

Genesis 25-26 • The Birth of Esau and Jacob

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Genesis chapter 25 is where we are starting off here tonight. It begins, you'll remember that when we last studied Genesis, Sarah had passed and it says in verse 1 of 25 that, "*Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. (and)*"² *She bore him (and then it gives the names) Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.* ³ *Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim.* (or something like that)

⁴ *The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.* ⁵ *Abraham gave all he had to Isaac.* ⁶ *But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, and while he was still living he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.*" (ESV)

I want you to stop there for just a moment and notice something about these first 6 verses that we read. You'll notice in verse 1, that Keturah is referred to as Abraham's wife but then in verse 6, it says, "*But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts.*" So, we're kind of left with a question, was Keturah a wife or a concubine?

I mean, Sarah has passed by this time, he's certainly free to take another wife. Well, if you cross reference this with a passage from 1 Chronicles, put it up on the screen so you can see it. 1 Chronicles chapter 1, verse 32, it says,

1 Chronicles 1:32 (ESV)

The sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine...

Isn't that interesting? So, you know, we're really not sure what to make of this. The scripture seems to suggest that Keturah was a wife, but of a lesser position, I suppose, is the best way. And I suppose that would mean that, you know, she didn't have all of the full privileges that went along with Sarah, you know, Abraham's first wife. You know, whenever we're dealing with this sort of thing from the Bible, it's always kind of challenging.

People like to cite these kind of references and try to make doctrines out of them, you know, and there are a lot of things in the Bible that the narrative simply just gives you that are not given as teaching and we have to be able to separate the difference between narrative and teaching. Do you know what I mean? If you're going to make a narrative into a doctrine, then you're going to come away with the idea that, you know, polygamy is a good thing, because it was allowed in the Old Testament. There was a lot of things allowed in the Old Testament that God never intended for man to fall into, but he did and not all of those things were corrected immediately.

They were corrected over time, but if you allow a narrative to be the governing factor of any sort of a doctrinal understanding of things, good grief, you can start pointing to all kinds of things and come up with wacky doctrines. You know, the Bible tells us that king Saul, when the Lord no longer answered him by dreams or visions or any other means, it says that he went out and sought the help of a medium to bring up the spirit of Samuel so that he could consult Samuel. Well, here's the crazy thing about that passage, it worked. God allowed Samuel to visit Saul, not because a medium came into the process, but because God was using this situation.

I've had people tell me, hey, it says it right there, this thing this works. You know, they create these belief systems and these doctrines out of a narrative. That's always a bad idea, okay? So just keep that as a rule of thumb in your heart and mind that just because it's in a narrative doesn't mean that it is being taught by the Bible.

And when it comes to marriage, we know that God's purpose in marriage was for there to be one man and one woman together for life. Now, obviously in a situation where one or the other passes away, a person is free to remarry, there's no question about that. The Bible does make that very clear, but in this particular case, for some reason or another, Keturah is listed as a concubine of Abraham. We'll have to just ask when we get there.

Verse 7, *“These are the days of the years of Abraham's life, 175 years. (Wow!)⁸ Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.”* We talked last time we met about what that term, *“gathered to his people”* means. It was a very significant term and we talked about the fact that Abraham started a new history in his family of being buried. Because it was tradition that when someone passed away, they would be taken back to their homeland if they weren't in their homeland at the time of their death. They would be taken back and gathered to their people, buried with their people. Well when Sarah passed away, we found

out in our last study that Abraham started a whole new heritage for his lineage by being buried in Canaan there in the land of promise and so this is a significant statement.

It says in verse 9 that, *“Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, ¹⁰ the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with Sarah his wife.”* So Abraham was the second person to be buried in that cave and was not the last.

“¹¹ After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi.” And this is where, by the way, Isaac was living when he first met Rebekah. When she was brought to him by his father's servant, which we dealt with in our last study. *“¹² These are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's servant, bore to Abraham.”* And then it says, *“¹³ These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: (and this is a bit of an exercise in pronunciation, here goes) Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶ These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments, (and look at this statement here) twelve princes according to their tribes.”* Why is that important? Because that's a fulfillment of prophecy.

You might remember when Abraham is wishing that God would bless Ishmael, the Lord said something to him, I'll put it up on the screen. It's back in chapter 17, He said,

Genesis 17:20 (ESV)

As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation.

As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, (there you go) and I will make him into a great nation.

