

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Genesis 26

There was a successful doctor who was driving his five year old son to school one morning. As they came to a red light, the doctor noticed that his son had opened up his work bag and pulled out his stethoscope and placed it around his neck and put the ear tubes into his ears.

The dad was suddenly overcome with joy, he started thinking that maybe his son was going to follow in his footsteps. He even had a tear come down one of his eye.

Suddenly the little boy picks up the chest piece and says, "Welcome to McDonald's, can I take your order"

There is a saying that goes, the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree.

Our children will tend to mimic the mannerisms of their parents.

There are mannerisms in both of my kids that they have copied either from my wife or me.

Unfortunately, children not all the mannerism that are copied are good mannerisms. Children will even copy the bad ones.

The way one treats their spouse

The way one treats other people

The way one responds to adversity

As our study in Genesis takes us from the life of Abraham to the life of Isaac, we will begin to see a few of the bad mannerisms that Isaac picked up from his father. Abraham wasn't perfect but he was a friend to God – he knew when he had erred and he knew how to respond – that is probably the greatest thing that we can learn from Abraham.

Isaac is going to be the one being tested now – and God will demonstrate to Isaac and to us as well, how He is with us every step of the way, guiding us and helping us grow in our faith and our relationship with Him.

And we will see that how fast we learn this lesson will depend on the choices that we make.

Let's pray...

1 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. 2 Then the LORD appeared to him and said: “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”

So chapter 26 begins with another famine in the land that God had promised Abraham.

Now, back in those days, famines were a big thing...

Famine meant that you didn't have enough food for yourself, food for your family and food for your herds.

We still have famines today, but because of technology we are capable of moving food and resources to the areas that are struck with famine.

I remember the area around Ethiopia being struck with a severe famine in the 80's and there were many organizations that raised money to send food and resources into that area.

However, during the time that Isaac was living, they didn't have these resources available so usually what would happen is that the people would go down to Egypt – since the Nile River was there and therefore food would be more readily available than in the middle of the desert.

This is what Abraham did back in Genesis 13 – Egypt of course, is a type of the world. And Abraham went to the world to find a solution instead of seeking out God and we saw the consequences of that choice – probably the main one being Hagar and Ismael.

So in verse one it also says that Isaac went to Abimelech.

This Abimelech is different than the Abimelech that Abraham dealt with. You see, Abimelech is an actual name but it is also a title – just like Pharaoh or Caesar.

This is most likely Abimelech's son or grandson.

So inverse two, God warns Isaac not to go into Egypt. Because God is all-knowing, it is possible that Isaac was considering going into Egypt and God saw his heart and has this conversation with Isaac.

This is the first time we see God speak to Isaac.

God wants to make sure that he doesn't go to the world to find an answer.

God doesn't want Isaac to make the same mistake that his father did.

God wants Isaac to put his trust in Him – and we see God do this by renewing the promise that He had made to Abraham over and over again.

However, notice that the Promise is now narrowed to the descendants of Isaac.

Not only does God renew His promise, He is also stressing to Isaac the importance of obedience. Look at verse five again,

5 because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”

In the midst of the famine, God was affirming and offering reassurance to Isaac that He would help him through this situation.

God says the same thing to us, especially when times are tough, when we are experiencing drought in our lives – God wants us to put our trust in Him and continue in the path that He has set for us.

He doesn't want us to abandon His will and look to the world for answers.

We need to resist the temptation to wander into Egypt in those times because if we do, we will only get burned and miss the blessings of God.

Let's continue in verse 6, let see how Isaac responds,

6 So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. 7 And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She is my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife," because he thought, "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold."

Remember, God told Isaac not to go into Egypt, so Isaac dwelt in Gerar.

Gerar is as close to Egypt as you can get while still staying in the land of the promise.

It would be like God telling me not to go to Mexico and I dwelt in Nogales, Arizona.

As believers, sometimes we also seek to get as close to the edge as possible while we remain in the Promised Land.

And I believe that this is where we run into trouble – remember Lot, he pitched his tent near Sodom and then he actually dwelt in Sodom and eventually became a leader in Sodom.

In verse seven, we have Isaac repeating the errors of his father. Remember Abraham did this twice; once in Egypt and then to Abimelech when he was older.

And the sad thing is that this happens **after God reassures Isaac to put his trust in Him.**

Like father, like son – both of them were scared that their lives were going to be in danger because of the beauty of their wives.

Turn with me to Ephesians 5, Paul gives us an example of what Abraham and Isaac should have been doing instead of resorting to lies.

[Eph 5:25-27 NKJV] 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

With Abraham, his lie was a half a lie since Sarah was indeed his half-sister. However, with Isaac, Rebekah was his cousin.

8 Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. 9 Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, ‘She is my sister’?”

Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘Lest I die on account of her.’”

10 And Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have

brought guilt on us.” 11 So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

So King Abimelech looks out his window and he sees Isaac and Rebekah smooching – and he realizes that Isaac has deceived him.

What Isaac thought could be hidden was obvious to others.

This is often the case with sin among God’s people.

Listen to the warning in the book of Numbers 32,

[Num 32:23 NKJV] 23 "But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.

