Leaving a Legacy — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 26 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, June 30, 2024 · *The Patriarchs*

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If you have your Bible, you can open to the book of Genesis, chapter 26. And as you're turning there, I want you to imagine with me something you probably swore you would never do or never be, which is all of those ways in which you act like your parents. Anybody got one of them stories? My dad told me growing up I'm not going to be like my dad, and in a lot of ways he wasn't. He broke some bad patterns that my granddad and the granddad before him and the granddad before him had established, so thanks, Dad, for that.

You're not watching, so I guess I can say whatever I want to say, honestly, because we're not recording this service, so we can get real raw in here. But there were other ways that my dad was like his dad. And some of his kind of humorous ways and I used to laugh at him and then I started doing stuff that sounded like my dad and acting like my dad and just the other day Audra told me, we were in Lowe's, she said, You kind of even look like your dad. And I didn't like that she said that.

Well, we can talk about that later. There are ways that my children cannot help it, right? They look like me. Some of my children have characteristics of mine that are physical characteristics. One in particular looks like a little mini-me. There are other things that are more temperamental, personality characteristics in which they embody their father or their mother. The point is, whether you like it or not, you're going to reflect your parents. Okay? I hate to break it to you. That's just the way that it is. Children are a reflection of their parents physically, genetically, but also socially and temperamentally.

And more importantly, spiritually. And what we're going to see in our chapter today, in chapter 26 of the book of Genesis, is the fact that children have a way of walking in the footsteps that their parents leave behind. You're going to leave a legacy and I know some of you in here are not biological parents and so you're like, well great, you know, this sermon doesn't apply to me. But you are a child of a parent, so in that way it applies to you and you do have influence on the next generation, whether you're a parent or not.

The way that you're living your life is leaving some kind of a legacy. It's leaving some kind of an inheritance behind and I think it's important for us if we're Christian people and want to try to bring the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. It's important that the footsteps we leave behind are footsteps that bless the next generation and not curse them. And we can all look at ways where maybe those who went before us left a legacy that, you know, you had to overcome. It was a hurdle that you had to jump instead of a resource that you got to lean into and strengthen you and make it easier for your life.

We want to make it easier to know and love God than it is to try to find Him and understand Him. And that's what Genesis chapter 26 is all about. It's really odd. It's the first time where the camera shifts away from Abraham onto Isaac in the book of Genesis, really from chapter 12 all the way up to chapter 25. A lot of the discussion has been about Abraham, the OG, founding father of faith. But then when the camera finally pans over to Isaac in chapter 26, which is the one chapter that describes Isaac's life, his whole life.

What it took 10 plus chapters to describe for Abraham, Isaac gets in one chapter, and almost everything that is mentioned about Isaac is a repeat of things that were mentioned about Abraham. Throwback after throwback after throwback, echo after echo after echo. What we see happen in Isaac's life is the same thing that we saw happen in Abraham's life, which establishes the main idea, which is children are not only a reflection of their parents, but that you, as a man or a woman, need to leave footprints that'll bless the next generation.

And we see footprints that bless Isaac and help him discover the goodness of God. And then we see footprints that are not quite the same way. So with that in mind, let's turn to Genesis 26 and read the first six verses. And I want you to kind of, if you've been with us for a while, to try to find some of these echoes that are throwbacks to chapter 12 onward. So it says in chapter 26, verse 1, there was another famine in the land, in addition to the one that had occurred in Abraham's time.

That famine was in Genesis chapter 12, verse 10. And then Isaac went out to Abimelech, king of the Philistines at Gerar. And then the Lord appeared to him and said, do not go down to Egypt. Remember, Abraham went down to Egypt in Genesis 12:10. The Lord says to Isaac, Don't go down to Egypt, but live in the land that I tell you about. Stay in this land as an alien. And I will be with you and bless you. Underline that phrase, I will be with you. It's going to show up again and again in this chapter.

I will be with you and I will bless you, for I will give you all of these lands to you and to your offspring. I will confirm the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky. I will give your offspring all of these lands, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring. Because Abraham listened to me, and Abraham kept my mandate and my commands and my statutes and my instructions. And so Isaac settled in Gerar.

Isn't that interesting that God's commitment to Isaac to bless him, to be with him, to give him land and his descendants, and to use his descendants to bless the nations, all of those things God says, I'm doing for you because Abraham, your father, obeyed my voice, kept my commandments, kept my statutes, so on and so forth. It's a powerful example of how your life as a first generation, whatever generation you are, has a direct influence for good or for bad on the next generation. And the other thing that stands out to me in these six verses, the thing that shows up again and again in this chapter is kind of like a sandwich.