So God was good on His promise. Well, God is always good on His promises, but we see this proof there. Verse 17, *“(These are the years of the life of Ishmael: 137 years. (Wow!) He breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.) ¹⁸ They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria. ...”* And this is what we call the Arabian Peninsula or just Arabia. If you want to see it on a map, I'll put it, well, I'll put it up on the globe.

There you go, that is the region where Ishmael and his family settled. What we call the Arabian Peninsula again, or Arabia.



And it tells us here, the last line of verse 18 is rather interesting. You'll notice it says, “...*He settled over against all his kinsmen.*” Now that's not a phrase that you and I would use. If I said to you that someone settled over against his relatives, what would you say? I don't know what that means, right? Well, the NIV renders this, this way, “*and they lived in hostility toward all the tribes related to them.*” The New American Standard Bible (NASB) puts it this way, “*He settled in defiance of his relatives.*”

And you can tell by the various renderings from the various translations, that this is a difficult Hebrew sentence to translate, but it is in keeping with what we are told prophetically about Ishmael even before he was born. That he would be a wild donkey of a man and he would live in hostility toward all his brothers. (Genesis 16:12) And that is in fact, the case.

Now, we come to the focus of this chapter and the life frankly, of Isaac and Rebekah, and that is the birth of their twin boys. First, a little summary here for you. Verse 19, “*These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham*

fathered Isaac, ²⁰ and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife.” And then concerning Rebekah and her challenge to become pregnant, we have a very short summarizing statement in verse 21 that goes like this, *“And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.”* Stop there. I'm stopping you because this is such an important verse.

I actually use this verse in my marriage series that we have on our website called God's Design for Marriage. But the reason this is such an important verse and the reason I use it in my marriage series, is because it speaks so powerfully to the role of the husband and particularly Isaac's understanding of his role. Because we're told in this single verse, that Rebekah was barren, she was unable to conceive and that's very similar, of course, to Sarah. Sarah too, was barren.

But, you know, what's not mentioned here is the burden that condition put upon a woman in those days. We've talked about this lots of times in the past, but for a woman to be barren was a cursed position, a cursed condition. She would be considered cursed by God because she was unable to bear children and so this was an absolutely huge burden for a woman to carry. Now, Isaac as her husband obviously wants to do something about this, but what he can do is limited by the biology of the day.

You know, what he can do, he can do and what he can't do, he can't do. And what that means is that Isaac was facing a situation, because he loved his wife and because he wanted the best for her, he wanted her to be happy and fulfilled, he knew the situation was out of his hands. Now, the women in the room might be hearing what I'm saying right now and they're yeah, the situation was out of his hands. But ladies, if you don't know this about the men in your life, let me clue you in. That is the most difficult situation for a man to face.

For a man to face a situation where he knows there is a need, but there's nothing he can do about it, that is one of the toughest situations for a man to face. And the reason is, because men are doers, as we've said many times, because they are created by God to be occupational, okay. And because men are predominantly occupational by God, they are fixers, that's one of the things that drives women crazy.

That, you know, they want to sit and tell us about what's going on in their heart and the men want to fix it. And she's like, I'm not asking you to fix it, I just want you to listen. Guys, you don't... , ladies, you don't even know what you're asking of your husband, the men in your life, you don't even know. That's the

toughest, you might as well tell him to hold his breath and stop breathing because it is just hits in him, it's hardwired to do, to fix, to respond. But here's Isaac, there's nothing he can do. His wife is barren, he's done everything he can do as a husband to try to remedy that issue and nothing's working.

But Isaac knew, as many husbands don't, let me say that, that when his efforts proved insufficient, there was still something he could do. He could bring his wife to the Lord and lay her at the throne of grace and this simple but powerful verse tells us that he did just that. It says, "*Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren.*" And not just because she was barren, but because Isaac knew there was nothing he could do except pray. It's so simple, it's so incredibly simple and yet it is so easily forgotten.

Men, I'm talking to you right now because I need this talking to for myself. We've got to remember to pray and especially when things are dire and appear very much to be out of our hands. We've got to remember that we are not without options, we can bring these things before the Lord. We can pray, we can ask for God's grace, we can ask for God's power. One of the reminders I want to give you about prayer is don't put a time limit on God's answer, please. I've told you guys this before, but so many times people will say to me, I don't know what to do, I prayed about it and God didn't answer and my response is always the same. How long did you pray?

