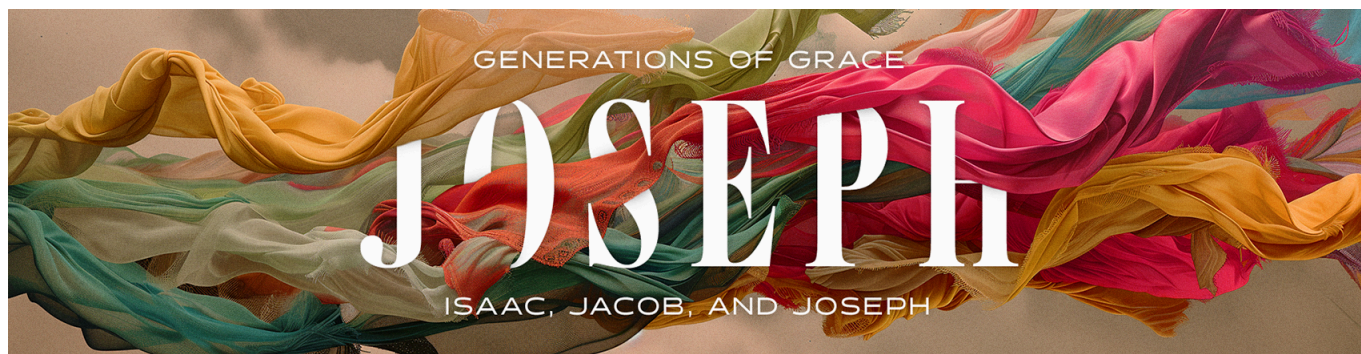




Genesis Part III (Week 1/8) The Blessing God

Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect *What makes you excited or apprehensive, as we come to explore the book of Genesis?*

Warm-Up

1. When the future is uncertain, what are you most likely to do: wait, worry, plan harder, ask for help, or take control? Why?

Read Genesis 26:1-11

2. What difficulty does Isaac face, and what does God tell him to do? Why might that be difficult?
3. What promises does God make to Isaac? What are the key features?
4. How do the promises compare with those made to Abraham? (Hint: read Gen 12:1-3; 17:1-8, 22:15-18)
5. How are trusting God's promise and obeying God connected?
6. What does Isaac fear about the people of Gerar? How might his actions be a threat to God's promises?
7. How do you respond when you're afraid?
8. How does God respond to Isaac's fear? How does God's faithfulness encourage you as you face your "fearful" reactions?

Read Genesis 26:12-33

9. What visible evidence of God's blessing does Isaac receive? How does this fulfil (in part) what God had promised to Isaac?
10. How does Abimelek respond to how God materially blesses Isaac? How does this incident inform how we can expect opposition?
11. How does Isaac respond to each "well" conflict? Why does he give credit to God when there is "room"?
12. What does God reaffirm to Isaac in v.24? Why might "*I am with you*" be better than an explanation?
13. How does Isaac respond to God's reaffirmation? Which of the three responses encourages you most?
14. What exactly did Abimelek and his men "see clearly"? Why is this significant from these men?
15. Why might Isaac need to hold onto God's promises, his blessing, and his presence?
16. Why do we need to hold onto God's promises, his blessing, and his presence?
17. How *ultimately* are all the peoples on earth blessed through Abraham and Isaac's family?

Apply *Knowing God's unchanging promise, presence, and purpose in Christ - what is one specific step you will take this week, and how can the group support you in taking it?*

Pray *Faithful Father, help us trust your promise, rest in the presence of Jesus, and take the next faithful step so that others may see your grace. Amen.*

GOING DEEPER

Genesis Part III (Week 1/8) The Blessing God Small Group Discussion Questions

On Your Frontline this Week

Who do you long to come to know Jesus? Pray for their heart to be open and for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus.

