

Lies and Blessing

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[0 : 00] Now as we continue our progress through this section of Genesis in chapter 26, we read about Isaac now, remember he is settled with Rebekah's wife.

After 20 years of marriage, they have finally produced twins and they've got children now. And we said now in chapter 25, this was a unique chapter in the Bible, insofar as it's the only chapter in which you've got Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all together.

They're alive in the same chapter because Abraham would have been, rather Jacob would have been 15 years old when Abraham died.

So here we now have after the death of Abraham and we've had the incident with Jacob and Esau and Esau selling his birthright and regarding with indifference all the generations of the covenant line which have gone before.

And that's something of what we had in the foregoing chapter of Abraham and so on. Isaac, which should have been inherited by Esau, but he's not bothered about it. He just wants what is there in the world in front of him, his immediate needs.

[1 : 09] So we have the family here. There was a famine in the land beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, unto Gerar.

Now it's not clear whether this is a famine across the land in general. If it was, there wouldn't have been much benefit in going to the land of the Philistines, to Gerar, unless there was more food there than there was where Isaac was at the well Lahairoi.

Now we're told in chapter 25, verse 11, Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi. Now that means, okay, it's a spring of water, yes, but it's been pretty much a desert area.

And if you've got a lack of rainfall or less water being produced by the well, then it means that there is a shortage of water. Now a shortage of water leads to famine because there's no pasture for the flocks, there's no crops that will grow, so you have to go somewhere where there is food.

And we read verse 2, Now we might be inclined, naturally enough, to read verse 1 and then verse 2, as though Isaac were beginning his journey, as though he intended to go down into Egypt initially, and he only got as far as Gerar amongst the Philistines.

[2 : 29] And that's when the Lord said, don't go any further, don't go down into Egypt, just dwell in this land and stay here. But I think we would really need to take it in the context that verse 2 is meant to be taken as almost retrospective, as though we're saying, the Lord had appeared unto him and said, go not down into Egypt, which is why he's gone to Gerar.

Because if you think about where the well of Lachairoi would be, it is in the deep, deep south into the desert land of the Holy Land. We read in previous chapters when Hagar was there beside the well of Lachairoi, it's between Kaddish and Birol.

Now we don't know exactly where Birol is, but Kaddish, Varnia, is far to the south into the desert land of the Sinai Peninsula. And that's one of the places the children of Israel stopped when they were wandering through the desert.

So it's quite far south. It's in desert area. If the water begins to become less or threatened there, then you really do have a famine problem. So if Isaac is not to go down into Egypt, Gerar is not on the way to that.

Gerar is about 60 to 70 miles north of where Isaac is. Egypt would be pretty much to the west. So the Lord, before he even thinks about Egypt, must have said to him, well, don't even think about going back down into Egypt.

[3 : 54] Dwell in the land, which I will tell you all. So he's moving 60 to 70 miles north into the land of the Philistines, where, with it being a low-lying, comparatively flat plain in a coastal area, and fed by streams coming down off the mountains of Judea, there is almost certainly more water and more

food available.

Perhaps they have shortages as well, but at least there's something to be going on with. Now, this fact of, you know, saying it's retrospective, that shouldn't be too inconsistent.

We think about it, you know, chapter 12, when Abraham really is introduced as a character. Chapter 12, verse 1, we read, The Lord had said to Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from my kindred, and from my father's house, and to a land which I will show thee.

And that's coming after, we've got at the end of the previous chapter 11, Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, Sarah his daughter-in-law. They went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Caden, and they came unto Haran.

In other words, that's as far as they got. And dwelt there. The days of Terah were 205 years. Terah died in Haran. The Lord had said to Abraham, Get thee out of thy country.

[5 : 08] So I think we should take it, the Lord had appeared to Isaac and said, Don't go westwards to Egypt. Go north into Gerar, the land of the Philistines, and dwell there. The land which I will tell thee, of soldier in this land.

