

The Blessing Continues with Persecutions

Genesis 26:12-33

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Introduction:

If you are a true Christian, you crave God's blessing.

- You, of all people, recognise that you cannot survive without God's blessing—not at all.
 - You are resting in Christ, trusting in Him, for forgiveness and for complete reconciliation with God because you realise that apart from God's blessing,
 - You have nothing of any lasting good—only cursing and death and judgement.
 - God's promises of blessing and every token of His favour gives you tremendous joy and comfort!

And in our sermon series from Genesis, we have seen that Genesis 26 presents to us a pattern of how the covenant blessing that God established with Abraham continues to each generation with those who fear God and keep His covenant.

- It is a chapter that interrupts the narrative and presents an overview of Isaac's life, highlighting all the ways that it is parallel to Abraham's life.
 - Isaac faces a famine, just as his father did.
 - Isaac is given commands and promises, like his father
 - Isaac is told where to live, like his father was
 - Isaac lies about his wife because of fear, exactly like his father did
 - Isaac is rebuked for his lie, like his father was
 - Isaac is blessed with riches, just like his father
 - Isaac's riches bring strife, just as his father's riches did
 - Isaac is visited by God to assure him of protection, just as his father was
 - Isaac worships the LORD in response to His appearing to him, just as his father did.
 - Isaac is acknowledged by Abimelech as blessed of God, just as his father was.
 - Isaac makes a covenant with Abimelech, just as his father did.
 - Isaac even names the place where the covenant is made and water is found *Beersheba*, just as his father had before.

We have already had two sermons from this chapter...

In the first sermon, we saw how God explicitly came to Isaac in the time when his wife was barren and when there was a famine that threatened the survival of his household...

- And we saw how God repeated the very same covenant promises He had made to Abraham, and how He also reminded Isaac of how Abraham had walked faithfully in His covenant.
 - And we saw how by this the LORD shows us as His people that His blessing continues through covenant faithfulness—*His* faithfulness as the one who promises, and *our* faithfulness as the ones who receive the promises and so walk with Him.
 - In every generation, the blessing continues to the children of His people, to those who faithfully remember His commandments to do them...
 - As Psalm 103:17-18 puts it: **But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.**

- We saw that in essence, the very same covenant that God made with Abraham is the covenant that God makes with those who believe in Christ today.
 - We are Abraham's seed, according to Galatians 3:29, and heirs to the same promises.
 - There is an ongoing pattern of establishing this covenant with each new generation.

And in the second sermon we saw another matter of great encouragement...

- And that is that God's faithfulness still continues even when we sin.
 - When Abraham did not trust God to protect him at Gerar and hid the fact that Sarah was his wife, the Lord humbled him for his fear and his deception.
 - And we saw that the LORD did exactly the same thing with Isaac.
 - By this, He shows us that it is a pattern with Him to humble us and chasten us when we sin that we might continue in His blessing.

So those first two sermons show us that God's blessing continues...

- Through mutual covenant faithfulness and also despite our disobedience.
- It is very helpful—and very comforting—for us to know the pattern of God's dealings with us as His people.

And today, we come to a third pattern of how He deals with His people in every generation:

- Today I want to show you that His blessing continues with persecutions...and other troubles...that persecutions are to be expected.
 - This is very important.
 - We must not to suppose that trouble in this world is always a sign that God has rejected us...especially persecutions...
 - It is really quite the opposite in fact—that as Jesus told His followers time and again, "If you follow Me, you will be persecuted."
 - This same truth is repeated often by His apostles—by Paul who said: **All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12)**
 - And by Peter whose exhortation we read in 1 Peter 4 in which Peter begins with the words, **Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind.**
 - It is very easy when suffering comes to begin to wonder if perhaps God has forsaken us, but we learn from Genesis 26 that it is a regular part of following the LORD.
 - If we are in rebellion, troubles can certainly be God's chastening hand because of our disobedience, but very often they come because of our faithfulness.

Let me draw your attention now to our scripture reading for this week...Genesis 26 beginning in verse 12.

- This is the Word of God, so it is packed with wonderful content for you from the living God.
- May He enable you to receive it with the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit.

