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Genesis

Chapter 26 - God's Blessing to His Beloved Children Old Blessings Rediscovered (vs.18-25)

Genesis 26:18-25: 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. But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water, the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek, because they contended with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over it too, so he named it Sitnah. 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." Then he went up from there to Beersheba. 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.” 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.

I was thinking about this passage and trying to think of a good title for it. The only thing that come to mind was, "Oh, Well". But I came up with a better one than that. I'm so thankful for the Lord giving me more insight. This is Genesis 26- We come into the life of Isaac. And Isaac is the son of Abraham. He's coming behind a great man, a great man of faith. I think the thought sometimes is that maybe we could just follow on the same path, do the same things, everything's going to come out okay. But one of the things that this passage is demonstrating to us is, it doesn't matter if you do the same things, it's not going to come out the same way. You don't control it that way. We somehow think that faith is a vicarious thing. You know, we could kind of live it out through another

person, "My mother was a great person of faith, therefore I'm somehow going to tag onto those coattails and become a great person of faith just because I'm related to certain people." It doesn't work that way. And so, Isaac is going to have to come to the God of faith just as Abraham did.

What is God like? How would you describe Him? When you go through the Book of Isaiah, the ultimate conclusion is, "Who would you liken Me to? There's nobody you could liken Me to." So, God gives us His word and begins to describe Himself to us. At first, very tangible. As you read in Genesis, He created all these things and one after the other it was all good. We have a good God. He loves to give us good things. Not one good thing will He withhold to those who love Him. He has great and wonderful things in store for us. And as Jesus so aptly puts it, "If a child were to come to a father and would ask for a fish, he wouldn't give him a serpent. So, too, you have a Father that gives you good things. And this is really clearly revealed in the Book of Genesis. You see God's goodness all the way through. You see His

desire to have relationships, whether it's with Enoch who walked with God and then he was not, or whether it was just in the simple sacrifice of Abel in which he desired to have that relationship. He looked forward to coming, giving God the best. God says, "I really like this guy." And He begins to demonstrate what He desires more than anything else. Scripture tells us that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and it was because of the fact that he wanted to do the right thing. And so, God preserved him and his family in that ark.

Throughout, God desires a relationship. I mean, in the very beginning of Genesis, you have Him walking in the garden with Adam wanting to have this relationship. But it's hard for us to understand, how do you have a relationship with God and what exactly does He want? What is He like? God will describe Himself as Moses will then call out the people of Israel and God will raise him up for the purpose of really rescuing them out of the land of Egypt. And He'll turn to Moses, and Moses will say, "I don't know what to say. Who are You?" And God declares, "I AM. I'm the self-existent one, the only

uncaused cause. There's no one like Me." "Yeah, but who do I tell them You are?" He said, "Call your elders together," in Exodus 3, "and tell them this- Tell them the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is going to rescue."

What He does in that is He gives us a point of reference. It gives us a point of reference of how He interacts with these individuals. And it is that which we continue to go back to because it's the foundation of the relationship which is ultimately consummated in the person of Jesus Christ.

There's a passage in Isaiah, if you look with me, in Chapter 51, in which God is calling out and He says, "You need to listen to Me, all you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord." You want to have a relationship with God, let's talk about foundation here.

So, it reads this way,

(Isaiah 51:1) "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, Who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn And to the quarry from which you were dug."

Another way of putting the word "quarry" is the excavation of a pit which basically is a well.

(Isaiah 51:2) “Look to Abraham your father And to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; When he was but one I called him, Then I blessed him and multiplied him.”

(Isaiah 51:3) Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and sound of a melody.”

"I'm going to give you joy. I'm going to give you gladness. I'm going to give you refreshment. I'm going to give you life in the desert."

