



Sermon – 06/04/2023

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Verses Covered

Genesis 26:1 – 35

James 4:1 - 2

Let's open our Bibles together. We're going to be in Genesis chapter 26, Genesis 26 today as we pick up in the story of Isaac. And as you're turning there, I want to remind you that today we'll be celebrating the Lord's supper together. And so, if you have not yet grabbed those elements, you can make your way to the Lord's Supper tables and grab those during the response song. And and I'm I'm curious. Anybody else feel those storms come through last night? Anybody lose power? Yeah, I had to get ready this morning with no power. I was just hoping my white shirt would match whatever pants I happen to grab in the dark in my closet. Hopefully that worked out okay for us today. We didn't expect that to happen but the Lord knew it would happen. The Lord knows everything that will take place. And that's what we're going to see in just a moment in Genesis 26, is things that are unexpected to Isaac, unanticipated by the people of his day, God is sovereignly overseeing and watching.

But before we get there, I want to draw your to the screen. You'll remember last month, we did a church-wide survey during the worship service. To just get some feedback from you as we prepare for our NEXT Initiative, and over the next few years to prepare ourselves for our 100th anniversary. We've received those results back and man, they were super encouraging. And this week and next week, I just want to highlight a few of the different things that showed up in those surveys that I think you'll find interesting and encouraging. So, there's four quick things I want to show you. The first one is the answer to the question, how long have you been attending Central Church? And so you'll notice there a a ring chart that will show you those ages. About almost half of you have been here over 10 years. A smaller segment for 5 to 10 years. And then you'll notice that there's 40% of you that have been here less than 5 years including 17%, or 1 out of every 6 people that filled out the survey that have been here for less than a year. And if that's you, welcome home. We love having new faces to get connected to. You'll see in the second question, we also ask, what is your age? And this is one of my favorite results we got. Look at the broad spectrum of ages. There's no decade represented there with more than 20% of our church. This is one of those things that truly shows us that we're a church where every generation is on mission to reach the next generation. We're doing it all together. You have the the largest pockets in the 30s and 40s. But across the board, it is very balanced in a way that is so unique to how God's designed us as a

church. Or how about the next one. How committed are you to Central and its mission? This might be the most important result that we got back and deeply encouraging. Our partner that's walking us through our generosity initiative has told us that if a church scores at a 4.0 or above for this result, that's a good sign that the people are living out the mission of the church. And our average is well above that at 4.21. You can see the biggest chunk, nearly half of us, are bought in at a 5 out of 5 level. That 4 and 5 together make up almost 80% of who we are. We see what the Lord has called us to do. We see the mission field. And we're living it out on a day-to-day basis.

Let's look at one more. We ask you the question, which of the following best describes your giving to this church. And this one's a little bit harder to decipher. Let me walk you through it. I'll kind of split it up in three different chunks. You'll see the top two bars there. Those are what I'd refer to as our faithful givers. That first one is those who tithe 10% of their income. That's 38% of us. Then there's another chunk right below that who give beyond that 10% and that's 16% of you. So that means that those faithful givers at a tithe and above are more than half at 54%. Then the second grouping there, the next two bars below that, will tell you the results of our emerging givers. This is 28% of our body. Uh the first line there is those that are already giving but haven't yet reached the full scope of God's design for their gifts because they give less than a tithe. That's 10%. Or the one below that, there's 18% of you who try to give but you're not always consistent in that giving. Those are our emerging givers. Then, in the lower part, the final three of those bars there would be what I'd call our potential givers. And this makes up 18% of us. Whether it's your circumstances or your current commitment are preventing you from stepping into God's journey of generosity. And so you'll see there 8% said it's difficult to give due to their finances. Another 1% said they're skeptical of giving to religious organizations. And 9% simply said that they do not give.

