

## Introduction

I was very blessed to have a father at home. My father took an interest in our lives. He made us read and do book reports outside of what was required in school. He made me do extra penmanship because mine was so poor. I have been blessed with a good education because my mother and father made sure that we had one. He took an interest in our other activities. He taught us to play golf, and he frequently took me to play or practice after work. He exercised regularly and we frequently had pushup contests. He worked hard and set a good example for us. I was blessed by having a good father. In our text today, Isaac is blessed because of his father, Abraham, who loved God and kept His commandments. The people around Isaac were envious of him and the blessing of God, and did spiteful things, but God was with Isaac and blessed him.

I have a friend who is receiving training at his church to get involved in prison ministry. I have been talking to him, and have sent him some statistics. Having been a prison chaplain for several years, I learned a lot about prison and family statistics. For example, eighty five percent of incarcerated people are functionally illiterate. They did not have a father to bless them with a good education. About eighty percent of people incarcerated grew up in a home without a father. That does not mean that fatherless boys will go to prison. There are lots of successful people that grew up without a father. But, without a father to set boundaries and an example, they can be disadvantaged. One of the things that I saw quite frequently was that the fathers of the men that I ministered to were also in prison, or had been in prison. In fact, one day I was visiting a man that I had led to Christ, and during our discussion he told me that his dad was also in prison.

*“According to one criminologist’s analysis of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, 5 percent of families account for more than 50 percent of all arrests. Numerous studies have found that individuals whose parents have committed crimes are at least two times more likely to be perpetrators themselves.”* One incarcerated man in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by the name of Clintron, said, *“On the block right now, there are probably three or four sets of brothers. And there are fathers and sons on my block. Just on the block alone, there are families, cousins. There is nothing for it. It’s the cycle. It’s the generational curse.”*

In a number of places, including the ten commandments, God said that He would show lovingkindness to thousands of generations but would not leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, grandchildren, and on to the third and fourth generations. We do see generational sins and curses. At the same time, we also see blessings on families and children where the mothers and fathers love God and keep His commandments. Unfortunately, we also see the sins of a father passed down to the next generation. Our text ends today with Esau marrying a foreign wife, and it dishonored and grieved his parents. It is not father’s day, but today’s text has some exhortations for fathers.

(Ex 34:7) “who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”

## Blessings From A Godly Father

1. Blessings From A Father (Gen 26:1-6,12-33)
2. Sins From A Father (Gen 26:7-11, 18-25)
3. Grief Of A Father (Gen 26:34-35)

## 1. Blessings From A Father (Gen 26:1-6,12-33)

(Gen 26:1-22) “Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. So Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines. {2} The LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you. {3} "Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. {4} "I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; {5} because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws." {6} So Isaac lived in Gerar....{12} Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the LORD blessed him, {13} and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy; {14} for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him. {15} Now all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped up by filling them with earth. {16} Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are too powerful for us." {17} And Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar, and settled there.” {18} Then Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham; and he gave them the same names which his father had given them. {19} But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water, {20} the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek, because they contended with him. {21} Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over it too, so he named it Sitnah. {22} He moved away from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he named it Rehoboth, for he said, "At last the LORD has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land."

There was a famine in the land, which meant that food was scarce for both man and beast. Herdsmen have to find food for their flocks, so Isaac went to Gerar. The Lord appeared to him and told him not to go to Egypt, but to stay in the land. It says that this famine was besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. We covered that in Genesis 12 and saw that Abraham had gone to Egypt during that famine. Isaac may have intended to go there, but God appeared to him and told him not to go to Egypt, but to stay there in Gerar.

(Gen 12:10) “Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.”

God not only tells him to stay there, but He said that he would bless him and his descendants, and give them all these lands. Why? Because God was going to establish the oath that He swore to Abraham. Isaac was going to get blessed because of God's oath to his father. In verses four and five, God said, *“I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.”* Isaac was going to be blessed because Abraham had obeyed God, kept His charge, His commandments, His statutes, and His laws. Isaac was being blessed because his father loved God with all his heart and was obedient to God in all things.

