

Wide Open Spaces

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[0 : 00] A Pastor's Reflections, Wide Open Spaces, Genesis 26, 22. And he removed from thence, and digged another well, and for that they strove not.

And he called the name of it Rehoboth, and he said, For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. 1 Corinthians 10, 13.

There hath no trial taken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the trial also make a way.

Isaac's decision to dwell in Gerar had not turned out quite as he had hoped. True, he was able to receive provisions during the famine, but the amount of strife and hassle it brought to his life was beginning to outweigh any of the positives.

Having left the city of Gerar, Isaac is then essentially hounded across the countryside by those who would hope to use his blessings for their own benefit. Every decision Isaac makes only brings more strife and more quarreling.

[1 : 05] Surely God is punishing him for his mistakes in Gerar. No, God is most certainly not punishing Isaac. In fact, it is quite the opposite. What may look to Isaac as evidence of divine displeasure is actually evidence of God's loving hand at work in his life.

How so? At every turn, the men of Gerar are hounding him and chasing him. Yes, they are. They are hounding him right out of a bad situation and into the wide open spaces of God's blessing. God knew where Isaac needed to be, and it wasn't in Gerar. Isaac needed to be in a place where his own voice of fear and the world's voice of strife would be drowned out by God's still small voice of grace.

When Isaac arrives at Rehoboth, he realizes that not only has God brought him to a place free of strife, but a place full of promise and potential.

What had at one time appeared as God's displeasure was now in hindsight viewed as simply the means by which God brought Isaac into the wide open room of God's grace.

[2 : 12] For you and I, it is so easy to see the strife and the problems of our lives as evidence of God's displeasure, of proof that I am doing something wrong and have brought some type of punishment or curse upon myself.

The truth, however, is quite to the contrary. Not only is God most definitely not punishing us, he is not even a little bit upset with us. Isaiah 49, 14-16 But Zion said, The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.

Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget. Yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hand.

Ephesians 2, 14 For he is our peace. In Christ, we no longer need to fear the displeasure of God. All that would ever cause God to look unfavorably upon us was placed upon Jesus at the cross. When the trials come, and they will, remember that God's will is not for you to stay in the trial, but that the trial would be a means by which you are brought into the wide open spaces of God.

[3 : 31] Father, thank you that your will is being done in my life, even when I can't see the evidence of it. Help me to understand that no trial is outside of your control, but is in fact part of your plan of grace.

Thank you for taking me from the dark hole of fear and placing me in the wide open room of your love. Amen.