It's the brackets, it's the thing around which this chapter is built, is this promise of God to be with Isaac. I'll be with you. I'll bless you. But all of the blessings of God are really attached to his presence. This idea of I will be with you, this gets said to Isaac, it doesn't actually get said to Abraham. And all the things that God says to Abraham, he never actually says those three words, I will be with you, in the same way that he does to Isaac. But what the life of Abraham demonstrates is that God was indeed with Abraham, and now he's saying to Isaac, I will be with you too, because of what your dad left behind.

So the greatest thing that we can do as men and women who want to influence the next generation, the greatest thing you can receive from those who've gone before you, is the blessing of God's presence. Because all of God's greatest gifts, even gifts like land and children and prosperity, all of those gifts are really not a gift divorced from the presence of God. In other words, if you had all the money in the world but you didn't have God's presence, your money wouldn't be a blessing, it would be a curse.

And we all know people for which that's the case. If you had all the children in the world, but you're trying to raise your children without God's power or help, God help you, you know. Good luck. If you had all the land and big nice houses and all the influence of the world, but you didn't have God, you would have nothing. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul? So the presence of God is the thing. It is the thing. The older I get, it's clearer and clearer to me that it is the presence of God that matters most.

It's the presence of God that matters most in this local church. When we have times of worship like we did this morning in which the presence of God just becomes palpable and tangible. It is in those moments that I'm reminded that this is the thing we need more than anything else. We don't need programs, we don't need money, we don't need staff leadership; all those things are icing on the cake, but the substance of a church is the presence of God. The meaning in your life, the purpose in your life is the presence of God.

So the greatest thing that you can give to your children, to your family, to those who follow behind you is the presence of God. The question is, how do we do that? How do we instill in the next generation the goodness and the value? And I really believe what Genesis 26 is showing us is a template for how to establish the value of God's presence in and out of every

season of life. Starting with the famines of life. So Isaac is here, he's experiencing a famine, just like Abraham experienced the famine in Genesis chapter 12.

And he's tempted, just like Abraham was tempted, to go down to Egypt because Egypt is, you know, not having the same problems. They're going to have food, they're going to have money, they're going to have opportunity. If I want to provide for my family, I've got to leave here and go down to Egypt. And the Lord, kind of shockingly, stops him. He doesn't stop Abraham and he doesn't stop Jacob who goes after him. It's only Isaac that he stops and he says, I don't want you to go to Egypt. I want you to stay here.

I want you to trust me. I want you to take me at my word that if you stay here, I can bless you. And that is the way the Lord works in the famines of life. Sometimes the Lord will allow famines to come into your life. Sometimes because of your own foolishness or the foolishness of other people, God just allows circumstances to happen in which you just find yourself in the lowest valley, you are struggling. Sometimes God will intentionally lead you into a famine, just like he led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Whether it's his divine intention or his divine permission is irrelevant. The point is, what God will often do in those seasons is strip you of everything that really matters to you in that moment. He'll strip you from all of your comforts, all of your sources of security and strength and sweetness in life. He will strip all of those things away. Almost as if it's an intentional way to see if he's all you really need. Am I the source of your greatest satisfaction or has it become your money? Has it become your influence?

Has it become your success or whatever the case may be? Often God takes us through the famines to establish he is enough. If you have everything but not Jesus, you don't have anything. And if you have nothing but Jesus, you have everything that you need. God will do that in the famine. And his presence in those moments of life, it is the promise of God that is his presence. Sometimes you don't feel God. You pray and it's like your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling. All you have to go off is his word.

It's his promise that I am with you. Even when you can't feel me. And when you can experience the presence of God in those kinds of seasons of life, it is one of the greatest gifts that you can receive. And it's one of the greatest gifts that you can give to the next generation. The gift of God's presence in the famine. So trust in his word. Now, what does it look like to trust in his word? We've seen this in the life of Abraham. Faith is not about what you say.

Faith is about what you do. It's one thing to say, I believe in God, but what do you do? How do you live when everything is stripped away? Is there continued obedience? Is there perseverance? Is there active willingness to participate and flesh out what God's called you to do even in the famine? That's what true faith is made of and if you want to experience the

grace of God, you want to experience the provision of God, you want to feel the confidence of the promise of God, then continue to work out your salvation even in the famines of life.