This is a snapshot of our church. This is a snapshot of the way that the Lord has fostered generosity. And I want to encourage you as you look at that chart to just ask yourself the question, where do you find yourself today? And where is God leading you to be over this next season with the NEXT Initiative? I've been deeply encouraged as we've started to process these results. And I just wanted to share some of those with you today. We'll have more to highlight coming into next Sunday's sermon as well.

So, let's turn our attention now to Genesis 26. The last time we were in Genesis, we saw that there were three choices before us. There was a choice of God's lineage by God's legacy by Abraham. There's a choice of God's lineage by the father. There was a choice of a lifestyle by Esau. And in each of those cases, what we found is those choices created the turning point in the story of Genesis that radiates through all the way to today. Which brings us to Genesis 26 now. And maybe you've heard this saying before that history doesn't always repeat itself but it often rhymes. We're going to see one of those rhyming moments in the book of Genesis right here where Isaac relives some of the lowest points in his father, Abraham. And what we're going to find as we look at this is that the Bible is repeating a similar story and that should capture our attention. The danger is you tune out and say, "We've already covered something like this before." But why is it that nearly the exact same story is showing up twice? It's for emphasis. It's laser focusing what our hearts are feeling towards what is taking place in this text. And what is that emphasis? This passage is reminding us that we can trust God to keep His promises even when we face adversity that shows up through hardship and hostility. And we'll see that playing out starting in verse 1 of Genesis 26. Let's start reading through the passage together. It says,

¹Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. ²And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. ³Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, ⁵because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

Let's pray together now.

Father, we come seeking Your face. Longing to experience more of Your presence. And I pray that even now as we turn our hearts to Your word that You would meet us here, that You would fill us with Your Spirit, that You would reshape us to be more like Jesus. And if there are people that are here this morning that feel forgotten, abandoned, overwhelmed by the hardships that they feel, Lord, would You meet them in this moment and help them sense Your presence and Your goodness in their lives? We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Have you ever heard the phrase like father, like son? We use phrases like that to highlight the fact that so often, children resemble their parents. Maybe it's when you look back at old class pictures of somebody who's now out of school and you see them in that younger age at the same age that their child is now and that striking resemblance is there. Or maybe it shows up in the clothing choices that they have or the college sports team that they love or the mannerisms they convey. So often what happens with the parent is resembled and reflected in a child both for good and for ill. What we see here in Genesis 26 is a like father, like son moment in the life of Isaac. He faces a similar challenge, a similar hardship, a similar temptation, and he responds in a similar way. Exactly how his father does; not independence on God but in deception of others. Seeking to pursue the promise of God by his own design rather than God's design. And what we're going to find here in Genesis 26 is that when the next generation faces the same challenges as the last generation, we're going to see that God is faithful to fulfill the same set of promises to that new generation. This is going to play out in several ways starting in verse 1 with the covenant that continues through a new generation. You see, Abraham is now gone. We're stepping into the sequel of his life. It's the same plot line just different characters. And what we find here is a replay of several experiences that Abraham has had. You'll remember back in Genesis 12, he's given the first calling from God. And then right after that, famine hits the land. He flees to Egypt. He fakes out Pharaoh as if his wife is his sister and plagues come upon them in judgement and he's set free. And as if he didn't learn the lesson later on in Genesis 20 and 21, what we find is he encounters this king named Abimelech and he's fearful just like he was with Pharaoh and he tells Sarah to pretend to be his sister and not his wife and it almost leads to destruction again. And now a new generation with the same old temptation. To seek God's promises. To seek the fulfillment of the covenant; not through God's design but through our deceptions. But before we get there, what we find is there's another similarity in the text. That before this trial comes, before this crisis takes place, there's a covenant that is made that happened in Genesis 12 before Abraham went to Egypt and it's happening right now with Isaac. And the heart of this covenant is the exact same as we've been seeing all throughout the story of Genesis. That God's covenant with His people boils down

to three things: a new people in a new place living out a new purpose. And look back at the text. We see each of those show up here. Look at the beginning of verse 3 where it says,

³Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands,

It's the promise of a new people. To him and his offspring. But now, look at the beginning of verse 4.

