

An Altered Heart - Genesis 26:23-35

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[0 : 00] Okay, so last week I had grand plans to do all of chapter 26. That was pretty silly. But we came as far as verse 23 or thereabouts.

But we're going to back up and read a little. The synopsis is Abraham's gone off the scene. He's passed on. And Isaac has now received the inheritance from Abraham.

Abraham's second wife, Keturah, had six sons. They've all been sent out into the east. They're still in the east today. And those children of Isaac are still dealing with them today.

Isaac then takes Rebecca and the two boys, Jacob and Esau, who seem to be men by this time.

Because by the end of the chapter, we see Esau is 40 years old.

And there's a famine in the land. So they leave the well of the living one seeing me or Lahari, which is where Hagar, when she flees from Abraham the first time, when she's pregnant with Ishmael, because Sarah's being too hard on her.

[1 : 09] She meets the Lord there. She says, truly the Lord has seen me here. The well of the living one seeing me. And Isaac dwells there. That's where Rebecca finds him when the unnamed servant brings the bride to the son of promise, dwelling at Lahari, the well of the living one seeing me.

Says he comes from there. And then we see that that's where he's living. That's where he's dwelling. The famine comes into the land. And it says, like the famine, the first famine during the days of Abraham. And Isaac then heads to Gerar.

So he stays in Canaan, but he heads to Gerar. And the Lord meets him and says, hey, don't go down to Egypt. So it seems like that was probably in his heart and mind. Like, I'm going to go to Egypt. There I can be taken care of. He says, dwell in the land.

Sojourn in the land. Stay in this land that I've given you. And Isaac does. He stays in Gerar. And then he decides to pull the same stunt that his dad did.

We said that, you know, Abraham's half truth had become Isaac's full lie. As he said, no, no, my wife's my sister because they might kill me.

[2 : 09] Well, it doesn't turn out that way. Abimelech doesn't kill him, but he reproves him. And then we saw God's grace as God pours out blessing upon Isaac. And it says he's blessed a hundredfold.

He reaps a hundredfold. And for Isaac, he's thinking, it worked. This worked. Okay, everything's okay. I can stay here. And he then begins to open up the wells that his father Abraham had dug. That the men of Gerar, the Philistines, because they were so jealous, they went and filled them back in. And that's what the world does. They can't understand grace. So they say, hey, look, if I don't understand it, nobody's going to have it. And so they throw all their junk and their filth at us to stop up the source of life.

But Isaac opens it up and he says, surely this is where God wants me to be. But then they come and they strive with him. Two different times they strive with him. And that's where we're going to pick up in verse 17. We're going to read through 17 to where we then begin breaking down the text in verse 24.

So let's pick up in verse 17. And Isaac departed thence and 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.

[3 : 17] 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. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley and found there a well of springing water.

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 or strife because they strove with him.

We said that word strove is different than the one in 21 that we're going to see. That one means to pull. So he calls the name strife because they're pulling with they're fighting with him. It's a tug of

war. And they dug another well and strove for that also.

That word there means to quarrel. And he called the name of it Sitna or accusation. Here it's more of a verbal thing that they're fighting over this. And so God was stretching Isaac and moving him toward the place of God's choosing and not Isaac's.

For Isaac, it seemed like, God, don't you want me here? I'm doing good here. There's ministry here. Isn't this the place? There's a source. And then he's on to the next place. Okay, surely this is the place you have for me.

[4 : 23] And then he moves on to the next place until he gets to verse 22. And he removed from the fence and dug another well. And for that, they strove not. He called the name of it Rehoboth. He said, for now, the Lord has made room for us.

We shall be fruitful in the land. And Rehoboth means wide places. Psalm 31, 7 and 8 says, And Isaac is saying, this is a wide place.

But the thing is, Isaac is doing what? He's viewing this from the circumstances. He says, okay, because nobody's fighting with me here. Well, this must surely be the Lord. The Lord's put me in this wide place.

And God is taking Isaac. If you remember, we looked back in 25, where we saw the home Isaac on chapter 25, Isaac and Rebekah had, where Rebekah can't have children.

So it says that Isaac entreated of the Lord for her. And then she's pregnant. She's like, if everything's okay, what's going on? And she inquires of the Lord. And you see how that they are entreating and inquiring. And it's this house that's built on faith.