So God's presence is the promise in the famine. Will it be hard? Absolutely. Will you fail? Probably. You know, Isaac failed. A lot of us fail in the famine to one degree or another. Which is the next principle that gets established in Genesis chapter 26. Isaac makes a big boo-boo, just like many of us do when life gets hard. It says that he settled in Gerar, but when the men of the place asked about his wife, he said she's my sister. I heard that one before. She's my sister. Why did he say that?

Because he was afraid to say that she's my wife, thinking that the men of this place will kill me on account of Rebekah because she is a beautiful woman. He's like his daddy in that he married a beautiful woman. When Isaac had been there for some time, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked down from the window, and he was surprised to see Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. The original Hebrew word there is the word laughing. He saw Isaac laughing with Rebekah. Some of your translations will say that. You just need to know that laughing, in one way, is a play on his name, because his name means laughter.

It's also just a euphemism for you know what. So that's why the CSB says caressing his wife. It's a kind of a word for flirting, but imagine where flirting leads and then you'll know. Abimelech sent for Isaac and he said, see, so she really is your wife. How could you say she's my sister? And then Isaac tells the truth, because I thought I might die on account of her. Then Abimelech said, what have you done to us? One of the people could have easily slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on all of us.

And so Abimelech warned all the people whoever harms this man or his wife will certainly be put to death. And so what you see here is the protection of God. God's presence is our protection in the failures of life. And it's just a really striking example of it, just like it was in Abraham's life. This is another throwback. I don't know if you guys remember this when Abraham went down to Egypt. He was fearful of Pharaoh, he was fearful of the Egyptians. He thought they're going to take my wife, they're going to kill me.

So I'll say that she's my sister. I can kind of play along to get along and everybody will kind of want to give me stuff because she's so beautiful. And Isaac here is doing the same thing. Now why is he doing this? I have no idea. It's a dumb thing to do. I do not recommend ever doing this if you're married. This is a terrible idea, but Isaac, I think, does it because his dad left a legacy of doing this. If you read in, I don't remember what chapter it was, but basically when Abraham is talking to Abimelech, who was the king of the Philistines in Gerar, he says, I made an oath with my wife to do this.

Every time we go to a new place, we had already made an oath that she was going to say, she's my sister. And so I wonder if Isaac is kind of carrying out that oath, almost as a way of

honoring his dad, like some dads give their boys bad advice, like, you know, grown men don't cry or real men don't go to church or you know whatever the case may be. There's all kinds of oaths that we carry that are not biblical. Irrespective of however he got it, the point is that he failed.

And I'm sure he had incredible regret for doing what he did. But regret is not what it takes to receive the grace of God. A lot of people make mistakes and they feel sorry about it. What you need if you want to experience the grace of God, if you want to rest in the grace of God, what you need is what Isaac demonstrated, which is repentance. And that's one of the greatest things you can show and teach your children. Teach your children that they can experience God's protection in their failure, that they can rest in his grace, but that that grace is awarded to those who repent of their sin, who honestly confess it.

That Jesus is the propitiation. He's the atoning sacrifice for our sin. And so nobody should sin, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and we can rest in his grace through repentance. Repentance isn't just feeling bad. It's not just saying you're sorry. It's actually being grieved in your heart. Not just that you got caught or that there's consequences, but that you sinned against the holy God. And you change your mind. You begin to agree with God about the nature of your sin and about the goodness of his design, and you turn the other direction.

And I think that's what Isaac demonstrates, which is why God is merciful to him and eventually is gracious towards him and giving him all kinds of wealth and prosperity and all these other things. And so your children need to see a model, not just of trusting the Word of God in the famines of life, but also trusting in the grace of God to save you from sin. They need someone, a mom or a dad or an uncle who shows when I mess up, I own up. I'm not pretending like I have to be a perfect person because I serve a perfect God.

And I'm willing to be humble and own it when I mess up and model that kind of repentance before you. And that's one of the ways that your children can receive the blessing of God's presence in their life and in giving that gift to their children and their children after them because they saw it modeled by you. He's your promise in the famine. He's your protection in the failure. And then finally he's going to be God's provision in the fighting. So look at verse 12. He gets a protective order from the king in verse 11.

Verse 12 it says Isaac sowed seed in that land. And in that year he reaped a hundred times what was sown. The Lord blessed him. And the man became rich, and then he kept getting richer until he was very wealthy. He had flocks of sheep, he had herds of cattle, he had many slaves, and the Philistines were envious of him. No surprise there. The Philistines, because of their envy, they stopped up all the wells that his father Abraham and his servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham, filling them with dirt.

