

## The Next Generation, Part 2: Like Father, Like Son (Genesis 26)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on September 29, 2013

Genesis 26 is the only chapter in Genesis that's all about Isaac. Chapters 12-23 were all about Abraham for the most part. The chapters after Gen 26 will focus far more on Isaac's son Jacob and his family for the rest of the book. Isaac is not the main character of the 3; Abraham and Jacob have far more about them in Genesis, even though Isaac lived longer than either. In Isaac's life, though in Gen 26, we'll see much of Gen 12-23 repeated, and it doesn't take many chapters to see *the God of Abraham is the God of Isaac*:

- In Genesis 12-20, Abraham's wife is barren over 20 years waiting for God to fulfill His promise of children. In Gen 25, Isaac's wife is barren for 20 years waiting for God to fulfill His promise of children (and Isaac's 2 sons had a sibling rivalry much like Abram's 2 sons)
- In Gen 12 God blesses Abram with words much like Isaac in Gen 26
- In Gen 12 there's a famine in Canaan and Abraham moves down to Egypt to survive and lies about his pretty wife saying she's his sister
- In Gen 20 Abraham repeats the same lie in Gerar with Abimelech, and when Abimelech the Philistine king finds out Sarah's his wife, he rebukes Abraham and commands no one to touch this man's wife

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**26:1** *Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. So Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech the king of the Philistines.* <sup>2</sup> *The LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt [Gerar was SW route to Egypt]; stay in the land of which I shall tell you.* <sup>3</sup> *"Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.* <sup>4</sup> *"I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;* <sup>5</sup> *because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws."* <sup>6</sup> *So Isaac lived in Gerar.*

<sup>7</sup> *When the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," for he was afraid to say, "my wife," thinking, "the men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah,*

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for she is beautiful.”<sup>8</sup> It came about, when he had been there a long time that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was caressing his wife Rebekah.<sup>9</sup> Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Behold, certainly she is your wife! How then did you say, ‘She is my sister’?” And Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘I might die on account of her.’”<sup>10</sup> Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.”

<sup>11</sup> So Abimelech charged all the people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.” [Sound familiar? Abraham part 2?]

As I read this chapter, Isaac's life can be summarized as like father, like son:

- v. 13 says he became *great* (same Heb word promised his dad, 12:2)
- v. 14 says he had flocks, herds, a great household (also like his dad)
- v. 16 says he was *mighty* (same Heb word promised his dad, 18:18)
- v. 18 says Isaac re-digs and renames the wells of father Abraham
- v. 25 says Isaac built an altar and called on the Lord, also like dad
- v. 26 - 33 says in Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol (the commander of the Philistine army) met with Isaac to establish a non-aggression treaty or covenant after disputes over wells. Abraham did the same in the same place with the same names over the same wells (Gen 21)
- we're not sure if this is a different Abimelech, as that may not be a proper name, but a title for Philistine Kings, like Pharaoh or Caesar
- in 26:34 Isaac's son marries at age 40, same age Abraham's son did

If Gen 26 was a movie, this would be considered a sequel or a remake of the original, with just different actors. Maybe “Patriarch 2: Return of the Son,” starring Isaac as the lead role, with different actors for the Philistine parts? If Gen 26 was a music album, I might consider this a remix or a compilation of Abraham's greatest hits, with his bad ones mixed in (including the low notes of the “she's my sister” song). If it was TV, Gen 26 would be a replay and we were to give a summary for Isaac repeating his dad's dumb mistakes it might be “chip off the old blockhead.” Both old man and son foolishly lie.

If Gen 26 was a comic strip, Isaac would be most like the brother of Linus and Lucy Van Pelt who she calls “rerun.” Lucy was hoping for a baby sister and a little disappointed to get a little brother just like Linus, a rerun of her experience with the first boy. If there was a line from Yogi Berra for Isaac in Gen 26, Yogi Berra's memorable line fits: “it's déjà vu all over again.” If we were to pick a classic poem for Gen 26, v. 1-11, Walter Scott's line fits best: “O what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.”

But we also see in this chapter that no web is too tangled for God's weaving together for good. God blesses despite the sins of the father that seem like déjà vu all over again. When Isaac re-runs into some of the same mistakes, God repeats His grace, restates the promises He gave to Abraham, renews His covenant, and reminds us that if we're faithless, God remains faithful. If I were to pick a title: The Next Generation, Part 2: Like Father, Like Son.

