

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

“Like Father, Like Son”

Genesis 26:1-35

2003

Introduction

I'll never forget the day I was watching TV while laying on my back on the floor. Johnny was about 3 years old. My legs were crossed, my head was on a pillow and my hands were supporting my head. I happened to look over at Johnny who was next to me – legs crossed, head on a pillow and hands supporting his head – with a big grin on his little face. At that moment it dawned on me what a great responsibility God had given me. My sons are watching, learning and emulating everything I do.

Over the years that responsibility has changed what I watch, what I listen to and how I behave. And every time I hear my boys defending their inappropriate behavior to my wife by saying, “But daddy does it”, I have had to give up another much-loved activity in my life. For example, over the years I have had to give up:

1. Nose picking
2. Belching
3. Fingernail biting
4. Eating in the living room
5. Questionable television and movie viewing
6. And, of course, every man's favorite -- Intentional flatulence

Now I know that many of you are thinking – especially the men – what's left to live for?!

Prov 22:6“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”
But to “bring up a child in the way he should go” I must travel that way myself.”

I The Covenant Promises Repeated

A. The Lord **appeared** to Isaac during a famine [and said]: [Verse 1-3a]

In an attempt to preserve his considerable wealth in livestock, Isaac went to Gerar to avoid the famine. Gerar was the capital city of the Philistines. It was a seacoast country on the southwest side of Palestine, just above the Gulf of Suez on the way to Egypt.

Now Isaac was not wrong for being concerned about the famine or feeding his family, but since we have no indication that God led this decision, he was wrong for failing to trust God to provide for his needs.

And so the Lord appeared to Isaac with this corrective word of instruction:

1. Don't go down to **Egypt**

Evidently, it was Isaac's intention to go to Egypt in disobedience to God's commands.

Isa 31:1 “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.”

Application:

When I’ve make decisions apart from the will of God I have often suffered for it.
Proverbs 16:25 “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

2. Live and stay in the land where I tell you to live:

a. I will be **with** you

Isa 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

b. I will **bless** you

Bless = Barak = “To confer divine benefit”

1. God blessed Abraham materially with flocks, herds, and material riches.
2. God blessed Abraham socially with honor, influence, and responsibility.
3. God blessed Abraham spiritually; through his line the Messiah would come.
And now He was passing that blessing on to Isaac.

Ps 37:3 “Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.”

B. The Lord reaffirmed the covenant **promises** [Verse 3a-4]

Again and again God confirmed His covenant with Abraham (Gen 13:14-17; 15:1, 18-21; 17:1-7ff.; 21:12; 22:17-18), but this is the first time that God has spoken to Isaac.

1. I will give these lands to your descendents

Ps 105:8-11 “He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: “To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit.”

2. I will make your descendents numerous as the stars

- a. The dust of the earth - Gen 13:16-17; 28:14
- b. The stars of the heavens - Gen 15:5
- c. The sand of the seashore - Gen 22:17

3. Through your offspring all nations will be **blessed**

This is an affirmation what God had already said in Gen 12:3; 18:18-19 & 22:17-18.

Galatians 3:6-9 “Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”

C. The Lord explains the basis of the promise [Verse 5]

1. Because Abraham obeyed Me

Gen 22:15-18 “The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

- a. He kept my requirements
- b. He kept my commands
- c. He kept my decrees and laws

But we know that Abraham didn't do this perfectly. So how could God say it? Because Abraham was declared righteous not by works, but by faith (Gen 15:6).

Application:

In the same way, we are found righteous not because of our own good works, but because of the obedience of Jesus Christ.

Heb 5:8-9 “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”

D. Isaac's response to God's command [Verse 6]

1. He stayed in Gerar

Jn 14:21 “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.”

II The Sins Of Abraham Repeated

A. Isaac repeated his father's sin [Verse 7]

The first two occasions involving Abraham are recorded for us in Gen 12 and 20.

Similarities between the sin of Abraham and Isaac:

1. Both failed to trust in God during a famine.
2. Both men sought relief in Gerar, the land of the Philistines
3. Both Abraham and Isaac had beautiful wives
4. Both men feared for their safety
5. Both lied by saying that their wife was their sister
6. Both put their wives, others and the covenant of God at great risk

7. Both sinned against Abimelech.
8. Both were rebuked by the ruler of the Philistines.
9. Both failed to recognize the gravity of their sin or repent of it.
10. Both men entered into a treaty agreement with the Philistines.

1. He **lied** to the men of Gerar about Rebekah

Amazing! Like Sarai, even at age 60, Rebekah is such a beautiful woman that just being seen with her was a life-threatening experience.

Out of concern for his own safety, Isaac caves in to the temptation to pass off his wife as his sister, and as a result, willfully puts Rebekah's purity and safety at risk.

Lev 19:11 "Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another."

2. He chose to fear **man** rather than God

Prov 29:25 "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe."

Ps 27:1-3 "The LORD is my light and my salvation -- whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life -- of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident."

Application:

How do you respond when the pressure is on? When the finances are low? When you're having conflict with your spouse? When you have no idea what to do next? When you are discouraged or angry? When you have been mistreated?

Whether you realize it or not, your life, character and choices are influencing people around you – your spouse, your children, your family and friends.

The choices you make often have immediate consequences . . . but there are often long-term consequences as well. For good or for evil – your lie is influencing the people around you.

B. Isaac's sin of deception was exposed **[Verse 8-11]**

1. Abimelech saw Isaac caressing his wife

This is not the same "Abimelech" from chapter 20. The name "Abimelech" was a title of an office, like "Pharaoh," rather than a given name. The same is true of "Phicol", which explains the fact that the names "Abimelech" and "Phicol" are found in chapter 26 as well as in chapter 20.

