

# Blessing from God, Blessing Before the Philistines

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[ 0 : 00 ] 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 this morning. We're continuing our series in the book of Genesis.

You'll remember that the book of Genesis is the origin story of God's people, Israel. And this summer we're looking at the story of Isaac and Jacob. It's actually going to mostly be Jacob from chapters 25 through 36.

And to a certain extent, as I've said, we're asking the same question of the Abraham story that we asked last summer, which is what does it look like to follow God in faith? And yet as this story develops, progresses, unfolds, some new themes get particular emphasis.

So two weeks ago we were in verses 1 through 5 and Isaac is taking on the mantle of Abraham. We see God's faithfulness to his covenant generation to generation.

That's two weeks ago. Last week, verses 6 through 11, Isaac then, it's not taking on the mantle of Abraham, he actually repeats the sins of Abraham. And so we saw God's work in and through dysfunctional families.

[ 1 : 11 ] By the way, we'll see that again. That's a theme throughout the book of Genesis. This week we're in verses 12 through 33 where Isaac experiences the blessing of Abraham.

The blessing that God reiterated two weeks ago. God's faithfulness to his promises. God's favor on his people.

And so it's at that I invite you to turn with me now to Genesis chapter 26. We'll be starting at verse 12. And as we turn to this, remember that this is God's word.

Jeremiah chapter 23 tells us that God's word is a hammer that breaks a rock into pieces. Which is a way of saying that there is nothing so powerful that God's word is not more powerful still.

And so that's why we read now Genesis chapter 26 starting at verse 12. And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold.

[ 2 : 13 ] The Lord blessed him and the man became rich and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants so that the Philistines envied him.

Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father. And Abimelech said to Isaac, Go away from us for you are much mightier than we.

Verse 17. So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the valley of Gerar and settled there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham.

And he gave them the names that his father had given them. But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, The water is ours.

So he called the name of the well Essek, because they contended with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also. So he called its name Sidna.

[ 3 : 26 ] And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, saying, For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

Verse 23. From there he went up to Beersheba. And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, I am the God of Abraham, your father.

Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake. So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent there.

And there Isaac's servants dug a well. Verse 26. When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzath his advisor and Phicol the commander of his army, Isaac said to them, Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you? They said, We see plainly that the Lord has been with you. So we said, Let there be a sworn pact between us, between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you, and have done to you nothing but good, and have sent you away in peace.

[ 4 : 43 ] You are now the blessed of the Lord. Verse 30. So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths.

And Isaac sent them on their way, and they departed from him in peace. That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug and said to him, We have found water. He called it Sheba. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you again this morning that you've called us together as your people. That we're here to worship you in spirit and in truth.

And we thank you that you're a promise-keeping God. That you make promises and you honor them. We ask that you would honor your promise in Isaiah 55. That your word does not return to you void, but it accomplishes your purposes.

[ 5 : 45 ] So we ask that you would use your word this morning to accomplish great things in our lives. That you would help us to see Jesus. You'd grow our love for him, our faith in him, our obedience to him.

We ask these things in his mighty name. Amen. Last year during my sabbatical I went back to the east coast for a little bit.

And I went camping for a few nights in North Carolina with one of my best friends. And I have been in Colorado long enough now.

Actually nine years today. I'm still an east coast boy, but I've been in here long enough that when I go back to the east coast I have a little bit of culture shock. Especially when I go camping.

Because most of the time, if you're on the east coast and you're out camping, you can just make a fire. Anywhere, everywhere, no one cares. Okay, most of the time.

[ 6 : 41 ] We don't have fire bans all the time. You're not constantly seeing these ratings. Like, what's the wildfire chance at this point? Of course we know, and so we do this. We make fires when you're camping without a second thought.

And as a nine-year Coloradan, I think, ooh, this feels really dangerous. You can just start fires.

Wow, okay. Fires are a different ballgame in this state.

And that's for a number of reasons. One of the reasons is water. We're a semi-arid climate. There's not as much water out here. You may not know this. There's actually something called the Colorado Water Courts.

And they are courts that do only water and water rights. We are the only state in the United States that has courts just focused on water. Which highlights for you how important it is, right?

We could go on. Artificial intelligence is controversial. And it's controversial because of data centers. And data centers are controversial because they require water. Certain parts of the world, water is a huge deal.

