

Genesis

Chapter 26:26-33

Let's get started with this week's study.

✧ **Gen 26:26-27** ²⁶ *Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phicol the commander of his army. ²⁷ And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?"*

Remember last week's study, where the Philistines were trying to drive Isaac out of the land of Gerar by filling all of the wells Abraham had dug. Then Isaac would have to go back and re-dig them, and after he did the Philistines said that the wells belonged to them?

Well, this week we have not just the Philistine herdsmen coming to Isaac, but the actual king or Abimelech, as he is known. And he didn't come alone, but he came with a friend named Ahuzzath, which means "possession" which may have been a minister or advisor as he is called in the NLT.

Plus another person who was called Phicol, the commander of Abimelech's army. The interesting thing is, his name means: "the mouth of all or every tongue"

So Isaac sees these three guys coming from Gerar, which was around 20 miles from Beersheba, possibly with additional men. And Isaac's response is, ***"Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?"***

It would be like having been exiled or banished from the United States and then having the President coming to you. Wouldn't you wonder why he was coming to you after being driven out of your home and country?

Let's read Abimelech's response.

✧ **Gen 26:28-29** ²⁸ *But they said, "We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, ²⁹ that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD."*

Notice it says "they", "we" and "us". This may have been Phicol doing most of the talking at this time as his name implies "the mouth of all".

A few weeks ago we learned that there was a famine in the land during all of this, and during this famine the Lord had blessed Isaac. Well, the Philistines had seen this, and even though they drove him out of the land, they still knew that the Lord was with him. Talk about a testimony. Someone treats you bad and still they see the Lord in your life.

Once again they saw the Lord as we learned last week, because of Isaac's humbleness. Remember that if Isaac would have stood and tried to fight the Philistines there could have been bad consequences.

Plus Isaac knew that the Lord was with him, so he had no reason to fear.

I think that when Isaac was leaving, the Philistines saw not only Isaac's humbleness, but also his faith in God. And this faith was what they were seeing as the Lord blessed Isaac, no matter what the circumstances were, or no matter how much they tried to push him to the breaking point.

Who's been pushing you to the breaking point lately?

Or maybe you have a short fuse and you've gone beyond that breaking point. Someone has just made you so mad that you lashed out at him or her.

How did you feel afterward? Possibly still angry for a while, but then later on you probably felt sorry for what you did or said to them?

So what have you done about it? Nothing? Why not?

Remember what God's word says about your anger towards someone.

✠ **Matt 5:22-26 (NLT) *But I say, if you are angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the high council. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.***

So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God. Come to terms quickly with your enemy before it is too late and you are dragged into court, handed over to an officer, and thrown in jail. I assure you that you won't be free again until you have paid the last penny.

"But Steve, it says if someone has something against me. Not if I am angry with someone else."

You're right, it does say that, but you must also read it in the context of the whole passage. That's why I included verse 22. If you read verse 22 it speaks of your anger towards someone else and the words you say out of that anger.

So in your anger you speak these words to someone, now they have something against you because of your harsh words towards them.

I would encourage you to go to them and seek their forgiveness. And it's always better to speak to them face to face whenever possible. If for some reason it's not possible, then call them or write them a letter. But as Jesus' words say ***Go and be reconciled to that person.*** Even your ministry could be hindered, and also your giving to the Lord, which are things considered as offering of your sacrifices to the Lord.

After you do speak with them, then come to the Lord in prayer.

"So if I do and they don't forgive me then I'm off the hook right?"

The word reconcile means in the Greek: “*diallasso*” (*dee-al-las'-so*) which means: *To change the mind of anyone, to renew friendship with one.*

So it's not just a “I'm sorry” and walk away.
It's more of, not walking away until that reconciliation is complete.

† **Eph 4:25-27** *Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.*

“But Steve, I really have tried and they just wont forgive me. Does that mean God wont forgive or bless me until they do?”

I believe that if you truly give every effort to make amends with someone and they refuse to forgive you, then you have done all that you can do. But then I wouldn't say to stop there either. God knows your heart and your attempt to truly reconcile with that person. But even though they haven't forgiven you, that doesn't mean that you still can't pray for him or her.

Jesus did give us a course of action for reconciliation.

† **Matt 18:15-17** *Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

In other words, do all you can to make amends with this person.

Back to Isaac and Abimelech.

When you read verse 29, you can see how these guys are trying to butter up Isaac and pretend like nothing happened. Read it again and you'll see what I mean.

☞ *that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.*

We only treated you good, and sent you away in peace? Who are these guys trying to kid?