We saw in Exodus 34 that God shows His lovingkindness to the thousandth generation of those that love Him and keep His commandments. This was the first generation, but God was blessing Isaac and showing His lovingkindness to him. Proverbs 20:7 says that *“a righteous man who walks in his integrity, how blessed are his sons after him.”* Walking in integrity is important to me because I want to honor God with my life. But, it is also important to me because I want my children to be blessed. I know that if I walk in integrity and righteousness, my children will be blessed. That is a wonderful promise and a way that fathers can bless their children. It is pretty simple: we must love God and walk in integrity

(Pro 20:7) *“A righteous man who walks in his integrity, how blessed are his sons after him.”*

God blessed Isaac, but not everyone was happy about it. In fact, we find that Abimelech and the Philistines were envious of him. The Hebrew word is qanaw, which means jealous or zealous. It is used thirty-three times and the majority of times it is translated as jealous or envious, but several times it is translated as zealous. This is a deep, passionate jealousy that causes people to do zealous actions. Some people get jealous over power and control. Some people get jealous over worldly wealth.

In the New Testament, the religious leaders were not concerned about Jesus gaining wealth. He lived a very modest life, and did not try to accumulate possessions. He told one person that wanted to follow Him that He had no place to lay His head. (Matthew 8:18-20) So, the religious leaders were not jealous over His wealth; they were jealous over the power, authority, and public recognition that Jesus was receiving. They wanted people to follow them, and Jesus was a threat to that. We have a good example of the zealous things that they did in Mark 15. They had Jesus arrested, and now they want Pilate to put Him to death. At that time they had a custom for the King to release a prisoner, and Pilate suggested that he release Jesus, the King of the Jews. It says that Pilate *“was aware that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.”* These religious leaders had Jesus arrested, put to death, and to release a violent criminal because of their envy. That is a powerful jealousy that causes people to do things like that.

(Mark 15:9-11) *“Pilate answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” {10} For he was aware that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. {11} But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask him to release Barabbas for them instead.”*

Abimelech asked Isaac to depart from his area. He said that Isaac was too powerful. Abimelech wanted to be the most powerful and influential person around. Isaac was a threat to his power, control, and dominance in the area, so he asked Isaac to leave.

I was at a church for a number of years. I started and developed the Men’s Ministry. One of the messages that I preached on marriage drew lots of positive comments. A pastor from another church was there that morning and said it was the most powerful message on marriage that he had ever heard. The Senior Pastor at that church had nothing but criticism about it. There was envy over my teaching ministry. In five years, I was not allowed to preach one single time on a Sunday morning. It had to do with envy and control.

Another church that I planted the pastor made it very clear that he did not want me there. He was afraid that he would not have total control. He was concerned that people might come to me

instead of him. He wanted total control. That kind of jealousy is over control, not money. Abimelech was wealthy, and was not concerned about money; he wanted power and control.

The shepherds in the area were envious of the herds and wealth of Isaac. Their jealous acts were to fill in all of the wells that Abraham had dug up. In the desert, the wells are needed to support life. It does not make sense to plug up any of the wells. These were spiteful actions done out of jealousy.

The Scriptures have a lot to say about envy and jealousy. In Mark 7, when asked about eating with impure hands, Jesus said that it is not what goes into the stomach that defiles a man; it is what comes out of his heart. He said, *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”*

(Mark 7:17-23) “When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. {18} And He said to them, “Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, {19} because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.) {20} And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. {21} For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, {22} deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. {23} All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

In Romans 1, Paul talks about people without Christ. He said that they are filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil and are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, etc. Envy is listed with some pretty bad things. Envy is part of the old nature and when someone comes to Christ, his life needs to be transformed and the envy dealt with.

(Rom 1:28-31) “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, {29} being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, {30} slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, {31} without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful.”

In Galatians 5, Paul talks about walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh. He lists jealousy as one of the acts of the flesh. He said that if we walk by the Spirit we will not carry out the desire of the flesh. He concludes in verse twenty-six by saying, “let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.” God does not want us envying one another.

(Gal 5:16-26) “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. {17} For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. {18} But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. {19} Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, {20} idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, {21} envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have

forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. {22} But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, {23} gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. {24} Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. {25} If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. {26} Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Paul ran across envy in the church. In Philippians 1, he said that some are preaching Christ, even from envy and strife. There were ministers of the gospel that preached out of envy. Pastors need their hearts transformed, just like everyone else.

(Phil 1:15) “Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; {16} the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.”

James spoke about envy also. He said in James 4:2 that we “*are envious and cannot obtain,*” so we fight and quarrel. Yes, even in the church, which is full of people being transformed by the grace of God, we have people that are envious of one another. God wants us to replace envy with love. In 1 Corinthians 13:4 he says that “*love is not jealous.*” In 1 Corinthians 12:26 Paul wrote that when “*one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*” When we love one another, we will rejoice with one another and not be jealous of one another. The Philistines did not rejoice with Isaac, they filled in his wells and then quarreled with him about it. They quarreled at the well named Esek, which means contention. They quarreled over the second well, and it was named Sitnah, which means hostility. Isaac kept seeking and pursuing peace, so he dug another well and they did not quarrel over the third well. He named it Rehoboth, which means broad, and stated, at last the Lord has made room for us. Isaac prophesied, “so we will be fruitful in the land.” Where there is strife, contention, and hostility, there will be no fruitfulness. Isaac pursued and found peace and he knew that God would make him fruitful in the land.

