

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study

"GOD'S FAITHFUL PROMISE AND GRACE"

For individual study or discussion

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3)

Criticizing others is as easy as breathing. It's not difficult to point out the failures of Isaac (or Rebekah, Jacob and Esau). What benefit is there, however, in armchair criticism of the patriarchs? Do we learn from their failings? Do we see the ways in which we, too, so often follow a similar path of doubting God's promises and seeking to achieve—through whatever means necessary—our own desires?

- 1) What are the promises of the covenant God made with Abraham and the promises God made to Isaac? (See Genesis 12:1-3 and 26:2-5.)
 - What could Isaac be absolutely certain of? What was he unable to detect or know?
 - In which circumstances did Isaac apparently trust God's promises? In which circumstances did he not? (Some commentators believe that it is possible that the events chronicled in the first half of chapter 26 actually took place prior to the births of Jacob and Esau—that the author of Genesis chose to group the events in less-than-strict chronological order. If that is true, what else could Isaac have been sure of when he was in Gerar during the famine?)
 - What promises do believers have that will never change?
 - What have we not been promised? Are there particular verses you would turn to that would remind you of what we have really been promised?
- 2) The LORD ends the declaration of his promises to Isaac by pointing to Abraham's obedience (see v. 5).
 - The sentence can make it sound as though God's blessing comes as a *result* of Abraham's obedience, as though God is saying to Isaac, "Because your father obeyed me, I am now going to make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky." Why do we know that this understanding of the verse is faulty? (See Gen. 15:6, James 2:20-26, Rom. 4:22-25, and Gal. 3:5-14.)
 - What did this reference to Abraham's obedience make clear to Isaac?
- 3) God protected Isaac in a way that he probably did not expect. (vv.10-11)
 - Can you think of other examples in which God used unbelievers to speak to, bless, and/or correct God's people?
 - How should we interact with "the world" (i.e., those who are not followers of Jesus) knowing the following?
 - ◇ We are sojourners and exiles (1 Pet. 2:11).
 - ◇ God can use anyone he chooses to speak his truth (even a donkey—see Num. 22:22-40).
 - ◇ Our Creator's plan includes blessing the whole world through Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:1-3).



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

DATE: May 2, 2021

SPEAKER: Chad/Brian

SERIES: The Life of Jacob

PASSAGE: Gen. 26:1-18

Family Dinner Table

If anything comes very close to your eyes—a flying insect, for example—your eyes will close in a split second without your thinking about it at all. No one had to teach you to do this. Do you know the first part of Psalm 139:14, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made"? It's one of the marvels of God's creation that human beings all instinctively know to protect the more vulnerable parts of our bodies—the parts that could be more easily hurt.

It's understandable, too, that we generally want to find ways to protect ourselves when we feel threatened in any way. In this passage we see Isaac deciding to lie about his wife because he was so afraid of what others might do to him.

Why was it wrong for Isaac to try and protect himself by telling a lie about his wife? (Can you think of why it was wrong beyond the most obvious reason of God wanting us to be truth-tellers?)

We can be glad of the ways God has made our bodies that help keep us safe, but can you think of situations in which God might want us to put aside our desire to be safe and protected? When might we need to move forward, trusting in him, even though we feel afraid?

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Ridge Haven Conference Center

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

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