It is appropriate when we read this passage that God will oftentimes bring us back to a well. Whether it's in the gospels, the woman at the well, or whether it's in the Old Testament in which Abraham meets God oftentimes in this place. Because the well was a place not only where people met, but it was a place of life. Without the water, there is no life. And it was a place of great hope and a great comfort in which you felt like you could make it if in

fact you had water. And so, how wonderful it is even when we look at the Book of Revelation, and we see Jesus on the throne in heaven and water flowing from the throne. It is called the "living waters". They would actually call wells or streams "living waters". And the reason why is that if the water was running, then it was safe to drink and it would bring life. It was something you could trust in. So, God gives us refreshment. He gives us life. It is a good place to meet, at the well.

Isaac finds himself in this particular setting and I like the way that Scripture is written, because at the beginning of Chapter 26, we immediately go into a particular setting and the setting is a famine. A famine is a time in which great loss, disappointment, hardship, depression oftentimes follows it as well as great fear of the future when you have a famine. The word just simply in the Hebrew means "hunger". And it is a great time of concern. Man starts looking for answers at this time. God will oftentimes appear on those times when things are not going well. Quite frankly, most of the time we're not

listening to Him very well and a famine comes along and God says, "Are you listening now?" And we start listening.

Psalm 107 reads this way,

(Psalm 107:4) "They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region; They did not find a way to an inhabited city.

(Psalm 107:5) They were hungry and thirsty; Their soul fainted within them.

(Psalm 107:6) Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble..."

One of my favorite verses kind of puts it more blunt, in Psalm 78:34.

(Psalm 78:34) "When He killed them, then they sought Him..."

It goes on to say, but only in deception; only until He rescued them again.

God provides direction. He provides protection and correction throughout with the word of God.

If you look at the beginning of Genesis 26,

(Genesis 26:1) "Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine..."

Basically, a 100 year famine. The first famine was about 100 years before this with Abraham. God is running through the same work with Isaac. And when you consider what Abraham did, God says, "Now, don't do what your father did. At first, he went to Egypt." Because you basically, fundamentally, go into some kind of strategy some kind of planning when something like this hits, "Maybe I can work this out. Maybe I can deal with it." And God says, "Don't try to deal with it."

If you look at the passage, it reads,

(Genesis 26:1) "... So Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines.

(Genesis 26:2) The LORD appeared to him..."

Once again, God seems to show up at those times in which we begin to feel desperate.

"... and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you."

And so, he did. God reminds him that Abraham obeyed, and because Abraham obeyed, God was with him. He says, "Just do what I tell you. I'll be with you." And so, Isaac does. He stays where God told him to stay.

Nevertheless, as time goes on, things happen. And though, perhaps that particular event is taken care of, other problems begin to ensue and other fears begin to surface. And so, man begins to try to work through those times. Nevertheless, God has said clearly within verse 3, "Isaac, you don't have to worry. I'm going to be with you. I'm going to bless you. I'm going to give to you. I'm going to establish you. I'll take care of you." There's no doubt about what God's Word says. We read it all the time. There's hardship that comes at our life, and God says, "Don't worry, I've got you." And we go, "Okay, I sort of believe." And then we start going in our panic mode and circumstances and surroundings just don't seem to match what God's saying to us at that particular moment. And there are these intuitive feelings or visceral response that we have in which says, "I've got to do something." And this self-preservation thing kind of kicks in. And so, we

strategize; we go through traditional tactics which is exactly what Isaac does. He's classic us. He even goes into deception, "You know, maybe I can lie my way into this protection thing." What's interesting is that nevertheless, God not only directs him, but He does correct him through Ambimelech. And as he tries to strategize, even a foreign king says, "You did the wrong thing." And he's corrected by the hand of God in this.

God blesses him, if you look in verse 12, so much that he reaped the same year 100-fold. So, obviously God is with him.

It says in verse 13,

(Genesis 26:13) "and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy."

