

ISAAC: A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER WHO FAILED

Genesis 26:24-29

Advertisement: "Wouldn't it be great, if . . . ?!!" proceeds with fanciful dream about how a certain beer might make your life better!

Wouldn't it be great, if our name were recorded in God's history book, among "super-heroes" of faith?

Just how great *would* it be, to be a super-hero of the faith?

Hebrews 11 presents us with a list of some of the more significant "super-heroes."

What do godly people look like, when you see them "up close and personal"?

For the rest of the summer we're going to look at some of them.

We'll observe—as in the past— that these heroes are **ordinary people**, like us, through whom God has chosen to do **extraordinary things**.

We won't be looking at these people this way, like modern historians, to discredit them, or to rob us of our heroes.

Too often we have to ask, "*Where have all our heroes gone?*"

God's word continues to present these people as heroes.

God let's us see them, as real humans, with struggles like ours, so we can identify with them, and know that God can do great things through us too, if we'll trust Him.

In spite of human failure, these people trusted God when they couldn't see where He was taking them.

God revealed Himself through *ordinary* people of faith. *That's incredible!*

This morning we look at another "hero" in Heb 11: ISAAC => *the "child of promise"* **11:20:** "*By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.*"

That's the *only* description given in Heb 11!

This is *NOT* the occasion I would have chosen!

God must see this incident a little different than I do!

ISAAC'S WALK WITH GOD

3 major components of Isaac's walk with God are noted in Scripture:

[In all 3, "Like father, like son!" is true. Isaac follows in his father's footsteps]

1. Like his father, Isaac wanted to please God.

Isaac was the one person who observed Abraham's tension on the mountain.

He never questioned his father's love! *Abraham LOVED Isaac intensely!*

Yet it was apparent to Isaac, that however much Abraham loved *HIM*, he loved *GOD* more! (*Do OUR children know that?*)

Isaac wanted that kind of walk with God!

He wanted to please God!

[2nd element of Isaac's walk with God is another way he imitated his father.

He imitates his father in relationship to his *wife's barrenness*. **25:21**

When Rebekah was unable to have children, he took that concern to
GOD

God had promised descendants, as numerous as the stars. It wasn't working!

Even though he couldn't see it, **Isaac trusted God's** promise!

Where would he have learned that?!!! From Dad! =>]

2. Isaac was the "child of promise." – example of people who trust GOD

Originally—to Abraham, Isaac was given to Abraham because of his faith in God, rather than in *his* attempts to make *himself* fruitful

N.T., the fruit of faith, becomes example of people who trust God.

Rom 9:7-8 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 8 In other words, **it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.**

Gal 4:28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. (even includes Gentiles/pagans)

Isaac's conflict with Ishmael is used to teach believers that those who walk according to flesh *WILL persecute* those who walk according to God's promise – those who trust Him.

Gal 4:28-29 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 At that time **the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.**

So Isaac was the "child of promise"

He *CAME* by faith in God's promise.

He *LIVED* by faith in God's promise!

[3rd major component of Isaac's walk with God was also like his father:]

3. GOD identifies HIMSELF by Isaac's name.

God of Abraham becomes "God of Isaac;" becomes known by *Isaac's* name. **Gen 26:24** => **Gen 28:13** **Exod. 3:6** **Exod. 4:5**

Imagine, "Yahweh, the God of Ralph Porter!"

"Return to Yahweh, the God of _____ (David Peffley) !"

"Let's trust Yahweh, the God of _____ (Fred Plastow) !"

Isaac identifies with–calls *himself* by–God's name;

God is known by Isaac's name!

17 times Scripture calls him that! – both O.T. and N.T.

[In addition to 3 MAJOR components of Isaac's walk with God, . . .]

4. Moses describes Isaac as "the servant of God"

The person who wrote the story of Isaac's life twice appeals to God in the name of His choice servants. Isaac is one of them!

Exod 32:13 **Deut 9:27**

5. Isaac's name is on the guest list for the kingdom.

Few people mentioned by name, among those present in God's kingdom.

Isaac is one. His name is already on the published "guest list." *Jesus says so!*

Luke 13:28 *"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out."*

Was he worthy to be there? *Not exactly!* But *Jesus* says he'll be there!

6. God revealed Himself directly to Isaac. (as to Abraham and Jacob)

You probably remember incidents with Abraham,

... with Jacob at Bethel ... with Moses at the bush, and Sinai

Isaac also conversed *directly* with God

Exod 6:2-4 *God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. 4 I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. =>*

7. God established His covenant directly with Isaac. 18 X Scripture affirms it!

Lev 26:42 *I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.*

8. Isaac's son testified to his dad's walk with God

Gen 48:15 *Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, 16 the Angel who has delivered me from all harm _may he bless these boys.*

(Would our kids say that about US?)

Wouldn't it be great to be that kind of super-hero?!!

ISAAC'S FAILURE BEFORE GOD

In spite of his initial commitment to please God, Isaac wasn't always consistent in following through (*Do YOU know anyone like that?*)

[On negative side also, we see "like father, like son" principle in Isaac's life]

1. Like his father, (Isaac imitated Abraham's trick: he) schemed to protect himself from Abimelech. Gen. 26:1-11

Abimelech: Was he stupid enough to fall for it *twice*?!

Critics just call it a contradiction.