[ 7 : 41 ] Including the ancient Near East. So remember where we are in the larger story of Abraham. We're in chapter 26 right now. We've moved on to Isaac. And the story started this chapter, verse 1.

We find out there's a famine. And why would there be a famine? Most likely because there is not enough water. And where do you go when there's a drought? Of course you go to Egypt.

Egypt has the Nile River. They have plenty of water. Surprise! Verse 2. God comes to Isaac and says, Don't go to Egypt. Do what's counterintuitive.

Stay where you are. Go against all human wisdom. And so we talked about this two weeks ago.

There's this tremendous act of faith from Abraham to stay away from Egypt.

He has to trust God's promises. And so God repeats that promise. Verse 3. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and I will bless you.

[ 8 : 36 ] And then in verses 3 through 5, he repeats the blessing, the promises made to Abraham of land and offspring and blessing to the nations. Okay, this is all review from two weeks ago just so

we understand where we're headed.

And I told you the point was this, that obedience to God's commands is enabled by belief in his promises. That faith and promise always go together.

And then I reminded you Jesus has also made us a promise. Matthew chapter 6. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

Okay. Okay. But will all these things actually be added to you? It is nice to read Jesus' words from Matthew chapter 6 out loud.

But what happens in the long term? It's great to hear God reiterate his promise to Abraham at the very beginning of chapter 26. What's going to happen in the long run?

[ 9 : 43 ] And this passage is basically the answer to that question. Abraham makes a leap of faith, the beginning of chapter 26, and now we get to see at the end what happens.

And it's going to remind us of exactly what we saw last summer with Abraham. In the long run, in the final analysis, God keeps his word.

He does exactly what he says he will do. So we're going to look at two things. We're going to look, and this is on page 8 of your worship guides. You don't even have to write it down.

We're going to look at blessing from God and blessing before the Philistines. Blessing from God. Blessing before the Philistines. And so first, blessings from God.

This is verses 12 through 13. The first thing we find out in verse 12 is that there is an agricultural blessing. Isaac sowed and reaped in the same year a hundredfold.

[ 10 : 42 ] Wait, wasn't there a famine? Wasn't there not enough water? What happens in a famine? Famine is when you don't have enough food. And yet here Abraham is, reaped in the same year a hundredfold.

So Abraham, he's not just provided for. He actually has more than he needs. And it's not just an agricultural blessing. We go on to find out verse 13. It is a general blessing. And the man became rich and gained more and more until he became very wealthy.

What did God say back in verse 3? Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and I will bless you. And what do you know?

God has been with him. God has blessed him. God's kept his promise. Verse 13 tells us how abundant this is. It's not just that he became rich also.

So we don't miss the point. It is more and more. Not just wealthy. Very wealthy. What did we read this morning from the New Testament?

[ 11 : 52 ] Ephesians chapter 3. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think. According to the power that is at work within us.

God kept his promise. He kept it more than Isaac could have imagined. That's blessing from God. All this blessing though actually creates some problems. Which goes along with that old phrase, right? Be careful what you wish for. There is strife and conflict with the Philistines immediately. Verse 14. These flocks and herds and servants are more than the Philistines can manage. And so we find out, this is the end of verse 14. The Philistines envied him.

They see God blessing Isaac. They see more and more his wealth increasing. And their eyes turn green. So verse 16. They kick him out. They say, Isaac, this town ain't big enough for the two of us.

[ 13 : 03 ] And it's not just their envy. Also verse 16. We find out they see him as a threat. You are much mightier. So we're jealous of you. God has given you things we wish he'd given us.

We feel threatened by you. You're so powerful. And by the way, this is under the surface. It doesn't say this explicitly. But what do you need to have crops that are a hundredfold? You need a lot of water.

And so Isaac is putting demand on the infrastructure. It is time for Isaac to get out of town. And of course, this is not an easy thing for him. He's come to Gerar because of the famine.

So getting kicked out means, hey, I've got to start this search, this need for water all over again. And to make matters worse, notice what happened in verse 15.

They had already filled Abraham's wells with dirt. So we're kicking you out. You're too much of a stretch on our infrastructure.

[ 14 : 03 ] We're envious of you. We feel threatened by you. And by the way, all your father's wells, yeah, we filled those up. So good luck out there. Now, some commentators say the Philistines filled up all the wells because they just wanted to get at Isaac.

