

READ

Genesis 26

REFLECT

A famine forces Isaac and Rebekah to move, Isaac is afraid they'll be in danger because of a lust for Rebekah and so he claims her as his sister rather than wife, and the whole plot is uncovered. If that sounds familiar, it's because it is not the third time this exact thing has happened. History keeps repeating, and it's all grounded in the brokenness of humanity and our proclivity to covet that which is not ours. The Commandment expressly against this pervasive sin wouldn't come about for quite a long time, but we can see why God needed to prohibit such behavior – it was a problem for a long time. That problem also led to a dispute between Isaac and the Philistines, who coveted his wealth. Instead of entering into conflict because of the dispute, as would be so easy, Isaac simply let and created a new home for himself in other places his father had also previously settled. That willingness to pick up his family and possessions and travel indicates a deep trust in the promises of God, which had been reiterated in Isaac's famine move earlier. God had taken care of him then, and he trusted that God would continue to care for him. That trust was rewarded when the Philistines came to Isaac to create a treaty. God's blessing was made evident in the flowing of water into the well he had dug, showing that God was providing a way for Isaac and his family.

As a final word of foreshadowing we read of Esau, Isaac's favorite son, who has married two women and who make life difficult for his parents.

REACT

- With whom have you had conflict? Did you lean into the fight, or did you allow space to be made? In cases where you leaned in, what was the result? When you've allowed space, what happened? Recognizing that there are times when neither action has led to satisfactory ends, how can we allow God's Spirit to guide us in all times and places?
- Esau was married and they were marriages where the family was immediately thrust into conflict. Their experience is altogether too

common, even if we don't have multiple marriages today. Reflect on the difficult relationships in your family. What are the problems that have been caused? Have solutions been found? If now, how might they be resolved?

RESPOND

Prayer of Good Courage: *Isaac, like his father, constantly faced danger and turmoil in the path that God set him on. He trusted that God would see him through, and his trust was rewarded. Our lives are no different – we do not know the dangers we will face in our walk of faith. The Holden Village community developed the following prayer, a helpful reminder for us all:*

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.