

A Deeper Journey



A Deeper Journey is designed for those who would like a guide that supports self-study and self-reflection related to a teaching topic.

Message Date: June 16, 2013

Message Title: *Can You Dig It?*

Happy Father's Day! Being a father can be a wonderful thing, once you get past all the gross stuff, all the stressful stuff, the loss of privacy, no sex, the bewildering numbers of ways you can screw it up, it's wonderful. Other than those few daunting things, fatherhood rocks. Prepping for fatherhood is more than reading Dr. Spock, childproofing the electrical outlets, and buying a tiny baseball glove. That's the easy stuff. Father's Day happens to fall right in the middle of our "Back to the Beach" series where we are visiting various water events in the Bible. Today, we are going with a dad named Isaac, whose dad was Abraham. Isaac did two things: He re-dug the wells that his dad had dug -- a good thing. (The Philistines, a perennial enemy of Israel, kind of like the Cubs and the Cards, had filled in the wells with dirt.) The second thing he did was sin the way his dad had also done -- a bad thing. This story gives parents one gigantic bit of advice. So, let's get started and find out what it is.

Begin by reading the whole story in Genesis 25:19 – Genesis 26:34. Read the chapter and record what you observe here:

How would you answer this question? "What's the most important thing I need to know as a parent?"

What did you say? How to change diapers? How to drive a car and break up a sibling fight simultaneously? I'd say this: **"Our choices aren't ours alone."** This brings to mind some common clichés like: History repeats itself. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Like father like son. Cut from the same cloth, Monkey see, monkey do. We see it every day in the people around us. We see it every day in nature. There is a ripple effect and our choices don't only affect us, they affect others. Children are learners. They are constantly watching and learning from us – even if they don't realize it. In this story, recorded in Genesis 26, it is like father, like son. Take a look:

Abraham and Isaac had the same tough times. Genesis 26:1

This sets the stage. We would call this a recession – an economic downturn. They call it a famine. In our day, this means that jobs are scarce, people are stressed and scared. This is the stage we enter into as we begin Genesis 26. Abraham, had lived through a famine as well, and now Isaac is living through a famine.

What did Isaac do?

He moved. He got outta Dodge. When the going gets tough, the tough get going – out of town. That's what Isaac wanted to do. That's what I want to do at times as well. What do you think his reasons were for moving? What was God's response to Isaac's plan? (Review Genesis 26:1-6)

A little bird was flying south for the winter. It got so cold, it froze up and fell to the ground in a large field. While it was lying there, a cow came by and dropped some manure on it. As it lay there in the pile of manure, it began to realize how warm it

was. The manure was actually thawing him out! He lay there all warm and happy and soon began to sing for joy. A passing cat heard the little bird singing and came to investigate. Following the sound, the cat discovered the bird under the pile of manure, and promptly dug him out – and then ate him. The morals of the story are: 1) Not everyone who drops manure on you is your enemy. 2) Not everyone who digs you out of a pile of manure is your friend. 3) When you're in manure, keep your mouth shut!

Abraham and Isaac had the same promise. Genesis 26:3-6

Here's what God is telling Isaac, "Don't leave the place just because it's hard. Yeah, Egypt seems a lot easier, but I want you here because I've got some wells for you to re-dig so people can have fresh water to drink." I'm not saying it's wrong to move – but some of you have heard from God in this way, I know for a fact many of you have heard from God in this way: "Stay in the place where it's a bit tough because I've got work for you here."

Have you ever heard from God in this way? If so, reflect on that experience and what you learned in walking through it. If not, reflect on what your response might be if/ when you do hear from God in this way:

Abraham and Isaac had the same fear. Genesis 26:7-11

When the men asked Isaac about his wife Rebecca, he said, "She's my sister." His old man did this twice – review Genesis 12:20. His crazy old man gave away his mom, Sarah, twice. Now, like father like son, Isaac is ready to pimp out his wife Rebecca. How many of you now, as you are getting older, are saying things like your parents said? "I can't believe it! I'm becoming my parent!" Isaac can relate. He sinned against his wife as his father had sinned against his mother. He succeeded in not going to Egypt, but he failed in being a coward by not protecting his wife. However, keep reading. It's kind of cool how even in his stupidity, God had his back. Review the verses again: what did God do?

