"The LORD's GOODNESS to Isaac"

Genesis 26:1-33
12/6/1998

Introduction vv.1-5

**** The LORD was so good to Isaac; and He is good to us as well.***

Several indications of God's Goodness to Isaac in Genesis 26:

I. The LORD <u>protected</u> Isaac <u>from the consequences of his sin</u> of lying about his wife v.6-11)

II. The LORD <u>provided</u> Isaac with <u>an abundance of resources</u> which made him an influential man (v.12-16)

III. The LORD <u>endowed</u> Isaac with <u>patience & wisdom</u> that enabled him to deal wisely with his enemies and avoid a major conflict (v.17-25)

IV. The LORD <u>rewarded</u> Isaac with <u>peaceful relations</u> with his heathen neighbors (v.26-31)

V. The LORD <u>showered</u> Isaac with the <u>good news of water</u> in the wilderness (v.32-33)

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v. 1
"Abimelech" – A title (similar to Pharaoh or Caesar), which means "my father is king." Since the Abimelech whom Abraham encountered lived 97 years prior (Gen. 20), this is perhaps that Abimelech's son who carried on his dynasty.

v. 2
"Dwell in the land" – i.e. stay right where you are.

Tough circumstances in a certain place are <u>not</u> necessarily an indication that one should move from that place.

The Lord was about to bless Isaac right where he was. He didn't need to go to Egypt for aid.

v. 3
Isaac is guaranteed:

1) God's <u>presence</u>
"I will be with thee."

2) God's <u>provision</u>
"And [I will] bless thee"

3) God's <u>promise</u>
"I will perform the oath"

What more do we need?!

If He is with me and if He will take care of me, what else do I need?

v. 4
"In thy seed" – An ultimate look toward a particular individual from the lineage of Isaac who would bless the world. This is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16 - Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.)

v. 5
"Because Abraham obeyed My voice" – "Isaac and his family enjoyed the blessing of God because Abraham was obedient" (Ross, p. 459)

It is a fact of life, that we pass on blessings to the next generation when we are obedient to God. They will reap in large measure what we have sown. What will you pass on?

The clear emphasis of this chapter involves God's goodness to Isaac, God's kind intervention on Isaac's behalf.

"[I] will bless thee" (v. 3)
"The Lord blessed him" (v. 12)
"[I] will bless thee" (v. 24)
"The Lord was with thee" (v. 28)
"Blessed of the Lord" (v. 29)

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Several indications of God's Goodness to Isaac in Genesis 26:

I. The LORD <u>protected</u> Isaac <u>from the consequences of his sin</u> of lying about his wife v.6-11)

v. 7
Like father, like son.

Just as Abraham lied to Abimelech of Gerar in his day about his wife (before Isaac was ever born) (Gen. 12:13; 20:2), so now Isaac repeats the same error. Both men -–due to fear and lack of faith in God – figured that a lie would be the best means of protection.

Whereas Abraham's lie was partially true (in that Sarah was his half-sister), Isaac's deception was not.

Beware parents: What we allow in measure into our lives will often be magnified to greater extremes in our children's lives!

v. 8
"Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife" – This is one "sport" that is restricted to marriage!

He was caressing her, showing her the marital affection of hugs and kisses.

When Abimelech saw that, he was assured that they were not brother and sisters but husband and wife (such activity would not normally go on outside of the bonds of marriage).

v. 10

Abimelech's response shows that he had an unusual fear of God, as did Pharaoh (Gen. 12) and his predecessor Abimelech (Gen. 20).

v. 11
Who was behind the scene, causing Abimelech to look out the window (v. 8); who was it who put within Abimelech a respect for marriage (v. 10); who was it who put within Abimelech the conviction to protect Isaac and his wife from danger (v. 11)?

It was none other than the sovereign God, who was looking out for Isaac because he has a job for them to fulfill which would require them to be husband and wife.

God was good to Isaac as He kindly protected him from what could have been fatal consequences for his lie. He had jeopardized his wife and his marriage (v. 10), but God in goodness safeguarded him.

II. The LORD <u>provided</u> Isaac with <u>an abundance of resources</u> which made him an influential man (v.12-16)

v. 12
"In that land" – in the land of Canaan.

God blesses you when you are where He wants you.

For every seed Isaac and his men would plant, a harvest 100 times that amount would sprout up.

v. 13
Although the land around him had been famine-stricken (v. 1), God blessed His man so that everything he did prospered. He went forward (progressed) and increased in goods and hence in wealth.

God not only meets the needs of His servants, but He very often goes beyond our imaginations as He in goodness gives us (if we really think about it) much more than we "ask or think."

v. 14
"The blessing of God may excite envy and opposition from the world." The word 'envy' describes "intense jealousy, an impassioned zeal, that leads to some action. . . the Philistines strongly desired what Isaac had and attempted through conflict to obtain it." (Ross, p. 466).

"The Philistines envied him" –

Unfortunately this is very often the response of the world.

They see God's blessing on a child of God and they become jealous and strike out with bitter vengeance. Rather than rejoicing with those who rejoice, the owrld will taste the bitterness of envy.