For Families

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen (sermon):* “Genesis 26:1-33 - Trusting God or Fearing Man” by William Taylor:
<https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/talk/9517/audio/>
- *Listen (sermon):* “Like Father Like Son” by J. Ligon Duncan:
<https://bit.ly/46XIRiy>
- *Listen (sermon):* “Learning Who to Fear” by James Fletcher:
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/learning-whom-to-fear/#sermons>
- *Listen (podcast):* “Genesis 26 - Compromise, Controversy, and Covenant” by Proclaiming Christ:
<https://reformedforum.org/podcasts/pc83/>
- *Read (devotion):* “Gen 26:1-5 - The Promise to Isaac, Part 1” by Ligonier.
<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/promise-isaac>
- *Read (devotion):* “Gen 26:17-35 - The Promise to Isaac, Part 2” by Ligonier.
<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/promise-isaac-part>

Series Resources

- *Read:* “Genesis” by Derek Kidner. 
- *Read:* “Genesis for Everyone: Part 2” by John Goldingay. 
- *Read:* “How to Read Genesis” by Tremper Longman III
- *Read:* “Genesis: Story of God Bible Commentary” by Tremper Longman III
- *Watch:* “Genesis 12-50” by the Bible Project:
<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-12-50>
- *Watch:* “How should we read the Old Testament?” by Dan Paterson:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJtba-IyPVg>

 Available to borrow from the St Bart's Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

GENESIS PART III (GENERATION OF GRACE)

Week 1/8 “The Blessing God”

by Justin Lai (04/10/2026, Toowoomba)

복을 주시는 하나님 | 賜福的神 | ஆசீர்வதிக்கும் தேவன்

Bible Passage: Genesis 26:1-32

*Faithful God, as we open your Word,
help us trust your promise, rest in your presence, and fix our eyes on Christ. Amen.*

Introduction

- When we hear someone say, “God has blessed me,” what do we expect next?
 - A new baby? A new job? Good medical result?
 - But what about when we’re afraid, facing opposition, or have made a terrible mistake? Is God still blessing us then?
- In Genesis, God promised Abraham a land and a family, and through that family, blessing for all nations (Gen 12:1-3).
- Now that promise passes to his son, **Isaac**.
 - Isaac seems rather *ordinary* beside the famous Abraham and Jacob.
 - And that’s what makes Genesis 26 so encouraging: God’s blessing does not depend on being an impressive hero, but *on the God who made the promise*.
 - So our question today is not simply, “*What kind of man is Isaac?*” but, “***What kind of God has committed himself to Isaac?***”
- We’ll see 3 things:
 - Same Promise, so do not doubt;
 - Same Presence, so do not fear;
 - Same Purpose, live so that God’s blessing is seen

Same Promise - do not doubt (26:1-11)

Our first point: the same promise. God gives Isaac his word, and his word is *enough* for him to take the next step - even when that step feels risky.

The chapter begins with a famine in the land. No rain, no harvest, and no one knows when it will end. For Isaac, this is not just an inconvenience; it's survival. Egypt looks like the obvious escape. But Gerar, God stops him. Let's read verses 3-6:

3 Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. 4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed me and did everything I required of him, keeping my commands, my decrees and my instructions.” 6 So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

- Notice what God gives Isaac. Not a forecast of when the famine will end, nor a cheerful, “you’ll be right, mate!” He gives him *promises*, summed up in four ‘Ps’ [D. Davis, *God’s Rascal*, 23]:
 - *Presence*: “I will be with you...”
 - *Place*: “I will give all these lands...”
 - *People*: offspring “as numerous as the stars...”
 - *Purpose*: “through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed”
 - Keep especially God’s presence and purpose in mind - the rest of the chapter will show God keeping both.
- But the point here is: *none of these promises is new*.
 - God had made these promises to Abraham. Now Isaac hears them for himself.
 - It’s as if God says, “Your father has passed away, but his God has not.”
- Verse 5 connects these promises with Abraham’s *obedience*.
 - That does *not* mean Abraham *earned* them through his own goodness. They rest ultimately on God’s grace.
 - But obedience still matters, because God works out his plans *through* the obedience of his people. [Belcher, *Genesis*, 175]
 - God’s grace does not make obedience unimportant; *it produces a life that takes God at his word*.
- So, verse 6: “*Isaac stayed in Gerar.*”
 - Nothing dramatic. *God speaks, Isaac obeys*.
 - An old Glasgow preacher put it this way: “Young people often have problems with guidance for the future...God will always give you enough light to take one more step... Take that step.” [Davis, 24]
- Isaac doesn’t know what lies ahead. Like his father, he simply *takes that step* because ***God has spoken!***

But then Isaac also follows his father in the bad way - verse 7:

- Isaac is afraid the people of Gerar will kill him because of Rebekah.
 - So he lies, “*She is my sister.*” It’s the same lie his father told, twice. (*Gen 12; 20*)
 - God has just promised, “*I will be with you.*”
 - But fear narrows Isaac’s vision: “*Will God really keep his word?*”
 - So instead of trusting God with the outcome, Isaac makes himself safer by putting his wife in danger—and lives with that lie for “a long time” (v.8).
- Until he is exposed! Abimelech sees Isaac ‘caressing’ Rebekah.
 - A little Hebrew joke - Isaac’s name means “he laughs,” and “caressing” comes from the same root word. So, “Mr Laughter” is laughing in a way that’s clearly not brother-sister behaviour!
 - And the joke is on Isaac. The man who should carry God’s blessing to the nations needs a *foreign* king to tell him - he nearly brought guilt on them (v.10). Ironically, the foreign king shows more integrity than God’s people.