And I will be with thee and bless thee, for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto thy father. Now a famine, obviously, or a shortage of water, is a challenge.

It's a dangerous situation. It is a potentially life-threatening situation. But it is not one from which there is no solution. Isaac is told by the Lord where he should go, what he should do, how he should respond.

If he stays where he is, he will perish, yes, in the famine, in the lack of water. But the Lord directs him as to where he should go. Just because we may be blessed of the Lord, just because we may be those who love the Lord, and seek to be faithful to him, does not mean that we will not hit problems in our lives.

That we will not have obstacles and challenges, whether physical, and tangible reality, everyday life problems, like the famine here, or the drought that Isaac is facing.

[6 : 26] Nor does it mean that we will not have spiritual famines, or spiritual drought. The Lord does not leave us, however, in such a case.

In every instance, he directs us how it is that we should respond, what we should do about it, and the solution here is, if there's no water, or no food where you are, you go where there is.

Follow the life, as one has once said. So the Lord appeared to him, said, don't go into Egypt, go into the land that I will tell you of. And he is also reiterating his promise to Isaac, to a promise to Abraham, he is reiterating it to Isaac.

Why is he doing it here? I would suggest to you, that at the beginning of this chapter 26, where Isaac has had to wait so long, not only for a wife, but secondly, 20 years before his wife is able to have any children, again, might seem to be calling into question, the promise of seed multiplied like the stars of heaven, but he's had to wait so long, and now he's finally settling down, and now there's a famine, and he has to move again.

Again, all these potential draining setbacks, perhaps he needs a word from the Lord to say, don't worry, I will perform the oath, verse 3, which I swear unto Abraham my father, I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, just as he said to Abraham, back in chapter 15, verse 5, unto thy seed all these countries I'll give it, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

[8 : 06] Now this is important here, because at the end of verse 4, this is a reiteration of the messianic promise. What God had originally promised to Abraham in chapter 12, at verse 3, that in him and in his seed, would all the families of the earth be blessed, that's something that doesn't just apply to the physical Israelites, the physical Jews, it's something which would go right round the world.

Now that means the Messiah, it means the coming of the Christ, and the good news of the gospel, the forgiveness of sin. All the families of the earth, not just Abraham's family according to the flesh, but all the families of the earth would be blessed, because of his descendant, because of his seed. That is the promise to Abraham, chapter 12, verse 3, it's reiterated here, chapter 26, verse 4, to Isaac, in thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, and God does in the fullness of time, reiterate it again to Jacob, chapter 28, verse 14, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, each time the promise is renewed, and it is renewed at a time that perhaps they need it most.

When the Lord causes or requires us to pass through times of testing, or challenge, or difficulty, which he does, nobody gets a free ride in this world, whether they're a believer or not, but if we are believers, and the Lord puts us through challenging or difficult times, maybe a spiritual famine or drought, maybe a physical time of difficulty or testing, he will not leave us comfortless, he will come to us, and this is when the Lord speaks to Isaac, and reiterates his promise, the promise to Abraham, he now renews to Isaac.

Why? Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, my laws. The same faithfulness is repeated, as it were, with five different phrases, and each of them could mean a different aspect of it.

[10:09] He obeyed my voice, kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, my laws. And when you think about it, Abraham had been tested in so many different ways.

He was tested not only by having to uproot from Ur of the Chaldees, and go to where he did not know. He went to Haran, where his father died, and then he was called to go into the land of Canaan, not knowing a soul there.

He obeyed God's voice. He was promised that there would be a multitude of descendants for him, all those years, when he had to wait when he was childless.

And then he sort of took matters into his own hands at Sarah's suggestion, and took Hagar, and then there was Ishmael, and of course the Lord still made the best of that.

There was the covenant of circumcision. Abraham obeyed God in that for himself, for Ishmael, for all his men's servants, throughout his tribe, and throughout his family there.

