to heaviness (Prov. 14:13).*

What I'd like to focus on is the last statement of our text: *He sought **it** with tears*. What is "*it*"? Most people say "repentance." He sought "repentance" with tears and could not find it. What? God's word tells us if you ask, you receive, and if you seek, you find (Matt. 7:7-8). What is "*it*"?

I. The "**it**" in this passage is *the blessing of the birthright, not repentance toward God*.

It's easy to read this text and believe that the "*it*" is repentance, and Esau never found it, but:

A. "It**" has two antecedents ... *the blessing and repentance*.** In English we are taught to look at the closest one (repentance), but in other languages (including Greek) we look at the ending of the pronoun to see if it is feminine or masculine. "*It*" is feminine. So, the noun modified must be feminine. Both *the blessing and repentance* are feminine.

B. Genesis tells us Esau wept for *the blessing* ... After his father gave Jacob the blessing and told Esau he could not receive it, "Esau lifted up his eyes and wept" (Gen. 27:38).

II. It's never too late to find *repentance*, but you can lose *blessings* in this life.

The point of this text is clear: "See to it ... that (you) are not an immoral or godless person." See to it that you don't get shortsighted and for a single moment of pleasure sell the blessing.

A. The single meal is a symbol of momentary pleasure ... you lose the blessing.

B. The blessing is a symbol of privileges and responsibilities ... you lose the blessing.

C. The tears that come will be very painful ... because you have lost the blessing.

III. The good news is there is a Firstborn who guarantees you *blessings* in the next life.

You may carry the scars of your past with you. You may have sexually transmitted diseases; you may be tagged with a descriptor of character that causes you shame; you may be one who through your choices in this life have lost a spouse, a family, a job or a career. The good news is that Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of many brethren (Romans 8:29) and He is now taking over my life and yours. He will renew. He will restore. He will redeem. Trust Him. It's never too late for one in need of grace to repent; but we may weep over lost blessings.