

# A Culturally Relevant Church - Acts 19:8-22

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[0:00] I want to open your Bibles to Genesis chapter 26. We are just getting into the life of Isaac. And we finished up, oh, I don't know how long we were hanging out with Abraham, but that was some good times.

And now into Isaac in Genesis 25, we saw where we finished out Abraham's genealogy, looking at his second wife, Keturah, looking at Ishmael's line, and then jumping into Isaac.

And it gives us this picture of kind of their home life. Isaac and Rebekah, Isaac entreating for his wife. She conceives and gives birth to Jacob and Esau.

So 26 is going to be just a picture of Isaac's journey of faith. It's a pretty cool chapter. And then we'll be right on into where we start to pick up the narrative where Jacob's going to mainly take over that, and we'll follow him then for a long time and his descendants.

But in Genesis 26, I had thought, I'd studied the whole chapter and thought, I'm going to do the whole chapter. Then I thought, I'm going to do a half of the chapter. Then I thought, I'm going to do a third of the chapter. So I don't know what we're going to do. We're going to find out. We'll see how the Lord goes through this.

[1:05] The title for my message today is Like Father, Like Son. And we're going to see as Isaac kind of retraces some of the steps of Abraham, but as God takes him through this journey to establish his own faith and not just the faith of Abraham's.

There's kind of three main parts of the chapter. Verses 1 through 16 is the first chunk, and it's where Isaac's going to go down to, he's going to go to Gerar because there's a famine. I call that things go south.

And then it's broken down into three parts within there where the Lord appears to him the first time. And then you see Isaac doing the same thing his father did, where he lies and says that his wife is his sister.

And then he stays there, and the Lord begins to bless him. Life becomes good. He's living the life. And then he leaves Gerar. He's on the road again. He's back out, and he goes through this series of wells where he's re-digging some wells.

He's finding new wells. And then verses 23 and 25, the third section is he returns home. The Lord appears to him again, and Isaac begins to take his faith for himself.

[2:08] And then Abimelech comes back, the king of Gerar, and wants to make, at that point, a covenant with him. And the very last part, it's kind of tagged on there. It doesn't really fit, but it does.

Harry gets married. Well, that's Esau. Remember, Esau's name means Harry. So Harry gets married, and that kind of is in between 26 and 27. I'm sorry.

But the first section we're going to look at is 1 through 16, and then we'll see where we go from there. Verse 1. So Isaac, just like his father, this says there, like the first famine.

Remember in Genesis chapter 12, shortly after Abraham leaves his father's house, comes into the land of Canaan. And finally, after Terah dies, he's up in Haran, he comes down into Canaan, and there's a famine, and he goes to Egypt.

He's out of there. He has to Egypt, and he kind of pulls this stunt where he says Sarah is his sister, his wife's his sister. So this is, referring to that, this is now this second famine.

[3:16] There's a famine like that. And so Isaac goes to Gerar, which we'll look at where that is in a moment, unto the king there. If you remember from Genesis 21, Abraham makes a covenant back then with the current king of the Philistines, the Abimelech.

Abimelech is like saying king. If you see in Genesis 21, it says, And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the chief captain of his host, spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with you in all that you do.

Now, therefore, swear unto me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's sons, but according to the kindness that I've done unto you, shalt thou do unto

me, into the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

And Abraham said, I will swear. So Abimelech and Phicol, those aren't their names. That'd be like saying king and general. So we wouldn't say high king, high general, you know. So it's saying the king and the general.

They make a covenant. And if you see it there, it says in verse 23, he says, make a covenant with me and with my son and my son's son. So he says, Abraham, let's make a generational covenant. [ 4 : 24 ] So Isaac is kind of responding to that. And it's like, I'm going to go to Gerar. There's a famine in the land. I'm going to go and get sustenance there. And that's where he heads. And in verse 2, it says, And the Lord appeared unto him.

This is God's first personal appearance to Isaac. And he said, go not down into Egypt. Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land.

So this is God's first appearance to Isaac since his father's died. It's his first personal appearance. Remember in Genesis 25, we looked at the faith of Isaac and Rebekah. They didn't have children. It was 20 years after they were married, before they had kids. And in the middle of chapter 25 there, in verse 21, it says that Isaac entreated the Lord. He went to the Lord with this impossible problem. We see then Rebecca, when she gets pregnant, she goes to the Lord. And she inquires and says, what's going on? You know, so the faith in their home wasn't to go to outside sources. It was to go to the Lord, to receive his word.