Sometimes we need some encouragement from the Lord. In verses 23-25, God gave Isaac some encouragement.

(Gen 26:23-25) “Then he went up from there to Beersheba. {24} The LORD appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, For the sake of My servant Abraham.” {25} So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.”

After digging those wells, Isaac went up to Beersheba, the well of seven, where his father had made a covenant with Abimelech and given him seven ewe lambs. (Genesis 21:27-32) That very night God appeared to Isaac and encourages him. He said, “I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you.” Promising to be with someone and stand with them is one of the most encouraging things that you can do. It also eliminates fear. Isaac did not need to be afraid because God was with him. When God spoke to Joshua, He told him to be strong and courageous. He said, “Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous...” Standing with someone encourages and strengthens them. God is telling Isaac the same thing, “Do not fear, I am with you.”

Then, God says that He will bless and multiply him for the sake of His servant, Abraham. Isaac is going to be blessed by God because of his father. God was going to show His lovingkindness to Isaac because of His father. Fathers, when you and I walk with God, and walk according to His commandments, our children are blessed by us. When we walk in integrity, our children are blessed by us.

Isaac left Gerar because Abimelech asked him to leave. Isaac did not quarrel; he sought peace. When the shepherds quarreled over the water, Isaac kept moving on. He was seeking and pursuing peace. Notice what happens in the next section.

(Gen 26:26-33) “Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with his adviser Ahuzzath and Phicol the commander of his army. {27} Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" {28} They said, "We see plainly that the LORD has been with you; so we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, even between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, {29} that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.'" {30} Then he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. {31} In the morning they arose early and exchanged oaths; then Isaac sent them away and they departed from him in peace. {32} Now it came about on the same day, that Isaac's servants came in and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." {33} So he called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.”

Abimelech has a change of heart and came to him from Gerar, along with his adviser and the commander of his army. I imagine that they did not come alone, but the army was with the commander. They were not going to take any chances with Isaac. Notice how Isaac addresses them. “Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?” When Isaac left Gerar, he left being hated and unwanted. But, there has been a change of heart by Abimelech. This time he comes to make peace with Isaac. He recognized that God was with Isaac. Scholars say that this Abimelech was the son of the Abimelech that made a covenant with Abraham. His name had been Benmelech, which means son of the king, and he changed it to his father’s name, Abimelech, which means my father is king. Abimelech’s father had been a righteous and god-fearing man. Perhaps Abimelech sees that if he is opposing Isaac, he is opposing God, because God is with Isaac.

In Proverbs 16:7, Solomon wrote, “When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” I believe that Isaac feared God and was seeking to make peace with his neighbors. I believe that his ways were pleasing to the Lord, and God moved on Abimelech to make peace with Isaac.

After talking, they made a feast, and ate and drank. In the morning, they arose early, and exchanged oaths. The exchanging of oaths were part of making a covenant. You will recall that when people made a covenant, they cut animals in half and then walked between the animals and exchanged their vows. These covenants were lifelong commitments, and anyone breaking their oaths was to be like the animals which had been cut in two. Isaac’s enemies became Abimelech’s enemies, and Abimelech’s enemies became Isaac’s enemies. Their friends became each other’s friends. Covenant partners went to war on behalf of their partners. With two powerful people making a covenant together, that region became strengthened and unified.

## 2. Sins From A Father (Gen 26:7-11)

(Gen 26:7-11) “When the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” for he was afraid to say, “my wife,” thinking, “the men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful.” {8} It came about, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was caressing his wife Rebekah. {9} Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Behold, certainly she is your wife! How then did you say, ‘She is my sister?’” And Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘I might die on account of her.’” {10} Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.” {11} So Abimelech charged all the people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

In the introduction I shared a verse out of Exodus 34 where God said that he visited the iniquity of fathers on the third and fourth generation. (See Exodus 20:5-6, 34:6-7, Numbers 14:18, 33, Deuteronomy 5:9-10, and Jeremiah 32:18.) Some people today struggle with that and do not accept it for today. However, we have seen great fruit from helping people break generational curses from their families. A few years ago I received a call from Rich Graham, an evangelist in Orlando. He shared with me some family struggles. I recommended that he see Joe Warner, a friend of mine, who pastors a church called Freedom Fellowship. Joe is a prophet and has an anointing in the area of inner healing. Rich made an appointment and took his family there for some ministry from generational sins and curses. They had a significant breakthrough. He called me afterwards, thanking me, and saying that I had given him the best counsel he had ever received. They are now actively serving at Freedom Fellowship. So, my experiences line up with the Scriptures. I believe that there are things in our past that need to be dealt with. I believe that when we repent of those things that God forgives and cleanses us.