[5 : 32] And Isaac, at the beginning of chapter 26, the Lord had come to him when he said, don't go to Egypt because I'm going to bless you as I've blessed your father, Abraham. So it's like, okay, Isaac knows the Lord.

Isaac has his promise. Isaac's in faith, right? Well, think of with Abraham. What did God say to him when he believed? He said, Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. That was right at the beginning. That was Genesis 15. When I think the Abrahamic covenant comes, when he cuts the covenant, it says, and Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Done deal. Let me live my life and take me to heaven.

But then God takes him on this journey of faith, right? So Abraham's faith was 100% genuine, but there's still more that God wanted to do with Abraham in his relationship with him and in his faith than just that, yes, you believed, but I want you to go deeper.

That's what we're going to see here with Isaac. God wanted Isaac to go much deeper than these wells that he's digging. Proverbs 20 verse five says, counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, like a well, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

[6 : 38] And so God's doing here. He's going to begin to draw this out of Isaac. And so our outline for today, this is kind of taking that piece from last week's, verses 23 through 35 is welcome home.

Isaac is turning his heart and heading back home. And then there's the breakdown within that 23 and 24. Isaac, it's the Lord visits Isaac the second time, 2.0. Verse 25 is Isaac's owned faith.

He owns it for himself. 26 through 31, unwelcome guests. And then 32 through 33 is welcome news. And then lastly, like we said, Harry gets married. It's Esau, right?

Esau means Harry. So he's going to get married. It's tagged on. And I didn't put it up, but my message for today is an altered heart. And yes, I'm notorious for bad spelling, but I know that's spelled wrong. Okay.

It's meant to be. An altered heart. So Isaac, his journey, if you remember, he was in the well of Lehorai or Beer Lehorai.

[7 : 41] And he goes up to Gerar. Hebron is where Abraham was when the angels come to him with the Lord. And the Lord says, I'm going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. And then Beersheba is where Isaac will then head to.

So he has stayed in the land. He stayed in that area. He did not go to Egypt as he's journeying here with the Lord on this journey of faith.

Okay. So now let's pick up in verse 23. And he went up from thence to Beersheba. Isaac is now moving in the right direction. He looks around at the circumstances.

Oh, God must be here. This must be God. And yet it's given him space. God has given him space. And where he begins to then realize, you know what? I need to go back. I need to go to a different source.

I need to go somewhere and find something deeper. And God begins to call him back, moving in the right direction to where he would have grown up. And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, verse 24, and said, I am the God of Abraham.

[8 : 45] Thy father, fear not, for I am with thee, and I will bless thee and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. Well, the beginning of chapter 26, he kind of says the same thing.

The Lord appeared unto him and said, Do not go down into Egypt. Dwell in the land which I shall tell you of. Sojourn in this land, and I'll be with you and bless you. For unto you and unto your seed I will give all these countries and will perform the oath I swore unto thy father Abraham.

But there's a difference. It's like, well, okay, he just reiterated the same thing. But if you look at verse 24 there in your text, there's an extra phrase in there that he does not say at the beginning of 26.

The Lord appeared unto him the same night and said, I am the God of Abraham, thy father. Fear not, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

Isaac has responded in faith. He says, okay, God has done this. God has put us in a wide place. And God never delays his response to faith. Never. If we respond to God in faith, God does not delay his response.

[9 : 48] You say, now, wait a minute. I've been trusting the Lord for 10 years for that whatever, and it hasn't happened yet. Well, God has not delayed in his response to your faith. He may be delaying your receiving the manifestation of that, but he never delays his response.

James 4, verse 8 says, draw an eye to God. He will draw an eye to you. That's a fact. If you take the time to draw near to God, he will draw near to you. You don't have to question, Lord, is this the right time?

I mean, 2 o'clock in the afternoon, Lord, I don't know. Are you going to draw near to us today? No, he will. 2 Corinthians 6, verse 17 and 18.

Paul writes, That's not a future thing.

That's currently, presently. If we choose to do that, if we come out from among the unclean thing, if we repent and turn to the Lord, he will receive us. We don't have to question that.