[11:11] He obeyed that. When he finally got Isaac as the fulfillment of the promise, he obeyed the Lord in sending away all the other children, which would have been a breaking of his heart.

Because even if Isaac was the covenant child, it would not have been easy to send away children of his own old age. But he obeyed the Lord at that. He obeyed the Lord in offering up Isaac, chapter 22, as a sacrifice upon Mount Moriah.

And only at the last minute did the angel stop his path and say to him, don't put the child to death.

And the Lord offered himself a ram caught in the thicket. He obeyed the Lord's voice, his charge, his commandments, his statutes, his laws, everything Abraham had done.

But of course, there were some things in which Abraham showed human weakness. not just in listening to Sarah's voice with regard to Hagar and then producing Ishmael, but there were occasions when Abraham lied, particularly about Sarah, his wife.

Or rather, we might say he half lied. It's not that she wasn't actually his half-sister, at least. She was technically his half-sister, but she was his wife. And when people asked about her in order to preserve his own safety, albeit putting her reputation and her life completely at risk, he lied about it.

[12:38] Twice. Lied about it to the Egyptians. Lied about it to the Philistines of Gedar. And here we find Isaac, verse 7, making exactly the same mistake.

We might say, committing the same sin. Why would he do this? Abraham would have been guilty of this. The last time Abraham would have done this would have been like 100 years earlier.

Because if we're looking in this chapter, at the end of the chapter, Esau is 40 years old when he takes these two wives. And remember that he isn't born until Isaac is about 60.

So in this chapter, Isaac is nearly 100 years old. And Abraham's incident with the Philistines at Gedar was before Isaac was born. So it's like it's 100 years earlier that Abraham has made the same mistake.

But Isaac would have heard about it. People talk then as they do now. In a camp, there would be lots of gossip and stories around about the campfires. Even if Abraham didn't tell his son, maybe he wasn't especially proud of it.

[13:42] The other servants in the camp, or the maid servants, would have been chatting or gossiping about it. Everyone would have known what Abraham had done. And perhaps there was a little bit of tendency here with Isaac, maybe a touch of hero worship for his father.

Well, Abraham's the friend of God. He's my father that I looked up to. You know, if it's good enough for him, then perhaps it should be good enough for me. Now, there's no doubt that Abraham had a special relationship with the Lord.

James tells us, chapter 2, verse 23, the scripture was fulfilled, which said, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.

Abraham was in a special relationship with the Lord. Isaiah 41, verse 8, But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend.

And there is no doubt whatsoever that one reason that Isaac is able to inherit these promises is not because Abraham was so good, but rather out of God's free grace that he's only able to step up to inherit them at the human level precisely because Abraham has steeped Isaac in the things of the Lord.

[15:04] If we turn back to chapter 18, we see what the Lord says in verse 17, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him, for I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Because Abraham would instill in his children the fear of the Lord and the love of his truth and the need for obedience to his commandments. That's how Isaac is prepared, like good soil into which the seed readily falls.

It doesn't become good just by leaving it fallow. It becomes good because the stones are gathered out of it and the weeds are rooted up from it and the earth is turned and it's dug and it's fertilized and it's prepared and it's watered but when the seed goes into it, this is now prepared, good soil and the seed brings forth.

Abraham was the friend of God and so Isaac, yes, inherits these promises and he's ready to do so but there is a sense in which we tend perhaps to idolize those who have been faithful servants, particularly of previous generations to our own.

Abraham did this, well, good enough for him. Maybe he's good enough for me too and a failure perhaps to see, well, yes, Abraham did this or Spurgeon did this or, you know, Dr. Kennedy of Dingwall may have done this but they might still have been wrong in something that they did if it is contrary to the word of God.

[16:58] God is never pleased with a lie that dishonors them. The men of the place asked him of his wife and he said, she is my sister. Now, at least with his father Abraham, that was half true.

Sarah was the daughter of his father but not in his mother. She was his half-sister. Not a healthy relationship to marry your half-sister but, as Romans tells us, you know, where the law is not written and sin is not imputed so, however, won't pass over that.