⁴I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands.

It's not just a new place but also a new people. They will inherit the land. These lands will be theirs. But then we see the third piece of it at in the verse 4 when it says to us,

And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,

That's his new purpose. To extend the blessing he's already received to the nations. To take God's design everywhere he goes, a new people in a new place living out a new purpose. But why is it that God renews this covenant with Isaac? What's the reason He chooses him? You see it there in verse 5. Look at the answer.

⁵because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

In other words, God's faithfulness to Abraham empowered Abraham's faithfulness to God. He kept the covenants. He kept the statutes. He kept the law. The one who was the head of the covenant, fulfilled the demands of the covenant so that he could receive the promises of the covenant. And just think about the way that showed up in Abraham's life. This one who left the comforts of home to sojourn in a far country. This one who had finally received the gift of God through the child of the promise that was born to an unexpected mother. This one who's faith and faithfulness caused him to go up on the mountaintop with that chosen son and to raise the knife willing to sacrifice his one and only son in obedience to God. And what the text is showing us here is that Isaac now receives the promise because he's connected to, he's united to that covenant head that fulfills the demands of the covenant. And here what we have is a preview of what God does for us in Jesus, the son of Abraham. Because in the same way that Isaac can benefit from the covenant promises because he's connected to the head of the covenant and then Abraham, so is that true of you and me by faith. We follow Jesus, the son of Abraham, the one who left His heavenly home and came down to a far country to sojourn among the lost. We trust in Jesus, the one who was the chosen son that came from an unexpected mother. We're united to Jesus by faith. The one who went up upon the mountain top, whose heavenly Father took His life in our place to make a way for our salvation, His life for mine, His blood for yours, His judgment for the one you deserved. And by being united to that covenant head, we are set free to receive all the benefits, all the promises, all the blessings that the covenant has to offer. What we see here with Isaac is true of each one of us in the New Covenant if we know Jesus through faith in Him. But what we find here in the text is it's not just that the covenant continues for the next generation.

You'll see picking up in verse 6, the second thing, that the crisis also continues for the next generation. Let's look at that crisis now starting in verse 6 when it says,

⁶So Isaac settled in Gerar. ⁷When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," for he feared to say, "My wife," thinking, "lest the men of the place should kill me because of Rebekah," because she was attractive in appearance. ⁸When he had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac laughing with Rebekah his wife. ⁹So Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Behold, she is your wife. How then could you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac said to him, "Because I thought, 'Lest I die because of her.'" ¹⁰And 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." ¹¹So Abimelech warned all the people, saying, "Whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

See, Genesis 26 is not a happily ever after story. It's not just that Isaac receives the covenant promise and then, he's happy all the day. Instead, the covenant is followed by a crisis. And the crisis comes with the famine in the land. And this famine of food tempts Isaac towards a famine of faith where he begins to doubt that God can supply his needs for his future and this desire to take matters into his own hands, just like his father. But what we're going to find is that even in the midst of the crisis, God is faithful to the future of His people. And that faithfulness to the future we see in a number of ways. You'll see it in verses 6 and 11, through 11. That God protects our future despite our fears. And what is it that Isaac's afraid of? You see him there in verse 7 telling us that he feared to say that Rebecca was his wife because he was worried that they would kill him because of her. In other words, he's desiring to protect himself. It's a new generation but the same type of fear that leads to the same type of deception as what happens with Abraham. And I can't help but wonder if you're Abimelech, you're like, "Man, I've been here before. This guy's dad came a few years back and told me that this woman he was with was just his sister. And this guy is telling me the same thing. Is this really happening?" You wonder, did he have his radar up? And it tells us some time passes and all of a sudden, Abimelech is looking out the window and he sees Isaac and Rebecca together. And it tells you in the text they were laughing. The text doesn't fully cover the essence of this word. In fact, in the original language, it would most accurately be represented as Isaac was Isaicing. They're from the same root word. This idea of laughing or folly or play. It has some sort of more intimate dimension to it. What we know is that when Abimelech sees what's going on between Isaac and Rebecca, he immediately knows that is not what a brother and sister should be doing together. So, he calls them in. He confronts them. He says, "What are you doing?" And Isaac confesses his deception. He admits his fears. And what happens here is in his effort to protect himself, he failed. But the protection he couldn't provide himself, God provides for him through Abimelech. See it down there in verse 11?