And then Abimelech said to Isaac, Leave us, for you are much too powerful for us. A couple things on this before we get to the main principle of this section. Notice that Isaac is enjoying a lot of wealth and prosperity because of the work of his father. It was the father's wells. The father and his servants had dug up all these wells, and those wells are the reason why Isaac is getting all of this prosperity. His seeds are bearing a hundredfold in the harvest because he had water to put on his plants.

And I think that's just a small reminder for us as people who are this generation, influencing the next generation, that a lot of God's favor on the next generation is because of the diligence of this generation. We may not see the wells out of which our descendants will drink. We may not ever get to see the glorious things that those who come after us build, but it doesn't mean it's not worth the effort of what it takes to contribute those things. The other thing that's interesting to me is that anytime you attempt anything great for the Lord, you're going to receive some opposition.

If you want to never get criticism, never get resistance, then don't try anything great, don't do anything of significance. But if you want to do something great with your life, if you want to be used by the Lord and you're going to be successful in any way whatsoever, you need to know it will attract the haters. It'll attract the critics and the detractors, and you've got to know what to do with that opposition because it is not pleasant. It doesn't feel good. There will be people who will be envious of your success, and the way Isaac responds is really interesting.

It's the same way that his father responded when him and his nephew got in an argument about their land. So it says in verse... Yes, where are we? Verse 17. So Isaac left there. He camped in the Gerar Valley and he lived there. So he leaves the city where Abimelech and all of the Philistines are and he goes into the valley and he lived there. I had a map. Can you throw that map... it was way, way early. Can you throw that map up there? So Gerar is right here, this is where he settled.

This is Beersheba where he's going to end up. So he's leaving here. And he's settling down in here and he's looking for wells. He's outside of the hostility of the Philistines, and he's just trying to make a living for himself down in this valley. So back to verse 18. Isaac reopened the water wells that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham and that the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died. He gave them the same names that his father had given them. So he doesn't get vengeance, as would have been tempting, I imagine.

Anytime you get resistance, especially if you grew up kind of scrappy, your immediate response is, all right, let's go. You know, you want to fight me, I'll fight you and I'll just lose my Christianity for a couple minutes and we'll go out behind that barn and we'll settle this. That's not what Isaac does. He trusts the Lord, he leaves vengeance in the hands of the Lord,

and he just leaves. But he doesn't leave and do nothing. He leaves and he waits on the provision of God. So God's presence is our provision in the fighting.

You got to wait on his supply. Now when I say wait, I don't just mean wait and do nothing because that's not what Isaac does. Isaac goes into the valley, he finds a new location and he says if God can do it there, then he can do it here and he just gets to work doing his thing and as a result of him putting in the effort, the Lord begins to bless him. Look in verse 19, Isaac's servants dug in the valley and they found a well of spring water there.

Then they get opposition again. The herdsmen of Gerar find out. They begin to quarrel with Isaac's herdsmen and they say this water is ours. So they push him back even further. He named that well Esek because they argued with him, and so they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also, and so he named it Sitnah. And then he moved from there and dug another well, and they didn't quarrel over that one, and so he named it Rehoboth, and he said, for now the Lord has made space for us, and we will be fruitful in the land.

When you think about teaching the next generation what it looks like to experience the presence of God through the fighting of life, they need to know, number one, how to wait on the Lord, but as they wait on the Lord, leaving vengeance in the hands of the Lord, they need to know that waiting doesn't equal wasting your time. Trusting God doesn't mean you sit on your rear. You get to work. It doesn't require just an expectation for God to move. You've actually got to put in some effort and give the Lord something to work with, which is exactly what Isaac does.

There's a lot of people who talk about we're just going to let go and let God, you know, let go, let God, and some people let go and let God and never see God do anything because they're not doing anything. One of the things about faith is it requires activity. You give the Lord something to work with and that's exactly what Isaac does and the Lord begins to bless him. And those wells that he dug up, they begin producing water again. And then some of the wells he digs new. He not only clears out the old well, he contends for the new wells.

And they begin to produce water. But even as they produce water, it's not easy street, right? He gets opposition. He even names these wells contention, or he names the first one Esek and the second one Sitnah. Sitnah is the word where we get the word Satan, so the idea of laying a snare, waiting for someone to trap them, supplanting, trying to disrupt or thwart what God's trying to do in any given thing. That's how the world always responds to God's people trying to do something good. When you're trying to live for the Lord, you're trying to do something significant for the Lord, you will be persecuted.

