

Getting It Right When Things Go Wrong

The Story

Genesis 26

Sermon Notes

1. Sometimes hard times are just a famine, not a failure.
 - Your prosperity and comfort are not an indicator of God's favor.
2. I would rather be led than lucky or smart.
 - God uses the good and bad in our lives to direct us to where we need to be.
3. Worship first, take care of business second.
4. When life is not all about you, you can see what God is up to.

My Story

1. Looking back over your notes, what did you find most helpful, challenging, or interesting in this week's teaching? Was there anything you've never heard before or something that made you think differently?
2. What "famine" or hard times have you experienced in your life? What happened? How did you get through?
3. God spoke directly to Isaac about what he should and shouldn't do. He also told Isaac how He would respond if he listened. How has God spoken to you during tough times? Did you listen to Him? What happened?
4. When Chris said, "sometimes hard times are just a famine and not a failure," what did you think?
5. Do you believe that someone who is a "real Christian" will experience famine times in their life, or is that more of an indicator of a lack of faith?

In The Beginning

Chris Figaretti
October 16, 2022
Sermon #24 | Genesis 26

6. Do you think your prosperity and your comfort are an indicator of God's favor in your life? Are there ever times when they are not? Are there times when you think God does bless you as an indicator of His favor?
7. When something good happens in your life, why do you think that is? Do you think it's mostly because of you (or something like luck), or do you think it's because of God?
8. In a moment of fear, Isaac made a bad choice. Does fear ever lead you to make choices you regret?
9. Do you find it odd that Isaac lied the same way his father, Abraham, had lied? Do you think this might be because Isaac learned that lying had worked for his dad when he was afraid? If you have children or leadership over others, what do you think this says about what the people you are responsible for learn from you?
10. God blessed Isaac by returning his crop one hundredfold. Why do you think God did this? How did God use this to get Isaac where he needed to be?
11. Isaac discovered that there is much in life more important than our things; Isaac decided his things weren't worth contention and opposition. Can you relate to that? If so, why?
12. Do you tend to think life is mostly about you? How easy is it for you to see the opportunities and perspectives of others even when you're going through challenging times? How can you better keep your eyes heavenwards and serve others even when you're struggling?

Digging Deeper

Read through these guiding scriptures and answer the corresponding questions.

Read Genesis 26 and Matthew 6:25-34

1. God uses the good and the bad in our lives to direct us to where He wants us to be. In today's reading of Genesis 26, we read how God used both good and bad to get Isaac where he needed to be. How has/is God using good and bad in your life to get you where you need to be? Do you know where you need to be? If you have no idea, what will it take to understand better where God is telling you that you need to be?

2. In verses 16-17, Isaac packed up and moved away from his banner crop. What would you do in this situation? What could entice or force you to pack up and move on? Is there anything in your life that you think God is calling you to put behind you and move on from? What are you going to do about that?
3. Looking at Isaac's struggles and prosperity in this chapter, can you see how those were not so much about Isaac himself but because God wanted to reveal Himself to the Philistines? Can you think of anything similar in your own life about how God is using the events in your life so you can share Him with others?
4. Chris told us to get our priorities straight by worshipping first and taking care of business (or pleasure) second. What does the scripture in Matthew say about this to you? What does this look like in your everyday life?

Bringing It Home

1. How do you respond when you go through a really hard time (your famine)? Do you lean on God or yourself? How do you humble yourself in that situation and seek support from God? How do you seek support from your Christian brothers and sisters?
2. What does it mean to be led by God? Is God leading you in your life? What does this look like? What is happening in those places where God is leading you? Are there areas of your life where you haven't trusted God to lead? Are you willing to prayerfully submit those areas to God?
3. Isaac told a similar lie to the one his father Abraham had told when he said his wife was his sister; he lied because he was afraid. It's easy to shake our heads at Issac, but are there areas in your life where you repeat the same sins as your family did before you (generational sin)?

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4. Are there any areas in your life where you keep falling into the same sin patterns or doing the same thing wrong again and again? Issac and Abraham lied because they feared men rather than trusted God. What things cause you to keep falling into the same sin patterns? What are you doing to address the root of your sin? Have you opened up to God and asked for His help? Have you opened up to a fellow Christian and asked for prayer and accountability? If not, what will you do?
5. Our working definition of faith in this series has been faith is trusting God enough to do what He says. Faith is also knowing God will get you to where He wants you to be. Spend a couple of minutes prayerfully thinking about this definition. What is God saying to you about how this applies to your life? What are you going with that?
6. Isaac built an altar to the Lord, and THEN he built his home and dug a well. He chose to worship first and then took care of business second. Think about this in relation to your own life. Is worshiping God your first priority or lower on your list? Do you choose to worship first and then take care of your business and pleasure second? If you are putting other things ahead of God, do you think that might correlate to issues in your life where things won't seem to go right? What specifically will you do about this to get your priorities straight?
7. Think about your challenges and struggles. Have you ever asked God why you are facing them? How can you use those struggles to share how awesome our God is with someone else?
8. Take a moment and think about how you are reaching others with the Gospel of Jesus. Ask God to speak to you in this. What is God revealing? How are you reaching others? Do you think you are giving as much as possible to share the Gospel? If not, what do you think you're missing? Are you trying to do it in your power, or have you asked God to pour out the power of His Holy Spirit on you and equip you to share His Gospel and shine His light in your areas of influence? What will you commit to for spreading God's Kingdom by helping others see God?