Isaac did not say by any stretch of the imagination, she is my sister. He was just lying. For he feared to say she is my wife, less said he, the men of the place should kill me for a better because she was fair to look upon.

Now, we mentioned the other day how this is what tyrants did in the old days. They saw a woman they wanted and they fancied just like David did with Uriah the Hittite and he wanted Bathsheba, get rid of Uriah.

Just like that. That's what pagans did. That's how David caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. He behaved like a pagan ruler instead of like one who feared the Lord.

[18:06] But, there is no doubt, Isaac should have trusted the Lord for his protection and in the end, of course, nothing befalls them because it came to pass when he had been there a long time.

We don't know how long a long time is, whether it's weeks, whether it's months, whether he stays in the land of gear some years, but rather verse 12 would suggest it's not yet a complete year.

But rather, Abimelech looks out of the window and saw. Now that implies that Isaac and his people are camped comparatively near to the royal palace within sight of the king looking out at his window.

And so, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah, his wife. Now the word translated sporting means it's from the same root as laughter or he laughs from which the name Isaac, of course, comes.

Isaac means he laughs. And he caused his mother to laugh with joy. He caused Abraham to laugh when the child was promised. He laughs. That's what the name Isaac means. But the word translated here as sporting comes from the same root.

[19:14] It means that there's laughter, there's sort of playful, enjoying, game-like intimacy in a sense that would only be possible between those who were already intimate with one another.

This kind of playful, intimacy which anyone would be able to see at a glance, that is not a brother and sister playing playfully together outside.

That is two people who are intimate with each other. So either he's having an affair with his sister which is less likely or else she's not his sister at all. She is his wife.

So this playful intimacy caused him to laugh and playfully be intimate with each other. and Abimelech called Isaac and said behold her assuredly she is thy wife. How saidst thou she is my sister?

And Isaac said to him because I said lest I die for her. At least he's honest now. And Abimelech said what is this that has done to us? One of the people might likely have lied with thy wife and thou shalt have brought guiltiness upon us.

[20 : 17] And so then he tells his people don't touch this man or his wife which means that Isaac and his camp are now under the personal protection of the king of Gerar. Things could hardly be better than the sage.

Then Isaac sold in that land and received in the same year. The same year as he sold he received a hundredfold.

Now remember that this is the same year in which there is famine elsewhere in the countries round about. There are almost certainly shortages in the land of Gerar and whether the water production is reduced or the water coming off the hills is less and the drought has meant that yes there's still food in the land of Gerar but there's less.

A hundredfold of anything is a massive increase. Any banker or investor in the city of London that invested say one percent of something and they got a hundred percent hundredfold back they're going to be delighted with that investment.

It is almost unreal. It is certainly miraculous. Jesus tells remember in the parable of the seed and the different kinds of soil.

[21 : 35] Some in the good seed, in the good soil rather some brought forth thirtyfold. That's good. Some brought forth sixtyfold. That's brilliant. Some brought forth a hundredfold.

That's miraculous. That's more than just a bumper crop. So what Isaac has got here the same year a hundredfold the Lord blessed him.

God isn't just making him rich because it's highly doubtful actually that he's going to be that rich. If he's sowing in the land he hasn't bought land in the land of Gerar.

Because remember the Lord had said to Abram I won't give you ownership of so much as a fruits breath in this land. The only piece of ground the children of Abraham owned was the cave of Machpelah where Abraham and Sarai were buried.

That's all they owned. So Isaac doesn't own land. He must have rented it. He must have leased it in somebody. This field that wasn't bringing forth or the fields that weren't doing much in times of shortage or drought.

[22 : 35] Isaac sows in them and boom a hundredfold. Now this is miraculous. This is the Lord stating to the world this is my chosen vessel. I am going to bless him and you're all going to see that I am blessing him.

