

Genesis 26:24d – Promises
8-Nov-09 Morning Sermon Outline

1. **Introduction:** God's making Himself known as a sort of "Cliff's notes" but better (perfectly accurate, written by the author)
 - a. "I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring"—**promises to look forward to.**
 - b. These are **three promises**, and they cover **now** (I *am* with you and I will bless you) and **later** (I will bless you and multiply your offspring).
 - c. Back to our catechism, **this is more of what man is to believe concerning God.** When God makes a promise, it is actually **already true, even though it hasn't happened yet.** So, in a sense, here we have more truths to rest in. But since they are truths about things still happening and things that will happen later, we have called them promises to look forward to.
 - i. God's promises are truths to rest in, because they are already true before what is promised actually happens
 - ii. **Certainty of future blessing is a big part of believers' lives** on earth
 - iii. We are to **enjoy already** things that have not yet happened because God has promised them
 - iv. We are to **respond already** to things that have not yet happened because God has promised them
2. **"I am with you."** This wonderful promise comes in the context of our duty! **God doesn't just give Isaac a command based upon past truths; God gives Isaac promise truths about the present to hold Isaac up as he does his duty!**
 - a. God is not a therapist whose goal is to get you to a place where you can be independent of Him! This is why you can't take secular therapy and add some Bible verses and call it Christian counseling—the two have exactly opposite goals: **God's goal is to make you absolutely and totally dependent!**
 - b. God tells us about Himself, tells us about our duty, and then says, "and **even after I save you, I am the One who completely sustains you in doing your duty!**"
 - c. Isaac is going to "fear not" and to be a blessing to Abimelech, *because God is with Him!*
 - d. **You are going to fear not" and to serve God in the situations of this week, because God is with you!**
 - e. Jesus the ultimate fulfillment of this (**Is 7:14, Matt 1:23, Matt 28:20, Heb 13:5**)
3. **"I will bless you and multiply your offspring."** God doesn't just promise **help in the present process**; He actually promises the **success of the future outcome!**
 - a. I *will* bless you. And what can sustain you in your duty more than knowing that God carries you now and has promised that you will make it to the end?
 - b. I *will* multiply your **offspring.**
 - i. **Spiritual** offspring
 1. We know this **from Genesis** already... Gen 3:15, Gen 6, Gen 24
 2. We know this **from the New Testament** ... Rom 4:16, Rom 9:6-8, Gal 3:29
 3. We know this **from the immediate context** in Genesis 26:24 ... I'm not just going to be your father. Just like Abraham→you, I'm going to do you→others, and others→still others.
 - ii. God's work in making **natural children into spiritual** children primarily in view.
 1. Enter glory together!
 2. **Make their time in your house one of continual spiritual pregnancy** (not necessarily the exegetical point, but certainly a helpful illustration of spiritual parenting):
 - a. be continually aware of **what you feed upon,**
 - b. **how you exercise,**
 - c. where they are in **their development** ...
 - d. with a sharp eye on how it is going with **their hearts (behavior as symptomatic indicator/feedback** of heart condition!)
 - e. desirous of their **correct positioning and direction;**
 - f. there is no "premature" time for this birth to take place ... **be always trying to bear, always contracting and constraining and pushing**
 3. **Getting your children into this world is such a microscopically small concern by comparison to getting them into the next!** (and think about how very earnest are *physically* pregnant parents)
 - iii. But God's work in **making outsiders into spiritual children** also very much in view (did Abimelech believe? Ahuzzath? Phicol?) ... cf. **1Tim 1:2** ... both **evangelism (1Cor 4:15)** and **discipleship (Philemon 1:10 ... Gal 4:19)** ... **Ac 2:39, what God generally does in believing families is a template for what happens spiritually in evangelism**
 - iv. This is a **PROMISE**; we should **expect** that there will be fruit; and, the **certainty of it is found in Christ's finished work (Is 53:10 w/ 59:16-21 ... Heb 2:13)**

c. APPLICATION

- i. **Living on God's promises is the key** to a Philippians-style **life of joy**. Taking these promises seriously means BELIEVING:
 1. 1:6, **God began the work** in you.
 2. 2:12-13, **God is now at work** in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.
 3. 1:6, **God will complete** the work.
 4. 1:21-22, **There can only be one reason for me to be alive: fruitful labor for God.**
 5. 1:22, **There can be only one reason for me to die: to depart and be with Christ.** To live is Christ, and to die is gain.
- ii. We do our duty with the **proper dependence upon God** when:
 1. **TRUST: (Gal 2:20)** our dependence is so complete that we can also say, **"it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me; the life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."**
 2. **OBEY: living so vigorously** that it can be described as working with fear and trembling, or pressing on, or running, or grabbing hold... all wonderful **New Testament words for what the ACTIVITY of a person looks like when his heart RESTS in Christ**
- iii. Phil 4. Living by God's promises means that we can be content regardless of the situation, because we can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us

4. CONCLUSION

- a. And He is the key in all of this. **Christ is the key.**
- b. The rest of the text says, **"for My servant Abraham's sake."** And we have seen God doing good to others for Abraham's sake for some time now:
 - i. The first thing God had ever said to Abraham was that **in him all the nations would be blessed**
 - ii. And we have seen God **spare Lot** for Abraham's sake and **Abimelech for Abraham's sake**
 - iii. Indeed, we have seen it already **in this chapter in v5**
- c. But Abraham is also a **forerunner of Christ** here; Abraham is a foretaste, an appetizer of which Jesus is the main course. We have already seen how **the ultimate fulfillments of "God with us" and of God blessing offspring is in Jesus' offspring.** It's no accident that **one of Jesus' great names in Isaiah is "My Servant"—the Servant for whose sake God keeps promises!**
 - i. We saw this as a **general pattern in the Sodom and Gomorrah account**, when God said that He would **spare the unrighteous for the sake of the righteous**
 - ii. And that is the story of the whole Bible—**God saves sinners, to which we could rightly add: "for the sake of Christ"**
 - iii. Even Abraham could only be called and blessed for the sake of God's servant, the suffering servant of Isaiah, Jesus Christ.
- d. This is also **the argument that Jesus Himself makes** in the most extended prayer of His that we have in Scripture in **John 17.**
 - i. The basic argument that Jesus makes is that **He's done everything**, absolutely everything, that God required. And that He's done it absolutely perfectly. And He's done it for us. And **so He asks God to bless us for His sake.**
 1. He asks God to bless us **in this life.**
 2. But especially He asks God to bless us **with eternal glory**
 - a. If you look at **John 17:20**, you'll see that Jesus goes out of His way to ask for us specifically—to ask **for those who would believe in Him in the future.**
 - b. And Jesus is **still praying like this** for us. We heard that in last week's call to worship. He **always lives to intercede.** And you can see the **best of His intercessions in John 17:24, that we would see His glory!** (Not selfish but rather the most *GENEROUS* request ever!)
 - ii. **For Jesus' sake**, God gives to believers **steadying grace in this life**
 - iii. **For Jesus' sake**, God gives to believers **full enjoyment of His glory forever**
 - iv. **For Jesus' sake**, God fulfills **your life's usefulness**
 - v. **For Jesus' sake**, God gives you **your chief end—to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.**
 - vi. **2 Corinthians 1:20** For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. **That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen** to God for his glory. In a sense, this is what the entire Christian life is made of: our uttering "Amen" to God's keeping of God's promises in Jesus Christ to God's glory.
- e. **Isn't it the most glorious thing in the world to be a Christian?**