[10 : 53] Will this happen? And so the Lord has appeared to Isaac. And this, I think, is a lot more personal, right? This is speaking directly to Isaac. This isn't just Isaac. I'm going to do for you what I promised.

Yeah, there's promises in here. God will never leave me or forsake me, right? He says, I know the thoughts that I have for you, thoughts of peace, to give you a future and a hope, right? But then there's time God speaks to you directly, particularly.

And there's a verse that jumps off the page. And you're just like, wow, that's exactly what's going on right now in my life today. And God wants to bring us deeper into that relationship with him.

So Isaac's faith resulted in what? In greater revelation from God's word. As Isaac responded in faith and heads up to Beersheba, says God met him when? And the Lord met him that same night.

God responded. And he met him with what? His word. He spoke to him. So you see, just like Abraham, Isaac's faith was 100% genuine. 100% genuine.

[11 : 51] He believed God and was counted to him for righteousness. But that faith needs to go through testing, didn't it? So the beginning of the chapter, Isaac's at Lechari. He believes in God.

Famine comes. And Isaac says, ah, I need another source. This one's not doing it for me anymore. The Lord's going to take him through this whole journey to where he comes back to the source and says, that's the only source for me.

That's the source of my faith. Trials and tests prove our faith, not to God, but to us. God doesn't need to know if my faith is real.

He does. I need to see it proven and tested. And we've said it before. Your faith doesn't grow. Wait a minute. What do you mean faith doesn't grow? We need to grow in our faith. No, you need to grow, but your faith doesn't grow.

No, because the scripture says that you could have, if you remember the disciples, they came to the Lord and said, Lord, increase our faith. And he said, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can say this mountain will be removed in the sea and it will.

[12 : 48] So it's not the size of the faith. It's what's your faith in. You can have the biggest faith in the world in Buddha. Knock yourself out. No matter how big your faith is, it's still going to fail because Buddha fails.

But if your faith is that big and it's in something that never fails, well, it doesn't matter the size of your faith. It matters the size of what your faith is in. So as God tests our faith over and over and over, and he says in Peter, 1 Peter chapter 1, verses 6 and 7, he says, wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations or trials or testings, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than that of gold, which perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found under the praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Gold, the more it's tested and tried, the better it becomes, the more purified it is. Our faith is likened in the same way. As I go through something and I hold on in faith, no matter how big that faith is or how small, right?

And I see, God, you brought me through this. My faith didn't grow, but boy, God just did. What I recognize he can do in my life just got bigger and bigger and bigger. So the next time something comes along, I'm like, oh, I've been tested there.

I've tested God, my trust in you, and you came through. Praise the Lord. That's what's happening here with Isaac. See, Isaac had discovered that Abraham's faith could only take him so far, right? [14:16] He had redug the wells of his father. He had gone back through the same land his father had. But he needed to make Abraham's faith his own. Romans 4, 16 says, therefore, it's a faith that it might be of grace.

Faith is the only operative by which we can interface with God that we receive grace. Anything else would be works. Faith is not works. Faith is putting our trust in God to do all the work.

To the end, the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but that also which is of the faith of Abraham. That's us.

We have the faith of Abraham. You don't have any different faith than Abraham. He believed God. It was counted to him for righteousness. I believe God. It's counted to him for righteousness. But it doesn't do any good.

It used to be like, well, Abraham believed you, God. He says, yeah, OK. We come by the same means. We come by grace through faith. But we have to own it. Who is the father of us all.

[15:14] So just as Isaac was the son of promise, we can come into that relationship as well. So the faith you and I partake of today is the exact same faith as that of Abraham's. But also like Isaac, we need to own it.

How do we do that? How do we make the faith of Abraham and Isaac ours? We go to the altar.

Verse 25. And he built it there and altar and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent there.

And there Isaac's servants dug a well. This is Isaac's first altar. Do you know that? Abraham had built many altars. Isaac didn't. He was a well digger. This is his first altar.

But it wasn't the first time we see him at an altar, is it? Genesis 22, verse 9. And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham. He said, here am I. He said, lay not thy hand upon the lad.

[16:21] Neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thou fearest God. Seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked.

And behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. You know, we talk about this from the perspective of Abraham a lot.