[ 5 : 24 ] And they accepted it. So there is a faith there. But Isaac, if you remember at that time, his dad was alive. Abraham overlapped Jacob and Esau by 15 years.

So when Abraham dies at 175, Jacob and Esau are 15. So at the time that Isaac and Rebekah are seeking the Lord for children, his dad's still there.

You know, he's still got that support. He's still got that feature in his life that he can look to and go, that's right. The Lord is real. That's right. My dad, his faith, the thing that I've counted on for so long. But the Lord appears to him now for the first time. And he says, don't go into Egypt. Stay in the land, in the land of Canaan, in the promised land. Stay in this land.

Sojourn in this land. And the word there, sojourn, means to turn aside, to dwell or abide, or with a sense of doing so temporarily. Right? If you go on vacation, you're going to sojourn for a week, essentially.

[ 6 : 26 ] You're going to dwell there. But you're not going to stay there long term. And technically, that's how we live in this world. No matter how long you stay in one spot in this world, it's only a sojourn. Because eventually, we're all going to move on.

I've lived where I grew up, in upstate New York. And then we lived in an apartment after we got married. And then a house there, my wife and I. And then we moved down here, lived in Highland Creek, northeast Charlotte.

Rented over here. And now where we're living. So that's like six different places. All of those places, except the place we were renting, I had expected like, well, this is where we're going to be. This is where we'll be.

And then the Lord moved us. I sojourned. I didn't even intend to. But I was sojourning. I was dwelling there. I was abiding there. But it was temporary. And so he says to him, sojourn in this land.

Continuing on in verse 3 of chapter 26. What does he say next? He says, if you do that, and I will bless you. I will be with you, I'm sorry, and will bless you.

[ 7 : 24 ] For unto you and unto your seed, I will give all these countries. And I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham, thy father. Sojourn in the place God has placed you, Isaac.

Stay here in the land. What are the three things that we see there? God promises his presence.

You stay here, I'll be with you. God promises his blessing.

I'll bless you. And then we have God's promise. Presence, blessing, and promise. He says, hey, I will do for you what I've promised to your father. Sojourn in the place God places you.

And there is God's presence, there is God's blessing, and there is God's promise. And continue on in verse 4. He then reiterates the Abrahamic covenant. He says, I'll make your seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries.

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. The Abrahamic covenant. What's that consist of? Well, he's just reiterating what he said to Abraham in Genesis 12. Covenant of the land, of a nation, and of blessing.

[ 8 : 27 ] He says to them, I'll make your seed to multiply as the stars of heaven. A nation. You'll have a people. And will give unto you all these countries, the land. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

There's a blessing. So he's saying to Isaac, as Isaac's heading to Gerar, the Lord doesn't say, what are you doing? You should be relying on me. Right? He's going to lead Isaac through this journey. And bring him to a place of a stronger faith, where he's going to own his own faith.

But right now he's just telling him, Isaac, you stay where I put you. And I will be with you. And verse 5 says, the reason is, not because of Isaac's faithfulness. Isaac's going to receive faithfulness from the Lord, but not even for his own obedience.

It says in verse 5, because that Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. That's a lot of ways of saying, Abraham did what I told him to do.

And because of that, Isaac, you will be blessed. God's faithfulness to Isaac was the result of the faith and obedience of another. Remember in Luke, I think it's chapter 5, where there's the paralytic. [ 9 : 38 ] And those four people, they bring him to the house. It's in Capernaum. It says they come to the house. Most likely it's Peter's house. And they can't get in because of all the people that were there. So they go up on the roof, and they start ripping the roof open.

Poor Peter. Remember, Peter's mother-in-law lived there too. So, but poor Peter. They're ripping the roof open, and then they lower him down. And if you're going to rip open a hole in a roof and lower a guy down as quick as you can, you know, when I was in Sunday school and in the flannel graph, the guy came down.

He was always laying like horizontal. But the quickest way is to rip open a hole, strap him tight on his pallet, and drop him, drop him down. You can just picture him coming down in front of Jesus. Hey, Jesus.

But Jesus does what? He looks and he says, he sees their faith. Seeing their faith, he says to the paralytic, Son, your sins be forgiven you. Now, is he forgiving him based on their faith?