- This should make us uncomfortable. We can sincerely say, “Lord, I want to live for you” and still let *fear* make our decisions.
 - Afraid for our safety or our name, we may protect ourselves at someone else’s expense, and sometimes we end up living a lie.
 - *Trusting God* doesn't mean pretending we have no fear or questions.
 - It means that when the outcome feels uncertain, we do not have to secure it for ourselves. We can take God at his word.
- And here is the encouragement:

Isaac’s lie is exposed - with all its shame and guilt - *yet God does not walk away!*

 - That doesn’t excuse Isaac. But it shows us our hope doesn’t depend on how strong our faith is, but on *how faithful God is!*
 - He has spoken - He will keep it - Do not doubt
 - So when we fail, we do not need to hide in lies.
 - In Jesus, we can confess, return, receive forgiveness, and keep trusting the God who has not changed.
 - And in our next point, God makes that promised *presence* even clearer.

Same Presence - do not fear (26:12-25)

Our second point: the same presence. Because God remains with Isaac, Isaac does not need to live by fear. Let’s read verse 12, then jump to verses 22-25:

12 Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him.

...

22 He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, “Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land.” 23 From there he went up to Beersheba. 24 That night the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.” 25 Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.

- Earlier, God promised Isaac: “*Stay in this land...I will be with you and will bless you.*” (v.3). And now that promise becomes *visible*:
 - Isaac reaps a hundredfold, even during famine! And becomes increasingly wealthy.
 - This is not a promise that every believer will become rich. In context, Isaac’s prosperity is a *special, visible sign* that God is keeping his promise to bless him.
- But God’s presence does not mean an easy life.
 - Isaac’s neighbours envy him. They fill his father’s wells with dirt, and Abimelek tells him to leave (vv.14-16).
 - So Isaac moves on and reopens Abraham’s old wells.
 - His servant finds fresh water, and the local herdsman quarrel over it.
 - Isaac calls it “Esek”, meaning “dispute”.
 - He digs another one; another quarrel. He calls it “Sitnah,” “opposition”

- But notice *Isaac's response* - he does not fight to seize the wells.
- He moves on and digs again.
 - Derek Kidner says Isaac was “*called not so much to pioneer as to consolidate.*” [D. Kidner, *Genesis*, 154] Isaac recognises his calling is to simply carry on faithfully what God has already begun through Abraham - not pioneering but just doing the next faithful step.
 - And sometimes faithfulness looks like that:
 - Not doing something new or impressive, but faithfully tending to what God has entrusted to us, doing the next faithful thing, day after day.
 - Perhaps it might be passing on faith in your family - praying for your children, telling them what God has done.
 - Or when the work is opposed, when family or colleagues mock our faith, we don't always need to fight for control. Sometimes we simply trust God - and dig again.
 - ***Because opposition does not mean God has left us.***
- Finally, at the next well, there is no quarrel. Isaac calls it “Rehoboth,” meaning “room” - “*for God has given us room and we will flourish in the land.*”
 - Then at Beersheba, God gives Isaac something deeper than visible blessing: “*Do not be afraid, for I am with you.*” (v.24)
 - After famine, fear, conflict, moving, and digging, God does not give him an explanation. Instead, he gives him himself: “***I am with you.***”
 - And notice this does not rest on how impressive Isaac is, but “*for the sake of my servant Abraham.*”
 - Same promise. Same presence.
- To this faithful God, Isaac responds in verse 25 - in *three ways* : [K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1B*, 412]
 1. *He builds an altar* - he worships!
 2. *He pitches his tent* - he stays where God has put him!
 3. *His servants dig another well* - he gets on with the work before him!
 - Notice the order - Isaac does not worship in order to earn God's presence. God comes to Isaac first. Then Isaac responds.
- Looking forward, Jesus gives his disciples that same assurance as he sends them to the nations: “*I am with you always*” (Matt 28:20). By his Spirit, Christ is with his people still.
 - His presence doesn't change when our circumstances change.
 - So we don't need to control every outcome. Whatever faithful frontline of yours - at work, at home, in your family, or in your walk with Christ - *you are NOT digging alone* - *God's presence is still there*. So,
 1. Worship him;
 2. Be faithful where God has placed you today;
 3. Keep digging!
- And we'll see, because God can use those ordinary acts of faithfulness to make himself known to others - which brings us to his ever-same *purpose*!