"Abimelech" = "My father (is/was) king" => "Pharaoh" => dynastic title [like "Caesar" or "Herod"]

What for Abraham was a "half-truth," became a full lie for Isaac!

2. Isaac failed both as a father and as a husband.

He made a mess of family!

It's possible to love God, and fail in your home!

Difficult to isolate issues because they're enmeshed in the story.

Writer isn't trying to point to problems in home; they jump at you!

(1) Breakdown in relationship with his sons.

ISAAC DIVIDED HIS FAMILY

God prophesied it.

But Isaac did it! *He is accountable.* How did he do it?

He allowed preferences to develop — He had “a favorite!”

Children had to *compete* to win their parents' *acceptance*.

Gen 25:27-28 Dad chose one; mom the other! Each had their favorite!

Their love was conditional; based on what *they* got from it!

Result: **Gen 27:45**

Mom was afraid of losing both important men in her life the same day. Who were the two? *Isaac and Jacob*

What does that tell you about *Esau*? How would *YOU* feel about that?

Isaac allowed this tumultuous environment to develop!

(2) Breakdown in his relationship with his wife.

SHE BEGAN TO WORK DECEPTIVELY, BEHIND HIS BACK!

Why? She couldn't talk to him!

She had to manipulate him to get her own way!

She schemed to accomplish what she *KNEW* was God's will!

Gen 25:23

Did she keep the prophecy a secret? If so, *why*?

If she didn't, Isaac was openly rebellious about God's plan.

More likely that she kept the secret.

Scenario: Isaac saw his first-born and fell in love with him.

He took him hunting, etc.

2 found other ways to win acceptance—he worked *mom* over!

Did she see the developing favoritism and decide it was *futile* to try to talk to him? (*Have WE given OUR wife cause to think that way?*)

Mom saw she wasn't going to convince Isaac to make Jacob # 1!

So, she went underground and became deceitful.

She probably reminded Jacob of “their little secret” often.

Isaac should have eliminated the preference to start with.

He created the tension.

He paid the price: his divided family NEVER healed.

He lost a son.

[Isaac's 3rd failure: Fruit of conditional love]

3. Isaac's sons tried to do something (anything!) to please dad!

They competed with each other for dad's affection.

Jacob went hunting; NOT because he wanted to hunt, but to get dad's attention

He gave up on pleasing dad on his own merit, because of who HE was

He was no hunter—he would never measure up!

So he went after his dad's blessing—under the *guise* of hunting

Esau went WIFE-hunting to please dad.

Esau's story will be basis of the next several points:

Gen 26:34-35 Gen 27:46-28:1 Gen 28:8-9

See what he's doing? This isn't a personal conviction — nor is it the *right* solution, but at this point he's desperate for his dad's acceptance. He'll try *anything*! => # 4

4. Isaac's sons didn't understand their parent's values

At first they didn't know what they were.

They never did understand why these issues were important to them.
=>#5

5. Isaac didn't talk to his sons about how to pick a wife

Isaac didn't follow dad's example in guiding *his* sons in *their* choice of a wife.

Abraham's Principle: **24:3**

Isaac knew about it **24:66**

Rebekah knew about it. The servant told her

She used it as an excuse to get Jacob out of there **27:46**

Neither thought it important enough to teach them how to choose a wife!

Isaac never talked to his *favorite* son DIRECTLY about a godly wife!

He mourned internally **26:34-35**

Esau figured it out, *later*! 28:8-9

Then he tried to do something about it => he took TWO!

Even after his disappointment with Esau, Isaac did nothing about Jacob seeking a godly wife, until Rebekah schemes (again!)

Gen 27:46-28:1

[6th area of failure in Isaac's life]

6. Isaac's plan goes directly against God's revealed will! **25:23 => **27:29****

Either Isaac's rebellion against God's plan was deliberate, or, he never consulted God or his wife concerning his plan to bless Esau (even after knowing about Esau's "meal deal" with Jacob!)

Isaac says to "Esau" what God said about Jacob; God wins anyway, because he really says it to Jacob.

God works out His plan—in spite of Isaac's efforts to do otherwise.

Results: **27:37** **40**

Esau seeks to kill Jacob. *It's Isaac's fault!*

WOULD it be great to be that kind of super-hero?

SOME LESSONS FOR US TODAY:

1. Everything starts with God's promise

That's based on God—NOT on us! *—He's the initiator!*

Isaac was chosen before birth

He came to God by faith, NOT by his own efforts.

2. Do we want to please God more than anything else?

Is that the consuming passion of OUR life?

3. It's possible to want to walk with God and still blow it at home!

With our kids—

Have our kids seen tangible evidence we love God more than ANYTHING else?

Do we ever share that fact with them?

Or is it "our little secret?"

Have kids seen evidence we love them EQUALLY and UNCONDITIONALLY?

Do we play favorites?

Do we base our love on performance?

Are our kids working overtime to try to please us?

—to win our love? —to earn acceptance?

Do kids understand how important it is to marry god-loving and godly mates?

Have we communicated to our kids how important that is?

Sometimes I fear we've placed greater emphasis on finances than on godliness!

(as prerequisite for marriage)

With our spouse—

Have we stopped "talking it over?"

Is one of us working behind the other one's back?

Are you getting your satisfaction from the kids?

Critical issues: Finances, kids, relocation, job

Whatever it is, ***we ought to be pulling together.***

Otherwise, like Isaac, ***it could pull us apart!!!***