

# Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

## Genesis 26:1-33

"Learning to Trust...Again"— April 30, 2023



### **Introduction**

The world values good performance. It is where they place their hope. In a performance based value system, sometimes things go well. The opportunity to perform could mean more money, a promotion, status, awards, "likes." But when you don't perform well everything falls apart.

Have you allowed this performance based value system to creep into our heart and mind? You have been saved by grace, but then you feel as though you must "measure up." This becomes a heavy load to carry around. It can cause you to become prideful in our ability and/or discouraged when you don't think we measure up.

This chapter in Genesis focuses on Isaac. He shows up as a hero of the faith in Hebrews 11, so you may assume that if he shows up there that he had an award-winning performance in life. This chapter in Genesis does not tell that story. It shows a very weak, fragile faith.

If you are trusting God this morning but you feel like a lousy Christian, Genesis 26 has good news for you. God's blessing is based on His faithfulness not your performance.

### **Sermon Outline**

Scene One: Blessing and Fear vs. 1-11

Scene Two: Blessing and Conflict vs. 12-25

Scene Three: Blessing and Peace vs. 26-33

### **Read & Discuss**

#### **1. Read vs. 1 – 11**

The narrative here opens with a problem - a famine. If you have no food, you die. This is a threat to the promised line of Abraham. Isaac stays in the Promised Land, and God lavishes him with "I will" promises. This should give Isaac confidence. God is going to bless Isaac because Abraham obeyed God. It has nothing to do with what Isaac has done. What does God mean by "Abraham's obedience?" It comes from chapter 22 when Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac. Remember, that event came AFTER God had declared Abraham righteous. Abraham's obedience was not a means for obtaining God's blessing. It was because of God's grace.

When you get up in the morning, before you go out in public, you look in the mirror. The mirror tells you the truth about yourself. When you see the flaws, you don't get rid of the mirror. God's law is the same. ([Romans 3:20](#)) It shows us our need for Jesus. God made the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 that He alone would keep by sending Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice for sin.

God promised Isaac that He would be with him. ([vs. 3](#)) God's promises are something we can count on. Isaac feared. He lied about Rebekah to Abimelech. Does this sound familiar? (Genesis 12, 20) God didn't need Isaac's lie to protect Rebekah. When Abimelech discovered the lie, he confronted Isaac. When you face an impossible situation, are you tempted to lie? Telling the truth will glorify God. If you choose to lie, you make a mockery of God's faithfulness, and God takes this seriously. Knowing that our sin grieves a holy God, we often see God as Someone who will punish us severely or One who will give up on us. How do you view God?

**Additional Reading:** Genesis 12, 15, 20 and 22; Romans 4

#### **2. Read vs. 12 – 25**

What was God doing to Isaac here? He was blessing him. This was NOT what we expect after Isaac's failure. How do we make sense of God blessing Isaac? It is because God's blessing was based on His faithfulness not performance. We assume that God is good to us when we are good people. We know the truth, but deep down, we still think we have to perform. God **chose** you before the foundation of the world. ([Ephesians 1:6](#)) We are a trophy of God's grace. Can you see God's heart in this text? Yes, God does discipline, but He disciplines the one He loves. His heart is to do you good not harm. He is good. What He does is flowing from His

character. When God makes a promise, He always keeps it. Do you see how God has worked for your good in difficult circumstances in your life?

Even though Isaac was blessed financially, he still had problems. Water is important in a famine. Without water in the wilderness, you will die. Isaac dug a well because the Philistines, who envied the well that Abraham dug, had filled it up with dirt. They saw Abraham and his offspring as a threat. Isaac dug a well and the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with him. Digging another well might have been frustrating especially since they were not honoring the treaty that was made in Genesis 20. This happens twice. Isaac dug a third well that he could keep. Can you identify with Isaac? Is whatever you do met with frustration? No matter how hard you work there is nothing but conflict and quarrels. Nothing seems to be working. How do we keep going? How did Isaac keep going? He was learning to trust.

Four observations from this scripture that we can apply:

- Trust God for your daily bread. Vs. 22 ([Matthew 6:34](#))
- Trust God's providence. God was using each frustration to move Isaac to Beersheba - a place of blessing.
- Remember God's promises. Isaac names these wells in faith because He knew that God gave them to him. (In 1 Corinthians, there was division in the church over envy. Paul dealt with this in 1 Corinthians 3. You don't have to envy others; all things - the world, the future - are yours.)
- Watch your heart. ([Proverbs 4:23](#)) We watch over our hearts by daily reading God's word and praying, weekly gathering together for worship and getting together with other believers. Worship fuels our perseverance. (vs. 25)

**Additional Reading:** Genesis 20; 1 Corinthians 1 and 3

### 3. Read vs. 26 – 33

Isaac had already faced hostility from Abimelech, and he expects more when they came to talk with him. Yet they saw God's blessing to Isaac, so they came to make a covenant. To oppose Isaac was to oppose God. They came to make peace with Isaac. ([Proverbs 16:7](#))

We were enemies of God. ([Romans 5:10](#)) We wanted the blessing and gifts of God but not the Giver of those gifts. When we oppose God or the people of God, it is a fool's errand. Jesus said that He would build his church, and the gates of Hell would not prevail against it. ([Matthew 16:18](#))

Our desire to perform well gives us a sense of control. If we choose that path, perfection is the standard. However, we are not perfect. Left to ourselves we deserve God's curse. ([Galatians 3:10](#)) God has a different way. ([Galatians 3:13-14](#)) We get the blessing of Abraham by faith. The problem is that grace offends our pride. We can't get the blessing of God by our performance. We are not in control. God is free to do what He wants. His blessing is based on His faithfulness. God's blessing doesn't mean prosperity in the way we think of it. It does mean forgiveness, life, and reconciliation to Him.

God is patient. He teaches each generation to trust. He teaches each generation that He is faithful. Through it all, Isaac comes to terms with the greatest blessing - the presence of God. ([vs. 3, 24, 28](#)) Can you recall the times of God's faithfulness to you? Who needs to hear your testimony?

Come what may yesterday, today, or tomorrow, God is with you. You have received the promise of Abraham. Great is God's faithfulness!

### Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I understand, believe, desire, or do?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at [fbcum.org](http://fbcum.org)

**Next week's sermon text:** we turn to [Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#) "The Suffering Servant"