Well, they're always kind of caught off guard by that question a little bit, so they have to think about it usually. Well, I prayed for, I don't know, about a month. Okay, good. Why did you come up with the conclusion that after a month, if God had not yet answered that He wasn't going to, why did you reach that conclusion? What caused you to put a time limit; a month, you know. A month, as long as anybody ever ought to pray, if anybody ever has to pray longer than a month, good grief. What's up with that? We should, nobody should ever have to pray longer than that and you know, but it's all arbitrary, whatever people think. It could be just a week, could be a day.

It's like, yeah, I asked God and He didn't answer. How long did you pray? Prayed for a solid 24 hours, you know. We do this all the time people, we put time limits on our prayers. We have an expiration date on it and when the ding!, expiration thing pops up, we're angry. What happened? God, I prayed about it and God didn't answer. Do you understand how foolish that is? God works in His own time and God wants us to persevere in prayer and not to give up. In fact, Jesus told whole parables to encourage us to keep on praying and not to give up, keep knocking. So important that we remember that.

Hey, did any of you guys happen to see the sign I had out on the electronic sign up on the road? We popped a message on there that just simply says, have you prayed about it? I don't know if you saw that or not. Yeah, I thought, you know, that's going to be good as people drive by. I want them to see that, I want them to see, you know, cause everybody's going through something. They all got something going on in their life. They're driving along, I don't know, I'm thinking about the guys in the onion trucks. You know, they go by here about one a minute during this time of year, you can hear them, you know, and I'm thinking, you know, here they are.

They're going through something in their life, they're going through some challenging, difficult thing and everybody needs that reminder. Have you prayed about it? You've probably done everything else in your power, but have you prayed about it? And I challenge you with that same question. I love this, that's why you see, this is so beautiful and the result, look at the result speaks for itself. It says, *“And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.”* Prayer works, prayer works guys.

Can I tell you something else though? Prayer is a kind of barometer of our faith. If you believe that your investment in prayer is going to pay dividends, you're going to spend more time doing it. If you don't think it's going to pay dividends, in fact, if you think it's going to be a waste of time to pray, you won't do it.

So, if you ever want to know how your faith is doing, look at your prayer life and I don't say that to condemn anybody. I just say it that it's kind of like the gas gauge on your car, you know. If you want to see how much fuel you got, you look at the gas gauge, am I empty? Oh boy, I'm getting close, lights on!, you know. So how much time are you spending in prayer? We do it when we believe it's going to have an impact. I believe prayer is powerful, but I have to be very careful all the time not to put an end date on my prayer and so do you.

So here she is, she gets pregnant, but yet now she's troubled about it. It says in verse 22, *“The children struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is thus, why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.”* And by the way, we're not told how Rebekah chose to inquire of the Lord, but here's what she found out. *“²³ And the Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, ...”*” Ladies, would you like to hear that from the Lord? Two nations are in your womb? You're thinking, good grief, what kind of stretch marks are going to come from this? I've got two nations in here, right?

Heavens!, *“²³ ... and two peoples from within you shall be divided; (that’s an important statement) the one shall be stronger than the other,* (and then, look

what the Lord told Rebekah) *the older shall serve the younger.*” What you're told, what we're told, what Rebekah was told right from the get go, is that the younger, and that means the second to be born, the second child to pop out was actually going to be dominant in terms of a preeminence; a power over the first born. And the reason that's an important thing for you to know is because this kind of introduces us here in the Book of Genesis to this whole cultural idea of the first born.

You know, we don't think of it like this in our culture today. First borns aren't usually considered to be any more in line to be blessed or, you know, as anybody else in the family. But in this culture, the firstborn son, particularly, would, by virtue of that birth order, possess a birthright that gave to him a superiority of rank above and beyond any other children who would be born after him. And he would receive the lion's share of his father's estate, if not in some cultures, the whole estate. So this was a huge thing, a birthright was a guarantee of a prominent portion of the father's blessing and estate and he would also carry on the family heritage in a way that the others did not.

So, this is important for you to know and it is very important as a theme of what this story begins to develop for us going forward, okay? But I do need to stop here also for just a moment before I go on and tell you that this theme of the natural order of things being either disregarded or transcended. Because that's what God is saying to Rebekah, I'm going to disregard the birth order. The second baby to pop out, it's actually going to be more powerful and have preeminence over the first. I'm going to disregard it, okay, that's what God is saying.

Culturally, the firstborn will be considered to be the one who has the birthright. God says, I'm going to, I'm going to overrule that, all right. Now here's what you have to understand, this theme of overriding natural order, this is huge in the Bible and even here in the Book of Genesis. I mean, we've already seen it. Sarah had a baby when she was 90 years old, that is God overriding the natural order of things, right? You with me? Women who are 90 don't conceive, but she did.