Everybody knows about JFK's extra-curricular activities. What a lot of people don't know is the source of those activities. To understand John Kennedy, it helps to know his dad, Joe Kennedy. By example and instruction, Joe taught his boys to see and use women as sexual objects. When John Kennedy was 12 years old, his dad invited the famous actress Gloria Swanson to join the family at their summer home. Unknown to his kids, Joe Kennedy was having an affair with the actress. One afternoon, Joe decided to take Gloria out on the sailboat. Jack found out and hid below deck. When they were a couple of miles out to sea, Jack decided to come up and surprise them. He was the one surprised when he caught his dad and Miss Swanson in the act. Stunned, shocked, and shamed by his dad's behavior, he threw himself overboard. His father quickly pulled him back into the boat. He may have saved his son, but his son was forever affected.

Let's look again at Genesis 26:8. Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looks down from a window and sees Isaac caressing his wife (KJV translates this word "sporting" – I've always loved sports!) You know he's looking down saying, "What kind of crazy Arkansas family is this?" Yee-haw. (Just kidding! Arkansas – ancient Gerar....yeah. Connect those dots.)

Abraham had been afraid to put his wife in danger. Isaac was afraid to put his wife in danger. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree apparently. Once again, Isaac (like his father before him) exposes his wife to rape and ill treatment because he is not man enough to claim that she is his wife.

What fears do you have that have led to bad decisions? Failure, rejection, loneliness, abandonment, feeling worthless, being controlled?

Instead of being afraid, tell yourself the truth: God loves me. I am His Child. I am a new person.

Isaac repeats his father's inappropriate behavior. As a chip off the old block, we do the same thing. What one "sin" of your parents would you like the Lord to help you eliminate from your own life? Can you think of any negative traits or habits in your life that have been in your family line for generations? Perhaps you can identify negative patterns such as alcoholism, verbal or physical abuse, pornography, racism, prejudice, bitterness, or fear. What do you want to place before the Lord today and ask Him to heal and redirect in your life?

Griffin O'Neal is the son of actor Ryan O'Neal and brother of Tatum. Several years ago, Griffin made headlines when he accused his father of turning him onto cocaine at the age of 13 and encouraged him to begin having sex at age 11. "We were going to a movie and Dad said, 'Let's do a little of this to get us through. It's a long film.' He pulled out some coke, and that was that. I'd smoked hashish before that with him. There were always drugs in the house. I was an old hand at smoking pot when I was 6. My own father gave me cocaine, and yet he won't take the blame. If he'd given me a stronger fatherly message against drugs, who knows? My life could have been different."

The point? Our children are watching. They are learning from us. Not every case is so over-the-top as the O'Neal or Abe and Isaac cases, but we are setting examples for those who follow us by our spending habits, how we resolve conflict, how we handle hard times, how we respond to those who hurt us. What do you want your legacy – the one that lives on in your children – to be?

Lord, I give You my legacy. In You, my legacy will become something it could never be through me alone.

Prayer Focus

God, you do have our backs. You do care about the things we teach our children, the examples that we are for others, and the legacy we leave behind. Help us to sit and reflect on what You want to change in us to improve the world we leave for our children. Constantly open our eyes to your love and grace and strong desire for us to be anchored in Truth and in You. Give us the courage to live in faith and dependence on You – growing more to know you each day. In Your name, Amen.

Family Focus

Today, we celebrate fathers! Make a point this week to reflect on the great characteristics of the men in your child's life with your children. And, make a point to pray for the fatherless children in our community this week. Be on the lookout for our upcoming service project as we partner with Robberson Elementary school. Mark your calendars for Saturday, July 13 and SAVE THE DATE so we can love on the teachers and help get the school ready to be a place where kids are loved on in a huge way this year! Let's share the LOVE!

The Children's Ministry continues to gear up for summer and wants to make sure that all those who volunteer are able to take all the family time and vacation that they need this summer – so that means we can use some extra volunteers! If you or someone you know is willing to give time this summer, please contact Holly Hime at HollyHime@hotmail.com or Cheyenne McLean at CheyenneH1982@sbcglobal.net. Thank you!