Same Purpose - Live so that God's blessing is seen (26:26-32)

Finally, the same purpose. God's blessing was never meant to stop with Isaac.

In verse 26, we see Abimelek arrives with his adviser and army commander - the very people who sent Isaac away. So Isaac asks: "*Why have you come, since you were hostile to me?*" (v.27). And we hear from verse 28:

28 They answered, "We saw clearly that the Lord was with you; so we said, 'There ought to be a sworn agreement between us'—between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you 29 that you will do us no harm, just as we did not harm you but always treated you well and sent you away peacefully. And now you are blessed by the Lord." 30 Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. 31 Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they went away peacefully.

- Notice the repeated theme:
 - Back in v.3, God promised Isaac, "*I will be with you.*"
 - In v.24, God reassured him, "*I am with you.*"
 - And now in v.28, even outsiders say, "*We saw clearly that the LORD was with you.*"
 - The king who once rebuked Isaac now publicly recognised that the LORD has blessed him.
- And remember, Isaac is not an impressive hero. He has been afraid. He has lied and struggled. Yet through all his weakness, *God's blessing has become impossible to miss.*
 - Even his former enemy sees this and gives the credit to God: "*Now you are blessed by the LORD.*" (v.29)
- Then Isaac does something surprising.
 - Abimelek says, "We always treated you well."
 - Urg, not exactly! They cast Isaac out of community, quarrelled with him again and again over the water...
 - But Isaac does not argue. Instead, he makes them a feast.
 - They eat, make an oath, and leave in peace (vv.30-31).
 - "*Once the enemy, now seated at the same table*"
 - We're not told whether Abimelek becomes a believer. But surely this gives us a glimpse of God's bigger purpose from verse 4: "*Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.*" (v.4; cf. Gen 12:1-3).
 - God blesses Isaac - but his blessing is meant to reach **beyond** Isaac.
 - And that has always been God's purpose.
- For us, God's presence is not proved by wealth or success.
 - But his grace should become visible in Christlike lives -
 - In truthfulness when lying would be easier;
 - Peace when we could fight back;
 - Generosity when we could hold tightly,
 - Endurance and faithfulness when life is hard;
 - People should be able to see something **of our God** (*spiritual wealth*) in the way we live.

Conclusion

And that brings the whole chapter together.

Genesis 26 began with famine and a promise.

Then come fear, failure, opposition, quarrels, and finally peace.

But the hero of Genesis 26 is not Isaac.

God is.

He is the God of the:

- **same promise:** he keeps his word;
- **same presence:** he stays when we fail;
- **same purpose:** he blesses his people *so that* his blessing reaches beyond them.

And that promise does not end with Isaac.

It leads ultimately to Abraham's true offspring - **Jesus Christ!** (cf. Gal 3:16)

- Isaac, in fear, put his wife at risk to save himself;
- But *Jesus* did the opposite and far more: *He gave himself to save his people.*
- And through *THE Offspring - Jesus Christ* - the blessing promised to Abraham has gone out to the nations - even here, to us in Toowoomba.

That doesn't mean every promise to Isaac becomes ours in exactly the same form.

We are not promised Isaac's land, wealth, or hundredfold harvest.

But all God's promises find their "YES" in Christ:

Apostle Paul says,

"No matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ." (2 Cor. 1:20)

So, back to our opening question.

When we are afraid, when obedience feels costly, when opposition comes, or even when we have made a terrible mistake, are we still under God's blessing?

In Christ, YES! So:

Trust his promise.

Rest in his presence.

Live so his blessing is seen - one faithful step at a time.

Because the God who was faithful to Isaac is still faithful to his people today.

Faithful God, thank you that your promises do not depend on our strength, but on your faithfulness.

Help us to trust your promise, rest in your presence, and take the next faithful step.

May your grace be seen in our lives,

so that others might know the blessing we have in Jesus Christ. Amen.
