

## Genesis: Failure and Faithfulness Genesis 26:3-29

In studying the life of Isaac, we discover a man who was unfaithful to his God despite his promised blessings. Thankfully, God is faithful even to the unfaithful. We often find ourselves assuming we have to be “good enough” for God to truly love us. But the truth is that God doesn't love you because you're good; God loves you because He's good.

### Intro – Kid Proposal Video

- I don't know if that's how your proposal went, but what really stood out to me is that **her first reaction includes “Can you make soup?”** – because even kids know that our relationships often hinge on **what we DO – whether or not we're “good enough”**

### The Truth is...

- **We've all lost a relationship** because we couldn't do the right thing or we weren't “good enough” in some respect. You lost a **friendship** because you weren't good enough. You got **dumped** by that girl because you weren't good enough. Your **parent** was never proud of you or loved you because you weren't good enough. Your **spouse** left because you weren't good enough.
- The problem is that **Christians** are surrounded by relationships that depend on us being “good enough” and we **assume our relationship with God works the exact same way.**
- **We think: I have to live a certain way for God to love me.** I have to read my Bible or pray or serve or stop sinning or else God won't really love me. I have to be good enough for God or else He will either abandon me or maybe I was never His child to begin with...

### This Semester...

- We're walking through the book of Genesis, which serves as an introduction to our God by showing us His **Plan** of glorifying Himself through creation, His **Promise** to restore creation broken by sin, and His chosen **People** who were selected not based on words or deeds, but by God's Grace alone.

### This Morning...

- We're looking at the life of **Isaac**, who is one of our greatest Biblical examples of a useless dude who isn't “good enough” on any level...
- But we see through Isaac one of our greatest Biblical examples of the simple truth that **God doesn't love you because you're good, God loves you because He's good.**

### The Context

- Whenever we talk about Isaac, it's generally because he's in **someone else's story** – Abraham, Jacob and Esau (**supporting actor**)
  - **Ex: Sassy cop** in action movie; **Sassy friend** in Romantic Comedy
- But **Genesis 26** changes the game: **Isaac gets his one and only chapter as the headliner**, and it starts off great! It begins with...

### God Gives a Promise

- **Read: Genesis 26.3-5** – There's a **famine** where Isaac was living, just like there had been a famine with Abraham, so God tells Isaac not to worry because God's got his back
  - At this point, we're thinking, “Awesome! God just reminded us of all that **great stuff Abraham did**, and Isaac was already pretty cool about that whole sacrifice thing, so **I can't wait to see what he does now!**”
  - Unfortunately, we quickly see...

## Isaac Has a Problem

- **Read: Genesis 26.6-7** – Isaac stays where God says, but just like his dad years before, he gets **concerned about how attractive his wife is**
  - While this would make an incredible Valentine’s Day card (**You’re so beautiful... It’s Dangerous!**) it displays an incredible lack of faith on Isaac’s part
  - In fact, Isaac has less faith than the nearby Philistines!
- **Read: Genesis 26.8-11** – **King Abimelech** sees through the ruse, and confronts Isaac about it since he probably **remembers his dad telling him** the story about taking Abraham’s “sister” and getting cursed for it
  - Isaac obviously doesn’t appear ready for the spotlight, so at this point we’re thinking, “Okay, **Isaac, that was a bad call**, so God’s going to have to discipline you or force you through some sort of extreme trial to **keep or prove your position in God’s family**
  - Which is why it’s so confusing when...

## God Keeps His Promise

- **Read: Genesis 26.12-14** – **In the midst of Isaac’s unfaithfulness, God gives him incredible material blessing** to the point where the Philistines hate him, which seems like the **wrong message** to send
  - **Ex: Penelope biting Katherine** – I have a niece named **Penelope** who’s almost 3 and a niece named **Katherine** who’s almost 4. They’ve just entered the amazing stage where they can play together by themselves, so we’re happy to let them run off and play muffin factory, or whatevs. However, the last time we were all together, I noticed **Penelope would get frustrated** if they were both tugging on the same toy, and she’d **bite the toy**. I thought “**well, there’s an omen**” and sure enough, the next day, Katherine came up to me, said “**Penny bit me!**” and lifted her shirt to show me her **teeth-marked stomach**.
    - Thankfully, Penelope has amazing parents who **disciplined her** and told her no biting. But what if they’d just patted her on the back and told her to really use those sharp teeth on the bottom?
  - Isn’t God just reinforcing bad behavior?
- **Read: Genesis 26.27-29** – Abimelech and his men saw Isaac’s life and the only conclusion they could reach was “**God is with him.**”
  - **In the midst of Isaac’s unfaithfulness, God gives him blessing because it ultimately brings glory to God!**
  - God is reinforcing the truth that **God doesn’t love you because you’re good, He loves you because He’s good!** Unfortunately...

**We Have a Problem** - We generally respond to God’s saving grace in one of two ways: We want to DO something to **keep it**; or we want to DO something to **prove it**

- **We want to DO something to keep God’s love:** I simply can’t wrap my mind around what another pastor described as a “**God who cannot love me more and will not love me less**”
  - **Read: Romans 3.3-4a** – **God is faithful to the faithless!** Which we’d all agree is much more impressive than “God is faithful to the ones who are worthy of love thanks to their deeds”
    - Instead, we know that God so loved the World that He sent Christ to die so that we might live (**GOSPEL**)
  - **Ex: I tell my wife “I love you”** and not “I love you as long as you pick up those clothes and take my car in for an oil change and build a headboard for the guest bed” – because my **love is based on the fact she’s my wife**, not that she does nice things and makes good soup
    - My wife has done all of those things because she’s the handy one in our relationship. But what if she did them to keep my love? Because she was afraid not doing them would bring our relationship to an end? – **How would that reflect on her? Me?**
  - Jesus told us that if we love Him, we’d keep his commandments. He wants our **obedience born out of love, not out of a selfish fear** that otherwise I’d lose my salvation

- **We want to DO something to Prove God's love:** I'm afraid that if I don't prove to be a **worthwhile investment**, I was never truly saved
  - **Read: Romans 3.27-28** – I could **never boast in my works** because I'm saved by faith alone! If works can't gain my salvation, why would I assume they can prove my salvation?
  - It's very beneficial to **check yourself for the works that God calls us to**, but **not in a selfish attempt** to prove your salvation – check to make sure you're **loving the God who first loved you!** The God who is **faithful** when you're unfaithful! **The God who doesn't love you because you're good, but because He is Good!**

#### **Application**

- The **knowledge of God's unmerited love** and forgiveness should fill us with a **love for both God and His people!** Let's go out into our world **Speaking and Showing Grace**
  - **Speak Grace** – Share the **Gospel** (Christians are for, not against)
  - **Show Grace** – Share the **Grace** you've experienced with someone you know – **forgive, trust, love despite faults**