

Scripture Reading: Genesis 26:12-33

“12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and Jehovah 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." 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, because they quarreled with him. 21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah. 22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now Jehovah has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." 23 Then he went up from there to Beersheba. 24 And Jehovah 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 Jehovah, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well. 26 Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with A-huz-zath, one of his friends, and Phi-chol 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 Jehovah 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 & have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of Jehovah.' " 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 SHE-bah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.”

“God Blesses Isaac”

We left off last week with the Philistines being troubled by the prosperity of Isaac! Now I think we all realize that you have in many corners of Christendom these days what is often called the Prosperity Gospel and quite honestly there is much in the Scripture that they can draw from...

- The weaknesses I have seen are not keeping wealth in perspective or not facing the persecutions that often follow.**

These lessons from these early Saints can teach us much about not fearing the prosperity that God might bring to us on the one hand, nor forgetting God in the very midst of His blessings on the other hand as we often see. Here in chapter twenty-six we see that God has greatly prospered Isaac:

- The plantings of Isaac yielded a hundred fold increase which is astounding for those who know the agriculture of that time and region.**

It should bring to our mind the parable of the Sower where Jesus tells us that the seeds on the good ground, the hearts prepared by God, will yield Godly fruit with a thirty, sixty or a hundred fold increase.

Yes, God desires to bless His people!

We saw this in our readings from the Psalms this week: Psalm 144: “9 I will sing a new song to You, O God; On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You, 10 The One who gives salvation to kings, Who delivers David His servant From the deadly sword. 11 Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of foreigners, Whose mouth speaks lying words, And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood—

[this should bring us special comfort this week where we saw great lies and falsehoods coming from our highest court in the land! We must remember that God is still on His Throne and that He will rescue & care for His people!]

- **And this promise of deliverance & rescue comes as God promises to richly care for His people!**

12 “That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; That our daughters may be as pillars, sculptured in palace style; 13 That our barns may be full, Supplying all kinds of produce; that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields; 14 That our oxen may be well-laden; that there be no breaking in or going out; that there be no outcry in our streets.

- **15 Happy are the people who are in such a state; Happy are the people whose God is Jehovah!”**

So yes, we should expect and should not fear to have God bring blessings into our lives, but it is much more than putting a picture of that new car you want on the refrigerator or making sure you tell God what color you want it to be...

- **Our blessings come as He sees fit AND they often come with trials and persecutions!**

Of course we would rather pass on all those, but that is often the means by which God will sanctify us for even greater glory and blessings. In the history of the Church we know that the most dramatic growth has often followed the most severe persecutions and the same can be true in our own personal lives.

- **In our text this is certainly what we are presented with...**
- **We see the better side of Isaac as he gladly receives the blessings and patiently deals with his adversaries.**

As we often find in the ongoing history of Israel there are a bunch of trouble- makers in Philistia!

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."

- **Isaac does not protest this unfair treatment from the hands of those who ruined the wells, nor the King!**
- **I see it as an example of how Jesus told His disciples to be ready to turn the other cheek.**

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, because they quarreled with him. 21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah.”

- **Isaac’s troubles continue, but he patiently endures them and gives these wells names that will remind him and his heirs of the strife & hostility that he faced.**

22 “And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now Jehovah has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." 23 Then he went up from there to Beersheba.”

We should notice of course that Isaac did not pat himself on the back for being patient nor clever enough to solve the problem they were experiencing...

- **He gives God all the glory as we should in our lives as well!**

- Then just as we saw last week at the beginning of this journey God appears to Isaac!

24 “And Jehovah 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."

- God certainly reminds Isaac about the BIG picture and then Isaac responds with right worship!

25 “So he built an altar there and called on the name of Jehovah, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.”

When we face tough circumstances in our personal lives, in our church community or even as a nation...

It is important to reflect on the BIG picture, remembering that God is in control and to bring Him right worship. As we see here in the life of Isaac, God will take care of the “problems” in sometimes very surprising ways and then add His blessing, either now or in eternity!

26 “Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with A-huz-zath, one of his friends, and Phi-chol 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?"