I have said it before, it is a sad day when an unbeliever rebukes a believer for the actions that they took.

Here we see Abimelech rebuke Isaac for lying to them about Rebekah.

Abimelech certainly doesn’t want the same thing to happen to the woman in his household – you might remember back in chapter 20, when Abraham lied to the other Abimelech, God caused the woman in his household to be

barren – it wasn't until Abraham prayed for them later on that they were able to have children.

So here Abimelech passes a law saying that no one can touch Rebekah or they will be put to death.

Just like God protected Sarah when Abraham, God protects Rebekah here as well.

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. 13 The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; 14 for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him. 15 Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. 16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

After Isaac was rebuked, verse 12 tells us that he sowed the land – meaning that he went back to work.

And God blessed Isaac tremendously – it says that he was able to reap a hundredfold.

But keep in mind that Isaac would not have been able to reap, if he hadn't sowed.

You don't reap if you don't sow.

You see it in business – if you don't invest in your business, it's hard to see your business grow. You don't always have to invest more money, sometimes investing hard work and ingenuity are all you need. But your business doesn't generally tend to grow unless you "sow" into it.

You see it in relationships – relationships require work. Marriage and friendship all work the same. If you stop "sowing" into your relationships, they become "uncultivated ground". You need to keep investing time and energy into relationships to keep them healthy and productive.

You see it in God's kingdom – your walk with the Lord requires that you sow into it. If you want to see fruit in your life, you need to be sowing the right kinds of things into the field of your heart. God desires that more people

come to know Him, and that doesn't happen unless we sow the seed of the gospel.

God had blessed Isaac so much that the Philistines envied him and they covered all his wells and Abimelech kicks him out of there.

In the same way that the Philistines treated Isaac, there will be those people that we will come across that don't understand the grace of God.

They will be envious that God has blessed us despite our past shortcomings.

They will say something like, "How is it that God has blessed you when you used to be such a jerk toward people or I remember when you used to do ..."

But that is what God's grace is –

God is demonstrating His grace toward Isaac.

17 Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. 18 And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the

Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.

19 Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. 20 But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek,[fn] because they quarreled with him. 21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah.[fn] 22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth,[fn] because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

Here we have Isaac re-digging the wells that Abraham had built. Remember they were living in the middle of the desert, water was their livelihood and years earlier, Abraham had dug up these same wells. However, they were covered over by the Philistines.

So what does this mean to us?

Spiritually speaking, there were those before us that had dug up wells that sustained them in their Christian walk.

Wells of wisdom, wells of grace, wells of peace – these same wells are available to us as long as we go look for them and dig them up.

The question is whether a present generation will have the faith, the work, and the commitment to dig the wells again.

So Isaac digs up the first couple of wells and the men of Gerar come and they argue over the rights of the well.

However, the scriptures do not record that Isaac became contentious with the men of Gerar. He simply walked away and moved on to the next one.

Finally, Isaac digs up another well and this time, the men of Gerar leave Isaac alone.

Isaac realized that this came from the Lord based upon what he names the well. He names it Rehoboth, because the Lord had made room for them.

God wanted Isaac to be far enough from Gerar that He used the conflict between the men of Gerar and Isaac to bring Isaac back closer to Him.

That is what is happening to Isaac, he is drawing closer to God the farther he moves from Gerar.

23 Then he went up from there to Beersheba. 24 And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham’s sake.” 25 So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well.

Isaac needed to draw closer to God for him to see His presence. That is what we see in verse 24 as God now appears to Isaac.

And God once again reminds Isaac of the promise that He had made to Abraham.

And we see Isaac respond with worship. He builds an altar.

26 Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. 27 And Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?”

28 But they said, “We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, ‘Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, 29 that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.’ ”

30 So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. 31 Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32 It came to pass the same day that Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, “We have found water.” 33 So he called it Shebah.[fn] Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba[fn] to this day.

So as Isaac got right with the Lord, things started to happen.

In verse 26, we see that his enemies make peace with him – they hated him because they were envious of him.

In verse 27 and 28, Isaac's integrity and witness are renewed. No longer was he Isaac the deceiver, he was Isaac the man who God had shown favor to.

And then in verse 31, we see that Isaac has peace now.

All because he sought the Lord.

And this is a wonderful picture of what God wants from each of us. He wants to bring us to a place of worship first, then, He will take care of the rest.

The chapter ends with a reminder of what happens when you choose to live in your flesh apart from God; you end up being a source of grief to those around you; like Esau

34 When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

A few weeks ago, we studied how Abraham was meticulous in the instructions that he gave to Eliezer in finding a wife for Isaac.

He sent him far away to find a bride because he didn't want his son to marry one of the Canaanite women.

Esau rubs it in the face of Isaac and Rebekah by not only taking a Canaanite woman as his wife, he takes two of them. And later on, we will read that he takes one of the daughters of Ishmael as a wife as well.

You see, the question isn't *if* we will go through trials but *when* we will go through them. And the greater question is what will we do in the time of testing when the trials come? I hope we can learn from Isaac that the shortest route to victory in trials is from our knees to the floor; because victory comes as soon as we listen to the Lord and obey Him.

Let's pray...

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