They were spiteful because it takes work, right? You actually have to go out there and put dirt in the wells. Some people say they weren't spiteful at Isaac. Actually, they just wanted to discourage anyone from being close to them.

So they want to make it hard to get water. Whatever the reason, if you think all the way back to the Abraham story, Genesis chapter 21, Abraham had made a covenant with Abimelech.

Look, these wells were supposed to be protected. They're supposed to be Abraham and his offspring's wells from generation to generation. And whatever the reason, Abraham's got to figure out, okay, my wells are filled up.

How am I going to get any water? And so the same question with this crisis comes to the surface. God's told him to go to Gerar, told him to stay there, not to go to Egypt.

[15:06] What will God provide? Is he going to give Isaac what he needs to survive in the desert? That takes us to verses 17 through 22, where there's this conflict over wells.

So Isaac goes, he digs up his dad's wells, and we're told he gives them the exact same names that Abraham gave the wells, which reminds us once again that Isaac has taken on the mantle of Abraham.

It's also kind of a little dig at the men of Gerar saying, hey, I'm making these what my father named them, because you remember they're actually his wells. And we actually made a treaty back in Genesis 21.

You weren't really supposed to mess with them. Then in verses 19 through 21, he digs three new wells. And the first two wells, the herdsmen of Gerar want to fight over it.

Isaac, we're going to see this next week, a little bit passive. He decides he's not going to make a battle over it, so they fight over one well. He says, okay, fine, you can have it. We're going to move to the second well. They want to fight over that.

[16:09] Okay, fine, you can have it. Third well, no fight. And Isaac looks at that, and he says, oh, okay. God's provided. God's honored his promise.

I've been kicked out. I've had fights over wells. Verse 22, for now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

So the way Isaac interprets it is this. Hey, this last well, the fact that there's no conflict over it, just tells us, hey, God continues to provide. He's given room for us.

It relates to his promise of land. Remember, he told Isaac back in verse 3, and now he's about to tell him again, the land for you and your offspring. Takes us to verse 23.

Abraham, or Isaac, excuse me, goes from Rehoboth to Beersheba, and there is what we call a theophany, which is appearance of God. So God shows up again, just like he did at the beginning of the chapter, and repeats the promises made in verse 3.

[17:19] This is verses 23 through 24. The Lord appeared to him the same night and said, I am the God of Abraham, your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake.

In other words, God shows up and says, Isaac, do you believe me now? Do you trust me now? I told you in verse 3, I was going to be with you and I was going to bless you.

You see how I've done that? And now I'm coming to remind you again, I'm going to be with you and I'm going to bless you. So Abraham, Isaac, I'm sorry guys, I keep saying Abraham, I'm so used to that from the previous time.

Isaac, verse 25, doubles down, he's committed to the place, right? He builds an altar. God also comes to us over and over to remind us of his promises.

Now he doesn't do it in the way that he did it for Isaac. You're not going to have a theophany, I don't think. You're not going to have a special appearance of God before you. You're actually not one of the patriarchs.

[18:38] But God does continue to remind us of his promises to us. And he does it in at least two ways. He does it in his word and he does it in our worship together.

Some people talk about Sunday morning worship as our meeting place with God. And that's not to say you don't meet with God, in other ways. But there's a special sense in which we come together on Sunday morning to meet with God and be reminded every week of the promises he's made to us.

There's a sense when we open God's word day by day, we are doing it to be reminded of what he said he would do. And there's another piece to this as well.

It's not just that that you are reminded in worship and in God's word. We also remind one another. Part of your job as a Christian in a church is to remind your brothers and sisters of what God has said he will do.

That we need to be reminded of God's promises again and again over and over. God said he would provide verse 3. He goes on to provide more than Isaac could have expected and God shows up again and says, look, I did what I said I was going to do.

[ 20 : 01 ] Here's my promise again. The author of Hebrews in chapter 3 tells us that this is what we're supposed to be doing. Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God.

But exhort one another every day as long as it is called today that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

For we have come to share in Christ if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. Cheyenne Mountain, Presbyterian Church.

Remind one another of God's promises as long as it is called today. Even though they've kicked him out the blessing on Isaac is so intense even as he's wandering around uncovering his father's wells that the Philistines have no choice but to come and sue for peace.