Rebekah, contrary to nature, it says she was barren, she couldn't conceive. She had a baby, God overruled that natural order that was going on in her body for whatever reason. And Jacob, as we're going to see in the birth of these two babies that are right now in Rebekah's womb, Jacob, the second born would be the stronger and the more powerful, contrary to the natural order. And the reason that this runs through scripture is because it shows the sovereignty and the power of God.

Listen, it's exactly what Jesus did during His earthly ministry when He went around healing people. People were sick, some people had already died. Jesus raised them from the dead, what is that? If that isn't transcending the natural order, I don't know what is.

I mean, it doesn't get much bigger than that. They were dead, now they're alive, Jesus was here. Somebody is sick and they're on their way out, somebody has leprosy. People didn't get better from leprosy people, they didn't improve. When you got leprosy, you had to look forward, the rest of your life, however short it might be, to a very painful existence, where you slowly lose your limbs, because they become infected and fall off, and then you die. And Jesus healed those people contrary to the natural order.

But He did it to show the sovereign power of God, and God alone to turn the natural order on its ear, you with me? This is the miracle working God that we serve and this is a theme throughout scripture.

Verse 24, *“When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. (I love this) ²⁵ The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau.”* There's some word play going on here that you need to be aware of. Esau sounds like a Hebrew word that means hair, so he was named due to his hairy condition, in a sense. It's kind of like calling him Harry, kind of.

Verse 26, *“Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob.”* Or Ya‘aqov, it would have been in Hebrew. But here again, the name, and Jacob sounds similar to the Hebrew words for “heel” and also “deceiver.” Those words don't sound alike in English, but they did sound very similar in Hebrew.

And so this whole idea of..., if someone was called a heel grabber that was a term that was used to describe someone who we try to pull the wool over people's eyes. Even that phrase, pulling the wool over someone's eyes, that's something you and I understand. Heel grabber is what they understood and that meant deceiver, someone trying to pull a fast one on you.

And we're going to see just how fitting that name was by the way upcoming in Jacob's life as we go further, but in the end of verse 26, we're told that, *“Isaac was sixty years old when she (Rebekah) bore (the boys) them.”* So that means they were married for 20 years before she became pregnant, 20 years.

How long do you suppose Isaac prayed for Rebekah to have a baby? How long do you suppose? I mean, they would have expected her to become pregnant naturally within the first year of their marriage, I'm sure, but it was 20 years. We know he was 40 years old when they got married, 60 when the boys were born. How long did Isaac pray? We're not told, all we're told is that Isaac prayed, but you can bet that he had been praying for a long time. Do you think 20 years is too long to pray for something? What do you think? That's a long time to pray I'll grant you, but is it too long? Would you pray for 20 years for something?

Would you pray for someone's salvation for 20 years? How about 30? How about 40 years? Would you pray for someone that long? I believe that there are some people who come to Christ whose ministry is just to lay things before the Lord in prayer. They may not do anything that you and I would recognize as great, but in the kingdom of heaven, they move mountains because they're the kind of people that get down on their knees and they pray and they don't stop praying until the mountain moves.

And I think some of those people, we're going to find out who they are when we get to heaven and we're going to kind of think that person? That was that little mouse of a lady that used to sit in the corner and never talked to anybody, she moved mountains, you know, because she just wouldn't stop. She wouldn't quit, she wouldn't say, enough. She kept praying and kept praying and kept praying until that mountain moved. Boy, I tell you, I have deep respect for that.

Verse 27, we're told, "*When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, (he wore khakis, I guess, he was) a man of the field, ...*" He liked camping outdoors, you know what I mean? You know the kind? Yeah, it doesn't need an outhouse outdoors, he's fine. "²⁷...*while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents.*" So, what we're told here in verse 27 is something that most parents who have ever had more than one child have learned and that is the incredible difference in personality and ability that can pop out of, you know, the same parents. But you get these 2 kids or 3 or 4 or whatever and they are so incredibly... I mean, they're birthed by the same parents, raised in the same home, raised with all of the same ideals and teachings and upbringing and so forth and they are just, that's absolutely the opposite of one another. It is just incredible and that's, you know, Esau and Jacob were just that way.

We read on in verse 28 that, and this is the problem see, this is the problem when you have differences in personality and ability, sometimes one parent, you know, it appeals to one parent, not the other. It says, "*Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, (in other words, he liked the meat he brought and the game because he'd fix it up and make it, Isaac liked to eat it) but Rebekah*

loved Jacob.” Because he liked, I guess, to stay in and make cookies or something, I guess, I mean, they had their favorites. That's what it's saying here, they had their favorites.