But of course Ecclesiastes tells us and I think it's in chapter 5 verse 11 when groups are increased they are increased to eat them and we read that he had possession of flocks and herds and great store of servants.

In other words it's a good job he brought four of a hundredfold because he had to feed all these people. He had to supply the needs of all his servants all his flocks all his herds.

He may have had a bumper crop but he needs all this to sustain his massive household. His massive numbers of flocks and herds and servants and so on but the Lord blessed him and the man waxed great and went forward and grew until he became very great and the Philistines envied him.

Here he comes he takes our fields okay he's leasing and he's probably paying for them and the Lord is blessing his efforts in a way that he didn't bless the Philistines. It's not really to be wondered at when you think that God will honour them that honour him.

[23 : 50] If Isaac comes into that which was a pagan land where gods like Dagon the fish god were being worshipped and other heathen idols were worshipped and probably making their sacrifices on the land and pouring out blood and goodness knows all what other abominations and here comes Isaac the son of a friend of God the covenant child.

Yes he's been a little bit silly and lying about Rebekah his wife but he is still the covenant man the one in whom the promises will be fulfilled. He honours the Lord he souls in the land and God

honours him.

This is not pagan idolatry anymore this is a man honouring the Lord with his family with his tribe with his clan and here now the Lord blesses and the world can see that he is being blessed when the Philistines envy him.

Verse 15 seems like a bit of mindless spite because it doesn't seem to be all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham the Philistines had stopped him just over the years thinking wells springing up in the desert oh that's no use to anyone just fill it in.

You know you can use water you can use wells you can control the flow of water it's a resource it's wealth of course you're going to save it but no they stoppered them up this was a source of wealth even to them and they stoppered them up that is just spite that is just enmity.

[25 : 16] They envied him and said we're not going to let him have any of this water and even Abimelech finally says to Isaac go from this thou art much mightier than we yes you came for a while now you've got rich you have to leave you have to go it's just too much for us to bear.

He would have been conscious of simmering discontent amongst his people. Where the Lord's people go they will almost always end up at enmity with the forces of the world.

With those who worship other gods those who worship no gods when the Lord blesses them they envy them when the Lord doesn't bless them and they just think they're trying to sponge the Lord's people will always find that this is not their home.

That here they have no continuing city. Go from us for thou art much mightier than we. And Isaac departed this and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar and dwelt there.

Now that's probably only about 20 miles or so away from the sooty of Gerar. But the point is he's going up now. He's going up into the hills. He's not staying in the low flat valley that's lush and comparatively fertile.

[26 : 29] Maybe only 20 miles but it's 20 miles up into the hills. Up into the sort of mountain of Syria. Less fertile. Less wealthy. Let's see how he survives up there.

They might have been thinking. He goes from them. What a contrast with his brother. Remember what we're told about Ishmael when the Lord spoke to Hagar when she was in wilderness.

The Lord said he will be a wild man. His hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Isaac is not like that.

Isaac will have peace at almost any cost. Not quite at any cost but almost any cost. He is a man of peace. He wants to live on peaceful plans with all his neighbours and even with his enemies round about.

but he is made to be. Now this shouldn't cause us to think oh how terrible. Remember what Jesus said. When with the gospel is proclaimed or lived out and when you get enmity, when you get resentment or resistance to it.

[27 : 36] He says in Matthew 10 verses 22 and 23 you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

that when they persecute you in this city flee ye into another. For verily I say unto you you shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.

Fighting is rarely the Lord's chosen choice when confronted with enmity. Move on. Move on and just lift the gospel to say shake the dust off your feet.

Isaac moves on with all that he has. And yes he is gone from among them. But all the wealth and all the input into Gerar that he and his people represented is likewise gone.

They are the poorer for his having left. And this is perhaps indicated from verse 26 onwards. But we read that he digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abram's father for the Philistines had stoppered them.

[28 : 38] And he called their names after the names by which his father had called. And he returns to the good old ways of his father. Isaac's servants digged in the valley found there a well springing water.