No, not at all. Not at all. But it was their faith that picked up this man. It was their faith who brought him to Jesus. It was their faith who persisted in getting him to Jesus in an impossible situation. So that the man's faith in that moment when he's looking at Jesus comes alive.

[ 10 : 47 ] And he says, your sins are forgiven you. So very often, it's not just my faith in my life that I'm receiving a blessing from. Here we are sitting in a Calvary chapel.

Look back over the years. How many people's faith have we been building upon? So yes, we have to own it. But we receive a blessing, a huge blessing from other people's faithfulness.

And God wants to do the same for us. So Abraham obeyed. These are a lot of words. Essentially meaning that Abraham obeyed. Where it says, because the Abraham obeyed my voice, that's to hear with understanding.

So it's his voice. He's hearing his voice. And he's saying, yes, I understand what I need to do. And I'll do it. He kept his charge. That's he took custody of it. He owned it. He said, okay, this is what you want from me.

I'll own that. I'll take care of that. He kept his commandments. Those are moral precepts. He knew what God expected of him, of how he should live. He kept his statutes.

[ 11 : 46 ] Those were limitations. God put limitations on him. We have limitations on us as people of God. There's things we can't do and shouldn't do. And it's not because God's keeping us from things that are fun and delightful.

He's keeping us from things that are harmful. And then Abraham kept my laws, which is instruction for the purpose of direction.

God gives instruction for the purpose of direction. The blessing and benefit of Abraham's obedience became Isaac's, as long as he, too, chose to abide in the faith of his father.

You see, Isaac was being given the same chance Abraham was. To obey, to believe, right? Abraham believed God and was counted to him for righteousness.

So Isaac here is being given the same opportunity. Isaac, I will do all this for you. Will you believe me? Now, a true faith results in obedience because we only do what we believe.

[ 12 : 46 ] We only act upon things we believe. And if you look at your life, you'll realize that. I only do the things that I believe. We get in our car and we turn the key because we believe it'll start. If you didn't believe it would start, you wouldn't be sitting there turning the key.

It just doesn't make any sense. And Isaac, in verse 6, he dwelt in Gerar. Gerar means a lodging place. So where is this land that he's told to sojourn in, this place?

Pretty small. It was a lot bigger when I was picturing it. But there you can see in relation in Israel, in Jerusalem, there's Hebron. That's where Abraham was dwelling at the time when the angels come to him and tell him about Sodom and Gomorrah.

He's in Hebron. This is where Isaac would have been brought up. And then you see down at the bottom there, Bir Lehorai. That's the well of Lehorai. That's where when Hagar runs from Abraham and the Lord meets her and says, go back.

She names it the well of the living one seeing me. Isaac hung out, would hang out there. This is where he loved to be. And when Rebekah is brought to him by the unnamed servant, this is where he is.

[13:51] And so when he goes to Gerar, he's leaving from there. And the Lord is saying, don't go down into Egypt. Stay in Canaan. Stay in the land. If you want to do a little exercise with me, pull your phones out.

You have your phones. And go to your maps, whatever maps you use. Or you can just follow along. And then type in Tel Heror. T-E-L-H-A-R-O-R. Tel Heror. Suppose we should put a H in there since Hebrew.

Tel Heror. H-A-R-O-R. And it should take you to Israel.

And there is a historical site there. That's the belief of where Gerar is. Tel Heror. If you zoom out from there.

[14:50] Keep zooming out. If you look down the bottom right, man, you cannot see that on that map. Wow. I'll zoom in. There is.

Come on up. There it is. Still can't see that. It's Beersheba. Which would be Beersheba. So if you look at where that red dot is, down to the bottom right, where you see a little bit, there's some more population.

That'd be Beersheba. Beersheba today. That is where Abraham dugged a well, the well of the seven oaths. That's where Isaac's going to end up at the end of this chapter.

If you look to the west of that, there's something else there. What is that? Gaza. If you look right around Tel Heror, if you can see on your phones, because this is not behaving, you can't see very well.

There's Ophakim, or where Gerar is. This is where Isaac's being told to go, to sojourn, to stay.

[15:47] So he goes to Gerar. Gerar means a lodging place. God said to Isaac, he said, sojourn in the land. Live like it's not going to be your home. Where does Isaac go? He goes to a place where he's going to lodge. He's going to lodge himself there.

He's going to stay there. In verse seven, and the men of the place asked him about his wife. Hey, who's that lady with you? He said, she is my sister, for he feared to say she is my wife.

Lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she was fair to look upon. Isaac, much like his father, begins to formulate this plan.

Isaac was not alive at the time when Abraham went down to Egypt and lied about Sarah, nor when he did so the first time to Abimelech in Gerar. It's possible Sarah could have been pregnant at the time with Isaac, but he was not alive at that time.

No doubt he heard the story. So here he is in this place, and he's fearing these consequences of the truth. The truth never fears consequences. Never. Why does the truth never fear consequences?

[16:53] Because the consequences of denying the truth are a hundred times worse than whatever consequence the truth may present. So as we speak the truth, there's consequences.

People have given their lives for the truth. But the consequences of denying the truth are eternal. They last much longer. Never fear the consequences of the truth.

So we see Abraham, he did the same thing in Genesis 20, went down to the same place, and compromised. But there's one thing different, and I'm going to throw it up there. In Genesis 20, if you look there partway down in verse 12, he says, And yet, indeed Sarah is my sister.

Abraham's saying this to the king Abimelech at that time. She's the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. So Abimelech, the king of that time, not the current king of this time, or almost a hundred years later.

But at that time, Abraham, he says, well, it was a half-truth. She really is my sister, but I'm married to her. At that time, it was okay, kids. Don't look at your sisters and think, ugh.

[18:03] But Abraham's half-truth becomes Isaac's whole lie, doesn't it? Isaac was not sister to Rebecca. He could say, well, she's like my cousin twice removed on my dad's side.

But Abraham's half-truth had become his son's full lie. A compromise, no matter how small, is still a compromise. For Abraham, it seemed like a small thing, and yet here's his son taking that a step further.

And why is that? You see that all the time. When you look in with people who, like, maybe as an adult, and you can handle something, and then your kids grab onto it, and they can't. Why is that? I think it's because as adults, and we allow things into our lives, and maybe we compromise on it. Maybe we say, well, okay, I'm going to compromise right now to get through this to the other side. That's not who I am.

And I need to kind of get through this, ugh. When I get to the other side, I can be who I am again. Then we know who we are. Our kids are still formulating who they are. They're still building and figuring out, who am I?

[19:02] Who's my character? And when they see mom and dad do something, they take that into their lives and go, okay, I'm going to build this into who I am. And that then becomes who they are. And we see so often kids taking things a step further.

In my life, it was kids I grew up with in the church and conservative families. I was homeschooled. They were homeschooled. And their parents, you know, they would drink wine, a little alcohol. And I'm not judging you if you drink.

I'm just saying some of their kids could not handle that. And they're full-blown alcoholics today. Because what their parents could handle, their kids looked at as a stamp of approval. You see it in the church.

The things that the church does, people look at that and go, well, that must be God's stamp of approval. If the church is doing it, well, God must be saying it's okay. Okay. So Abraham, what seemed to him maybe a small thing, has been passed on to his son.

A small lie for Abraham becomes a full-blown lie here for Isaac. Now, did Isaac inherit Abraham's sin?

[20:02] In the sense of, is this a generational curse? Is this sin being passed down from Abraham to Isaac? You see Isaac doing the same thing as Abraham? No, I don't think so. Numbers 14.18 says, The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth.

Generation. So it says the Lord is long-suffering, merciful. Any who want to enter into that can take part in that. But those who don't, those who reject that, then he's not going to clear the guilty. He says you need to be part of this or not. And where it says they're visiting the iniquity of the fathers, doesn't say passing upon them curses generationally. That's visiting the iniquity. A kind of little example would be, let's say you make a really dumb financial move in your life, and then you pass away and you pass that financial burden on your children.

They now have to bear that. You are passing on your iniquity to your kids. The Bible does not teach generational sin, but it does teach generational consequences. Ezekiel 18.20 says, The soul that sins, it shall die.

The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

[21:28] No, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. But my sin can have generational consequences. Something I do could have consequences for my family down the road.

Abraham's sin was not passed on to Isaac in the sense of the generational curse, but his moral weaknesses and tendencies that eventually led to that sin were.

My kids were born with a sin nature. Where any of yours? A couple. Okay, not the new people. That's good. Right? So that's from Adam, which was passed down and passed down and then to me and to my kids.

So it's not just physical characteristics and traits that are passed on. They're spiritual traits because a fallen sinful nature has been passed on to my children. So that means there are traits within us,

tendencies, weaknesses, failings, that will be passed on to our children.

