

09

SESSION NINE

God Reaffirms the Covenant

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 25:19-26; 26:1-6

THE POINT

God promises to be faithful to His people even when they show themselves to be unworthy of His love.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Isaac:** son of Abraham through whom God would renew His covenant

PLOT

In the previous sessions, we've seen how God chose Abraham to be the one through whom salvation would come to the world. We saw how Isaac was the child of promise, and how Abraham's faith was tested. But what happens when Abraham's descendants are unfaithful to God? How will God's promise go forward?

In this session, we see that God renews His promise to be with Abraham's offspring and to bless the world through them despite their sinful and unworthy ways. Abraham's descendants fight, lie, and manipulate one another, but God remains faithful and renews His promises again and again. We can take heart in knowing we serve a God who keeps His promises in unusual ways to unworthy people, a God who is present with us as we fulfill His mission.

HIS STORY

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

We're still working through Genesis, the first book of the Bible, and we see how this book is divided into units by the key phrase "These are the generations of..." (see 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 36:1; 36:9; 37:2). The use of this phrase in Genesis 25:19 indicates that a new section is starting, one that deals with Isaac and his children.

We've seen that Isaac is the child of promise who carries forward the promises of land, offspring, and blessing that God gave to Abraham. But before the promises are carried forward, a crisis must be addressed. Like Abraham's wife, Isaac's wife, Rebekah, could not have children.

But Isaac prayed for his wife, and God miraculously opened her womb. Are you noticing the pattern here? God is using unlikely pregnancies and births to keep His promises and deliver His people, and He is asking His people to trust Him in the process.

Genesis 25:19-21

These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

God Is Truthful

The Scriptures are clear that in God there is no falsehood (Heb. 6:18, Titus 1:2). God represents things as they really are. Everything He says can be trusted because God guarantees the truth of everything He tells us. The call for humans to be honest and not to bear false witness is rooted in the utter truthfulness of our Creator. Telling the truth is one way we bear the image of God, whose Son is the Way, "the Truth," and the Life (John 14:6).



ABRAHAM'S HEIRS RECEIVE THE PROMISE

The promise of the covenant is passed to Abraham's descendants.



JACOB AND ESAU

Family dysfunction erupts between parents and sons for the birthright blessing.

Genesis 26:1-3

Now 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. And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn 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."

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES EVEN WHEN PEOPLE ARE UNWORTHY

We've seen how God keeps His promises in unusual ways. As the story progresses, we watch how God's people prove to be unworthy of those promises by their behavior. They play favorites, lie, and manipulate. Yet God remains gracious to them.

Here we read about another famine in the land, just like there was in the days of Abraham. The famine in Abraham's day foreshadowed the exodus. Famine drove Abraham and his family to Egypt, where plagues were unleashed on Pharaoh's house, and Abraham's family left Egypt richer than they came. The same thing will happen generations later on a larger scale, when God rescues Israel from slavery in Egypt. God continues to rescue His people and keep His promise of land, offspring, and blessing despite horrible circumstances, such as famine and being away from their homeland.

We see here in Genesis 26 a similar unworthiness in Isaac, and we also see God's graciousness to keep the promises. Like his father, Isaac passed off his wife, Rebekah, as his sister because he feared the men of the area would kill him to take her as a wife since she was so beautiful. Yet despite Isaac's cowardly treatment of his wife, he was blessed in this foreign land and became rich, to the point the Philistines wanted him to leave. Eventually Isaac made it back to the land of promise in Beer-sheba, where God restated the promises to him yet again.

In what ways does remembering God's faithfulness in your past affect how you face difficult situations today?



JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

Jacob, the deceiver, is forever changed after being broken through his encounter with God.



JOSEPH'S HARDSHIPS

The sufferings of Joseph and the mercies of God.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Consider this pattern throughout the Bible. God granted Isaac as a miracle child to Abraham and Sarah in order to keep His promise to them. Likewise, Esau and Jacob were an answer to Isaac's prayer. God granted a miraculous birth, the prophet Samuel, to Hannah who was barren. Manoah's wife faced infertility but gave birth to Samson, whom God used to judge Israel. Ultimately, the virgin Mary gave birth to the Savior of the world, an unlikely birth that was the culmination of all of God's promises.

There is no doubt that God graciously grants many things to us in the gospel. He gives us forgiveness of sin, adoption into His family, eternal life, an inheritance in His kingdom, and so much more. But the one thing the gospel of Jesus Christ secures for us that is far more glorious than any of these is God Himself.

The God-man, Jesus Christ—the One who shed His own blood for us and was raised from the dead to free us from the curse of sin—will live with His people forever. The promise of God to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is the promise God has fulfilled for us in Jesus Christ. And if we learn anything about God's character from these biblical accounts and others, it is the fact that God is someone who keeps His promises, even at the cost of His own life!

THE SUPREME BLESSING IN ISAAC'S LIFE WAS NOT MATERIAL POSSESSIONS, BUT THE LORD HIMSELF. "I AM WITH YOU," GOD SAID TO ISAAC.

Willem VanGemeren, Gospel Transformation Bible



THE SALVATION OF MANY
God brings good out of the evil done to Joseph.



MOSES SPEAKS TO GOD*
God reveals Himself to Moses and promises redemption.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

▶ **What are some ways you have seen God keep His promises in your life or in the life of someone you know?**

▶ **What situations have caused you to doubt God's promises to you?**

▶ **How can you battle your doubts and trust God's promises in these difficult circumstances?**

▶ **How has this session challenged you on a personal level?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
Redemption through
His Son, Jesus Christ*

YOUR STORY

*Where your story
meets His.*

YOUR MISSION



HEAD

There's no question that God has made promises to us that are independent of our worthiness. Not only that, but God also keeps His promises even when we fail to live as we should. Yet, we often seem to believe that God is mad at us or that we forfeit His blessing if we fail Him. When we think this way, we reveal a works based mind-set at work within us.

- Why is it easy to think God is perpetually angry with us when we fail Him?
- Why is it important that we change that way of thinking?



HEART

It is important to remember that God's grace, love, and mercy are unmerited—meaning we didn't do anything to deserve them. In fact, the Bible affirms that we love only because God first loved us, and that it is His kindness that leads us to repentance.

- How can we stand on the promises of God we see in Genesis? How does this help us grow in love and obedience toward Him?
- How does God's faithfulness lead to a deeper trust in Him?



HANDS

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (see Pr. 3:34; Jas. 4:6). There is no place for pride or boasting in the Christian's mission, but only the desire to become more like Christ in the hope of expanding His kingdom in the hearts of people.

- What are some limitations that may make a person feel unqualified to share the love of Christ with others?
- How does knowing that God uses unlikely and unworthy people to accomplish His plan free us from the fear of not being qualified to share His message?