

Discussion Guide

Week of August 24, 2014

Genesis 26

Passage Overview: In Genesis 23-27, the torch of God's promise is passed from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. In the closing days of Abraham's life, Sarah dies, and Abraham turns his attention to finding a wife for his son Isaac. The story of Abraham continues in the account of Isaac and the birth of his sons, Esau and Jacob. God's promises are reiterated to Isaac, just as they were previously given to Abraham. Isaac not only receives the promises of God to Abraham but also inherits some of the same sinful tendencies, as we see in chapter 26. The promises of God are then passed down *not* to Isaac's older son Esau—as expected, but to Jacob. The big idea of this section of Genesis is that God is preserving an offspring (Gen 3:15) by the promises to Abraham being passed down to the next generation.

Understanding the Text—Read Genesis 26

- List the right and wrong actions of Isaac in this chapter.
- Immediately after God confirms his covenant promises to Isaac (vv.3-4), Isaac utters the exact same lie about his wife that his father did—even in the same place (Gerar) with the same king (Abimelech; see Gen 20). Nevertheless the Lord blesses Isaac abundantly in that land. He has so many possessions that the Philistines envy him.
 - Why do you think this account of blessing (vv.12-16) comes right after the account of Isaac's deception (vv.7-11)?
 - What does this suggest about the nature of God's blessing in our lives?
- The focus of vv.17-33 is on how Isaac moves about and digs the wells that Abraham had dug. This is not merely about water. It is about something more, since Isaac gives them the names that his father had given them. In particular, Beersheeba is dug with remarkable similarities to how it was originally dug in Abraham's time (Gen 21:22-33). God has promised Isaac that "in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (v.4). How is this seen in these verses?

Living and Applying God's Word

- Isaac committed the same sin as his father when he tried to pass off his wife as his sister. Isaac is fully responsible for his sin, yet his father set a horrible example for him (on two occasions!).
 - How can we fight against passing on our own sinful flaws to the next generation?
 - Parents, what sinful attitudes/actions/tendencies might you be passing down to your children? How are you countering this in the way that you parent?
- God's promises, purposes, and character do not change. The God who has promised and revealed himself to Abraham now extends those same promises and revelation to Isaac. What does this show us about the nature of God? What are the implications for us?
- Isaac is greatly overshadowed by his father Abraham and his son Jacob. His significance is first in his role in God's covenant-making with Abraham and second in his role in the life of Jacob. He just seems to be less interesting and have less drive and charisma than either his father or his sons, and yet God uses him greatly to advance his purposes. What comfort can we take from this? What does this teach us about the grace of God?

Prayer: Praise God that he works in and through 'average' people like Isaac and me and you. He is a God of grace intent on building a new people for his own glory. Pray also for one another.

Announcements

- Children's Ministry Basic Training (August 31, 9am; RSVP to nicole@insidecrosspointe.com)
- "One Another" Member Meeting (September 7, 6:00-7:30pm)
- Starting Pointe—September 12-14 (RSVP to robert@insidecrosspointe.com)