But the cross breaks all curses, doesn't it? Galatians 3.13. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

[ 22 : 32 ] For it's written, cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Isn't that amazing that Paul says that there? That Jesus became a curse to break all curses so that the blessing of Abraham can come on me.

I'm not Isaac's seed, but through the seed, through the Messiah, through Jesus, I can enjoy the same blessing of Abraham. That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. And so Abraham's promise, where he said it was land, a nation, and a people, was more than that, right? It was Jesus, and it was a promise of a new heart of flesh. I will take out of you the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

The Spirit. And as we continue, so Isaac is, this is kind of, I think, his mindset where he's at when they ask him, you know, tell us about your sister. And he's lying, and he's in his mind coming up with these thoughts and ideas and this crazy plan.

And the men of the place, in verse 7, asked him of his sister, and he said, I'm sorry, asked him of his wife, right? And she said, and he said, she's my sister. For he feared to say, she's my wife.

[ 23 : 45 ] So as we read there in verse 7, he feared to say. Well, what is speaking right now? Is Isaac listening to the voice of the Lord? Nope. Is Isaac listening to the voice of his wife? Probably not. Hey, honey, pretend you're my sister.

Are you sure? Remember what happened with your dad? This is going to work. We're not in Egypt. And I got a covenant with Abimelech. This is going to be great. You know. Fear. He's listening to fear.

What does fear say? Well, fear talks nonsense, doesn't it? This is nonsense, Isaac. You're afraid that they're going to look at you and kill you because of your wife?

That's nonsense. Think with Abraham. When he went to Gerar, and he says, Sarah, say you're my sister, okay? She actually gets taken into the harem. She actually gets taken in to be the wife of Abimelech.

Abimelech then finds out in a dream that, hey, wait a minute. This is really Abraham's wife. When was Abraham in more danger? When he's just walking the streets with his wife, telling everybody that it's his wife?

[ 24 : 45 ] Or when the guy actually took her into his harem to be his wife? I mean, if I was Abimelech, I'd be like, okay, yeah, go kill him. I mean, he lied to me. I got this woman as his wife.

It's never happened. Not only has it not happened, it's ridiculous to think it's going to happen, that someone's going to kill you for the sake of wanting to take your wife. But here he speaks nonsense. Fear talks nonsense. And this is what Isaac's listening to. It speaks compromise. Isaac, just lie a little bit to get through this. It speaks suspicion. You know, everybody around him now is a potential assassin.

And it speaks self-preservation. That Isaac, instead of looking out for his wife, is now looking out for himself. Self-preservation takes a low view of others, doesn't it?

Because I need to stay alive. And if I need to stay alive, then the best thing I can do is put you between me and the problem. So self-preservation all of a sudden elevates my need to stay alive or preserve myself in a situation, to get through a situation, and I'll throw you under the bus so that I could stay preserved.

[ 25 : 52 ] And we see Isaac here just slipping into this. In verse 8, it came to pass when he'd been there a long time. That means stretched out. So he's been there a good stretch of time. The Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out a window and saw, and behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah, his wife.

Isaac was treating his wife like his wife. And Abimelech looks out the window. I mean, come on, dude. If he's looking out the window, you're outside his palace. You know, like, you want to lie to him, and here you are.

Well, the truth can never be contained indefinitely. The truth is going to come out. No matter how hard we try to contain it, it cannot be contained indefinitely. You know, Paul would later write in the New Testament, he'll say that the word of God is not bound.

You can't bind it. You can't hide it. You can't keep it. You know, we think of the scripture that no man lights a candle and puts it under a bushel, but that it may give light to the whole house. Well,

how silly is that?

Have you ever lit a candle and tried to put a wicker bushel over it? It's not going to stay that way for long. The whole thing's going to catch on fire. The truth can't be contained. But here you see Isaac, when he should be standing in the gap for his wife, is willing to put her in a harmful position.

[ 27 : 06 ] In verse 10, And Abimelech said, What is this that you've done unto us? Remember what happened last time when Abraham lied to him. They were plagued with health problems, to say the least.

And so this Abimelech, who probably knows that story, he says, You know, if she was your wife, hey dude, we wouldn't have touched her.

Now that she's your sister, someone might have just taken her and treated her as their wife. That's pretty, kind of a low standard that the culture has, don't you think? Just grabbing someone's sister and thinking, Oh, I'm going to treat you as my wife.

