

The Lord's Day Morning

July 1, 1945

"Faith of Isaac"

Scripture Lesson – Genesis 26:17-35

Text – Hebrews 11:20

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Introduction

1. Have been thinking of great men of faith listed in Hebrews 11.
 - a. Abel offered acceptable sacrifice
 - b. Enoch stood before men of his day; lived righteous life; walked with God
 - c. Noah believed God, built an ark and spared the human race
 - d. Abraham – father of the Hebrew nation; pilgrim and stranger who looked for city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God
2. Come tonight to an entirely different type of character
 - a. These men were dynamic souls and some changed the course of history
 - b. Isaac was not this type of individual
 - c. His was a passive life
 1. Under domination of his father who greatly overshadowed him
 - d. His history could be told very briefly and most of it would be what was done for him, not what he did himself.
 1. He was taken at about 30 years of age to be offered as a sacrifice by his father.
 2. At 40, his father selected his wife for him.
 3. At 60, he had two sons born to him.
 4. At 137, Jacob under direction of Rebekah deceived him.
 5. At 180, he died.
3. Yet somehow this man looms large upon the pages of the Scripture and had an especially large place in hearts of Israelites.
 - a. Time and again God is spoken of as God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
 - b. From, "The Great Men and Women of the Bible" – Hastings – page 370

"In the cave of Machpelah there are still to be seen six cenotaphs of the patriarchs of Israel and their wives. There are the monuments of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob; of Sarah, of Rebekah, and of Leah. Of these there is one larger and more imposing than the others. Were we asked to say beforehand which this is, probably the universal voice would be – that of Abraham, the father of the faithful. And if, on being told that this was not so, we were asked again to select a name, we should probably select the name of Jacob, and give as our reason that he was the second father of the race, from whom the name of Israel came. There are few who do not receive with surprise the tidings that the most imposing of the monuments of Machpelah, in outward appearance is that of Isaac. And the surprise increases when we learn that among the Jews there has always been an

undercurrent of feeling to the same effect, and that for the name of Isaac they reserve their greatest honors, and their deepest reverence. Why this should be we can give no account. But it is certain that of the three patriarchs, and indeed of all characters in the Old Testament, Isaac is made in the New the most striking type of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

c. He is among list of heroes here in Hebrews, eleventh chapter.

4. His faith

a. Passive not active

b. Comes much nearer being faith of average man than does that of some of the others.

5. His faith was great

a. Let us notice his faith

I. Faith in accepting his circumstances

1. About being sacrificed

a. Sometimes forget element of faith here

b. He must have been told of promise of God to Abraham

1. He was to be the one through whom promised would be fulfilled

c. Yet he did not resist his father

1. Trusted his father's wisdom

2. He knew God could fulfill

d. Father led him into this circumstance but he showed his faith

2. About his marriage

a. Abraham made all the arrangements

1. Trusted his father

b. He realized Abraham was acting upon faith in God

c. In this he concurred

3. Here is element of faith

a. He did not rebel because he was overshadowed

b. Instead he yielded

c. Many will not do this

1. Cause all manner of trouble

2. Keeton and Leggett when First and Grace Covenant united. Leggett said these were good men and he did not mind following them.

II. Faith in living with other people

1. Genesis 26:17ff

a. He dug other wells

2. Notice names of these wells

a. Esek means “strife”

b. Sitnah means “enmity”

c. Rehoboth means “room”

1. Surely there would be room here

d. But he moved to Beersheba – means “well of seven”

1. Archaeology had discovered this well at Beer Sheba 12 ½ feet in

diameter, 44 ½ feet deep to water level and 16 feet below this dug out of solid rock.

3. He simply moved rather than have trouble
 - a. Abraham would probably have fought about it.
 - b. Jacob would probably have traded and by subtlety have had all the wells.
 - c. But Isaac kept digging other wells.
4. The man who dug another well

“At a great state university an unusual complication had arisen. Two of the larger fraternities had unwittingly selected the same date for their biggest annual function. One of the fraternities was holding an induction meeting. Man after man got up, each claiming that his fraternity had selected the date first; that they would fight before they would give up having the blow-out on the date chosen. When things were at their hottest, the 200 lb. football captain arose, with his red hair as usual standing on end, and offered as a solution, ‘Why don’t we dig another well?’ After a moment of stunned silence, somebody yelled, ‘Red, are you crazy? What are you talking about?’ But Red sat down again with a broad grin over his face, and would offer no explanation. Only the president of the senior class, who was a member of the same fraternity, could explain what Red meant. He had played his boyhood days in the same gang with Red Conway and his seven brothers and sisters, and he remembered how whenever in those days things got pretty rough (as they often did), that Red’s mother, who was also red-haired, would stick her head out of the window or door and call to her children, ‘What about digging another well?’ Do you know what she and Red meant when they each offered the same suggestion to disputants? They both got their idea from the man whom we are to study this week.

The football captain in our opening incident believed in this policy because since his childhood he had tried it and found that it worked. As a result of his belief and influence, his fraternity selected another date for their annual function. And so they had a great banquet which reflected honor on their college and gained for their fraternity certain very worth-while new men. Had they followed the course suggested by the would-be fighters for rights, they would have certainly precipitated a tremendous row. What would they have gained by the row?

Lots of individuals and nations do not believe in ‘digging another well.’ The maps and methods of certain European countries give abundant proof of that today. The war memorials of every land bear proof of the awful cost of not ‘digging another well.’ Was the gain in any instance worth the cost?

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, what is actually gained by contentings? In the end, do the pushers really gain the worthwhile things or those who, like Isaac, ‘dig another well’?

Judging by the experience of those who have tried ‘digging another well’ it sounds worth a try. It would be interesting if each one of us would try it out for

ourselves this week, and then report results in class next Sunday. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.”

5. Isaac knew he was a child of God’s and that God would take care of him.
 - a. Some men have never been aggressive enough to go out into business world and fight for what they wanted or even for their rights. They have been content with less and in their lot have found peace.
 - b. Genesis 26:28 – “We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee.”
 - c. Often shipwreck is made because do not have faith.
 - d. Have known women who lived with husbands
 1. Mrs. Bob Bell – he turned out all right. At his funeral said how happy she was she had stayed with him.

III. Faith pronouncing blessings on Jacob

1. At time these boys were born God said the younger should be greater than the elder.
 - a. Genesis 25:23
2. But Isaac cared more for Esau
 - a. Maybe because he fed him venison
3. He tried to bless Esau instead of Jacob
 - a. But Rebekah outwitted him
 - b. So he blessed Jacob
4. He refused to undo what he had done
 - a. He recognized here the providence of God
 - b. He was not bitter that God had overruled his plans
 1. We should have faith here, too
 2. Many times we make our plans and they are overruled. Sometimes by wicked men.
 3. Still we should trust God
 4. He will work it all out for our good and His glory
5. Isaac looked to future
 - a. Genesis 27:28ff
 - b. Isaac believed the promises of God
6. We, too, should have faith to believe the promises of God
 - a. Future here on earth
 - b. Future in heaven

Conclusion

1. Isaac trusted God
2. Let us have faith to trust Him