You know, imagine sacrificing your only son. Bringing that which you cherish the most. Bringing your Isaac to the altar. Imagine being Isaac. What is dad doing? I trust him.

But he's binding me. He's going to sacrifice me. This God, he said, loves him. He has a plan. And I'm the plan. And now he's laying me on the altar. He's got the knife above me. And I don't think it's too hard to see why Isaac didn't like altars.

It's a little hard for him. Every time he's at an altar worshiping with his father, right? And they put the sacrifice up there. You know what Isaac's thinking? If that wasn't there, if that lamb wasn't there, he'd have to put me there.

[17:25] It was me who would be there. Abraham passes off the scene and we don't see Isaac have any more altars until now. Isaac, the son of promise, he knew better than most, didn't he, what

it costs to build an altar.

It costs a life to build an altar. Up until now, Isaac had sought to gain fulfillment without first paying the price. He went to the well first. He said, I want to get fulfillment.

I want to find a source. He wanted to drink from that well without first going to the altar. We can not go around the altar. The price must be paid. You can't get to the well without first going to the altar. Romans 3.23. We all know it. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The price must be paid. You can't get around that. You can't get to any type of fulfillment or life without first dealing with that.

Ephesians 5.2, though, says, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us and has given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

[18:30] The price has been paid because the son of promise went to the altar and laid himself on it in our stead. Hebrews 9.11 and 12. So because of the sacrifice of Jesus and because it was satisfied once for all, the altar to us is no longer a place of dread and of death.

Right. What's it become? Well, today we're going to take communion because for us today, the altar is a place of worship and memorial. Right. We come to the altar and we remember. We come now to worship.

And here we see Isaac doing the same thing, an act of worship. We saw the first time worship was used in the scripture. So that Abraham worshiped and is to bow. He bowed himself. Is to surrender and to kneel.

We come to the altar of the cross to remember the sacrifice of the son of promise paid on our behalf and to now worship with the sacrifice of our own lives.

We don't give ourselves like to have our throats cut and bleed out and to die. Right. But the sacrifice of our lives. Psalm 51.16 and 17 says, for thou desire is not sacrifice.

[19:51] Else would I give it. Thou delights not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. Oh, God, thou will not despise.

Isaac had learned the altar must come before the well. This is the same for us. We see the same thing in Acts. Peter, as he stands up and preaches his sermon, he says, repent, you therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out first.

Repent, be converted that your sins may be blotted out. For what purpose? When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. You have to do the one before the other. And so Isaac now has a relationship with God, which is now established on worship.

He's come to the altar. He's received the sack. He's made a sacrifice to the Lord. And now he comes and establishes relationship. Worship is a response, right?

God always initiates. We saw the same thing here. And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said. It's in response to God's word. God's word is the initiator. And then what does he do there in verse 25?

[21:01] And he built an altar there, one. And he called on the name of the Lord, two. And he pitched his tent there, three. And Isaac's servants digged a well, right? Picture of Isaac's personal faith.

And he built an altar there. He worshiped. He called on the name of the Lord. He trusted in his God. Shows he has faith. He pitched his tent there. He trusted him. Hey, I'm going to stay here.

I don't need to go anywhere else. This is where I'm going to be. Then he digged a well. There is fullness, right? There is satisfaction. There was a source. Isaac's relationship with God was no longer in response to his circumstances or his father's faith.

All legitimate in their own way, right? But to God's word. Because God's word had come to him and said, fear not, Isaac. You personally. I'm interested in you and I have a relationship with you.

Good stuff for Isaac. So Isaac now is dwelling here in Beersheba, where Abraham had dwelt. He has sacrificed to the Lord. He's made an altar and God has spoken to him.

[22:00] And then something interesting happens in verse 26. Dun, dun, dun. Then Abimelech went to him with Gerar and Ahuza, one of his friends.

Hey. And Phicol, the chief captain of his army. Remember, Abimelech just means my father is Malach. Abimelech, or my father is king. Ahuza, or Ahuzath.

I don't know how to pronounce his name. It means possession and Phicol, which is just a term for general, means strong. So this is a flex. Abimelech's coming with a flex. He's coming with, he's going to impress Isaac. He's coming in his own strength.

My father is king with possession and strength. And this is how he's coming to Isaac. And the world never comes with pure motives, right? The world doesn't come because they really want to receive what we have.