Read Isaac's opening line when he first sees them, from verse 27 again from the NLT:

☞ **Gen 26:27 (NLT)** *"Why have you come?" Isaac asked them. "This is obviously no friendly visit, since you sent me from your land in a most unfriendly way."*

Or as the last line reads in the Living bible:

✧ *since you kicked me out in a most uncivil way.*

Weren't these guys listening to Isaac when they first showed up?

Even from last weeks study we read of how the Philistine men quarreled with Isaac. He even named the wells after the fact that they quarreled.

✧ **Gen 26:20-21** ²⁰ *But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. ²¹ Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah.*

If this were me, I may have said, "Hey Abimelech. Does the names "Esek" and "Sitnah" mean anything to you?" Well, not really, but it would be tempting to.

But I don't think that Isaac said or even considered these thoughts, because of what they said at the beginning of verse 28, and the end of verse 29.

"We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you." And "You are now the blessed of the LORD."

Here they are acknowledging the Lord in Isaac's life, and they are giving the glory to God and not Isaac.

Someone can butter you up all they want and you can see right through them. But when they acknowledge the Lord in your life and start giving glory to God instead of you.

That's when you stop and listen.

Also they wanted to make peace with Isaac not because of who or what Isaac was, but because the Lord was with him.

Read it again in verse 28.

✧ *But they said, "We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you,*

Do people see and respect you because of who you are, more then because of God in your life? If that's the case then you are showing them more of yourself and less of God.

If you go way back to the beginning studies of Genesis, you may remember that we talked about the sun and the moon. With the Sun representing Jesus and the moon representing us.

When you see the moon at night, it's not because of the light that it generates itself, but rather because of the reflection of the light from the sun onto the moon.

When you see a full moon then the earth is not blocking the reflection of the sun. But when you see a new moon then the earth is blocking the reflection of the sun on the moon.

It's the same way in our lives. You can be a full moon with the things of this world not blocking out Jesus in your life. Or maybe you're a half or quarter moon walking the edge showing only part of Jesus in your life, because you compromise with the things of this world, allowing them just as much or more into your life than Jesus.

Or maybe you're a new moon not showing any of Jesus in your life because the things of this world are more important to you than Jesus.

If you're a full moon then great, keep allowing the light of our Lord to shine in your life. If you're a half or quarter moon, then read Jesus' words to those who are walking the fence.

✠ **Rev 3:15-16 & 19** *I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.*

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Finally you may be the new moon hiding Jesus with the things of this world. It may most likely mean that Jesus is not a part of your life.

Are you tired of the things of this world? Do they seem to always leave you empty inside? You're just sick and tired of the one-night stands, the partying and the way you feel the next day. Are you tired of the loneliness that comes from all this type of living?

If the answer is yes to one or more of these questions, I know just how you feel, because I felt the same way too. But not any more, now my emptiness and loneliness are gone. I feel so much better and even better about myself. And it's not because of any new drug or new toy I just bought.

It's ALL because of JESUS in my life. He has filled that emptiness I used to have, He has given my life new meaning. No more using others to please myself.

And the coolest thing is that He has forgiven me for doing all that and even more.

And one more better, Jesus can and will do it for you too. He is waiting to forgive you; all you have to do is ask Him.

Remember earlier we talked about reconciliation, and going to someone asking their forgiveness. I guarantee you that Jesus will forgive you if you just ask. You have His word on it.

✠ **John 6:37 (NLT)** *However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them.*

Jesus will not reject you even if the world has. Just pray this simple prayer and ask His forgiveness and He will. Then start your new life in Jesus walking around like a full moon.

Just pray:

Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner. So many others have rejected me, but your word says that You will not reject me. Please forgive me for all my sins Lord Jesus. Come into my life and make me new. Take away that old way of life from me and fill me with your Holy Spirit. I believe that you are the Son of God and that you died for me on the cross for my sins. Thank You Jesus for dying for my sins. I believe that You rose again and right now You're at the right hand of the Father as Your word says You are. Now help me to tell others about You and to be a full moon allowing Your light to be seen and not me any more.

Thank you Jesus! I pray this in Your name Jesus. Amen!

Now is that too cool or what? Welcome to the family of God. Now go tell someone what you just did and what Jesus did for you. And if you don't have anyone to tell, then send me an E-mail, I would love to hear about it.

Let's read Isaac's response to all that's going on.

✎ **Gen 26:30-31** ³⁰ *So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank.* ³¹ *Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.*

Once again we see Isaac's humbleness, because he could have rebuked them and chased them out of his home. But instead he invited them into his home to rejoice in the repenting of the Philistines and the way they had treated them.

You've heard the term "Kiss and make up". Even as married people the best part of arguing (which even Christian couples do) is making up. There's a celebration in your heart, as you know that you are forgiven, or that you have forgiven someone that you care about. That in a sense is what is happening here. Isaac is rejoicing over their repentance, and not only that, but because they acknowledge the Lord in his life.

