

Blessing

Genesis 26

God blessing is rarely defined in terms of the troubling stories of the Bible. This text has Isaac's hundredfold harvest, giving some the idea that you can blab and grab it from famine to feast in one year! Isaac prospers materially, but God's blessing is about a lot more than crops.

God's Blessing Comes Through Trouble

Isaac faces famine in the land, like but not to be confused with the one Abraham experienced (v1; 12:10). Also like Abraham, he will receive God's call and promise (12:1-3; 26:2-6), deceive regarding his sister-wife (12:10-20; 26:7-11), quarrel with men and move (13:1-12; 26:14-22), be assured by God and offer sacrifice (15:1-21; 26:23-25), and make a covenant with Abimelech at Beersheba (21:22-24; 26:26-33). God was good to Abraham and He promises to bless, so Isaac doesn't go to Egypt (vv2-6). He trusts the Lord to provide rather than relying on the Nile. Though he doesn't go to Egypt, he imitates Abraham's lie, saying "She is my sister" because he fears the Philistines (v7). Eventually Abimelech sees Isaac *isaacing* Rebekah, and rightly accuses him of lying (v9). Just because we know history does not mean we won't repeat it, which is why people find themselves doing the same things their parents did, things they said they would never do. We will face in principle the same challenges our predecessors did, and only by trusting the Lord can we over come them. Isaac didn't go to Egypt. But he lied.

God's Blessing Requires More Stewardship

Isaac walks by faith, sows in the land and reaps a hundredfold that year, and he kept going until he was really rich, beyond his inheritance (vv12-14; 25:5). In the Bible we have righteous rich and unrighteous rich, righteous poor and unrighteous poor people. We have a prayer to be neither and warnings not to lust after money (Prov. 30:8-9; 1 Tim. 6:9). When God blesses us, it's not a trick, but it does require faithfulness to steward His resources and stay on mission (Prov. 10:22). Isaac's prosperity brings envy from the Philistines who ruin the wells just so he can't use them (vv14-15). Abimelech wants him gone (v16). Isaac moves on from the conflict and goes to the Valley of Gerar where digs wells and names them as Abraham did (vv17-19). He finds a well, is attacked for it, but continues confident in God's blessing for him until finally they leave him alone (vv19-22). His witness is more important than his wealth, so he can avoid foolish conflict. Isaac is blessed, then faithful, then blessed much more, and then faithful to an even greater degree. God appears and confirms His promises for Abraham's sake, and Isaac responds by establishing public worship (vv23-25).

God's Blessing is Constant

When Isaac wonders where he'll get food and water for his household and animals, when his wife is in danger, when he is envied and despised, when he is walking away again and again from wells he dug, it doesn't look like he is blessed. But now what has always been true—that God is for him—is now recognized by his enemies (v28): "We have certainly seen that the Lord is with you" (v28). "When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7). The Philistines want a covenant, and though their understand of events is skewed, Isaac makes them a meal and puts their aggression to rest (vv28-31). He could have leverage his position but doesn't, instead treating them the way God has been treating him his whole life. Isaac sees past his pocketbook, past his rights, past fleshly desires into the good of others and the grace of God. If God is for him, who can be against him (Rom. 8:31)? His servants find another well that would provide for his household, and the city of Beersheba is a witness to God's blessing on Isaac.

NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

Today's Passage: Genesis 26:19-25

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 the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." 23 Then he went up from there to Beersheba. 24 And the Lord 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 the Lord, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

1. What happens between Isaac's servants and the herdsmen of Gerar (vv19-21)?
2. How does Isaac respond, and what happened (v22)?
3. When people take our stuff, our natural tendency to fight or return evil for evil. But when we see the way God is for us, always doing us good in return for our evil and sin, we are able to bless our enemies and do good to those who abuse us. What does God promise to Isaac that no one can take away (verse 24)?
4. Draw a picture Isaac and his servant's digging a deep well and finding water.

Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

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 the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." —Genesis 26:22