Isaac cannot justify his compromise because of the culture's low moral standard. And neither can we. We can never justify our compromise or our reason for compromise because of the culture's low moral standard.

Well, I had to do this because the culture, we don't compromise because of the culture and their standards. And we see with Isaac, the closer he's dwelling to the world, the harder it is for him to maintain holiness, the harder it is for him to be separate.

[ 28 : 21 ] And verse 11, Abimelech charged all his people saying, He that touches this man or his wife, sister, shall surely be put to death. Then Isaac sowed in that land and received in the same year a hundredfold, and the Lord blessed him.

What in the world is going on? Isaac, you lie. You get caught. And the guy, instead of saying, You know what? Throw him in jail. Yes, let's put him to death. He says, Nobody touch him.

Nobody touch him. And then God does what? Pours out blessing on him. He sows in the land. He receives a hundredfold. What is going on? The word there, received, in verse 12, Then Isaac sowed in that land and received literally means found.

Isaac came upon. Isaac found in the same year a hundredfold. It's God's grace. It's God's grace.

Despite Isaac's failures and lapses, Isaac chose to do what?

He still abode in the land, didn't he? All this is happening in the place God told him to stay. And in that place of God's blessing, God is pouring out his grace upon him.

[ 29 : 25 ] Grace supersedes all of our failures and dumb decisions. Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound, though? Says Paul in Romans 6.

God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? So despite Isaac's failures and lapses, God is still bringing blessing to the man.

Verse 13, And the man waxed great and went forward and grew until he became very great. In that verse right there, five times there's a Hebrew word used.

The word and, the phrase waxed great, the phrase and grew, the phrase he became, and the phrase very great are all the same word. And it means to grow or magnify.

This verse is loaded with that word five different times, saying that Isaac has become great. God has blessed him, and he's grown, and he's being magnified. And I like there where it says, too, and he went forward.

[ 30 : 22 ] The Lord is using many things to bring Isaac forward. So now as we kind of wind down the section of Gerar here, it says in verse 14, For he had possession of flocks and possession of herds, and a great store of servants, and the Philistines envied him.

For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them and filled them with the earth. So the Philistines, the world begins to envy Isaac.

Their response is, Hey, instead of taking part in the blessing, let's do what we can to stop him from being blessed. And that's the world's response. They don't understand grace. They don't get it. The world responds to grace and blessing instead of joining in and taking part.

Come, be part. Come and receive new life. Come to Jesus. No. Well, I'm being really blessed.

Yeah, I can't take that either. I need to stop it. So what do they do?

They fill a source of life, a source of water, with filth and contamination, one shovel full at a time.

Let's fill this up. You're not going to get blessed either. We're going to fill it with filth.

[ 31 : 32 ] We're going to fill it with dirt until they've cut off all supply. They envied Isaac, and envy has shut off the flow from these wells. And then Abimelech says to him, Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we.

He's like, Isaac, it's time for you to go. It's interesting. He didn't kick him out after the whole lying thing, because it's after he's been blessed by God, and he sees that blessing. Right now, Abimelech says to Isaac, Go from us, for you are much mightier than we.

When we get to the end of the chapter, which is not going to be today, and that's okay, Abimelech's going to come back around. He's going to say, I can see the Lord is with you. He's going to recognize this true source of Isaac's greatness.

But right now, he just looks, and with understanding of the natural, he says to Isaac, Man, you are too mighty for us. Get out of here. We see God's promise coming to pass. You should be a mighty nation and a great people.

And God is building that. And this relationship that Isaac hoped was going to work between him and Abimelech, Abimelech, we can make this work, okay? I just need to draw supply from you, and we'll stay here, stay out of your business.

[ 32 : 42 ] And God is bringing the separation, and he's moving them apart. There's a principle here, to never seek to hold on to a relationship that the Lord is clearly moving you away from. When the Lord is moving you away from a relationship, or moving a relationship away from you, it's never wise to seek to hold on to that.

No, no, stop, stop. We can make this work. We can make it work. We can compromise. We can make this happen. And the Lord's trying to pull you away from that. He's saying, no, this is not where I want you to be.

And so Isaac is on the road again, in verse 17 there. And Isaac departed thence, and he pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father. For the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham. And he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

So Isaac leaves, and he goes into the valley. So there's the city of Gerar, and now he's down in the valley, or the wadi, those gullies over the Middle East that when it rains, they fill up.

