

Faith, Promise, Mission

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 May 2026

Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm one of the pastors here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

Today we are continuing this morning our series in the book of Genesis which we were in, you'll remember, last summer. Last summer, summer 2025, we were in the story of Abraham. Of course, Genesis tells the larger story, the origin story of God's people, Israel.

And so last summer we were in chapters 11 through 25 which talk about Abraham. This summer we're in the story of Isaac and Jacob, mostly Jacob, chapters 25 through 36.

And to a certain extent, it's kind of the same theme of last summer. Remember our question was, what does it look like to follow God in faith?

And that will continue in the Isaac-Jacob story. We're also going to see some new layers though, some new themes that get special emphasis. One of them was introduced last week. Andy talked about this, this emphasis on God's faithfulness.

[1 : 1 0] So we have God's faithfulness to his covenant in the midst of human failure. Remember Andy pointed out last week that there's no good guys in the story. Everyone's flawed and imperfect. God's faithfulness also, and this is kind of the emphasis this week, God's faithfulness generation by generation.

So we finished chapter 25 last week, the birth of the twins, Jacob and Esau, to Isaac and Rebekah. This week we're starting chapter 26, which is actually moving back in time.

So chapter 26 is going to tell us about some things that happened before the birth of the twins, and it is about Isaac taking on the mantle of Abraham.

And so you're going to hear some things, if you were with us last year, that sound familiar, because there's going to be some repetition from chapter 12. When God comes to Abraham, he's now going to say the same things to Isaac.

And so this passage, this chapter, is ultimately about God's faithfulness to his covenant. So with that, I invite you to turn with me to Genesis chapter 26.

[2 : 2 0] You'll find it on page 7 of your worship guide. And as we turn to it, remember, Proverbs chapter 30 tells us every word of God proves true. He's a shield to those who take refuge in him.

And so that's why we read now Genesis 26, starting at verse 1. Now there was a famine in the land besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham.

And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech, king of the Philistines. And the Lord appeared to him and said, Do not go down to Egypt. Dwell in the land of which I shall tell you.

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands. And I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham, your father.

And I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

[3 : 3 0] Because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven, we do this morning praise you and thank you once again that you have brought us together on a Sunday morning to sing praises to you, to hear from you in your word.

Lord, we ask that you would pour out your Holy Spirit in a powerful and special way among us here and now. That you'd be at work by your word.

That you would open up our eyes, you'd unstop our ears. That you would soften our hearts, you'd clear our minds. That we would be able to see and hear and believe and understand everything that you've written for us in your word.

Most of all, we ask that you would set our eyes on Jesus, that we would see him clearly, that he would be more beautiful to us than ever before. And we ask all of these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

[4 : 35] Amen. There is an important concept in police work or criminal investigations that I imagine some of you are already familiar with, and it is the idea of a chain of custody.

And the chain of custody is a list of who had an item in their possession and when they had that item. So imagine there's a crime scene, you come to the scene, you're the police after the fact, and there's a knife there at the scene, and so you pick it up.

At that point, you have to keep track of who has the knife and when they had it from the moment it is taken. And if there's a gap in the chain of custody, well, it's going to be very hard for you to use that knife as evidence.

So you take me to court, and you could say, Matthew, your fingerprints are on the knife. We think you're the murderer. And I would say, okay, show me your chain of custody.

Because if there's a gap, we know that's when you planted my fingerprint on the knife. You have to prove that you knew where it was at all times.

[5 : 49] Now you might be wondering, what in the world does chain of custody have to do with the book of Genesis chapter 26? I'm glad you're wondering that because I'm going to tell you.

September 2025, we ended the Abraham story, and then we return to our series in the book of Genesis.

And in the first half of Genesis chapter 25, which we looked at September of last year, Abraham dies. And Abraham's death raises this question, who will inherit the promises that God made? God made promises to Abraham over and over again. He gave him these blessings, these commands, these promises in Genesis chapter 12 and 13 and 15 and 17. They were promises about land and offspring and blessing to the nations.

God said that he was going to make Abraham's name great. He said that Abraham was going to inherit and possess the land of Canaan, and that not just a king, but kings would come from Abraham's line.

So the big picture, the main point of this passage, these first five verses, is this, is this, to confirm that God's promises to Abraham do indeed pass to Isaac.

[7 : 13] The point is to confirm, to validate that in fact Isaac is the right heir, the one to receive everything given to his father.

