

Genesis 26:23-25 God's Grace is All Round

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From there he went up to Beersheba. ²⁴ 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." ²⁵ 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.

(Pastor prays)

One of the most interesting things about Isaac is that there is not much really interesting about him. He lived a long life, a fairly quiet life and very little stands out about who he is. In a world of self-expression and you being you, Isaac was boring. I owned a Ford Crown Victoria once – a white one. Boring. The only thing that it was good for was when people saw you on the road, they always thought you were a cop. And once I got that car, I saw them everywhere. And Isaacs life is like that. When we look at Isaac, his life shows God everywhere. In fact, his boring life is here to remind us of our good God. So that we might live this week and see God everywhere. We pick up Isaacs story after God appeared to him in verse 2 and renewed the covenant. God spoke to him and blessed him and assured him that He would be with him. Isaac should have been on a spiritual high. Abraham was his father. He heard about God speaking to Abraham, but God had never spoken to Isaac and in Chapter 26, He does. There are few things in life that feel as good as that moment when you feel close to God. When you come to Christ and genuinely believe. When you read the Bible all the way through. When you realize forgiveness for the first time. When you meet and fall in Love with a believer and are married. When you have your first child – or grandchild. When you come to grips with your own brokenness over sin and God restores you in Christ. Those are holy moments. And sadly, they are just moments that are here and then they are gone. I'm not suggesting we live that moment always. I am suggesting we don't have to wait on those spectacular moments to feel close to God. I want you to see that...

Our God is Good Every day and Every day, We Should Feel That

I am intentionally using the word feel. God gave us the ability to feel and these feelings must be tamed by the Lordship of Jesus. And, we must learn to see the goodness of God all around us.

All Around Us We See God's Mercy

Let me show you where I get this in the story. Go with me to Chapter 26. After being on a spiritual mountain top in verse 1-5, in verse 6-11, Isaac goes immediately into sin. *So Isaac settled in Gerar. 7 When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," for he feared to say, "My wife," thinking, "lest the men of the place should kill me because of Rebekah," because she was attractive in appearance.* Isaac did just what his father Abraham had done. A knee jerk reaction in fear. Verse 7 says he did it because he was afraid. Pure selfishness moved him to endanger his wife just to save his own skin. Afraid. After meeting with God in verses 1-5, after the best spiritual experience of his life when God promised him so much, he comes off the spiritual mountain top and right into sin – based on fear. How many decisions do we make because we fear something else more than we fear God? Do you remember how Paul described being a child of God and what that meant? It's in Romans 8:30-31. *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* In Genesis 26, God was for Isaac and yet Isaac acted in fear. You can see it in verses 8-9. Abimelech the pagan king catches Isaac and Rebekah together and in verses 10-11, Isaac – one of God's chosen Patriarchs – gets lecture from a pagan king for being so immoral! It's a real tragedy when God's people are MORE immoral than the world. All of that happened and paints such a terrible picture of Isaac. And Yet, I want you to read verse 12-14. *And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him, 13 and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. 14 He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him.* Here is mercy. That God would continue to bless Isaac so soon after his sin. God deals with his people in mercy – a lasting mercy that is found at the cross of Jesus. At the cross of Jesus, where God has poured out his justice and purchased you. If you are in Christ and the blood of Jesus covers your sin. Your sin has a voice that calls out to God for judgement. But the voice of Jesus' blood shouts down the voice of your sin. That blood calls for a river of mercy. A river of mercy that forgives us and sustains us and from this river of mercy there are little riverlets and streams and brooks of mercy. Like the sunshine and the roof over your head. Like a ceramic mug that's warm with

good hot coffee or the meal you will have this afternoon and a visit with family – mercy. Even though you and I have sinned against a holy God, in Christ, he gives us mercy. All around us we see God’s mercies that point us to his perfect mercy found in Jesus. All around us we see God’s mercy.

All Around Us We See God’s Grace

Let me show you what I mean by that. When you follow the story, in verse 16, Abimelech tells Isaac to leave his country so Isaac settles in the valley. In verse 17, he starts cleaning out well that his dad had dug but that had been filled in by the Philistines. He even named them the same thing his dad had named them. And every time, he found water, the local herdsman argued with him and hassled him til he went to another place and then finally in verse 22, Isaac could settle down. *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.”* Rehoboth – The Lord has made room. This is provision. This is God’s common grace. Common grace is the kindness God shows to all his creation. Jesus said that God causes it to rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Yesterday was a beautiful day for believers and unbelievers alike. You see God’s grace all around us. Now if you aren’t a Christian and you are enjoying God’s common grace, you should know that God gives us those beautiful days to awaken your mind and heart to see that there is a creator that can only be known through Jesus Christ. Common grace is given to point you to the specific grace in Jesus Christ. That’s God’s provision. In big and small ways, He provides for us so that we might know the sweetest provision of all in Jesus Christ. Now I want you to see His intervening grace, His initiating grace. Look, at His appearing in verses 23-24. Just read and see. *From there he went up to Beersheba. ²⁴And 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.”* Now lets just look at the graces.

Grace of Initiation

God appears to Isaac. Isaac wasn’t looking for God. He was digging a well and protecting his skin by lying about his wife. God came after him. That’s an Old Testament picture of a New Testament truth. Romans 5:8 says, *but God shows his love*

for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God came to Isaac not because he was good or religious or even Abrahams son. God came to Isaac like he comes to us, because he is loving, kind, forgiving and sovereignly gracious. We are saved by grace, not by works. That's the grace of initiation.

Grace of Relationship

I am the God of your father Abraham. He brought in a man's name. Abraham. God is willing to be identified with a person. Hebrews 2 says that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers. When he purchased you with his blood, God adopts you as his child and by faith you are now part of his family. Initiation - Relationship

Grace of Assurance

"Fear not for I am with you and I will bless you." God loves to reassure his people. We've talked some about fear not and how we should fear God rather than man. And, how a heightened fear of God creates a lower tolerance for sin. But, I'd like to talk some about the "with"ness of God. Throughout the Old Testament, we see evidences of God with his people. From Moses to Joshua to Samuel to David. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He is a God who is with his people. But it's not until Christ comes that we get the full picture of "with"ness. Last night before we ate, I wanted to go for a ride to clear my head and I asked Connie to go with me. Beside me. I enjoy her company and we had a nice ride. And then I go back into my office where I wasn't with her anymore. Sometimes, I get the feeling that we think that's how God works with his children. I'm talking to believers now. When Jesus came and lived, fulfilling God's law as the perfect son, he earned a righteousness we can never live up to. When he went willingly to the cross, he died in the place of sinners to take the punishment in the place of sinners. He covers us with his righteousness. The event at the cross changed a lot of things – the temple veil, earthquake, judgement – all these were changed. But one of the most overlooked changes is the "with"ness of God. He is with us differently than he was with Isaac. Listen to the promise Jesus makes to those that repent and believe in John 14:15-17. *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. John 14:20 says, In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* God is with you when Christ, by

the Holy Spirit is in you. That change happens when you come to the realization of our good and holy God as compared to who you are as sinful and separated from God. And you see what Jesus has done by living perfectly and dying on the cross for sinners and your eyes are opened and you respond by turning from your sin and by faith believing in Jesus. When you do that, God will not only be with you, but the Holy Spirit will be in you.

(Pastor prays)