[ 33 : 44 ] He's dwelling there. And as he's doing that, he comes across what? The wells that his father had dug. These wells that have been stopped up. Isaac discovered the same source of life that his father had.

Isaac goes and re-digs these wells. He opens them up, and he discovers the same source, drinking from the same source that his father had, the same source of water. And then it says that he continued on.

And Isaac's servants, in verse 19, they digged in the valley and found their well of springing water. That means living, like flowing water, like an artesian well, not one you have to stick a bucket down in and get, but where you dig, and the water just starts bubbling up and continually bubbles up, the living water.

It's like what Jesus talked about in the New Testament, that he who believes on me out of his innermost being will spring forth rivers of living water. So Isaac, he discovered the same source of life as his father, but he was not content to rest in the work of past generations.

He wasn't like, hey, I found Abraham's wells. I'm good. I'll stay here. This is fine. No, he continues to press on and he discovers his own source of living water. Hosea 6, verse 3 says, Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, his going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

[ 35 : 08 ] Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. You want to know? You want to know the Lord? You want to know what he has in store for you? Do you want to know what your purpose is in this life? Do you want a relationship with him?

You must follow on to know the Lord. We can't rest content in the faith of the past, right? God wants us to have our own and to be moving on. We're going to get through a couple more verses and then we'll stop halfway.

Looks like. So, they continue on and they dig this well. Unfortunately, it doesn't go very good for them. In verse 20, it says, And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours.

And he called the name of the well, Isek, because they strove with him. And he digged another well, and strove for that also, and he called the name of it, Sitna. So, So, those two words, Isek, means strife.

Sitna, as well, means accusation. And then there's two words, the word strove is used twice, but they mean two different things. The first one there, Isek, with strife, means to pull.

[ 36 : 13 ] So, they're pulling, they're fighting over this well, and so Isaac names it strife. And the second one, I'm sorry, that's accusation. Sitna is accusation, and that's the word, strive there is quarrel.

So, there you can see it's more of a verbal kind of match. They're quarreling over this. Isaac doesn't, he doesn't stake his, put his stake in the ground and say, These are my wells. These are my father's wells. He just kind of moves on.

He's recognizing what God is, I don't think he's recognizing what God is doing at this point. I think he's probably frustrated. God, I'm trying to settle down. I'm trying. I've got a source of life. Isn't this where you want me?

I'm trying to do your will here. I'm bringing forth water from the well. God, don't you want me to serve you here? I've left Gerar. Why not here, Lord? I found a source here for my family.

Don't you want me to stay here? As God is moving us from this space to somewhere. It's like, Lord, it's been a good source. It's been a good place. Why not? God was stretching Isaac, and he was moving him forward to the place of God's choosing.

[ 37 : 18 ] Not Isaac's. Isaac chose Gerar. Isaac chose these places. Isaac dug these wells, and the Lord is now moving him on to the place that he has for him. And he removed from fence, in verse 22, 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. Wide places. God has brought Isaac to this place, where he's no longer constrained by the men of Gerar.

He's in this wide place. And he recognizes this. And he says, the Lord has made room for us. He's speaking forth in faith, upon the promise God had given Abraham and him.

He says, hey, I recognize this is God's hand. God has made room for us. God had used strife, false accusations, quarreling, all of that, to allow Isaac to discover what?

Where not to be. So then he could know where to be. Very often, God first shows us where not to be before we discover where to be. Why? Because I have to kind of get it out of myself that it has anything to do with me.

[ 38 : 27 ] Right? I'm planting a church. I had a lot of thoughts and ideas. And they weren't the Lord's. They are. Like, God shows you something, and he says, here's what's coming.

Prepare for it and pray for it. But I'm not expecting you to fulfill it. And I have a tendency to run out ahead and try and figure out how to put some pieces together, you know, and help the Lord. It's like doing a puzzle with your kids.

Well, not my kids anymore, but little kids. Right? They want to help. You're like, sure. You find the piece, where it goes, you hand it to them, you overlay it, and they go and push it in. That's our part with the Lord.

The Lord puts the puzzle together. He puts the pieces there. He finds the one. He lines it up. He goes, now push that one in. And we get to push it in. And he says, good job. Well done. Good and faithful servant. You've been faithful over a few things.

I'll make you ruler over much. He's like, Lord, I thought I was going to put the puzzle together. He's like, no, no, no, no, no, no. I wouldn't trust you to put a puzzle together. He's like, that's for me to do. You just push the pieces when I tell you to. Right? But I get out ahead, and I'm sorting through pieces, and making a mess.