Abraham was and is a righteous man. He was credited as being righteous. Not everything that Isaac did was righteous. Abraham told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister, and then he did the same thing with Abimelech. (See Genesis 12:10-16 and 20:2-12.) Abraham did this out of fear. Isaac also did it out of fear. He thought, “the men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful.” There is no reason to lie about things. This was a sin of the father that went unchecked, and Isaac is doing the same thing his father did. Pharaoh confronted Abraham about it. Abimelech confronted Abraham about it. And now, Abimelech confronts Isaac about it, saying, “*What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.*” Then, Abimelech charged all the people not to touch Isaac or Rebekah or they would be put to death.

## 3. Grief Of A Father (Gen 26:34-35)

(Gen 26:34-35) “When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite; {35} and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.”

In the final two verses, Esau marries Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. The significant thing is that he married a foreigner. He did not marry from their relatives. When Abraham charged his servant with finding a wife for Isaac, he charged him to take a wife from his relatives. I am sure they gave these instructions to Esau.

Abraham's instructions to his servant were in Genesis 24:2-4. His instructions were based on the promise that God had given him that He would give the land to his descendants. Last week we saw that Esau had despised his birthright. The birthright gave a double portion of the inheritance, which would be land and possessions. Esau was not too concerned about the inheritance.

(Gen 24:2-4) "Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Please place your hand under my thigh, {3} and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, {4} but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

Esau was also not too concerned about honoring his father and mother. In Exodus 20:12, God said that we are to honor our father and mother, that our days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you. In the New Testament, Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:1-3 that children should obey their parents and honor them. Esau did not honor his parents when he chose a Hittite woman to marry. They not only felt dishonored, they were grieved over it. The Hebrew word for grief is morah, which means bitterness. They were bitter over this marriage.

In Proverbs 10:1, Solomon wrote, "A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother." My prayer is that I will be a wise son and make my mother and father glad. I do not want to cause my mother and father grief. I want the way that I live my life to bring them joy and gladness. I want the way that I lead my family to bring them joy. I want the way that I serve and honor them to bring them joy. I call them daily to check on them, and if they need anything, I go out of my way to do it for them. Karen is the same way. She used to call her mother every week to honor her. She calls and visits her father to honor him. This week, while I was out of town, Karen got Olive Garden for my mother and served them. She honors my parents. We are not children that are young at age; but we are still the children of our parents, and we are still called to honor our parents. Esau did not honor Isaac and Rebekah. Instead, he brought grief to them.

## Conclusion and Applications

As we draw near to a close, I want to bring up one more Scripture. Jesus was obedient in all things, and therefore God exalted Him above all. (Phil 2:8-9) In Ephesians 1:3-14, we discover that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Just like Isaac, we are blessed, not because of our own merit, but because of the faithfulness and obedience of Jesus. How do we receive every spiritual blessing? Paul concludes in verses 13-14 that after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed... When we believe the message of the gospel and confess Jesus to be our Lord, we are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance. This morning if you believe that Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead, but you have never received Christ, I want to invite you now to pray with me....

(Eph 1:3-14) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ... {13} In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, {14} who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."

**Introduction** (Ex 34:7)

1. **Blessings From A Father** (Gen 26:1-6,12-33, 12:10, Pr 20:7, Matt 8:18-20, Mark 15:9-11, Mark 7:17-23, Rom 1:28-31, Gal 5:16-26, Phil 1:15, James 4:2, 1 Cor 12:26, Gen 26, 23-33, Josh 1:8-9, Pr 16:7)
  
2. **Sins From A Father** (Gen 26:7-11, Ex 20:5-6, 34:6-7, Num 14:18, 33, Deut 5:9-10, Jer 32:18, Gen 12:10-16, 20:2-12)
  
3. **Grief Of A Father** (Gen 26:34-35, Gen 24:2-4, Ex 20:12, Eph 6:1-3, Pr 10:1)

**Conclusion and Applications**