As another Abraham, Abraham Lincoln said, “we cannot escape history.” He said those words to Congress in 1862 but they were true in OT and now.



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Ironically, though, descendants of Isaac would later reap what was sown. A later king descended from Isaac would fear the Philistines making sport of him and would lie on his own sword to die (King Saul, 1 Sam 31:4 NASB). And another descendant of Isaac named Samson would not see sporting but have his eyes gouged out as Philistines made sport of him (Judges 16 KJV). Jesus said better to gouge out an eye than view what's reserved for marriage.

If you have private sins and deceptions, be sure your sin will find you out.

God mercifully may let others find out, and in this case the unbeliever was watching the believer and God uses a pagan to call Isaac to his senses. But whether or not man sees, God is always watching through every window. Our sin may take a different form than Isaac's but God sees our heart and is faithful to send rebukes, through His Spirit, His Word, a friend, or a pagan.

It's ironic that this pagan Philistine in v. 9-11 is the defender of honor, truth, and righteousness in the story. This godless king rebukes Isaac the man of God. Look at v. 9. Isaac's reply reveals his heart as he tries to defend his lie: "...*I thought I might lose my life...*" (NIV). The pronouns show the problem - "I...I...my." He's driven not just by self-protection but self-obsession. He was thinking only of himself, not others, like his wife or the people of Gerar

Isaac's failure was a failure to trust God and His promises in v. 3-5. It's just like his father when he received promises in Genesis 12 of blessing and life and descendants, Abraham felt he had to lie to stay alive, so he wouldn't get killed for his beautiful wife. Like father, like son, Isaac doesn't trust God to keep him alive even after Gen 22 (God saving his life at Moriah) and 26:3-5.

It seems like the writer of Genesis wants to make clear God doesn't choose and call His elect based on what He sees in the future they'll do or choose, it's God's sovereign grace *in spite of what He knows they'll do or choose!*

Right after He chooses and calls Abram in Gen 12 Abraham falls in this sin.

Gen 25 records God's election of Jacob instead of Esau, then immediately it shows Jacob as a deceiving scheming heel-grabbing back-stabbing brother-betraying sinner. And as we see Jacob's future in Gen 27, it gets even worse

It's the same with Isaac when God calls Isaac by sovereign grace in 26:3-5, God sees (and we see) Isaac will do and choose the opposite of God's will and prove to be a fearful failure of a husband also who'd rather risk his wife than his favorite life (his own). In Gen 25 he fails as a dad playing favorites and here he lies and sins to save his own skin. But like father, like son, like God did in Abraham and his son, God the Father chooses and uses sinners through God's Son Jesus. He is true to His Word, though every man's a liar [and He gives undeserved grace greater than all our sin, PTL!] Which takes us from Isaac's failure to ... **Point #2: Isaac's faithful Lord** See again God's promise in v. 3: "*Sojourn in **this land** and **I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.***"

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See how God is faithful in v. 12: *Now Isaac sowed in **that land** and reaped in the same year a hundredfold [a miraculous provision in a famine year]. And **the LORD blessed him**,<sup>13</sup> and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy;<sup>14</sup> for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him.*

Now this isn't a promise all believers will be rich and wealthy, despite what you might see on Christian TV. If you flip through cable channels it doesn't take long before you'll see some preacher talking about "sowing a seed, so you can reap a hundredfold" by giving to this ministry so you can get rich (but only the preacher does). It may be a sweaty raspy-voiced preacher with his lines synchronized with the organ and the congregation's arm waving. But the prosperity teaching is a false gospel of health and wealth and self.

One black minister says prosperity preachers treat 'Jesus like a lottery ticket ... they're encouraging the love of money ... they've exported this garbage into other countries!

It's called self-ism, the fastest growing religion; they just dress it up and call it "Christian". Don't be deceived by this funny biz, if you come to Jesus for money ... He's not your God, money is! Jesus is not a means to an end; the Gospel is He came to redeem us from sin ...<sup>1</sup>

Amen? The gospel calls us to give up all to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior and our Treasure in heaven. God can choose to bless on earth as He wills, which God does for Isaac here, but this is not a promise for all believers.