This is verses 26 through 31. They kicked him out of the city. They filled his wells and yet somehow mysteriously Isaac keeps getting stronger and stronger.

[ 21 : 38 ] Remember we talked about this a couple weeks ago this idea of being anti-fragile. whatever they throw at Isaac somehow he just keeps on winning. Just ends up on top. We're going to see the same thing by the way with Jacob and Laban.

They come to make a treaty with him. This is verse 26 and he says why have you come to see me seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you? And he doesn't mention and you took my father's wells and you tried to destroy them.

And they tell him point blank verse 28 we see plainly that the Lord has been with you. We did everything we could to cut your legs out from under you.

And from some reason you just keep going from strength to strength. Verse 29 you are now blessed of the Lord. The point is this it is a fool's errand to oppose God's people.

It's a fool's errand because it's not a fair fight. What they have is greater than the sum of its parts.

Church what we have is greater than the sum of its parts because God is fighting for us.

[ 23 : 00 ] it's a fool's errand to oppose God's people. Christian God is fighting for you and he protects his people when they obey him in ways that are risky and counterintuitive.

Isaac has done what God told him to do. He stayed in Gerar. He did not go to Egypt. He violated every rule of human wisdom and God has blessed him.

Remember what it said there. This is verse 13. God has blessed him more and more until he became very wealthy. God protects his people.

God provides for his people when they take the risk of obedience. I don't know every risk that you've taken in faith to follow after God.

I don't know every risk you've taken trusting that God will provide for you. I don't know every way that you have suffered choosing obedience.

[ 24 : 35 ] Maybe it's a relational risk. Maybe you have lost friends. Maybe you're scared of losing friends for doing and saying the right thing. maybe it's led you into conflict.

Jesus has made us promises as well. This is Matthew chapter 5. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

It's a fool's errand to oppose God's people. Notice how it all comes together in this passage.

Verses 6 and 7, if you think back, Isaac was very afraid of the Philistines. He was so afraid that he lied about his wife, Rebecca.

Okay, that's the beginning of the chapter. What happens at the end? He's not afraid of them.

Philistines are afraid of him. The roles have been reversed.

[ 25 : 52 ] Verse 1, how did we start out? We started out with a famine. How does it end? Verse 12, Isaac has crops a hundred fold.

And then the cherry on top, the very end. Verse 32, that same day, Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug and said to him, we have found water.

Now there's a great well, just one more blessing from the Lord. So God's telling him, hey, I'm not just going to provide for you.

I'm going to super provide for you. I didn't just give you that one well that no one would fight over.

No, I'm going to give you this well too.

You're afraid that staying away from Egypt was the wrong move. Wait and watch what I do. I don't know every risk that you've taken to follow God in faith and obedience.

[ 27 : 06 ] Maybe it's a material risk. Maybe it's been making less and giving more. Gerar was in fact less than Egypt. Maybe it's a circumstantial risk.

Maybe it's living somewhere you don't want to live. Abraham, we're told, very beginning is a sojourner in Gerar.

He's vulnerable. He's vulnerable socially, he's vulnerable politically. God made Abraham a promise. Made him a promise of his presence.

He made him a promise of his blessing. He honored it. God's made us promises as well. Jesus has promised us Matthew chapter 19.

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

[ 28 : 12 ] Does that word a hundredfold sound familiar? Verse 12, Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold.

world. I heard an illustration many years ago that I've never forgotten. It says that evil is like a vicious dog snarling and barking.

But that dog is on a chain. It's on a chain limited, restrained, because God is at work.

And if you don't know where to turn or what to say or what to do, if you feel lost, wherever you are trying to follow God in faith, unsure of where your journey ends and how it goes, if you don't know where to turn, I want you to do this.

Take Psalm 27, verses 13 and 14, and make those verses your verses. This is really what Genesis chapter 26 is telling us.

[ 29 : 24 ] I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. I believe God's going to keep his promises. Wait for the Lord, be strong and let your heart take courage.

Wait for the Lord. In the end, God always provides. Follow him, he will take care of the rest.

For I know that he is working for his glory and my good. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that you're a promise-keeping God.

That no matter where we're at in the story, we know how it ends. It ends with you protecting and providing for us as we follow you in faith. faith. We ask that you would remind us of that this morning and it would sustain us as we continue to follow after you.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. I invite you to stand for our hymn. Amen. Amen. Amen.