Now, that's not a good thing, ultimately, I will say that, this is not a good thing. It happens in homes, but it's something that parents have to be very careful about. But can I just say something? This is a total sidebar, you can throw this out with the trash, but I do see parents making a mistake of trying to treat their kids the same and they're probably doing it because they do have a favorite, maybe.

I shouldn't try to say that I know why they do it, but it is, it's okay. When one of your kids attains a goal in school or in sports or in career or something like that, it's okay to honor that child and not the one that didn't, you know. When it's one child's birthday, you don't have to get a present for the other one whose birthday is six months later just because you're afraid they're going to feel left out. Their birthday is going to come around and it's okay for a kid to learn, it's their turn. It's not your turn, it's their turn. That's not playing favorites but see, I think some parents fall into that trap, alright, end of soapbox, done.

Here we go. Now, I just need to tell you that the next 6 verses that we're going to read are very critical to understand the development of how these 2 boys and the Lord, work through their personalities to accomplish His sovereign purpose. Verse 29, *“Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. ³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!”* (and then we're told parenthetically) *(Therefore his name was called Edom.)*” Because Edom means red and this has a double meaning because you'll remember when he was born, he wasn't only hairy, but he was red hairy. So it kind of had this double sort of a weird connotation for him.

Verse 31, *“Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright now.” ³² Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” ³³ Jacob said, “Swear to me now.” So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way.* (and then this final statement is the most important one of all, please take note of it) *Thus Esau despised his birthright.*” Very important, very important and that statement right there reminds us that God looks to the heart.

Can you trade your birthright for a bowl of stew? No, you can't, that's stupid. But you can show what you really think about it, you can show how you, whether you prize it or not. Because remember, the birthright that naturally or

culturally, I should say, it went to the first born. That was huge in this case, this is not just riches and possessions, this is a covenant promise, right? But Esau was a man who was willing to trade all that for a bowl of stew. He was willing to..., he showed in that by doing that, that this is not an important thing to me, it's just not and here's why.

We already know that Esau was a man of the outdoors, but more than that, he was a man who was dominated by his physical appetites. We all have physical appetites and I'm not just talking about what you put in your stomach. A physical appetite could also be any sort of sensual pleasure or need or whatever and we all have them. We all get hungry, we all get tired, we all need love and affection, but when we are dominated by those physical needs, we tend to look at spiritual needs as of lesser importance, you with me? What this shows more than anything is that Esau devalued what was spiritual in his life and he valued it so little he could trade it away for a bowl of stew.

And those actions by Esau are so important for us to see and understand that it actually even warrants a warning that is expressed in the New Testament from Hebrews. Let me show you this on the screen from Hebrews chapter 12, it says,

Hebrews 12:15-16 (ESV)

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal.

Right? So that's, you know, the writer of Hebrews is citing several things that we're to stay away from. But the last one there is what Esau represents. That attitude of unholiness that says, I don't care about those things that are sacred and given by God, all I care about is getting my fleshly needs satisfied right here, right now, give it to me, right? And that's the dominating factor of his life.

Now, on the other hand, Jacob being true to his nature, Jacob understood the value of his brother's birthright, right? He did, he knew that this was a big deal, but in order to get it, he manipulated his brother, who he knew was hungry. He appealed to his brother's physical need which he knew that Esau valued more than anything and he used that to get what he wanted. He is the heel catcher, he is the deceiver. So there's nothing going on in this passage that is praiseworthy in any way between these two guys.

But now we're going to take a break from the story. Oh, wow, we're getting close to the top of the hour. I don't think I have enough time to get through this chapter. Let me just read through and let's see how far we can get, okay.

Chapter 26, *“Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines.”* This is crazy, you know, because this is going on right where the war is happening right now. Gerar is this area of Canaan, Palestine that is, this is it, this is where it's happening. This is the Gaza Strip where the war is happening right now. But, it says that he went to live there because there was a famine.

“² And the Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you.” This is great. God stopped Isaac from making the first mistake that his father made, you remember? Abraham went to Egypt because there was a famine and he got in trouble there. The Lord spoke to Isaac and said, don't make the mistake your daddy did. He said, *“³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.””*

So, you'll see how the Lord reassures Isaac of the covenant promises originally made to Abraham. And you know, frankly, those assurances should have kept him from doing what he did next. But it says in verse 6 that, *“... Isaac settled in Gerar. ⁷ When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,”* (good grief, same thing daddy did) *for he feared to say, “My wife,” thinking, “lest the men of the place should kill me because of Rebekah,” because she was* (a dish!, that's not what it says, it says) *attractive in appearance.”* But you know what I mean, right? She was a knockout and so, we see these two areas where Abraham and Isaac are alike.