It's fulfilling v. 3, a specific prophecy to a specific man in a specific land, based on God's covenant with Abraham. The NT application of promises to Abraham's seed are spiritual blessings in Christ with more when He returns:

- Gal 3:16 *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ ...<sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. [what promise is Paul talking about? v. 14 "the promise of the Spirit through faith"; that's the promise for every NT believer: God's all-sufficient Spirit]*
- Eph 1 says when we believe the gospel, we're sealed in Christ "with the Spirit of promise" with "every spiritual blessing" and our eyes must be opened to the riches of our eternal inheritance (v. 3, 13, 18)
- The NT does talk about sowing a seed and producing a hundredfold but not by giving money to a televangelist. The seed sown is God's Word and Jesus said if a man's heart is good soil he "hears the word and understands...and produces: some a hundredfold..." (Mt 13:23)
- The NT harvest we're called to sow and reap is the gospel (Mt 9:38)
- In Matthew 19, Jesus calls the rich man to give up all he had to be a disciple of Jesus. He wasn't willing, but Christ's true disciples were

19:17 *Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have **left everything** and followed you. **What then will we have?**"<sup>28</sup> Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, **in the new world**, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father*

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*or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a **hundredfold** and will inherit eternal life [that's Jesus's promise to disciples].*

The Lord is faithful to provide and bless those who follow His call, like the disciples and like Isaac: Sometimes physically, always spiritually, and eternally. But the message is not "come to God, and everything will go great." Even when God *does* bless, *new* problems come with blessing, even persecution.

<sup>15</sup> *Now all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped up by filling them with earth.*

That's more than an insult to fill a well up with dirt that strikes at their very livelihood and life as they would die quickly in those lands without water. It's not just vandalism of a successful businessman; it's more like terrorism to cut off a water supply for some massive enterprise. This could mean war. Abimelech knows it and so in v. 16 he *'said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are too powerful for us."* <sup>17</sup> *And Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar, and settled there.* <sup>18</sup> *Then Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham; and he gave them the same names which his father had given them.'*

Isaac doesn't require insult for injury, even though he was a powerful man. He doesn't sing "this land is my land, this land ain't your land, I've got a shot-gun and you ain't got one, I'll blow your head off if you don't get off." Isaac doesn't claim a divine right to the land or threaten a military response. Isaac does something even more powerful - he quietly peacefully re-digs the wells rather than retaliate on their level. I think it's the Lord's faithfulness on display turning Isaac from doing things the way of the world (like he started out doing) and now Isaac is doing things God's way, no matter what the cost.

<sup>19</sup> *But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water,* <sup>20</sup> *the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek [contention], because they contended with him.* <sup>21</sup> *Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over it too, so he named it Sitnah [quarrel - Proverbs 17:14 says "strife is like letting out water, so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out"]* <sup>22</sup> *He moved away from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he named it Rehoboth [room or broad place], for he said, "At last the LORD has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land."*

This is encouraging to see the guy who starts the chapter sinning motivated by self-preservation is now laying aside self and his rights for the sake of others who are sinning against him. The guy who starts out in weakness is now a witness. This is the testimony to the transforming faithfulness of God.

Hebrews 10:23 tells us to hold fast our faith, because "*He who promised is faithful.*" That's the key statement I think for the next chapter, Hebrews 11, the hall of faith. Isaac lived by faith because God who promised is faithful. Hebrews 11 says Isaac and his family by faith lived as resident foreigners in the land of promise knowing this world was not their home. They looked to

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a future city built by God, a better reward than Canaan, a heavenly country. Because He who promised is faithful, Isaac lived by faith roaming the earth.

By faith our fathers roamed the earth, with the power of His promise in their hearts  
Of a holy city built by God's own hand, a place where peace and justice reign  
We will stand as children of the promise We will fix our eyes on Him our soul's reward  
Till the race is finished and the work is done We'll walk by faith and not by sight<sup>ii</sup>

Gal 4:28: "...we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise." (NKJV)

The good news is as we walk by faith God puts our sins out of His sight as we receive correction, repent, turn from sin, and trust our merciful Savior.