- Even Isaac is shocked by this turn of events...
- Why is the King who threw him out now coming to him...
- There must be some kind of treachery he must have thought!

28 “But they said, "We have certainly seen that Jehovah 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 & have sent you away in peace.' ” “You are now the blessed of Jehovah.' ”

So Isaac gets kicked out of Gerar and the Philistines keep stopping up his wells and doing everything they can to make his life miserable, and yet now this pagan king looks at his situation and says to himself, ‘we need to sue for peace, lest this man who is greatly blessed by God come to trouble us!’

God came to Isaac at the beginning and end of the journey bringing His promises to him and greatly increased his wealth during this time... A time filled with trials and tribulations!

Thus we have the classic case of the old glass being half-full or half-empty.

Even as we read through this text this morning it is easy to get caught up in all the troubles that Isaac is having and think ‘when is he going to catch a break?’ BUT it is Gods’ promises and God’s blessings that should encourage us!

Some see Psalm 37 as a commentary on the life of Isaac and an example for us in our lives and I will commend it to you as your homework...

- I will read just a few of the highlights as a tease so you can spend the time looking for all the parallels you can find on your own!

“1 A Psalm of David. Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. [*like those Philistines!*] 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. 3 Trust in Jehovah, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.”

7 Rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret--it only causes harm. 9 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on Jehovah, they shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more.” [our comfort in tough times!]

18 Jehovah knows the days of the upright, And their inheritance shall be forever. [God keeps his promises!]

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. [as Isaac was]

20 But the wicked shall perish; And the enemies of Jehovah, Like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away. [like all the nations of Canaan]

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by Jehovah, & He delights in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For Jehovah upholds him with His hand. 28 For Jehovah loves justice, And does not forsake His saints; They are preserved forever, But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous is from Jehovah; He is their strength in the time of trouble. 40 And Jehovah shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, Because they trust in Him.” [As Isaac did giving God all the glory]

- **And in the New Testament we see Peter commenting on how we are to live the new life we have in Jesus in the midst of trials and tribulations as well:**

I Peter 2: “Fear God. Honor the king. 18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. [like Isaac!] 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

- **And in the next chapter Peter reminds them that such actions are not just to those outside the Church but our brothers and sisters as well:**

I Peter 3 “8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good;

Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

So we need to consider carefully how we accept and acknowledge the blessings of God...

I think it can relate to how we handle such things with our own children...

Remembering that God is our heavenly Father and we are His children whom He desires to bless...

Examples could be something as simple as a little snack or be as involved and expensive as a family vacation...

- **Parents delight to give such blessings big and small to the children which they love...**
- **However, at the same time they understand the dangers that can result from such blessings.**

There is no problem with a treat of ice cream or an occasional Big Mac...

- **But a steady diet of junk food is very unhealthy.**

Family vacations are what make precious memories in a family and should be a priority...

- But again too many or too much can bankrupt a family!
- Wisdom shows us the balance!

On the other hand, of course our children delight to receive such blessings and will quickly ignore those same dangers!

-- What child will volunteer that they have had enough junk food?

-- What child would argue that the family really should not take that additional trip to the theme park where the tickets are now over a hundred bucks!

- We parents can teach them wisdom as we demonstrate and explain how we make good decisions in these types of areas!
- From a simple NO, in the early years, that is to be obediently received, to conversational lessons about family budgets or good diets as they grow older.

Parents who do not have such wisdom simply raise spoiled children and then it becomes a generational problem. Parents who do demonstrate such wisdom and Churches who take seriously the call to disciple the nations, which certainly included the children that God blesses His people with, will see great blessings.

They will experience the fulfilment of what we see in Psalm 78:

- Generational blessings! *[can you count them?]*

Psalm 78 "Give ear, O my people, to my law; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, 3 Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of Jehovah, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. 5 For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children; 6 That the generation to come might know them, The children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their children, 7 That they may set their hope in God, And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments; 8 And may not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not set its heart aright, And whose spirit was not faithful to God."

Communion Meditation: Genesis 26

Feasting follows commitments in the Orient and at weddings...

Abimelech told Isaac, "You are now the blessed of Jehovah.' " 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." *[living water]* 33 So he called it SHE-bah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day."