



# prayer *life!*

## Weekly Prayer Focus

September 22, 2019

### Passing the Baton: Keeping the Faith

*Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. ... And in your offspring, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.* —Genesis 26:3, 4b

Life is a trouble sandwich, even for those who are blessed by God. This world is no friend of grace, so keeping the faith is difficult, and passing the faith on is a challenge. The story of Isaac, the Passive Patriarch, begins and ends with God's blessing, but in between it's filled with struggle.

In a relay race, one person passes a baton, and another receives it. The key to success is simple: don't drop the baton. Passing on the faith is a relay race, and God's choice of Abraham and his family shows God's hand in making the handoff successful. When the LORD led Abraham to trust in Him, He rescued the world as well and made salvation available to all who believe in the One true God. But passing down the faith requires divine intervention, because our faith falters, and the world fights against it.

God blessed Abraham, because he obeyed His voice, kept His charge, and His commandments, statutes, and laws (Genesis 26:5). Abraham did this, not by being better than everyone else, but by trusting God's promise and living in faith that He'd keep it—even when God told him to offer up Isaac.

God passed Abraham's blessing on to Isaac, who also trusted the LORD. When a famine came, Isaac stuck to God's plan and stayed in the land of Canaan, instead of running to Egypt for food. He trusted God to take care of him and eventually give him the land, as He promised. Just like with Abraham, God counted Isaac's faith as righteousness, so all believers can look to Isaac as an example.

But human faith is fallible. Fear led Isaac to lie when the Philistines showed interest in his wife Rebekah. Like Abraham his father, he told them his wife was his sister. His lie left her vulnerable and dishonored the LORD before the Philistines, who displayed greater character than Isaac and even lectured him about the dangers of his sin. Fear so easily displaces faith, yet God continues to provide abundantly. He even used the Philistine king to protect Rebekah despite her husband's failure.

Still, Isaac was unsafe in an ungodly land. The more Isaac received God's blessing, the more the Philistines envied and opposed him. First, they stopped up his wells to let him know he was unwelcomed. Eventually, they sent him away. Then as now, the world opposes the people God blesses.

The Philistines' jealousy turned to contention at every turn. They wanted what Isaac had and resented him for enjoying blessings they didn't have. Trying to avoid conflict, Isaac kept moving to another place, looking for a new well. Finally he found a good place where he was left in peace and allowed to prosper.

In this new location, Isaac gave God credit for His blessing, and God renewed His promise to His faithful but faltering chosen child. And there, Isaac called upon the name of the LORD.

Believers enjoy God's blessings every day, but increasingly, we find the world turning against us. They reject the righteousness found in Christ alone and resent us for having it. What God has done in the lives of believers is a rebuke to those who don't know Him. Christian joy is real, and it provokes wonder and envy in those who don't experience it, so our world reminds us that this is not our home.

God doesn't just promise once, provide once, then demand that His people's trust Him indefinitely. Our Father is forever faithful. The One who promises to be with us never leaves us, even in those long stretches of time when He seems far away. God frequently renews His blessing and encourages our faith. That's why we pray, watch in faith for His answer, and expect Him to bless us as He promised.

When we trust in the LORD, we base our lives and every decision we make on the faithfulness of God. We cast every trouble and care on the One who is right here with us and will never leave us—from one generation to the next. To the praise of His glory.

## Calling on the Name of the Lord

Here are a few things we can learn from Isaac's walk with God.

1. Rescue is what God wants to use us for in the lives of those around us (26:4).
2. Home is where we worship God and receive His blessing (Genesis 26:25).
3. We lay hold of God's blessing by prayer that expects Him to answer (26:25, 32).
4. The Lord's blessing is His testimony to the world through the believer (26:28).
5. In this world, there is genuine fear of the Lord we worship, whether we see it or not, but it's all about Him and not about us (26:28-29).
6. The relationship of a Godly man with unbelievers has great influence and extends God's blessing to them (26:30).
7. Our relationship with unbelievers is a good thing with positive benefits that have no lasting value until they come to worship Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (26:30-32).

## Prayer for Our Leaders

Pray for strength, wisdom, guidance, and protection for our leaders.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, Vinoj Zechariah, and new elders who will soon come on to the board.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Chelsae Grant, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

## Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

*Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.*

*Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.*

*It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.*

*Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.*

*Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!*

*He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.*

Psalm 127