


Messy Life:
The Story of Jacob
 Part 3
Forsaking Family Flaws

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
 Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- Open two Bibles~one of them to Genesis 20:1-14, the other to Genesis 26:1-14, and complete this chart:

	Similarities:	Differences:
Genesis 20:1-14		
Genesis 26:1-14		

Was Rebekah actually, by any stretch of the definition, Isaac's "sister" (Genesis 11:29 and 22:20-23)?

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- What emotional and behavioral responses are we to have to God's promises (Deuteronomy 31:6)?
 What motivated Abraham to a half lie (Genesis 12:11-13) and Isaac to an out-right lie (Genesis 26:7)?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- We're **not** Abraham, Isaac or Jacob, and **we** must not claim promises that God made to **them**. So, what has God promised to **us**? Complete this chart:

Romans 1:16-17 & Philippians 1:6	
Matthew 6:33 & Hebrews 13:5	
Romans 8:28-39 & John 10:10	

- Which one of the above promises that God has made to us do you find most difficult to trust? What "human strategies" do you typically employ out of distrust of that promise of God?

What results from trusting in human strategies (Jeremiah 17:5-6)? From trusting God (see v. 7-8)? In this struggle to trust God, what is **not** our ally (Jeremiah 17:9)? What should we do (see v. 10)?

Sermon Summary Genesis 26:1-11

All of us are shaped by our family of origin, for good and for bad. The truth is, under stress we all find ourselves imitating our parents in ways that we never imagined we would. But we don't have to repeat the behaviors of the past. We don't need to copy the damaging patterns of the past to make life work out. God's love for us is so great, his goodness so certain, that we can trust Him without fear. We can forsake the family flaw knowing that God's goodness will come to us without resorting to such behavior. That's what God is trying to teach Jacob. Jacob doesn't need to repeat his family's destructive patterns. He can forsake the family flaw, because God's goodness will come to him without it.

The danger Jacob's father Isaac is facing is the threat of a regional famine—no water, no food, the collapse of the family's ranching business, and ultimately the starvation of the clan (Genesis 26:1). Eventually, he starts thinking about moving the family to Egypt. As Isaac ponders a move to Egypt, God comes to him and tells him not to go to Egypt (Genesis 26:2-4). God has already made these commitments to Jacob's grandfather Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17:1-8). Here God makes them again to Jacob's father Isaac. Since this is a generational blessing, all of this is for the benefit of Jacob and his descendants. These God promised-blessings are assured. They are unconditionally guaranteed. You don't have to lie and cheat and deceive others to get what God has already promised you. What you need to do is obey God and rest in God's promises.

The words in Genesis 26:2-3 echo what God had said earlier to Isaac's father Abraham (Genesis 12:1). In Genesis 26:3, God says He will be with Isaac. This is the first time that God's promise to be with someone is recorded in Scripture! And this promise is made to Isaac! Here, God says to Jacob's father, Isaac, "I'll keep my promises to you, promises of land, promises of a family, and promises of a spiritual destiny. I've made a covenant; I've sworn an oath; I've given my word. And I'll keep my promises to you." The family blessings that began with Abraham are repeated to Isaac. "I've led you in the past. I'll be with you in the present. And I'll keep my promises to you in the future!"

This recitation of family history is for Jacob's benefit, for it is through him that these blessings will flow. It's as if God is saying, "Jacob. You can trust me too. Therefore, Jacob, since this is true, forsake the family flaw. You don't need to repeat the family sins of the past to protect yourself, to solve a problem, to escape a threat, to secure a promise. You can forsake the family flaw because my goodness will come to you without you having to scheme your way into it."

The flaw God is trying to woo Jacob away from is deception - the pattern of lying and deceiving others...which is rooted in a failure to trust God with your life and future. So like Isaac, Abraham faced a famine in his day. How did Abraham react to this threat? He responds with deception. He lies to protect himself, to solve his problem, to escape the threat (Genesis 12:10-20). Abraham repeats the same flaw of deception in Genesis 20:1-2. Under stress, Abraham told the same lie: "Sarah is my sister." For a second time he compromised his wife, until God stepped in to clean up the mess (Genesis 20:3-7)! This pagan ruler obeys God when Abraham does not.

A generation later, in the same city of Gerar, Jacob's father Isaac also distrusts God's promise to protect the family and resorts to the same deception, the same lie. And the family flaw shows itself again (Genesis 26:6-8). What we have here is a pattern of lying and deceiving. I think that the inspired Biblical author is pointing out a fatal family flaw that Jacob will struggle with all of his life—the temptation to lie and to deceive. But God tells him to trust Him.

Can you hear God's gentle voice saying the same thing to you today? Can you hear God say, "My love for you is so great, my goodness to you is so certain, you can trust me without fear. You don't need to continue the behaviors of the past to protect yourself—to escape a threat, to solve a problem. You don't need to repeat damaging patterns to experience my blessings in your life. I will be good to you because I love you. Forsake the family flaw, it will only bring you pain. My goodness will come to you without it."

The question is, "Will we listen to God and in faith forsake those family flaws that we find ourselves keeping alive? We can't work our way into those blessings. We can't maneuver our way into them. We can't deceive our way into them. We can't bargain our way into them (Matthew 11:28-30). Jesus wants to put an end to the family flaw. He wants to forgive you and transform you. He wants you to pass down to your children the family faith. A life of trust and hope and love.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*Whose promise do you trust more: that of a stranger or that of a life-long friend—and why?
So, if we're going to trust God more, we've got to get to know him better!
Let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to do just that...*

Monday— Study Numbers 23:19 and Psalm 89:34.

Tuesday— Study Isaiah 14:24 and 1 Kings 8:56.

Wednesday— Study Psalm 100:5 and Isaiah 25:1.

Thursday— Study Romans 16:25-27 and 11:33-36.

Friday— Study Hebrews 13:20-21 and Jude 24-25.

Saturday— Study 1 Timothy 1:17 and 6:15-16.

Need blank copies for doing more

"Five Question Bible Study"?

e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would *this text* answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]