As the world looks at you and sees a tranquil home, as they observe the peace and contentment and joy you have because of Christ, they will not usually rejoice with you but become envious and retaliate.

v. 15
To strike out against Isaac and his prosperity, the Philistines dump dirt into his wells and fill them to the brim, rendering them useless.

To have people strike out against your accomplishments is one thing, but to have them strike against your deceased fathers accomplishments is often a very difficult problem to deal with.

v. 16
Just as Christ's display of power in healing the demoniac of Gadara led the townspeople to request his departure from their coats, so now the envious Philistines can't stand to see the continual success of Isaac and require him to leave town.

III. The LORD <u>endowed</u> Isaac with <u>patience & wisdom</u> that enabled him to deal wisely with his enemies and avoid a major conflict (v.17-25)

v. 18-22
In this section we find Isaac's servants digging wells and diggings wells and actually re-digging wells that originally belonged to Abraham. However, the Philistines continue fighting over the turf and forcing Isaac to either fight or move east.

Rather than fighting, Isaac is given wisdom and patience from God to roll with the punches and move to Beersheba (v. 23).

v. 21
"Sitnah" – related to the verb "Satan" (which means "to oppose," Satan = adversary) (Ross, p. 467).

v. 22

"The spirit of yielding is very noteworthy, more particularly as peacemakers are very rare in the East. A strife of this kind is scarcely ever to be met by such a spirit of willingness to yield" (Thomas, p. 241).

"What a testimony this is to the spirit of true gentleness and meekness" (Thomas, p. 244).

v. 24
"Fear not, for I am with thee" – "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

All of the Philistines of the region of Gerar may have been against Isaac, but God was for him. And God plus anyone makes a majority! If you have God, you don't need anyone else!

v. 25
Isaac did what we all should do out of gratitude for God's goodness. He worshipped God.

The goodness of God forms the basis for all praise, trust, obedience, service, and worship.

*People rebel against god because they are convinced that He is not good. Their rebellion is their way of getting even.

IV. The LORD <u>rewarded</u> Isaac with <u>peaceful relations</u> with his heathen neighbors (v.26-31)

v. 26
The elite of Gerar, figuring it will be to their best political advantage, go to Isaac to establish peaceful terms with him so that after his continued power growth, he would not use his strength against them.

They come for peace. "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

v. 29
"When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

God's continued blessing on Isaac leads the pagans to take the initiative to come to him and enact a peace treaty.

v. 30

Isaac graciously receives his neighboring delegation, and rather than denying their request, he gladly accepts it and shows a bit of God's goodness to them.

V. The LORD <u>showered</u> Isaac with the <u>good news of water</u> in the wilderness (v.32-33)

v. 32

The blessings keep on flowing, as the same day the peace treaty is agreed to, water is found!

Water in the desert!

What an occasion for celebration!

v. 34-35

God's kindness and goodness and blessing to us does not always come without a few heartaches along the way. Although Isaac was tremendously blessed, one of his sons would dishonor him by marrying two pagan Hittite wives (more will be said in the next study).

Conclusion:

Our enjoyment of spiritual blessings today is a direct result of God's blessing to Isaac. God blessed him, so that through him and his descendents we could be blessed with God's Word and God's Messiah. Praise Him for His goodness!

Exodus 18:9
And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Exodus 34:6
And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Psalm 23:6
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 27:13
I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Psalm 31:19
Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

Psalm 33:5
He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Psalm 52:1
the goodness of God endureth continually.

Psalm 107:8
Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Psalm 107:9
For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Psalm 25:8
Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

Psalm 34:8
O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Psalm 73:1
A Psalm of Asaph.
Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

Psalm 106:1
Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalm 145:9
The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

James 1:17
Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

The Bible speaks of. . .

1) The general and unconditional goodness of God

Matthew 5:45

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

2) The special goodness of God toward His children

a. He answers our prayers

Matthew 7:11
If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

b. He gives us good things

Psalm 84:11
For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

c. His will is good

Romans 12:2
And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Note: If the will of God is good, why do you run from it? Or fight it?

God's moral restraints are good, His boundaries are good; they are for our benefit, for our protection.

Our <u>health</u> is valuable – God's laws keep us from disease (AIDS, etc.)

Our <u>peace</u> of mind is valuable – God's laws keep us from <u>guilty</u>

Our <u>home</u> (marriage) is valuable – God's laws keep us from <u>distrust</u> and <u>strife</u>.

--We sin against the goodness of God when we <u>grumble</u> against what God has done for us.

--We sin against the goodness of God when we reject the Gospel (Rom. 10:15 - "good things")

Polycarp when asked to recant, he said, "86 years have I served Him and He has never done me harm, how can I speak evil of Him?"

See Psalm 23

When the LORD is your Shepherd, you will never lack … Provision (v.1)
When the LORD is your Shepherd, you will never lack … Guidance (v.2)
When the LORD is your Shepherd, you will never lack … Refreshment (v.3)
When the LORD is your Shepherd, you will never lack … Protection (v.4)
When the LORD is your Shepherd, you will never lack … Favor (v.5)
When the LORD is your Shepherd, you will never lack … Security (v.6)

The LORD is GOOD!