And you would say to yourself, "Okay, we've got it made in the shade. Everything is good. We're wealthy. No problems from here on out." Yeah, I would say unless you have a bad neighbor. And in this particular setting, you have a bad neighbor. I mean, even in times of great success, you plan for perfection, you look for that utopia in your life. I think that's what retirement is, isn't it? I

remember thinking as a young person, "Man, when I retire, I'm going to be doing this." No one ever told me I'm not going to have any energy. But nevertheless, here I am at an old age and now finding out that there are other problems that ensue in the midst of the time of retirement. So, you plan for success, you plan for everything going perfect, and then all of a sudden, you find people that are full of envy and strife and bad neighbors that are wanting to destroy the very things that you've built.

The way that it reads in verses 12 through 17 is,
(Genesis 26:14) "... the Philistines envied him.

(Genesis 26:15) Now all the wells which his father's..."

And let me just emphasize this- A well just literally meant that you were going to survive and that all that you had was going to survive.

It says in verse 15,

"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."

And there goes the neighborhood.

(Genesis 26:16) "Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are too powerful for us.""

(Genesis 26:17) "And Isaac departed from there..."

And he goes, I'd say, a little bit to the east and hopefully finding a place where he can settle with all of his stuff.

"Where am I going to put all this stuff?"

(Genesis 26:18) "Then Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham..."

"Maybe if I just follow the pattern of my dad... Maybe I'm doing something wrong... Maybe I just need to do the things that he did in order to have the blessings that God said I would have." So, he begins to dig the wells, the ones that have been stopped up since the death of Abraham, and he gave them the same names. "You know, my father dug this well, so he named it this. I'm going to name it this." You know, you just want to make sure that all of the good luck things are being done.

And it says in verse 19,

(Genesis 26:19) "But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water."

That's actually translated "living water".

(Genesis 26:20) "The herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek..."

Which fundamentally means "enmity" or "contention" or "strife".

"... because they contended with him."

Actually, the word there, "*‘āśāq*," "*‘ēśeq*"; same fundamental word.

(Genesis 26:21) "Then they dug another well..."

"Maybe we just move on a little bit further..."

"... and they quarreled over it too, so he named it Sitnah."

Which, once again, seems to make reference to "opposition". Interesting word. "Sitnah" seems to refer to not only somebody opposing you, but getting physical with the opposition. It actually has this root word to start pulling out hair. So, if you could just see, things started escalating. "That's my well." "No, that's my well." So, he

started pulling out hair. And so, at this particular juncture, what does he do? Well, he moved away again.

(Genesis 26:22) "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...""

"Rehoboth" just means "a broad place". "God has given us a broad place."

"... and we will be fruitful in the land."

Up to this point, we really haven't had any mention of God. I don't know if you noticed that or not. There's a lot of work going on. There's a lot of labor. And you know, I think sometimes we go through these difficult times, and we find these barriers that come into our lives, and we begin to get overwhelmed by the barriers. And we say to ourselves, "If I just work hard..." What's that phrase? "If you work hard and you put your mind to it, you can do anything," except take care of bad neighbors; except take care of the destructive forces that are around you. God begins to reveal that you're not as omnipotent as you think you are. You don't control the universe. But we

obviously have to have things in our life that begin to reveal those things. And so, God begins to reveal to Isaac, "You need to come to Me."

Now, the graciousness in the passage is that the Lord was gracious to him and gave him a place in which they wouldn't come and quarrel. But there was a process in which he goes from place to place to find this. In other words, he keeps going a little bit further. It's almost as if God's going, "You're a little bit too close to the world. You need to get out a little bit further." And he begins to go out further. Nevertheless, the interesting picture here is God's grace to him, and this is a very interesting point, in spite of the fact that he wasn't seeking God. I mean, he was doing what his father did in the wells. He dug the same wells, and he even named them the same names.