James Boice writes: 'in spite of the sins of Isaac that are recorded in Genesis 25, nowhere else in the Bible do we find God rehearsing these sins or suggesting that because of them Isaac somehow disqualified himself ... On the contrary, God praises Isaac and declares that he is not ashamed to be called his God (Heb. 11:16) ... God, in writing Isaac's spiritual biography in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, passed over the events of Genesis 26 entirely and focused instead on blessing his sons [in Gen 27]: "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob." (Heb. 11:20). We fail and disappoint God many times, in large ways and small. But God is not one to hold past sins against us.<sup>iii</sup>

And like father, like adopted son, Isaac who is a child of God doesn't hold sins against him by these Philistines. Isaac is not only like his earthly dad, he is like his heavenly father in showing undeserved mercy to his enemies. This is so encouraging for me to read, because I've failed as a husband, too. I've never told Philistines Jaime's my sister, but I've failed in other ways as a husband and a dad, and it's encouraging to see God's transforming grace at work. We may not have people throw dirt in our wells, but insults, quarrels, contentions will come our way, and God is working in those to conform us to be more like Father, and like His Son Jesus. Even evil done to us, the end of Genesis says what man intends evil by, God intends good in (Gen 50:20).

Isaac, like his grandson Joseph, didn't fight back but instead looked back on God's faithfulness. The roadblocks Isaac kept running into in Gerar were part of God's plan to bring Isaac back to Beersheba to freely worship God:

<sup>22</sup> *He moved away from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he named it Rehoboth, for he said, "At last the LORD has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land."* <sup>23</sup> *Then he went up from there to Beersheba.* <sup>24</sup> *The LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, For the sake of My servant Abraham."* <sup>25</sup> *So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.*

Like father, like son, Isaac sets up his roots, builds an altar, and calls on the name of the LORD, which means public worship, proclaiming Yahweh and His character and attributes, and I'm sure God's faithfulness was celebrated. I love how God speaks to Isaac's struggle; he lied in v. 8 because of his fear.

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v. 24: *I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you ...* Even Abimelech and company in v. 26 recognize this as true. Look at v. 28: *They said, "We see plainly that the LORD has been with you; so we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, even between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you,<sup>29</sup> that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.'* "

From the mouths of babes (or pagans), God ordains praise. In this case, the very words Yahweh promised in v. 24 "*I am with you ... I will bless you...*" is seen by the Philistine in v. 28: "*Yahweh [the covenant name of God, the LORD] has been with you...*" and end of v. 29 "*you are blessed of Yahweh.*"

This Gentile acknowledging Yahweh also fulfills v. 4. The end of v. 4 says "*in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.*" God promised to bless Abraham and Isaac not just for the nation of Israel's sake, but so that through that nation all the nations of the earth would be blessed. And Isaac is being a blessed (joyful/happy) witness; blessing even the Philistine nation [they'll know we are Christians by our love, not our long faces].

<sup>30</sup> *Then he [Isaac] made them a feast, and they ate and drank.* <sup>31</sup> *In the morning they arose early and exchanged oaths; then Isaac sent them away and they departed from him in peace.* <sup>32</sup> *Now it came about on the same day, that Isaac's servants came in and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water."* <sup>33</sup> *So he called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day. ["Well of the oath"].*

The Philistines were troublemakers, but Isaac is a peacemaker. "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*" Like Father, like son:

- Jesus is the son of God and son of Abraham (as first line of NT says) and in a greater way than Isaac was, Jesus was 'like Father, like Son'
- Let's look beyond Abraham and Isaac and look to Jesus as Hebrews tells us ("*by faith Abraham ... Isaac ... therefore ... looking to Jesus*")
- Don't look to Isaac's faith, look to the author and perfecter of faith
- Isaac lived by faith but Heb 12:2 says "*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith ... consider him who endured...*"
- Jesus is the One to fix our eyes on in Gen 26, not Isaac or any other name in Heb 11 (they all failed); look to the unfailing faithful Jesus
- Look to the Lord who laid down His life for His bride, unlike Isaac
- v. 31 says they 'departed in peace,' same words Simeon said fixing his eyes on Jesus in Lk 2 'you're letting your servant depart in peace'
- Jesus made a far greater peace with His enemies than Isaac in v. 31
- He endured far more from sinful men than Isaac endured in Gen 26
- In v. 30 Isaac initiates a covenant meal where they ate and drank to signify the covenant. Sounds a lot like Jesus when He inaugurated a covenant meal we'll celebrate next week, where we eat and drink as Jesus taught us to, saying "*this cup is the new covenant in my blood*"