2. Abimelech **confronted** Isaac - Gen. 20:9-10

- a. She is really your wife!
- b. Why did you lie?
- c. You could have brought guilt upon us!

It must have been a humiliating experience for Isaac – this man of faith, this great

patriarch of the saints to be rebuked by a pagan king for his deception.

Three possible motives for Abimelech anger:

1. He regarded marital purity of greater importance than Isaac (unlikely)
2. He was afraid of God's judgment
Undoubtedly, he knew of how Abraham's lie had led to God's judgment against his people some 100 years earlier.
3. He was holding Isaac to a higher standard because of Isaac's claim to a special relationship with God.

Application:

It is right and appropriate for unbelievers to look at our lives more carefully and with greater scrutiny.

Mt 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

At this point, Isaac should have immediately repented of his sin. But there is no evidence in the text that he did. So instead of being a source of blessing to the nations (12:2-3), had become a source of stumbling for the people of Gerar.

Application: James says, "We all stumble in many ways."

The question is, "What should you do if you fail?"

1. Admit your sin. Don't justify or excuse your behavior. Instead, take full responsibility for what you have done.
2. Confess your sin to God and to the offended party.
3. Ask for forgiveness without justification.
4. Make restitution for what you've done.
5. Humble yourself and ask for prayer for strength to not re-offend.

Prov 28:13 "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

3. Abimelech gave orders to protect Isaac

a. Anyone brothering them would be put to death

Ps 105:12-15 "When they were but few in number, few indeed, and strangers in it, they wandered from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another. He allowed no one to oppress them; for their sake he rebuked kings: "Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm."

C. Isaac was **blessed** by the Lord [Verse 12-14]

Gen 24:1 "Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the LORD had blessed him in every way."

In spite of Isaac's failure and sin, God didn't rescind His promises to Isaac, because the

promise didn't depend on Isaac, but on God.

1. He planted crops and reaped a hundredfold
Remember that this happened in a year of famine (26:1). This was a miracle!!
2. He became rich and very wealthy
3. He was blessed with flocks, herds and servants
4. He became the **envy** of the Philistines
Ps 112:10 "The wicked man will see and be vexed, he will gnash his teeth and waste away; the longings of the wicked will come to nothing."

III The Opposition To God's People Repeated

A. The Philistines became **hostile** toward Isaac [Verse 15-22]

1. They stopped up all his wells
"The digging of wells was a virtual claim to the possession of the land, and it was this in particular that the Philistines resented." Their opposition to Isaac's claim on their land was so intense that they preferred to fill in a well, an asset of great value in such an arid land, than to allow his claim to go unchallenged.
2. They forced Isaac to leave Gerar
If you didn't have water, you couldn't take care of your livestock. And so Isaac had no choice but to move on.
3. They repeatedly quarreled over Isaac's wells
God used the adversity and opposition of the Philistines to lead Isaac back to Beersheba. If you recall, Beersheba was the place where Abraham "planted a tamarisk tree [the place where he and Abimelech established a treaty], and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God" (Gen 21:33). It was also the place where Abraham had gone with Isaac after they came down from the "sacrifice" on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:19).
It was a place of worship – a place of God's presence and blessing.

Application:

Often God allows adversity of one kind or another to:

1. Move us physically to where He wants us to be - Acts 17:10
2. Move us spiritually to "be mature and complete, not lacking anything"

B. The Lord **appeared** to Isaac and said: [Verse 23-25]

1. "I am the God of you father Abraham"
Matt 22:32 "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."
2. "Do not be **afraid**, for I am with you"

Isa 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

3. “I will bless you and increase your descendents”

Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord”

1. It was a place of worship

Hebrews 13:10 “We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.”

2. It was a place of sacrifice

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

3. It was a place of absolute surrender

Romans 12:1 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship.”

C. The Philistines requested a treaty [Verse 26-31]

1. They saw **clearly** that the Lord was with Isaac

Despite Isaac's failures, he none-the-less was the recipient of God's covenantal blessings and protection.

2. They feared God's blessing on Isaac

Application: Rom 8:31 “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

3. They **swore** an oath confirming the treaty

Proverbs 16:7 - “When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him”

Conclusion

Let me highlight a few lessons that we can readily apply to our lives today:

1. Your life is influencing people around you.

"What kind of footprints are you leaving for those who come after you?"

Can you say with the Apostle Paul, “Follow me as I follow Christ?” If not, why not?

2. The covenant promises are not dependent upon your performance. The blessings that were passed on to Isaac were the result of Abraham's obedience to God. In the same way, your spiritual blessings and position before God are grounded not on your own performance, but on the performance of another – the person and work of Jesus Christ.

3. In spite of the many adversities you may face in life, God is behind the scenes orchestrating His divine and eternal purposes in your life:
 - a. Where you should be and when you should be there. Acts 17:10
 - b. Transforming you “into his likeness with ever-increasing glory.” 2 Cor 3:18
4. God is not thrown off by your failures. He is in the business of restoring broken lives. The Bible is filled with stories of how God took wicked, immoral people and offered them a new beginning. Even today He is offering forgiveness of sin through His Son, Jesus Christ. To those who are willing, they can become sons and daughters of God.

If you want to become a son or daughter of God and be assured of eternal life you must:

1. Repent of your sins

Repent = Metanoeo = “To think differently and to change course.”

Acts 3:19 “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord ...”

2. Reconcile your relationship to God through Jesus

Reconcile = Apokatallasso = “To put right a broken relationship”

1 Peter 3:18 “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

3. Realign your loyalty & allegiance to Christ.

2 Cor 5:15 “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

4. Make a public profession of your faith by being baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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