They come because they have something else they want. And so he comes with what he thinks is impressive to Isaac. He's coming in strength to Isaac. This is the guy who's just thrown him out. And Isaac now, we're going to see a different Isaac.

[22 : 58] But verse 28 says, Abimelech, the reason he's coming, he said, Well, we saw certainly that the Lord was with you. And we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us in thee. And let us make a covenant with you.

Proverbs 16, 7 says, When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Now you can substitute anything in there. When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his mother-in-law to be at peace with him.

When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his boss to be at peace with him. Right?

When a man's ways please the Lord. It is God who brings the peace. But for Abimelech, at this point in Isaac's walk, Abimelech, the evidence is undeniable.

That God's presence is now with Isaac. And Abimelech comes and wants to make this covenant.

And then Isaac, if you remember the last time Isaac spoke with Abimelech, Abimelech is charging him with lying about his sister, saying she's my wife.

And Isaac's like, Yeah, well, I said that because I was afraid she was going to die. That I would die for her. They would kill me. And then Abimelech comes and says in verse 16, he says, Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we.

[24 : 05] So at that time, Abimelech saw all the power was in Isaac. But he cast Isaac out. Well, if Isaac is mightier, why doesn't he just say, No, I'm not going to go. You know? But he goes.

So here we see a different Isaac. And Isaac was very confident of who he is in the Lord. And Genesis 26, 16 was to say, And Abimelech said unto Isaac, I'm sorry, we already quoted that.

Go from us, for thou art much mightier than I. And then verse 29 says, No, and I lost my place. 27. I knew we were there somewhere.

And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come you to me, seeing you hate me, and sent me away from you. He's like, What are you here for? You're only seeking something for your own benefit.

You kicked me out. You said you hated me. Why do you want to be here now? And they said, We have certainly said, I'm sorry, I mixed those two verses up.

[25 : 01] That's why I confused it. I read 28 before 27. Well, you already know what 28 is. Moving on to 29. As Abimelech continues to speak and say that there will be an oath between us.

And he says that thou will do us no hurt, as we have not touched you. We have done unto you nothing but good. I have sent you away in peace. Thou art now blessed of the Lord. That's exactly what happened.

Isn't it? They just had a great relationship and sent away in peace. No, not at all. Proverbs 20 verse 6 says, Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness, but a faithful man who can spine.

You know what a faithful man is? One who says, I blew it. It was me. Yeah. One who comes and says, Hey, Isaac, sorry. Can we be friends? That was really dumb. And it was me.

You know, there was a, it was all on me. I shouldn't have done that. There's a principle here.

Beware of those who would seek your good opinion by rephrasing facts in their favor.

[25 : 58] They're seeking your good opinion by rephrasing facts in their favor so that you'll go along with them. It's nothing more than insidious form of flattery. They're just trying to butter you up.

That's all it is. And that's all Abimelech is doing here. How does Isaac respond? He says, Get your butts out of here. Are you allowed to say that in church? Get your keisters out of here.

Go back to Gerar. Rawr. No. And he made them a feast. And they did eat and drink. And they rose up a few times in the morning and swear one to another.

And Isaac sent them away. And they departed from him in peace. Why did he do that? Because he'd come to the altar. Because there was nothing left. The price had been paid. And now Isaac could live exactly how Jesus says for us to live.

In Luke chapter 6, verse 27, Jesus said, I say unto you which hear, love your enemies. Do good to them which hate you. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them which despitefully use you.

[26 : 58] And unto him that smites you on the one cheek, offer also the other. Him that takes away your cloak, forbid him not to take your coat also. If he wants to take your well, let him take your well.

Give to every man that asks of you.

And of him that takes away thy goods, ask them not again. And as you would that men should do to you, do also to them likewise. Why? Be you therefore merciful as your father also is merciful.

Because we bear that name. You see, Isaac had an opportunity to treat these men the same way he'd been treated. Get out of here, guys. Or to respond to the same grace that he'd been showed. For us, never deny the peace of God to any who seek it. No matter their motive. Right? No matter their motive. If you have the opportunity to give God's peace to someone, great.

Now, look, scripture says to be careful. Because you don't want to say to a false prophet, go in the name of Christ, be filled and be blessed. Right? But if you have an opportunity, as Romans tells us in verse 18 of chapter 12.