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- In v. 32 Gentile workers find water at a well. In John 4, a Gentile woman finds living water at a well where Jesus says '*the water I give ...will become...a well of water springing up to eternal life*' (Jn 4:14)
- Jesus didn't just come to provide us physical needs or give us earthly space to live (like v. 22), Jesus came to prepare us a place in heaven
- The physical wells and physical sowing and reaping of OT times are historical realities that are also used as spiritual analogies in the NT:  
Gal 6:9 "*let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*" There is a spiritual harvest we're to look to the Lord of the harvest for, laborers in the gospel ministry
- And as we go make disciples, Jesus echoes the words of v. 24: "*I am with you.*" There's a story of a Chinese man named Lo who trusted Christ. Lo was excited when he read Matt 28:20 in KJV: "*Jesus said ... 'lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.'*" The truth is, we can all put our name in that verse: \_\_\_\_\_ *I am with you ...*"
- God was with Isaac as even the world saw in v. 28, but Jesus was Himself "God with us" (Immanuel). Jesus *is* God and "God with us"

In a book subtitled *The Gospel in the Life of Isaac*, the writer contrasts how Isaac feared man and forgot God and lied about Rebekah being his sister: "What is the answer for our self-protectiveness? The answer is the gospel. We need to remind ourselves over and over again of Jesus, the one who did not fear men, who did not [compromise] the truth to save himself ... so that he might lay down his life for the sake of his [beloved] ... His thought was not of himself and his comfort and safety. His focus was entirely upon the glory of God that would be demonstrated in the saving of an unrighteous, unworthy people ... Gentiles like Abimelech ... in the one kingdom of God alongside covenant-breaking sons of Abraham, such as Isaac, so that God's salvation might extend to the ends of the earth."<sup>iv</sup>

When v. 4 says "*in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,*" that verse is quoted by Peter in Acts 3:25-26 as applying to Jesus the greater seed of Abraham who would give salvation blessing to Israel and all nations of the earth as they turn from their sins to trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. If you never have, that blessing is offered to you today, turn and trust Jesus.

Go back to Genesis 12:3, where that language is first used. Paul calls it "the gospel proclaimed beforehand to Abraham..." when God says to Abraham at the end of Gen 12:3 "*... in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*"

That includes all nations on earth in God's multi-ethnic family plan and that includes salvation blessing, as Acts 3 and Galatians 3 says. And in context, who are the families of the earth promised to be made part of God's family?

Look back at Genesis 10:5 where the same word "families/nations" is used:

<sup>5</sup> *From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.* <sup>6</sup> *The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.*

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So these families became nations and areas that bore their name, v. 5 says. Mizraim was the kingdom of NE Africa that included ancient Egypt and Put extended west on the African continent (thru Somalia, Libya) while Cush in v. 6 were those who settled farther south in Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, etc.) It's the continent of Africa in context that's part of the blessing of Gen 12:3, where after listing all these nations God promises to bless all thru Abraham.

Gen 10:6 goes south west into Africa while v. 2-4 goes north east, former Soviet Union, and goes West to Europe: <sup>2</sup> *The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras.*

Javan is an old Hebrew word for Greece where our beloved brother Takis is from who we heard from last week. We're blessed to have Christian family like him in fulfillment of Gen 12:3. Scholars say Magog is the area around and to the east of the Black Sea, which would include Russia, Armenia and possible Ukraine (other names in v. 2 may be part of former Soviet Union).

These and more are the families of the earth in view in Gen 12:3, the multi-ethnic family plan of God to bring people of other nations into God's family by God's adopting grace. And as we close our service today, it's fitting we will be dedicating in prayer of children from those very lands (Ukraine and Africa) who have been adopted by families of God's people. It's a picture of the gospel.

So as I pray I want to ask the Worth and Cain family to make their way up.