As we spoke earlier about forgiveness. When you do go to someone and you are reconciled to him or her. Don't just walk away and leave it at that. But rejoice and celebrate with them. This is the same thing that happens in heaven when someone comes to repentance and turns to the Lord.

✠ **Luke 15:10** *"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

If you prayed the sinners prayer just earlier in this study, then right now at this moment rejoicing is happening in heaven over you, and the glory is going to Jesus, because He is the reason that you have been forgiven!

So Isaac makes a pact or oath with the Philistines. What exactly does this mean? The answer is in the end of verse 28 and the beginning of verse 29

✎ *Let us make a covenant with you, 'that you will do us no harm.*

Or in today's terms, "we won't go to war with one another".

But this wasn't millions of people involved at this time in this oath, but simply Isaac's family and the Philistines. It would be like being in the city that you live in, and having the mayor come to you and say, let's live in peace together here in our little town.

And as we read Isaac's response they were forgiven, and their sins forgotten because we don't read of Isaac bringing them up again.

Once again, when there is reconciliation with someone, don't ever, ever go back and bring it up again. Sadly it's a common thing done in marriages, but it shouldn't be so. God has forgiven and forgotten your sins from the past and He never brings them up again if you have asked His forgiveness.

Here is an example of what it's like when you do bring up someone's past sins that you have forgiven.

† **2 Peter 2:20-22 (NLT)** *And when people escape from the wicked ways of the world by learning about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up with sin and become its slave again, they are worse off than before. It would be better if they had never known the right way to live than to know it and then reject the holy commandments that were given to them. They make these proverbs come true: "A dog returns to its vomit", and "A washed pig returns to the mud."*

I know it sounds sick to even think about, but that's what it's like when we return to our sins, or even bringing up those that were forgiven.

But this oath or promise of peace doesn't last forever.

Chapter 26 is the last time we read anything about the Philistines. The next time they are mentioned is in Exodus.

† **Ex 13:17 (NLT)** *When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them on the road that runs through Philistine territory, even though that was the shortest way from Egypt to the Promised Land. God said, "If the people are faced with a battle, they might change their minds and return to Egypt."*

This is when the children of Israel were led out of Egypt by God with Moses being God's vessel.

Here God is telling Moses not to go by the way of the Philistines because they may fight with them. That's the end of the oath or treaty.

Still, throughout the bible we read of the Philistines and Israel battling. Remember the story of David and Goliath? And what was Goliath? That's right a Philistine.

And the reason all this happened was because of the war or fighting between Israel and the Philistines.

† **1 Sam 17:2** *And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines.*

But this wasn't the first battle or the last. In fact still to this day they are still fighting. All you have to do is watch the news and hear about the fighting between Israel and the Philistines.

So Abimelech is gone with his two friends, so what does Isaac do?

✠ **Gen 26:32-33** ³² *It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." ³³ So he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.*

First off, the Lord blesses Isaac with another well. Wells were very rare and important to those living in these areas since they were desert lands with little water.

Isaac names the well Shebah, which means: "an oath".

The land was then named Beersheba, which means: "well of the sevenfold oath"

This may have been named such by Isaac because there was completeness or an end to the confrontations between himself and the Philistines. (The number seven represents completeness.)

Actually the well was dug before and named before by Abraham, so Isaac was naming it just what his father called it, but knew even more why it was so named.

Also through this weeks study, have noticed something very familiar?

Lets go back the Isaac's father, Abraham and see an identical situation and why the well and city were named what they were.

✠ **Gen 21:22-31** ²² *And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. ²³ "Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt." ²⁴ And Abraham said, "I will swear."*

²⁵ *Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized. ²⁶ And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today." ²⁷ So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. ²⁸ And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. ²⁹ Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?" ³⁰ And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well." ³¹ Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.*

Doesn't that sound just like what we have studied this week?

I notice that Isaac was like his father Abraham by keeping peace with the Philistines. But Abimelech did not keep peace as we saw last week, and he had to come back and seek Isaac's forgiveness and make peace with Isaac again, just as Abimelech did with Abraham.

I believe that Abraham taught all of this to his son Isaac, but Abimelech did not teach or tell his son how important it was for him to keep this oath that he made with Abraham.

That's why it's so important to have good Christian values taught in your home. If you teach your children the ways of the world, then they will live like the world. But if you teach them the ways of God, then when they will grow up they will follow the ways of God. Even if they stray away from God's word, they will come back.

‡ ***Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.***

We use this verse to say that we should teach our children the ways of God. But it says more than that. It says to teach them in the way they should live. And what ever you teach them they will follow, even if you teach them the wrong way to live.

Teach your children the right way to live. Not what you think is right, but what God's word says is right, and then he/she will not depart from that teaching!