¹¹So Abimelech warned all the people saying, "Whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

In other words, rather than punish Isaac, he protects him. He prevents the others from bringing him harm. God makes a way for Isaac's future despite his faults.

But notice as we keep going down in verse 12, we also see the way that God provides for our future despite our flaws. Let's see those flaws here beginning in verse 12 when it says,

¹²And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him, ¹³and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he had become very wealthy. ¹⁴He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵(Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.) ¹⁶And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we." ¹⁷So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there.

So, what happens? God blesses Isaac. And even though there's a famine all around him, he becomes filthy rich. And as the age-old wisdom goes, what we see here is mo' money, mo' problems. Because the Philistines see this as a threat. They see a danger in his prosperity. And as a result of that, what happens? It tells us back in verse 15 that they begin to envy him, it tells us the end of verse 14. And as a result of that envy, they begin to lash out. They fill in the wells that had been dug. They, in other words, they're undermining his means of provision for himself. And what we find here is that as they fill those wells with dirt Isaac's heart is being filled with fear. He's reminded of his flaws, of his shortcomings. And what we find here is that at the same time, he has turned his back on God. God has not turned his back on him. He provides for him. He creates a way for him. The text tells us that he is mighty. And this first example in Genesis of a rivalry between the people of God and the Philistines, it starts right here. But we find it continuing all the way through the story of the Old Testament. And what begins with filling wells with dirt builds towards moments like when a Philistine named Goliath fills with fear the hearts of all the people of God around them. Envy, rivalry, quarreling, resistance. We see this and yet in the midst of that, God is providing for Isaac's future through the blessing of riches. So, where does Isaac go? What we're going to see starting in verse 18 is that Abimelech says, "You can't stay here anymore. You're too much a danger to our rulership." He sends him off. And notice what happens in verse 18.

¹⁸And Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. And he gave them the names that his father had given them. ¹⁹But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, ²⁰the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they contended with him. ²¹Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah. ²²And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, saying, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

We see right here in Genesis 26, the same kind of pattern that comes over and over again all throughout the book. That often some of the greatest tension and uncertainty and challenge comes either by seeking to find a wife or to find water. And here it revolves around this finding of water. The people of Isaac's tribe are seeking to dig up the wells and to restore the water. And they succeed one time and the Philistines show up and say, "This is our territory. You can't stay here. We'll take your well but you gotta go." And so they move a little further down the path trying to find a place where they can land and they do it a second time. Same thing happens. The water is there but the Philistines take it from them. And finally, they move to this place. Far enough way. They dig the well. I'm sure they're looking around waiting for the Philistines to come. Are they

going to attack us, to resist us, to quarrel with us? But finally, they found their place and they call it Rehoboth. Why do they call it that? Do you see that back in verse 22 where it says,

“For now, the Lord has made room for us.

He's providing for their future. Even in the midst of the quarreling, even in the midst of the resisting. And why does that quarreling take place? Look back at the end of verse 20 at the way the Philistines respond, they say, “This water is ours.” It's a perfect example of what the brother of Jesus, James, highlights in James chapter 4 and verse 1. He gets to the heart of why it is we have quarrels and this is what he says.

¹What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions^[a] are at war within you?