It will be challenging. There will be resistance, but you got to be able to instill in the next generation a faith that continues to wait on the Lord and trust in the Lord even as you pour yourself out in obedience. And eventually the dam breaks. Eventually the Lord provides and

things correct, and that's exactly what you see in the life of Isaac. He finds this third well and they finally stop resisting him. I heard an old proverb, I don't know who it's from. It says first they ignore you, then they laugh at you.

Then they fight you, and then you win. It's a process and part of instilling the value of God's presence in the next generation is training them how to continue waiting on the Lord through all of those seasons until God's provision is finally fully materialized. And so he gets this well, they stopped quarreling, and then the last part of the chapter is basically the favor of God on Isaac's life, so much so that the king who had formerly banished him, he comes and he pays him a visit. So it says in verse 23, from there he went up to Beersheba, and the Lord appeared to him that night, and he said, I am the God of your father Abraham.

Do not be afraid. Look at this phrase. For I am with you, and I will bless you and multiply your offspring because of my servant Abraham. That is the main idea. Those are the brackets on the chapter of all of these events in Isaac's life, the principle that was being established for him is that God is faithful in every season. In the famines of life, in the successes of life, in the oppositions of life, I am with you. Do not be afraid. I will bless you and multiply your offspring because of my servant Abraham.

And so he built an altar there. He called on the name of the Lord, and he pitched his tent there, and Isaac's servants also dug a well there. What's crazy is Abimelech, who had cast him out prior to that in verse 26, comes to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army. I'm sure Isaac had his shotgun ready to go. Don't tread on me. But that's neither here nor there, they didn't have guns. Isaac said to them, why have you come to me? You hated me, and you sent me away from you.

And they replied, We have clearly seen, notice the phrase, how the Lord has been with you. And so we think there should be an oath between two parties, between us and you. Let us make a covenant with you. In other words, God is clearly on your side, and we don't want to fight with God, so we don't want to be against you anymore. And so they said you will not harm us, just as we have not harmed you, but have done only what is good to you, sending you away in peace.

You are now blessed by the Lord. So Isaac prepares a banquet for them, they eat, they drink, they get up early in the morning, they swear an oath to each other, and Isaac sends them on their way and they left in peace. And on that same day Isaac's servants came to tell him about the well that they had dug, saying, we have found water. And he called that well Sheba. Therefore the name of that city is still Beersheba today. So even as Isaac resists the urge to get revenge, or to say, I told you so, or to even go to war against these people who had formerly been hostile against him, he extends peace and grace and says, the Lord that has blessed me now wants to bless you.

Just as God promised to Abraham, those who bless you I will bless, and those who curse you, I will curse, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by you and your descendants. This is a powerful principle that the presence of God is often given to his people as an evidence or as the proof of his favor. How do you know God is for that person and not against them? You know because the presence of God is in that person's life. How do people know that God is for us and not against us?

How do people know that the gospel that we're proclaiming is the true gospel that fills people with the Holy Spirit and gives them the blessed life? How do we know? Because the presence of God is in this place. The presence of God is not given because we're special. The presence of God is given because He is special. And when His people draw near to Him and receive His presence, He blesses them in such a way that everybody who is within eyeshot can see the Lord is clearly with them. And because the Lord is with them, I want to be with them.

Or I certainly don't want to be against them. And so if you think about it in those terms, what you begin to realize is that God doesn't bless you as some kind of a private privilege for you to kind of get the blessings of God and put the blessings in a can and sit on your can. The blessings of God are not a private privilege. They're a platform. They're a stage on which you stand and you declare to everyone within earshot and eyeshot that God is good and that the presence of God is the greatest gift and that even if everything else is stripped away, if I have his presence, I have everything that I need, and even when I have abundance and plenty and success and influence, even then the thing I want more than anything else is the presence of God.

That's why Isaac builds the altar. That's why he worships the Lord. It's his way of saying, Lord, this is all from you. It's all about you. And the only thing I want is you and people are drawn to that, just like they'll be drawn to it today. What's crazy though is that today the presence of God isn't found through some covenant with Abraham. We have seen throughout this journey that the covenant with Abraham points to a greater covenant. The promise of land for Abraham points to an even greater promised land, which is the new Jerusalem, the new heavens, the new earth.

The promise of descendants was not a promise about physical genealogical Jewish descendants, but it was about people from every tribe, tongue, and nation gathered around the throne, saying, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. It is about a people for the true chosen offspring, which is not Isaac or Jacob or Joseph or David or any of them, they were all pointing to the chosen one, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. And today the presence of God is found through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you think about these principles of God's presence being with us in the famines of life.