And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen saying the water is out a bit steep. It's a bit rich. And if they'd stoppered in the well in the first place, filled it with earth, Isaac's men dig it again. And they say, oh, well, that water's there, that water's out. Why didn't you keep the well open there? Why didn't you want it when you had it? No, they didn't want it then. But now they want it. Now what Isaac's men have done all the work.

And so he called the name of the well, Essek, because they strove with him. It means contention, striving. And they digged another well and strove for that also.

And he called the name of it Sitna, which means hatred. They are striving because of their hatred, because of their enmity. They will never be placated. Psalm 120 tells us, remember, my soul within the hate of peace, hath long a dweller been.

[29 : 40] I am for peace, but when I speak, for battle they are keen. What does Isaac do? He would have been justified in gathering his servants together and taking back the worlds and fighting against the herdsmen of Gerard.

But no, he doesn't do that. He just moves on again. He removed from Thess and digged another well. For that they strove not. And he called the name of it Rehoboth.

For he said, now the Lord hath made room for us. That's what Rehoboth means. It means room. It means having sort of enlargements, sufficient room, sufficient space.

Rehoboth. And we shall be fruitful in the land. And he went up from Thess to Beersheba. Now remember Beersheba was where Abraham had dwelt. And the Lord appeared unto him the same night.

Here he is reassured again. When the Lord appears, it's not just because, oh, I'm a bit fed up. I'm a bit kind of bored. Maybe I'll go and speak to Isaac. I haven't spoken to him for a while.

[30 : 40] No. The Lord knows that confrontation after confrontation after confrontation, turning the other cheek time and time again, moving on, giving place to evil, which is what Isaac has been doing.

That takes it out of you. It's not an easy thing. Just because Isaac is avoiding confrontation, just because he is avoiding open warfare doesn't mean this is a cost-free alternative.

It drains the life out of you. So the Lord appeared unto him the same night that he came to Beersheba and said, I am the God of Abraham, my father.

Fear not. God doesn't waste any words. If he says, fear not to Isaac, it's because Isaac must have been beginning to be afraid. Wherever I go, they chase me.

Whatever we did, they strive for the water. He tried to steal our water. Though it's us that beg for it, we are seeking peace. They are seeking enmity. We've done nothing to these people.

[31 : 45] Why are they against us? I am the God of Abraham, my father. Fear not. For I am with thee and will bless thee. And multiply thy seed for my servant Abram's sake.

This is the promise of the Lord. You've done well, Isaac. You've done the right thing. You've turned the other cheek. You've not lived into the temptation to war.

You keep digging. You keep getting your water. I keep giving it. I bless you a hundredfold in the land. I'm with you, Isaac. Don't lose heart. Don't be afraid.

I am with you. And just as we said a moment ago, the constant enmity, constant confrontation and contention, it drains life out of the child of God.

And you may be in that situation tonight for all I know. You may be in a situation where you feel as if you've been giving and doing giving and giving. And you're getting no thanks for it.

[32 : 44] You're getting only perhaps impatience or enmity. And you're turning the other cheek so many times you've lost count of which side is due to be slapped next. And the Lord wants to say to his children, don't be afraid.

I am the God of Abram, my father. I am the father of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am your God. I am with thee.

I will bless thee. I'm multiplied. I seek for my servant Abram's sake. I haven't forgotten you. Just because there's confrontation, just because there's warfare, just because there's difficulty, it doesn't mean that I have given up on you because I haven't.

I have protected you. I will protect you. And he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord. Now when Isaac builds an altar, which he doesn't often do, but when he builds an altar it means he's seeking to dedicate himself afresh to the Lord, to put down, as it were, spiritual roots to the Lord.

He built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord. Perhaps he hadn't been able to do that in the land of the Philistines for fear of upsetting them, for fear of finding them with a true altar to Jehovah as opposed to the altars to the false gods of the Philistines.