Psalm 49 talks about the fact that we name our neighborhoods, we name our houses after ourselves, and we think that they're going to last forever. And we think that by naming them, "Well, I'm going to honor my father, I'm going to honor my background," and we begin to think that there's some sort of security in maybe sharing

the same name. I mean, even if you were to use the name "Jesus," the thought is, "If I just use the name 'Jesus,' sort of as a good luck charm, it'll really take me places. I mean, God will protect me." It's sort of like that thing you wear around the neck. You just hang on to that. "I'm covered because I named the name 'Jesus'." But Matthew 7 says that "Many are going to come to Me on that day and say, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name? Didn't we cast out demons in Your name? And didn't we do great works in Your name?'" And He says, "Depart from Me. I never knew you." I don't guess it's the name that works. I don't know if you remember the passage in Acts where you have these seven sons of Sceva that are casting out demons in the name of Jesus and the demons cry out, and they go, "We know Paul and we know Jesus, but who are you?" And they begin to tear him up. We live in a superficial world and we try to live vicariously, perhaps through other people. I think it keeps us from having to really commit. It keeps us from having to get serious about our relationships. And so, we pursue them in a very superficial way. We say if we just do some of the same

things, then somehow we're going to fit into the same blessings. And God goes, "It's not going to work." But God is gracious oftentimes anyway. And Romans 2 will tell us that it's the kindness of God that leads us to repentance. He'll then affirm this again in Romans 12, and He'll say, "I beseech you by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice." What He's stating is because of the great mercy and the compassion of God... And if you think about it, there are moments that God rescues you, and you know that you didn't deserve it. It came at such a time that you go, "Wow, I was the last person on earth that God should have given good to." But He does. And it gets your attention. God gets our attention through His kindness, through His grace. In times of great difficulty, in times of confusion, God begins to place us in wide open spaces in which the distress seems to leave for that moment, so that we might do something. And that is, turn to Him.

The way that the passage ends is really where our focus is today. Because if you look at the end of verse 22,

"... "At last the LORD has made room for us..."

You almost hear in Isaac's voice, "Finally, God has been good to me." And God goes, "More than good."

The passage then reads this way,

(Genesis 26:23) "Then he went up from there to Beersheba."

Now, to us, just reading the text, that means absolutely, probably nothing. It's just another place that he moved. Oh, it's very significant. Because somewhere in this time of grace and mercy and kindness of God, the heart of Isaac was being moved. And because of that, he goes to Beersheba.

Then if you look in the passage, it reads this way,

(Genesis 26:24) "The LORD appeared to him the same night..."

You almost get the feeling like God was saying, "I've been waiting for you. I'm glad you made it."

"... "I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you..."

The way this starts off is very significant because the way that Isaac's been thinking is, "I know You're with my dad,

but I don't know about me." And God is saying, "No, I am the God of your father, but I am with you. And you don't need to be afraid."

"... I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, For the sake of My servant Abraham."

(Genesis 26:25) So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there..."

In other words, "This is where I'm going to stay." At Beersheba. And there, Isaac's servants dug a well. Did you catch the pattern? He didn't dig a well first. He set down his tent, and said, "This is where I'm going to live," and then dug the well.

What the passage is telling us is that this is all about God bringing us to Him. He's the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And really, when you look at Abraham, he wasn't perfect, but he was a man of great faith. He began to trust in the Lord, and he learned that God was trustworthy. Isaac, not so much. I mean, you read about Isaac, and you go, "What is there really about Isaac that really draws you?" And you have to say, "Well, let's see. He was a passive, and beyond that, he was really into pleasure."

Because we know that the whole reason why he liked one son above the other is because he had meat, and he liked that. And beyond that, you don't read a lot of depth about Isaac. You read about Jacob, and wow, Jacob's even less impressive. He's a striver and a conniver. And in the process of both of those, he goes his own way, and he fights and fights and fights. He wants the blessing of God, but he wants to make it happen his way. It's all selfish and self-consuming. Nevertheless, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He brings them all to a sense of faith, just as He does to Isaac in this passage.

Now, I have got to tell you what Beersheba's about. "Beer" just simply means "well". "Sheba" means "oath". It's where we get our word "seven". And as oftentimes, when they would make an oath, they would "seven" themselves to something. It would be a promise in which it was impossible to break. So, they would declare themselves, "seven". This is the well of promise.