How do you experience the presence of God in the famines of life? It's through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Because Jesus went through the famine, right? Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights. Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil and overcame every single temptation, trusting in the Word of God, so that when we go through our famines, we can draw near to him who was tempted in every way that we were, but without sin, and find strength and encouragement. And the faith that we need to continue trusting the Lord in the famines of life.

The presence of God is experienced through the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus didn't experience failures like Isaac did or Abraham did. But what the Bible does teach is that Jesus took on our failures on the cross. That he who knew no sin, he actually became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God. So how is it that God protects us in our failures? It's not because we're regretful or we try harder next time. The mercy of God and the grace of God are available to us through the Lord Jesus Christ because he paid the debt.

It's because he offered up his life as a sinless, spotless atoning sacrifice that God can look at us in our failures and say, I will not treat you based on your failure. I will treat you based on the obedience of my son. I'll treat you on the account of his perfect life. That's how I'll respond to you. And so he showers us with mercy and he showers us with grace. We experience the presence of God through the chosen Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And in the oppositions of life. When Jesus said, go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, teaching them to obey, know this, I will be with you.

And did they get persecuted? Absolutely. Was it difficult? Did they get opposition? Absolutely. But the presence of God marked that early church such that even the detractors, even emperors like Claudius, who were trying to wipe Christianity off the Roman Empire, even they had to acknowledge there's something different about these people. They die with courage. They die with boldness. They believe that God is with them. And so maybe we should be a little more slow to resist them. Maybe we should join them. And Constantine eventually, I think wrongly, makes Christianity a state religion, all because of the presence of God amongst the people of God.

Because the presence of God is the greatest gift. It's the thing that we need more than anything else, and it's the one thing that if it's absent, even if everything else is present, it's not enough. And so you are leaving some kind of footsteps. You are leaving a legacy for the next generation. You are modeling for them what it looks like to be a man or woman of faith. The question is, what kind of footsteps are you leaving behind? And if you would say this morning, my life is not marked by the presence of God.

I don't experience his presence in my famines. I don't experience his grace and mercy in my failures. When I get attacked, I get destroyed. I am so concerned with what other people

think about me. It may be this morning that the Lord is saying to you, I've got something better. I've got something that will enable you to persevere through every season, not because you're strong or you're good, but because my son Jesus did for you what you couldn't do for yourself. And if you've never received him by faith in your heart as a savior and as a Lord, then this morning as the team comes up and leads us through a time of response, I want to encourage you to make that decision.

And some of you would say maybe you made a decision as a kid, but you know you never really, it never really panned out. It never really materialized into anything significant. But today you would say, I hear the voice of God calling me to put my faith in the Son. And if that's the case, I would encourage you to come forward during this time of response and to surrender your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. The rest of us who are believers, I think this is a powerful reminder that our lives are not immaterial, that the choices we make are making a bed in which the next generation will sleep, they're leaving footprints in which the next generation will walk.

And you can give them money, you can give them houses, you can give them traditions, you can give them all those things. But if you don't give them that, if you don't give them Jesus and a clear pathway through which Jesus and the presence of God can be experienced, then you have robbed them of the greatest gift. And so maybe this morning you would just say, Lord, give me wisdom to know how to give my kids the gift of your presence. God, would you fill my home with your presence? Would you refill my life with your presence?

You may need to repent of sin. You may need to receive the grace of God by owning up to the things that you've done wrong. Maybe you, like Isaac, need to be publicly humiliated so that your kids can realize it's not about being a perfect person. It's about being someone that rests in the grace of God. I don't know how you need to respond, but I know the Holy Spirit uses the word of God to bring to bear specific application. And so as we respond during this public invitation, I want you to ask the Lord, what is it that you want to say to me specifically?

And what does obedience look like for me in light of your word? So Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time together and we do want to be a people who demonstrate the power of God's presence. I pray that would be true of our church collectively, that we would be a people marked by the presence of God. That we're not known for our programs or our music or our preaching or theology. More than anything else, we're known as a place where God's presence is manifest. It is clear. It's evident, and it is life-changing.

I pray that for every home represented here, every single person whether they're looking to get married or whether they're going to live a life of singleness, it doesn't mean that they don't live a life of influence. And I pray that the influence that they carry would be influence that establishes the goodness of God's presence in every season. Would you use this time of

invitation to speak to us clearly? Give us ears to hear what the Holy Spirit wants to say. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.