[34 : 06] But here he builds an altar and crawls upon the name of the Lord. He pitched his tent there and Isaac's servants began to dig a well. Then Abimelech went to him from Gerard and

Ahazeth, one of his friends, and by call the chief captain of his army.

And here they are seeking peace. He says, wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you. And here they are seeking peace despite all that has happened, because although all the herdsmen of Gerar may have been obnoxious and difficult, yet the official embassy from the king himself and from the officers of the state is that they want peace with Isaac.

They cannot have failed to be impressed by his patience and by his attitude in the face of great provocation. Proverbs 16 tells us, in verse seven, when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

And here we have this peace being made. We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee. And we said, let there be an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee.

And that was true up to a point, yes, to her, when Abimelech had stolen the wells, the water that Isaac's men and David, but the king could have said, look, I didn't know anything about this.

[35 : 31] These men are acting off their own back. We as a nation, we as a kingdom, we want to be at peace with you. We didn't molest you. We never touched your wife, although you lied about who she was.

We never touched any of your goods when you went from us. We didn't say, leave your harvest, your crop behind. We didn't say, leave us a tax of your flocks and herds. We sent you away in peace. We have done nothing until they were good.

And I sent you away in peace. Thou art now the blessed of the Lord. Maybe there was a state memory of how Abraham and a previous Abimelech had made such a covenant that they recognized Abraham was the blessed of the Lord.

And now this man, his son, is the blessed of the Lord. You can't afford to be on the wrong side of the blessed of the Lord. You've got to be at peace with that. You've got to maintain that relationship. Otherwise, you will only be in greater trouble. In famine, the Lord had blessed and protected Isaac. And now we read that he, just because he wouldn't allow, he wouldn't allow Abimelech or any of the Philistines to lay a hand on Rebekah or on any of Isaac's goods.

[36 : 42] Psalm 105 tells us, verses 12 to 15 there, when there were but a few men in number. Yea, very cute. And strangers in it, when they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people, he suffered no man to do them wrong.

Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes, saying, touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm. And Abimelech here said, we didn't do you any harm. Make a covenant with us.

Make an oath with us. And Isaac just forgives. He just accepts. He made them a feast. They did eat and drink. They rose up the times in the morning and swore one to another.

And Isaac sent them away and they departed from him in peace. And it came to pass, verse 32, the same day, the same day as his generous forgiveness that he has sent them away in peace.

After all his turning of the other cheek, men may have played him. Men may have deceived him and perhaps lied to him or dealt undishonorably with him.

[37 : 49] But God sees all of these things. The same day, Isaac's servants came and told him concerning the well which they had digged, said, we have found water. That physical element without which life cannot be sustained, we've got water.

God didn't do it the day when Abimelech and his men were there. He didn't do it the day when they were busy having their feast. He waited till they had gone.

When they knew nothing of what Isaac had and then the Lord revealed it and said, look, here's water. I have seen all that you endured. I have noted.

I am pleased with your patience. I am pleased with your restraints. But we have found water. And he called it Sheba, meaning Oath.

Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba, the well of the Oath unto this day. So the Lord blesses Isaac. He blesses his patience and his restraint.

[38 : 52] When you think that others may be always gaining the upper hand against you, you're always having to be the one that apologizes or who takes the step back, even if it's not your fault.

You're always the one turning the other cheek. You're always the one giving ground just to keep the peace. And you think, I'm getting fed up of this. Lord, this can't be right. Why is this injustice allowed to proceed?

Now Peter tells us, remember, if you suffer as an evildoer, if you're a thief and you get caught, you get punished and you take it well and with great patience, well, where's the virtue in that? You deserve that punishment because you did the thing that was wrong. But if any of you suffer as a crucifer, if you suffer innocently for things you haven't done and you take it well, that is an acceptable offering, an acceptable sacrifice to God.