Now, where did the well come from? Well, you have to go back to Chapter 21. And if you go back to Genesis 21, you'll see in this passage where Abraham actually names

this place "Beersheba". Now, let me say this, in Chapter 21, God has promised Abraham that He's going to give him a son. He's now made good on that promise. He has this boy, but yet he's already had Ishmael through Hagar, and obviously, his wife, Sarah, says, "You've got to get rid of Ishmael." And he's grieved over this. He loves this boy. He's now in his teens. He doesn't want to get rid of him. And God says, "You need to break it off." And this is probably one of the hardest moments in Abraham's life. I mean, all his life he'd wished for a son and now he's got to let this one go because he now has Isaac. So, he obeys God. He packs up a lunch. He gives them water to go on their way. He said, "You know what? God's promised He's going to take care of you. I believe Him." There's going to be times that God asks you to do things that you're going, "It just doesn't seem right. It seems mean. It seems cruel." God says, "I'll take care of them. Just do what I tell you to do." Because you're never nicer than God. You're never more loving than God. You'll never do more right than God. So, you obey Him; you do what is right. It is in the process of this that God reveals in this particular passage that the lad starts crying because he didn't have any

water, and then God says, "What are you crying for? The water's right next to you." And He reveals the well, the water to them.

It is in this context that it comes about that he is dealing with the king of the Philistines, Abimelech. "Abimelech" is just a title like "Pharaoh".

And it says,

(Genesis 21:22) "Now it came about at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do;

(Genesis 21:23) now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity, but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me and to the land in which you have sojourned."

(Genesis 21:24) Abraham said, "I swear it."

(Genesis 21:25) But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized."

See, nothing new under the sun, right? They were doing it back then; they were doing it during the days of Isaac.

(Genesis 21:26) "And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor did I hear of it until today."

(Genesis 21:27) Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant."

Now, you go, "Well, that's pretty strange. Why is Abraham giving stuff to make a promise?"

Then it goes on and says in verse 28,

(Genesis 21:28) "Then Abraham set seven..."

That's basically your word, "sheba".

"... seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves."

(Genesis 21:29) Abimelech said to Abraham, "What do these seven ewe lambs mean, which you have set by themselves?"

(Genesis 21:30) He said, "You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand so that it may be a witness to me, that I dug this well."

(Genesis 21:31) Therefore he called that place Beersheba..."

"The well of oath"

"... because there the two of them took an oath.

(Genesis 21:32) So they made a covenant at Beersheba; and Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose and returned to the land of the Philistines.

(Genesis 21:33) Abraham planted a tamarisk tree..."

It's called, basically, an enduring shrub, that would convey that this is an enduring commitment, so to speak.

"... at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God."

The God who is enduring and will take care of these promises.

In this context, Abraham's having to deal with doing things that are hard for him to do. God continually turns to Abraham, and He says, "Trust Me, Abraham. Trust Me. Trust Me." And Abraham's going, "I'm trying. I'm trying." So, then, God puts him in a particular situation, and that is with the surrounding people of the Philistines. And

they're starting to mess with his wells. And you don't mess with the wells. I mean, that's like killing people. And Abraham says, "I've got to make a covenant. We've got to keep a promise here. And Abimelech, the king, has got to know that I'm serious about this." How do you make somebody know that you're serious about a promise? You give up something.

It should be no surprise to you that the very next chapter, Chapter 22, God calls upon Abraham to take his son, his only son Isaac, and lay him on an altar. God will say to him, "Because you did this, I'll provide the sacrifice." At that moment, God makes a commitment, "I'll provide the sacrifice. I'll give you something to let you know that I'm serious about this relationship."