In fact, it's explicit in verse three. I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham, your father.

So chapter 26 is giving us the chain of custody of God's promises. By the way, this is going to continue throughout the book. So we see it go from Abraham to Isaac.

Isaac then is going to bless Jacob, chapter 27. If you're familiar with the story, you know it's a stolen blessing. And then what happens? Jacob, near the end of Genesis, is then going to pass the blessing on to the 12 tribes of Israel.

So this is the first transfer, but not the last, in the book. We've gotten ahead of ourselves a little bit though. There's three things we're going to look at this morning as we see God's faithfulness to his covenant.

[8 : 17] And the three things are faith, and promise, and mission. You don't need to write those down. They're on page seven of your worship guide because they're conveniently the title of the sermon.

So let's look first at faith. Verse one tells us, now there was a famine in the land besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech, king of the Philistines.

So the former famine is referring to Genesis chapter 12. You may remember this. Abraham experienced a famine, and so then Abraham goes down to Egypt. The larger point though here, the reason he's telling us, hey, there was a famine before, is not really about the famines.

It's part of this larger comparison that he's making to say, look, I want you to see all the ways in which Abraham is connected to Isaac. Remember, that's the focus of this passage.

So link Abraham to Isaac. Abraham had a famine. Isaac has a famine. And therefore, get again and again at this continuity of God's faithfulness to his people.

[9 : 22] Abraham faced a famine. Isaac faces a famine. Now, what do you want to do if you're in a famine? If you're in a famine, the logical thing would be for you to go down to Egypt.

Why? Well, the reason there's a famine, most likely, is that there's not enough water. And who has water? Egypt has water. There is this thing called the Nile River.

What did Abraham do when he faced a famine? Abraham, chapter 12, goes down to Egypt. So Isaac here is doing the logical, rational, smart, wise, prudent thing.

He is most likely starting his trip down to Egypt. So he goes to Gerar, which is closer to the coast than Bir-le-Hi-Roi, which is where he is.

And what happens next, then, should come to us as a surprise. Verse 1, Abraham's doing the smart thing. Verse 2, the Lord appeared to him and said, do not go down to Egypt.

[10:29] That's a big ask. A command is counterintuitive, but it goes against all human wisdom. And it's not just that he's not going to go down to where the Nile is, to where all the water is.

It's going to be even worse than that. Verse 3, he tells him, sojourn in this land. If you're familiar with Old Testament words, you know that a sojourner is a foreigner, an immigrant.

So a sojourner is always at a disadvantage. They are in a place of political and social vulnerability.

So don't go to Egypt. Actually stay in this other place where you're standing.

That's a little shaky. And so, what happens here with Isaac is similar, once again, to what happened with Abraham in chapter 12.

Chapter 12, Abraham had to exercise faith when God said, go. Chapter 26, Isaac must exercise faith when God says stay.

[11:42] Abraham has to have faith to go. Isaac has to have faith to stay. Now, as I mentioned, staying away from Egypt is a big ask.

And because it's a big ask, it also requires a big promise. promise. Remember I told you, we're talking about faith, promise, and mission.

We talked about the faith, that's what it requires for Abraham to stay. Now that moves us, it helps us understand why God then immediately goes on to explain his promise.

That's in verses three and four. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands. And I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham, your father.

I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and I will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

[12:51] Yes, Abraham, what I am telling you to do makes no sense from a human perspective. but and verse three you will have my presence and my blessing.

But and verse three everything I promised to Abraham is now given to you. Yes, verse three you will receive the land to you and your offspring I will give all these lands.

Verse four he repeats it again not just the land but the lands plural. verse four your people will be as many as the stars of the heavens.

Yeah, it doesn't make sense for you to stay in Gerar but you know what? I'll be with you I'll bless you. The promise is even greater than the command.

The promise to Abraham is now the promise to Isaac. In case we missed it in these five verses Abraham's name appears three times verse one verse three verse five.

[14:07] He's going to give Abraham and now he's going to give Isaac land and people and blessing. Yeah, it doesn't make sense from a human perspective to stay in Gerar and it also doesn't matter and it doesn't matter because God has promised his presence and his blessing to Isaac.

Point is this and we talked about this before obedience to God's commands are always enabled by belief in his promises.

Obedience to God's commands always find their power their motivation in the promises he's made to his people. Faith and promise always go together.