[27 : 57] If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Live in God's peace with all people, if that's possible with you. Now, if they won't receive it, hey, that's nothing you can do about that.

And that will do unto us no hurt, for we have not touched you. So he says, hey, everything's fine. We wouldn't hurt you. And Isaac makes them a feast. And they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning and swear one to another.

And Isaac sent them away. And they departed from him in peace. What a difference. True power. Right? True power is in humility and grace. And here we see what?

And it came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him concerning the well which they had digged. And said unto him, we found water. When we saw that, that was in verse 25.

It's just a quick synopsis. He built an altar, called on the name of the Lord, pitched his tent, and there Isaac's servants digged a well. Well, this is the well they dug. So the same day that Abimelech comes, the same day he's dealing with his enemies, the same day the son of promise is being reconciled with his enemies, a source of water has been opened.

[29 : 01] It's crazy, the pictures. Right here. The son of promise had come to the altar, been reconciled to his enemies, and to open a new source of life.

Just like Abraham, Isaac had now experienced God's fulfillment at his own personal Beersheba. Because he calls the name of the place Sheba. Therefore, the name of the city is Beersheba. Unto this day.

Or the well of the oath. Or the seventh well. The complete well. The last well. The final well. Isaac has come full circle, right?

He was at Lahori, the well of the living one seeing me. Everything's great. This is great. Well, a famine comes. And his faith is tested. And he doesn't trust God to take care of him at that point. He takes his whole family on this journey until he comes back around now.

And he says, I have my own. God has given me his own oath. I have my own place of promise. My own source. But it came first at the altar. He had to go by way of the altar. Until Isaac built an altar, he was just hopping from place to place.

[30 : 01] Until he found satisfaction in the Lord. And then these last two verses. What are these for? Harry gets married. Well, it does fit.

We're going to see that. And Esau was 40 years old when he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beerli, the Hittite. And Beshemath, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite. Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

If you remember in Genesis 24, Sarah has died. And Abraham's like, it's time to find a wife for Isaac. And he says to the unnamed servant, he says, I'll make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell.

But thou shalt go to my country and to my kindred and take a wife unto my son Isaac. So there's precedent set here of what's supposed to happen. It doesn't say Isaac took a wife for Esau. It said Esau went and took him a wife.

Esau, a picture of the flesh, right? The flesh wants fulfillment. The flesh wants what it wants. And it goes out and seeks to fulfill its own desires. Isaac here has been fulfilled by way of what God has provided.

[31 : 05] Esau, his son, is running out to find his own fulfillment. Proverbs 17, 25. A foolish son is a grief to his father than a bitterness to her that bear him.

And here we see that. So the names of these wives of his and all the names that are given here, you know, we've said before, with the name, the name is the nature so often, especially in the Old Testament.

The meaning is behind the name, very often gives the character. And if you look at these names, his wife, Judith, literally means like the Jews or Jewishly.

Comes from Judah, which means, you know, praise. But also, but Judith, adding that on there, means it's like the Jews. And so here we have, he marries Judith, the daughter of my well.

Beery means my well. Look at this counterfeit picture the flesh tries to make here. Well, she's like a descendant of Abraham. She's like Abraham's family. And, you know, she comes from a well.

[32 : 04] And then Bismath means sweet smelling, you know, the sacrifices, sweet smelling odor going up before God. And her father is Elam, oak or mighty, you know, as you lay the wood on the altar on the sacrifice.

At the same place here, they are at Beersheba, where Abraham had planted the oak, the mighty oak that he would dwell under. But it doesn't matter how much they look like or seem like the real deal.

Look who they are. They're people of fear. Hittite means fear and terror. A personal relationship with God is an inward reality with outward evidence.

An inward reality, and there's outward evidence. Not an outward display with no inward evidence, right? You can have an outward display, but there's nothing evident on the inside.

There's nothing real in there. You know it. It's not real. But her personal relationship with God is an inward reality with outward evidence. So it does fit. It fits right on the end here because here you see the flesh trying to counterfeit everything God has just done.

[33 : 06] Trying to make, well, it's like this. She's like, looks like, it seems like one of Abraham's kindred. Well, this one, it's kind of like the same type of thing, Dad, really.