[ 39 : 26 ] And it's just, and the Lord's like, no, I got my time. I've got a wide place for you. Second Timothy, chapter two, verse 24. And now, we'll close with this.

It says, and the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. And Isaac, as God is bringing him from a place of Abraham's wells, Abraham's source, Abraham's faith, and then you see the struggle and his contention as Isaac is trying to figure out where his place is.

What does he do? He just leaves him and moves on to the next one, and to the next one, and to the next one, and to the next one, until he ends up in this wide place there. In verse, what was that?

22. That God brings him to Rehoboth. You know, I think the application is that the stretching God does, the leading he does with us, where he moves us to, and the positioning, I want it to be comfortable.

I'm looking for the still waters and the green pastures. But so often, we don't appreciate those until we've gone through the dry places, until we've trudged through the valley of the shadow of death. [ 40 : 42 ] Then when we come into those places, there's an appreciation, there's a joy, and there's a recognition that God has done this, and it's not been me. I didn't make my own pasture. And for Isaac, he thought, well, I'm in the land.

This is good enough, right? God, I'm in church, right? And the Lord's like, no, I got more for you. I want a relationship with you. Okay, okay. My dad did this, and other people I know, I read their Bible for 10 minutes a day.

They went to a midweek study. Lord, I'm doing that. He's like, no, no, no. I want to bring you even further, because I have a well that I have for you. Lord, I found a well of living water. Surely this is where you want me.

Look at the fruitfulness here. And then the Lord takes that from him, too, as he moves him to this place now where Isaac says, the Lord has put me in a wide place. The crazy thing that we're going to see next time is he then leaves.

He says, God has brought me to this place. It's a wide place. And it's almost like he's at a moment of clarity where he's like, now I can make a true decision. Where does God want me?

[ 41 : 41 ] And what does he do? He goes, he's going to go back home, back to Beersheba, the well of the oath, and a lot of cool stuff happens. But anyway, scripture says that we're to be doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving our own selves.

And so often we sit in a message and we hear it and it resonates with us, it speaks to us. But how do you act on it? You know, are you going to go out and start a ministry, go change the world, you know, go home and break all your TVs?

I don't know, whatever. How do you act upon what God's spoken into your heart? It's through prayer. Prayer is the work. Prayer is where we ratify and we can say, yes, Lord, I want to say yes to what you've spoken in my heart.

I don't know how it's going to play out. I don't know the pieces of the puzzle. No idea. I don't need to know. But I want to say yes that I recognize you're doing this. That you're moving me, Lord, into a wider space. You want me to let go of what's been so comfortable.

These wells that my father dug, even some of the things that in my own life, Lord, you've allowed to take place that have just been part of who I am. And I recognize you saying, hey, it's time to go further. I've put you in this wide place so that you can make a decision.

[ 42 : 48 ] Now, what's it going to be? And we do that in prayer. So, Father, we're going to just sit now, Lord, we're going to worship and we're going to say yes and amen, just as all the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus.

Lord, we thank you for this picture of this man, Isaac, the son of promise. And yet, Lord, watching him trip and trudge and struggle and Lord, knowing how the rest of this chapter is going to play out and where he's going to end up.

But Lord, it's in the journey that our faith is built. You didn't take him from where he was in Lehorai, the well of the living one seeing me, right to Beersheba, the well of the oath, where there's a process in there.

He needed to go where he was not to be to know where he should be. He needed to discover, Lord, that you are willing to be with him as you were with his father Abraham. And Lord, his faith needed to be owned.

It couldn't just be Abraham's faith. And Lord, today we sit here with the same faith, owning the same faith of Abraham. This is Abraham's faith who believed God and was counted to him for righteousness.

[ 43 : 52 ] But it can't just be his. I have to own it. It has to be my own. Lord, that's the mistake that the Pharisees made. You said, you think, you search the scriptures because in them you think you have life.

But these are they which speak of me. And so Lord, let us not hold on to the things that look religious, that look like faith. But maybe it's empty of you, your presence, your promise, and your blessing.

So this morning, Lord, we want to say yes. We want that faith to be our own. And Lord, we want it to play out in our lives just like it did with Abraham. That we are willing to obey in every area. Not because it's part of our religion, but it's because of our relationship with you.  
So speak to us now, Lord, as we just sit in your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.