He is pleased. He's not pleased with your suffering. He doesn't delight in the fact that you're having a difficult time. But what he delights in is how you deal with it. He is pleased when his children show such maturity and strength from within.

[40 : 03] When they demonstrate to the unbelieving world that they draw their strength from a different source. They follow a different line, a different law, a different code because they're redeemed by a different saviour from that which is worshipped by the world.

God is pleased with that faithfulness. And God blesses Isaac's faithfulness fear. But it's not all plain sailing. He may have his public blessings but he has his domestic griefs.

Esau was 40 years old when he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Behi the Hittite, and Bashamath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, which were grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah. Now, the significance of these numbers is of course not lost. Esau probably thinks, well, come on, my father was 40 years old when his father found him a wife.

Here I am. Come on. What have you done about it? Why haven't I been given a wife? Why haven't I got somebody myself? Come on. Father, mother, what have you done about it?

[41 : 08] Nothing. So off he just goes and takes matters into his own hands. Too far to go back to Haran or out of the Chaldees or the covenant family back then.

No. Plenty of women needed hands. He was 40 years old, the same age as his father had been when he married Rebekah. He waits till then, whether that's virtue or whether it's just the significance of his father's age that he wants to capitalize on for his contrast.

But there's similarity also. He takes to wife these two, not one, two heathen women. He takes to himself who don't worship the Lord, Jehovah, who are not of the covenant family or line and who behave accordingly.

They show clearly no love or respect to Isaac or to Rebekah as their in-laws, as their parents and more. They have a completely different attitude to the world, to the flesh and to the devils and the nations round about worship.

They are a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah. Now, I'm sure all of you, all of us, have got relatives or friends or acquaintances we've had, you know, who don't love the Lord.

[42 : 28] And when you go into their homes, whether it's summer or stay or whether it's ordinary days or whatever, there's something about the atmosphere in that house, whether you know that television's on in the corner all day, every day, the particular magazines that are lying about, there's not a Bible to be seen anywhere.

The conversation is just completely of the world. Everything about attitude, everything about, you know, and that's spoken about, and it's not that it's hostile or antagonistic or anything.

It is just completely devoid of any grace, devoid of any acknowledgement or sense that there is something greater than this world.

Everything is just about the world, the world, the world. Like, oh, good price you got for this, or special offer on that, or about, you know, the latest music or the latest clothes or the latest business deal to be done, and it's all just the world.

And all the noise and all the music and all the loudness and all the emptiness and the attitude that is produced by such a world saturated outlook is completely at odds with an outlook influenced by the grace and the love of the Lord.

[43 : 50] Now, I'm not saying that in any judgmental or condemnation. It is just a reality. It is just a fact. You can sense it in the home, and I am sure you know what I'm talking about.

You know, being into a home of relatives, of friends, of neighbours, and you can just sense the complete absence of anything to do with anything deeper or higher or more reverent or more important than just the wild.

And this is what Esau imports into his home, that attitude of the wild. And that thing of the world which has no reverence, no sense of honour or duty or holiness or the solemnity of the living God, because they don't recognise the living God.

They have grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebecca. He doesn't just take one. He demonstrates his contempt for God's desire for men and women.

He demonstrates his complete lack of concern for the covenant values of his father and grandfather and all those who have gone before. The previous chapter ended with Esau despising his birthright. [45 : 10] This chapter ends with Esau despising his family and his God. And these little subtle postscripts at the end of each chapter, while Isaac is being restrained and blessed and God blessing him for his patience, Esau is just merrily going on immersing himself more and more in the things of the world and of the flesh.

Even those who begin on the same road can diverge. They can diverge and go in opposite directions. That is what Esau is doing for his father.

Because although he loves his father, he has no thought, let alone love for his father's God. And this is why at the end of the day, whoever else we love, whatever else we make our priority, it cannot be merely fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends, spouses, spouses, it must be the Lord, the Lord, the Lord.

Because that alone will last. That alone will bless. And that alone will save. Let us pray.