And the sad thing with Isaac is, you know, the scripture says, cast out the scorner and the strife ceases. Another proverb. Isaac, we already know his favorite, says his favorite was Esau.

And he's going to choose Esau, unfortunately. And he's going to continue to harbor him and cast out. Essentially, Jacob's going to have to leave. And he's going to retain Esau. And so we see Isaac, unfortunately, in the next chapter, where everything seems good in one sense right now.

Well, when we leave compromise, when we leave even a little bit of the flesh in our life, it eventually creates big problems. And Esau representing the flesh, Isaac continues to nurture and keep Esau. So as we close this, God was stretching Isaac, wasn't he? He was moving him forward from place to place until he got to the place of God's choosing, not Isaac's. Isaac's faith was built upon the same foundation as Abraham's.

[34 : 11] Even as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness, so then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. We which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham by the same faith.

Yet the faith you and I partake of today must also be made our own. By first what? Going to the altar. I have to go by way of the altar. Our altar is Jesus.

As we look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

He's set down because the work is done. The sacrifice has been made. He has gone to the altar. And so now we can look to our altar. Isaac had come to the altar and reconciled to his enemies.

And was now living in the fullness of God's promise. Right? The altar for us now becomes what? A place of worship in Momoro. We don't come to lay an animal on the altar.

[35 : 12] Right? But like Isaac, we look at that altar, we look at the cross, and we realize if Jesus wasn't there, guess who would be there? Me. For Isaac, every time he sacrificed an animal, you picture him now as he's, you know, Jacob and Esau, 40 years old.

You know, Esau, like, I don't know any of that or whatever. And Jacob made me like, Dad, what do we do? We haven't done sacrifices since Grandpa was alive. You know, I was 15 when he died.

And he's like, well, son, let me tell you.

I haven't told you about this part. Grandpa laid me on an altar once. You know, for Isaac, every time he put an animal up there.

You know, I was thinking about it that you could run out. Now, if you brought a lamb to be sacrificed, how often do you do that? How many sins do you let pile up before, like, I need to go, I need to go

and bring a lamb?

What if you run out of your lamb account? You know, you run out of money to buy a lamb. You could buy a dove. How often do you go? But then when you do, you have to take the thing. I mean, it's alive and it's there, and you've got to kill it.

[36 : 18] It's got to die. And there's got to be blood and death, and it's the end. And so for Isaac, every time he saw one of those animals and he did that, he's like, that's me.

If it wasn't for the head animal. It's the same for us. As we look to Jesus, man, he's the author and finisher. He endured the cross. It's done and it's finished. But if he didn't, where would we be?

Man, we'd have to endure all that. And it wouldn't be enough, guys. My sacrifice of my death just results in my death. It doesn't result in life, but it does in Christ.

So as we come to the altar, we're going to do communion this morning. Why? Because of the gospel. Because as Paul says, and very succinctly in 1 Corinthians 15, he says, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also you've received and wherein you stand.

Well, you have to do those two things. Paul says, I preached to you the gospel, but you have to receive it, and then you've got to stand in it for it to be of any effect in your life. By which you are also saved if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you believed in vain.

[37 : 24] It doesn't mean if you're like, oh, no, I forgot today. What's the gospel? No, it's a memorial. You're remembering. That's what we're doing. We're keeping it in memory because it's not in vain. It's the hope by which we live our lives.

Let's pray.

Father, how good it is, how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Lord, that unity has nothing to do with our backgrounds, our familiarity with one another.

It has to do with the oneness we share at the cross, Lord. We all come as sinners. We all go away saved and sanctified. We have put our faith in you.

Lord, we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. But he was in all points tempted, like as we were, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

[38 : 33] Shame on us, Lord. Forgive us, Lord, for being so slow to come to that throne of grace, thinking that I need to linger at the altar and throw something else in the fire of mine, Lord, when it's already been paid.

Lord, let us come back to the altar to remember, to worship, and then to receive, Lord, that new life and to live in fullness of joy. Lord, I pray your blessing upon my brothers and sisters here.

I pray that this week, Lord, we would go forth and we would live lives, Lord, altered lives. Lord, that our lives would truly be altered by you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.