I think about people in relationships, and when you think about marriage, or you think about commitments that friends have, it really starts getting clear that the person is really committed if in fact they give up something for you. Sometimes it's just a hobby, a career, and sometimes a lifestyle. I've seen people say, "I wanted to marry this person, but I just didn't want to give up my career." And

I'm saying, "Well, you really weren't committed to them. Because if you were, you'd give it up for them; if in fact they were more important than your career." We had a girl at one of the restaurants we go to, and she was sharing with us that she was getting married. And I said, "That's great. I'm glad you're getting married." And she said, "Yeah, my fiancé said that he wouldn't marry me unless I gave up drinking." And I said, "So, you gave up drinking?" She said, "I gave up drinking." I said, "So, you love him?" She goes, "I love him." You begin to realize that when you give up something, you're conveying how much you love somebody. And the greater the sacrifice, the more convincing the words. When God said He loved us and He sent His only Son, I'm convinced He loves me, aren't you? It's the evidence of His graciousness upon him as He gave up something of greater value; that you and I were not redeemed, as Peter says, with silver or gold, but we were actually redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

I've got to end this way. If you continue in Chapter 22 of Genesis, Abraham comes off the mountain, and it's the

mountain in which God gave that wonderful promise. And what we know is that, at that particular juncture, that was Mount Moriah. That's the place where Christ was crucified way back then.

But Abraham calls upon the name of the LORD, and God declares this,

(Genesis 22:16) "... “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son,

(Genesis 22:17) indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

(Genesis 22:18) In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

"Because you trusted Me; because you believed in Me."

Now, watch verse 19.

(Genesis 22:19) "So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together..."

This would be with Isaac as well.

"... to Beersheba..."

Why is it that Isaac goes to Beersheba at this time? And there's only one answer. He remembers that it begins with a commitment and a giving up. And what Isaac is going to have to give up is his own works. He's going to have to give up trying to make it happen. He's going to have to give up his control in order to have a relationship with Him. He goes back to Beersheba, and you don't think for a moment that he remembers? Because we know that he was at least a teenager at the time that Abraham put him on the altar. So, he knows what's going on, that he was about to get stabbed and God rescued him. You don't think that he's thinking, "I need to give up something. And if I give up something, God, I mean, for the first time, I'll have a relationship with God"?

There's a passage in Psalm 34. If you read it with me; we'll close with this. Psalm 34.

It starts off,

(Psalm 34:1) "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

(Psalm 34:2) My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice.

(Psalm 34:3) O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.

(Psalm 34:4) I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.

(Psalm 34:5) They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces will never be ashamed.

(Psalm 34:6) This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him And saved him out of all his troubles.

(Psalm 34:7) The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them."

Now, watch verse 8. He turns from his testimony and now he's looking at you.

(Psalm 34:8) "O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!"

Faith cannot be vicarious. You need to do it. It doesn't matter what your father did. It doesn't matter how great he is. It doesn't matter if you follow patterns. It doesn't matter. What matters is that you come to a point of you

giving up something to have the relationship with Him. What are you giving up? God says, "The foxes have holes, the birds have nests, the Son of man doesn't have a place to lay His head. How about taking up your cross and following Me?" And we go, "Woah, woah, woah, woah. You know, if I follow You, I'm not going to be liked by certain people or I'm not going to be as popular or maybe I'm going to have to give up finances." I don't know what you're going to have to give up. I don't know what's getting in the way of the relationship. I don't know what you feel is that which you control, but whatever it is, the only way you can really get close to Him is to give up something because up to that point, you're not serious. You're just throwing out words. You're just telling God, "I knew this person that knows You." And God goes, "So, what? It's your turn." But how wonderful to hear, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and it's our desire to have a relationship with You. We come in a very superficial way, oftentimes, before Your throne and we hear messages, and we go, "Wow, that's pretty interesting." And yet, we never get real with You. We come against difficulty and hardship, and we cry unto You, and we hope that maybe this time You'll show up. But You tell us in Your word, "I want to show up every time. Why don't you meet Me by the place of refreshment? Why don't you meet Me by the place of life, and we'll make a promise together? Why don't you meet Me here? Oh yeah, by the way, bring something that you're willing to give up." God wants a relationship with you. What does God like? He's a God that desires to be with you, to bless you, to use you in great ways. That's what He's like. But you have to taste and see that the Lord is good. You can't ride on somebody's coattails.