It is not a coincidence that God says stay and then immediately reminds Isaac why. God's commands for us also go against human wisdom.

They're also counterintuitive. They are also things that don't make sense. Wait, so you're telling me God that abundance in this life actually comes from giving things away.

[15:41] doesn't make any sense. God says be generous that's the command and then he says I will provide for you.

That's the promise. Wait, you're telling me that satisfaction in this life over against what the world tells me actually comes from containing and restraining sex so that it's only within marriage.

that doesn't make sense. God says be pure in heart. That's the command. And then he says I will give you real and true joy.

Joy that the world cannot offer to you. That's the promise. Wait, so you're telling me God that true and real and lasting and full and final justice come from trusting you and not from taking revenge. Doesn't make sense. God says trust me. That's the command. I will punish the wicked.

[16:53] That's the promise. Trust me. Believe me. I'm actually the one who has the good stuff, the best stuff, the real stuff.

Faith and promise go together. And so the command in verse two, do not go down to Egypt is in some sense actually a question.

Do you trust me more than you trust what you can see with your eyes? Do you believe that I am going to provide for you? Do you believe my promises are real and true?

are you going to put me first? Are you going to put me first not just in the words that you say and the songs that you sing in Sunday morning? Are you going to put me first when the rubber meets the road?

Do you really believe? Jesus says something similar to us in Matthew chapter six, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

[18:07] Seek first the kingdom of God, command. All these things will be added to you, promise. Faith and promise always go together.

Okay, I promised you faith and promise and mission. We've seen faith. Abraham had to exercise to stay. We've seen God's promise of his presence and his blessing to enable that.

That takes us to the idea of mission. Remember, we talked about this back in chapter 12. God's blessing is not just for Abraham, not just for Isaac, not just for their line.

No, the blessing to Abraham and Isaac is, verse four, for a blessing to the nations. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands.

That's great. And in your offspring, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. So yes, it is a blessing to you.

[19:20] It's not less than that. But it is more than that. it is also a blessing through you. How will all the nations be blessed?

Well, we talked about it in chapter 12. Jim read it for us this morning. Galatians chapter 3, verse 10. That was on page 3 of your worship guide, by the way.

So that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith.

How will all the nations be blessed? All the nations will be blessed because the multiplication of the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph will ultimately lead to the birth of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus Christ will come as a man, a real human, 100% God, and 100% human, and live on this earth, the perfect life that we should have lived.

[20:25] And then he will die the death that we should have died, taking the punishment we deserve, and then God the Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit, will raise him from the dead, showing once and for all that it actually worked.

That is the blessing of the nations that comes through Abraham. Abraham. That is what allows us to have God's presence and his blessing.

The New Testament makes it clear. Matthew chapter one starts out with a genealogy. Genealogy of Jesus Christ and the first two names, Abraham, Isaac.

The point is this. The blessing that comes to the nations is the blessing that is through Abraham and Isaac because and only because they lead to Jesus Christ.

Faith, promise, mission. Now, why do you care about the chain of custody? Why does it matter to you in 2026 in Colorado Springs that the blessing was passed clearly from Abraham to Isaac, that the blessing will be clearly passed from Isaac to Jacob and from Jacob to Joseph?

[21:55] The reason that you care is because you care about God's faithfulness to his promises. You care that God really means what he says when he says he's going to be faithful from generation to generation.

That his steadfast love really will continue forever. His commitment, his promises, he will not go back on. No, he's going to keep it.

It's another generation following after the Lord. It's another man trusting God's promises. God's faithfulness is another faithfulness generation to generation through specific families over the

course of history that leads to Jesus Christ.

And now his faithfulness that includes you. Christian, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, if you're going after him in faith, the encouragement for you is this.

God kept his promise to Abraham and Isaac. God will keep his promise to you. He keeps it not because they were perfect or exemplary, not because they get it right.

[23 : 26] as we saw last week. In fact, they very much don't. No, it's because of his commitment to his promise, his covenant, his mission. That same commitment, that same promise, that same presence, that same blessing comes to you if you are in him.

If you're in Christ, following after him in faith. Faith, promise, mission. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we do thank you and praise you for your steadfast love that continues generation to generation, relying not on us and our faithfulness, but on you and your commitment to your promise, that you will do what you said you would do.

We ask that you would grow our hope and trust and faith in that, and that it would overflow into love and obedience to you. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.