

On 11/10, I'll be preaching and teaching on The Gospel Project texts of Genesis 26. If you have any questions about the outline material below, feel free to email me at benjamin.j.williams@gmail.com

Sermon Outline

"Isaac, His Father's Son"

1. Question: What Do We Do With The Past?
2. Events in Abraham's Life:
 - a. Went to Egypt, Receives the promise of God, Pretends his wife is his sister (twice), Lied to a guy named Abimelech, Became a wealthy and powerful man, Dug wells in the promised land, Lived in Beersheba
 - b. How will Isaac strike out on his own and do everything differently?
3. Isaac
 - a. Did not go to Egypt (26:1-2)
 - b. Receives the promise of God (26:3-5)
 - c. Pretends his wife is his sister (26:6-7)
 - d. Lied to a guy named Abimelech (26:8-11)
 - e. Became a wealthy, powerful man (26:12-16)
 - f. Dug the same wells again (26:17-22)
4. Genesis 26:23-25
 - a. From there he went up to Beersheba. And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake." 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.
5. Something New
 - a. New friends from old enemies (26:26-29)
 - b. New joy from old problems (26:30-31)
 - c. New springs from old wells (26:32)
 - d. New history from old homesteads (26:33)
6. Jaroslav Pelikan: "Tradition is the living faith of the dead. Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."
7. Question: What do we do with the past?
 - a. Honor the Past.
 - b. Obey God.
 - c. Hope for the Future.
8. Jesus is the perfect example of the past becoming a new future:
 - a. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17)
 - b. And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." ... (REVELATION 21:5)

Bible Class Outline

Note: Allow room for good discussion wherever it arises and do not feel compelled to cover all of the thoughts below. Think of these as discussion starters rather than lesson plans.

Key Thought: "Tradition is the living faith of the dead. Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."

Question: What should we think about tradition and history?

1. Tradition Is Good (Hebrews 11 & 12)

- a. Hebrews 11 -- Generations of Faithful Saints
- b. Hebrews 12:1-2 "... we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses ..."
- c. The pagan and the skeptic believe the dead are silent. Christians believe that the dead speak: "And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks" (11:4).
- d. Tradition honors the voice of the dead. Why should their opinion stop mattering to us just because they do not happen to be with us today among the living?
- e. Who is in your cloud of witnesses? What voices from the past (and even recent past) are cheering you on to victory?

2. Traditionalism Is Bad (Matthew 15)

- a. Matthew 15:1-2 -- Traditionalism causes us to judge others, when ...
 - i. People do something different than we do.
 - ii. People alter our routine.
 - iii. People differ from our learned preferences.
- b. Matthew 15:3-6 -- Traditionalism causes us to be disobedient.
 - i. We look for loopholes to justify our traditionalism.
 - ii. We reverse God's will to preserve our will.
- c. Matthew 15:7-9, 14 -- Traditionalism causes us to be deaf to God.
 - i. We begin to confuse traditionalism with doctrine.
 - ii. We use the loud voice of tradition to drown out the voice of God.
 - iii. Our hearts begin to serve the status quo, instead of the Lord.
- d. Matthew 15:10-13 -- Traditionalism causes us to be offended by Jesus.
 - i. His teachings ALWAYS challenge "normal."
 - ii. "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up." That might include my favorite tradition.

3. Old Things Are Supposed to Lead to New Things (Matthew 13:51-52)

- a. This is a brief and cryptic parable offered without explanation or interpretation.
- b. The scribe was the expert in the Hebrew Scriptures, the ancient stories we call the Old Testament. Bringing these ancient stories forward was a way to pass down "treasures."
- c. The experience of studying the past is like finding a precious heirloom in the attic.
- d. Jesus' own parables, though in a sense new, were understood by digging back into the ancient stories.
- e. Jesus' own life, though told in the New Testament, is the climax of the story of the Old Testament (Luke 24:25-27, 32, 44-48).