First of all, they both married really pretty women, but second of all, they both gave in to fear and they lied about the relationship they had to their wives in order to save their own skin.

And it says in verse 8, *“When he had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac laughing with Rebekah his wife.”* Now, stop there because, well, hold on. Let's go ahead and read the next 2 verses. One verse, *“⁹ So Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Behold, she*

is your wife. How then could you say, 'She is my sister'?' Isaac said to him, "Because I thought, 'Lest I die because of her.'" You might think, well, that's really weird. How in the world would Abimelech discern that Isaac and Rebekah were married just because they were outside laughing together? Well, if you read this in the NIV, it actually says, *"he was caressing his wife."*

Oh dear, out in broad public where..., it's called PDA folks, public demonstration of affection right in front of the king. Anyway, the reason the NIV translators put, *"caressing his wife,"* it doesn't say caressing his wife in the Hebrew, but the word that is used denotes an act of intimacy. It simply doesn't specify what it was. It just says that Abimelech saw Isaac doing something that husbands do with wives, it was some act of intimacy.

Now, that would appear to be the case because, as we said, in verse 9, Abimelech responds by going, this woman's your wife, why did you tell us she was your sister? And, of course, Isaac responds by saying, well, I figured they'd kill me, if they knew she was my wife, so they could get her.

Verse 10, *"Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us." ¹¹ So Abimelech warned all the people, saying, "Whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.""* Do you know how similar that is to what his dad went through, right? It's like the same thing, right down the line.

"¹² And Isaac (it says) sowed in that land and reaped in the same year (look at this farmers) a hundredfold. (he sowed and reaped a hundredfold, he reaped a hundred times what he sowed, wow!) 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." And were all made aware that the blessing that we're reading about here in these verses was due to the Lord having His hand on Isaac. And this is such an important warning that we... We see actually a warning given to us in the Book of Deuteronomy about understanding that God is the one who blesses. Let me show you this, Deuteronomy, chapter 8. God says,

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 (ESV)

Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth...

It's Him, it's Him, it's not you, it's Him.

“¹⁵ (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 this was probably an attempt to get Isaac to leave so that he'd need to go find water elsewhere because he'd gotten so powerful. “¹⁶ And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.” ¹⁷ So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar (so he basically moved away from the city and into the valley) and settled there.

¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, ²⁰ 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 contended with him.” And Esek means contention or dispute.

“²¹ Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah.” Which means hatred or hostility. “²² And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, (and that means room or a broad place, a large place) saying, “For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

²³ 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.

²⁶ When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army, ²⁷ Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?” ²⁸ 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, ²⁹ 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. You are now the blessed of the LORD.”” Once again, you know, just what happened to his father with the king of Gerar.

“³⁰ So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. ³¹ In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths. And Isaac sent them on their way, and they

departed from him in peace. 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." ³³ He called it Shibah; (and that, by the way, that's another Hebrew word that sounds like the word for oath) therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day."

Now we're talking about Esau, this is the way the chapter ends. "³⁴ *When Esau was forty years old, (so we've just gone back in time a bit) he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, ³⁵ and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah."*

So it's kind of interesting, this last chapter ends with a bit of a snapshot of Esau. Remember the man who lived by his physical passions and he's showing here by his actions that he cares nothing about marrying within the family expectations like his father had done, you know. And there was nothing in his heart that desired to preserve or protect the covenant promises that you know, had been given to his grandfather, Abraham and to his father, Isaac. And so these are just further signs of how unfit Esau was carrying on the promises of God. So that's where we're going to stop and let's pray.

Father, we thank you so much for the time tonight to dig into these 2 chapters and open our hearts to the meaning. We thank you for the many lessons that are found here and Lord, we pray that you would help us to grow in our faith, that we might trust you with all of our hearts, that we might be obedient to your Word and all things. That we might walk in the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit, guided by your Spirit, that we might be responsive to your teaching, that our hearts would long to know more, to be faithful.

Thank you, Father, thank you for the things we've learned in these chapters. We commit them, Lord, to our hearts for our spiritual growth. We pray these things in Jesus holy and mighty name, amen.