

Cell Notes

Genesis ch 26 'Testing Times'

Recap:

Faith is tested either by temptations within us or trials around us.... 'a faith that can't be tested can't be trusted.' Isaac shows both the characteristics of living in faith (v1-5) and fear (v6-16) in this chapter. He goes on to experience God's discipline in the form of troubles with his neighbours – that lead him to move from well to well before reaching the point where he becomes known for the 'altar and tent' that he builds to God. We were encouraged on Sunday to have faith in times of trials and experience how God can 'enlarge' us or take us to a 'broader place' through testing. Ultimately we need to drink on God's well spring of life rather than build one of our own!

Questions:

Verses 1-5.

- Isaac is experiencing famine but knows that God wants him to stay and not leave for the more fertile lands of Egypt. What testimony do people have of understanding that where they are is where God wants them to be?
- Isaac was staying for blessings that were yet to come (v3). In what ways as an individual or as a church are we in a time of waiting? How can we make sure that you/we do not lose faith in the waiting times?

Verses 6-15

- In spite of having real faith in God during the time of famine, Isaac failed to trust God regarding his wife and that God would protect them both. Are there areas of our lives where we find it harder to have faith in God for or that fear or anxiety is an area of struggle?
- In spite of Isaac making mistakes how do you find him to be an encouragement to us? (note to word leader - e.g. Isaac does not discount himself from the promised God has spoken to him for his life and future generations in spite of his sin of lying).

Verses 16-

- Isaac eventually comes to a place called 'the well of Rehoboth' meaning 'the Lord has made room for us.' What testimony do people have of how God has 'enlarged them' or taken them to 'a broader place' after a time of testing?
- Isaac became known for his 'tent and altar' because he recognised the place of God in his life. What are the challenges and opportunities that you encounter as you build your 'tent and altar' for God at your work place, place of study, family home, neighbourhood etc?

Take the opportunity to pray for each other in response to your discussion.