I've been asked by these families to do a special prayer of dedication for the parents for the children God has brought into their families and I'm honored to do so and I can't think of a better way to close out today. The Great Commission is for all of us to make disciples of the nations, and for some of us, it may include bringing children of other nations into our families to disciple them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Adoption isn't charity and isn't easy, but neither is Christianity. It's spiritual warfare and parents need our prayer.

These families will face challenges and we need to support these families in ways God leads and lovingly welcome these kids in our church family. It's not so much a ceremony we're about to do (no holy water or anything like that). This is not about any ritual for children, it's about the responsibility of parents to raise them in the nurture and instruction of the Lord in a context of a church family, committing before you and with you, asking God's help.

Every child is a gift and blessing from the Lord as Psalm 127 says. Jesus welcomed little ones in His arms, blessed them, and prayed for them, laying hands on them, and used them as a visual aid of His gospel teaching for what the kingdom of heaven is all about and what we must be like to enter it. Adoption is also a further picture of the gospel we get to celebrate now.

Mike and Tara asked me to share a little of their journey in their words:

- For Mike it was hard to fathom being a father and it took many years of God softening his heart towards having children.

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- After having 2 children, we knew we had room in our hearts for more but were reluctant to pursue adoption. Our thoughts were that "if God wants us to give a home to a child, He will bring it to us."
- After two failed domestic adoptions, our obedience to God's heart for adoption was in question.
- International adoption was NOT an option for us, we thought. We were ready for whatever God had planned for us, but God was NOT going to send us to another country to adopt.
- Until an email came through about "hosting" orphans from Ukraine for the summer.
- We hosted two girls last summer for 6 weeks and that's when God gave us a heart to adopt from there and revealed to us our children were in Ukraine.
- After 6 long hard weeks in Ukraine we came home with the two boys that God had for us all long, Mark and Alex. And there's more to the story, PTL

Mike and Tara, it's a joy for me in the time I've known you to see the Lord working in your hearts. You're working with the guys here at the church on this building has been such a huge blessing we praise God for, and I have as great a joy seeing how God's been working in you and building your family and to all 4 of your special kids and extended family, we rejoice with you.

Ben and Ashley, it's an equal joy to see how God is building your family:

- You shared with me you felt the call to adopt early in your marriage.
- I know Ashley when you were in college you spent a summer in Ghana with a Wycliffe college internship. Back in 2009 you looked into reputable programs that might adopt out of Ghana but that door was closed at the time and God opened another door to adopt Josiah locally through Bethany, PTL – Then you found out before the start of last year that Bethany was starting an adoption program in Ghana, to your great excitement! After applying at the start of last year, you were matched with Solomon by December 2012!
- 4 months later Solomon was declared your son by the courts in Ghana as you spent a week there then returned home to complete the US Visa process
- Another 4 months later, July of this year, you brought your son home PTL

You wrote: "One of the largest blessings through this process was the role our church family was able to play in supporting us prayerfully and financially through the GCBC account with LifeSong. Through God's providence and the soft-hearts of our congregation, we received over \$8000 towards our adoption expenses through LifeSong's matching grant. It is a powerful and highly effective ministry our body has in fulfilling the Biblical call to orphan care." [Jas 1:27, Mt 25:35-40].

If any of you out there would like to contribute to that fund to help others to adopt or if God may be moving you to adopt, you can talk with me after.

[TO PARENTS] "I want to ask you a few questions to which you may respond, 'I will.'"

Will you do everything in your power to live a Christian life before your children?

Will you do everything you can to nurture these little ones in the admonition of the Lord?

Will you take the opportunity to place your little ones under the influence of godly people in the church?

## The Next Generation, Part 2: Like Father, Like Son (Genesis 26)

*Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on September 29, 2013*

Will you regularly pray for the salvation of your little one?

[CONGREGATION] “Will you support, pray, help as able?” <PRAY>

*Benediction*

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<sup>i</sup> Shai Linne, "Fal\$e Teacher\$," Lyrical Theology Album.

<sup>ii</sup> Keith and Kristyn Getty, "By Faith."

<sup>iii</sup> James Boice, *Genesis*, p. 750.

<sup>iv</sup> Iain Duguid, *Living in the Grip of Relentless Grace: The Gospel in the Lives of Isaac and Jacob*, p. 21.