And we see those passions at war right here. That passion for provision. That passion for protection. They're clashing as one in this way of resistance. And while you and I, today, may not find ourselves in a spot where we're quarreling over a source of water. That same spirit of the Philistines can lead to quarrelsome hearts today. It can show up in your home with your young kids who are playing and there's 800 toys they could choose from but one of them happens to go deep into the closet and pull out one that nobody seen or touched for 6 months. And the moment it shows up, there's three of them that descend on it at once. It's mine. I need it. You can't have it. It's my turn. Or it shows up in college students that are all trying to get into the same campus organization, to build the same desire for approval, to receive the same accolades, and they quarrel, they envy towards one another. It shows up in the spouses who get in rivalry and quarrelsomeness in the home. There's not a peace in the home because of those passions at war within them. It shows up in the boardroom. It shows up in the ball field when there's tension amongst others. It even shows up when a loved one passes away and there's quarreling, there's rivalry, there's desire for that inheritance. Why? Because the spirit of the Philistines is at war in every one of our hearts. They said, “The water's ours.” Our desires look at what's out there and says, “This should be ours. This should be mine.” There's this longing and desire. Why is this true? But James goes on to tell us in James 4:2 why it's true? He says,

²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. Listen to this. You do not have because you do not ask.

In other words, he says, the root problem with that quarreling, that envy, that jealousy, that sense of desire is that we're looking to others for our provision rather than to God. It's what happened here with Isaac and the Philistines and it will, it's what can happen in each one of our hearts. Which means we need to see the way that God is committed to providing for the future of His people despite the way that we fail Him with our flaws.

But there's another way that God's providing for our future here beginning in verse 23 and He promises our future despite our failures. Isaac has failed. He's dropped the ball just like his father and yet how does God respond? Does He look at Isaac in the aftermath of this and say, “Man, try to do something nice for somebody and this is how they repay you. I can't believe you would do that to me.” Is that the response he gives? No. Look here in verse 23.

²³From there he went up to Beersheba. ²⁴And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake." ²⁵So 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.

So, look, God does not honor Isaac's deception. But what happens here is that God doesn't respond to that deception by retracting the covenant. Instead, He does what we might least expect. He reaffirms the promise. He says, "I still got you." And with that promise, we see not just a promise of a future but a promise of His presence. That's why it says at the middle of verse 24, "Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you." God's promise and His presence are committed to go before Isaac to give him all that he needs to live out the design that God called him to. And what's true of him in that day is still true for us today. That God's promise, that His presence, they come together in one man, the son of Abraham, the son of Isaac, Jesus Christ, who receives the gift of that promise, who provides us with the gift of His presence. And what we find there is that the same way Isaac responds to that reality is exactly how we should respond. So, how does he respond there? Look back at the start of verse 25.

²⁵So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord

Isaac responds to the renewal of the promise with praise. He makes an altar. He worships God. And this is another way he's reflecting his own earthly father. Because just as Abraham had turned his back on God in deception, God renewed the promise to him. And he responded to that promise through the making of an altar and praise. And we see that same thing here with Isaac. That the restoration of the covenant is renewed so that Isaac can walk in the reality that God has called him to a greater promise, a new people in a new place living out a new purpose.

Which is why I want to show you one last thing in the text starting in verse 26. We see that the challenge continues for the next generation. And so it begins there in verse 26 by saying,

²⁶When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army, ²⁷Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" ²⁸They said, "We see plainly that the LORD God has been with you. So we said, let there be a sworn pact between us, between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, ²⁹that 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." ³⁰So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. ³¹And in the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths. And Isaac sent them on their way, and they departed from him in peace.

You see, the crisis has passed. Isaac now has a place of peace. And yet even after the crisis, he still faces the same challenges; the challenge of protection, and the challenge of provision. Even though he now has means, he still has to depend on God. And what we find here is that he experiences the same thing that his father Abraham did. See, after Abraham escaped from Abimelech back in chapter 20, we saw Abimelech and his commander of his army, Phicol, show up for a conversation afterwards. And lo and behold, what do we see? Beginning in verse 26, here comes the king. Here comes the leader of the military. And as they approach, you have to

wonder what's running through Isaac's mind. Are they for me? Are they against me? Is this good? Is this bad? What will be my fate? And notice what happens. Isaac responds to their request in verse 27 and he says to them, "Why have you come to me seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" Isaac knows he's surrounded by a culture that hates him. But notice the response to that question in verse 28. Look at what they saw. It says in verse 28, we plainly see that the Lord has been with you. That's what they saw in his father, Abraham. That's why they came to Abraham to make peace afterwards. But now, this culture all around him that he sees as hating him, sees his light shining. They see the presence of God in his midst and they come in order to make peace. They come to make reconciliation. In other words, when the light shines in the darkness, that light can bring transformation. When people plainly see that is true. And as I was reading this part of the passage this week, I couldn't help but think of all the parallels between Isaac's time and ours. In a lot of ways, it feels like we're living in a culture that hates us. We can feel that hate, that resistance, that hostility all around us. But perhaps especially in a month like June when the culture is so often celebrating Pride Month and standing for things that the Bible sees differently that God designed in different ways. And we can sense that hostility. We can sense that hate. The question that's been ringing in my ears though. Is would the culture around us see the same thing in us that Abimelech saw in Isaac? Because it says here, we see plainly that the Lord has been with you. Does this culture see that in us, Central family? Do they see the presence of God with us? Do they see the love of God through us? Do they see the light of the Gospel in us? That is what it should be stirring in our hearts. And when we wrestle with that reality, it brings us to the last portion of this chapter down in verse 32. Notice how it finishes. It says,

³²That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug and said to him, "We have found water." ³³He called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day. ³⁴And when Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, ³⁵and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

Now, we'll talk more next week about these wives that Esau takes and the hardship and tension that creates between Esau and Isaac. But for now, here's what I need you to notice. Isaac makes peace with Abimelech. There's a victory feast. And just as that's culminating, he receives more good news, not just of his protection but also that there's good news about the challenge of his provision, that there is finally water, this place called Sheba, that he now knows is Beersheba. In the original language, Beersheba means the well of the oath. It's a reminder of the provision and protection that comes through a promise.

And it's fitting that on a day like today, we're about to finish our time in God's word through the partaking of the Lord's Supper. Because right here in this passage, we see glimpses that point us ahead to what God was going to do in Jesus and that what is reflected through that taking of the supper. What do we see? We see a victory feast being celebrated by those who were previously far off. Who were hostile to one another. Who were resistant to one another but now have been brought near through the agreement upon a promise. And that's what we see through the blood of Jesus Christ. That those who are far off from God are brought near. That He breaks down the dividing wall of hostility between different peoples and cultures. He brings us together as one body in Christ. And where is that found? Not in the provision of a well of water in the Middle East. But in the provision of a fountain filled with blood that flows from Emmanuel's veins. His

broken body for you. His blood shed for you. Isaac's story here points ahead to a coming Isaac who would fulfill those promises and make a way for you and me. And there's nothing better we can do than to celebrate that through the taking of the Lord's Supper. And so let's prepare our hearts now as we pray and ready ourselves for that moment.

Father, Your word is pure, Your word is true, Your word is a gift. And I pray that You would use it to search our hearts, that if there is any spirit of the Philistines within us, that You would root it out, that quarrelsome spirit, that resistance to Your design, that hostility towards one another, Lord, would, would we crucify it by the blood of Christ? Lord, and if people in this room find themselves in moments just like Isaac of hardship and hostility, would You show them Your goodness for their future, Your promise not just today, but for everlasting life. And as we partake of the Lord's Supper, Father, would You remind us of the gift that You've given us in Your Son, in whose name we pray. Amen.