Gen 26:12-33: Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. 13 The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; 14 for he had possessions of

flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵ Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. ¹⁶ And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we." ¹⁷ Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. ¹⁸ And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them. ¹⁹ Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. ²⁰ But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water *is* ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. ²¹ Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that *one* also. So he called its name Sitnah. ²² And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." ²³ Then he went up from there to Beersheba. ²⁴ And 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 My servant Abraham's sake." ²⁵ So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well. ²⁶ Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. ²⁷ And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" ²⁸ But they said, "We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, ²⁹ that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You *are* now the blessed of the LORD.' " ³⁰ So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. ³¹ Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. ³² It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." ³³ So he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city *is* Beersheba to this day.

Thanks be to God for His holy and infallible word.

I. We find evidence here of God's commitment to continue His blessing to His people in every generation.

A. This is our theme in this chapter—that His blessing continues to His people.

1. That, of course, is His *ultimate* commitment to us.
 - We have already remembered how in the first part of this chapter, the LORD comes to Isaac to renew the promise of His covenant to him.
 - How He has reassured Isaac that though there is a famine, He will be with him and bless him and give him these lands.
 - We have considered how the blessing is by no means brought to its completion in this life because Abraham and Isaac were told that they would not inherit the land in this life, but in the life to come.
 - Therefore, their hope was not in this present world, but they looked with patience for a city eternal in the heavens whose builder and maker is God.

2. It is essential to have the eternal promise as the foundation of our hope, lest we be discouraged.
 - If it is only in this life that we have hope, we are of all men most pitiable.
 - We are taught, as Isaac and Abraham were, to look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen, because the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.
- B. But we also see evidence of how it is also God's way to bless us even in this present life.
1. Look at the incredible blessing that Isaac received!
 - a. Remember that it was a time of famine, yet, we are told in v. 12 that Isaac sowed in the land and reaped a hundredfold!
 - That was a bumper crop even in a fertile land, but Isaac is in Gerar where such harvests were not as common...
 - And especially during a time of famine!
 - b. We are told that though he had relocated because of hard times, that now he is prospering like mad...so much so that the Philistines envied him.
 - Look at verses 13-14: **The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; ¹⁴ for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him.**
 - c. This is following the pattern that God had established with Abraham, for he too was greatly blessed with prosperity in this world.
 2. But can we say that this is a pattern for God's people today?
 - a. According to Jesus, it is!
 - In Mt 10:29-30 when He says: **Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, ³⁰ who shall not receive a hundred-fold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.**
 - b. Sometimes we tend to shy away from this truth for a couple of reasons...
 - Lest we discourage the many believers who are poor...
 - And lest we give credence to that false gospel that we call the prosperity gospel.
 - But we must never deny what God teaches in His word just to avoid sounding like a heretic!
 - In fact, if we deny what God teaches in fighting heresy, we open the way for the heretics to point to true error in *our* teaching which gives credence to their false teaching!
 - c. So rather than deny the doctrine that we receive a hundredfold in this time, we must embrace this teaching—and it is true!
 - 1) Just think of all the many blessings you have in this life...

- If you and your spouse are following Christ, it is a great blessing as you grow together as heirs of Christ.
 - You have common hopes and common goals, and you have a commitment to each other that is rooted in your commitment to Jesus Christ.
 - You have His grace to help you to live together in richer and fuller marital love.
 - I am quite sure that if I had not been converted, any marriage I had entered into would not have lasted—but in Christ—it is altogether a different matter.
 - And with your children, if your household is following Christ, what rich blessings belong to you...
 - And even if you don't have a spouse or if you don't have children, or if they are not following the Lord, you are part of the world-wide family of God.
 - You have people who are committed to you and who love you.
- 2) And then there is material prosperity...there is that too in Christ...
- As you serve the Lord, you become a more faithful worker, a more trustworthy businessman,
 - You don't go into work with a hangover or call in sick because you were out all night carousing.
 - You enjoy your work even when it is hard because you are doing it as to the Lord and not just for people...
 - As you grow in grace, you are not so quarrelsome or distracted or such things at work...
 - And all of this contributes to greater wealth and better jobs.
 - And you don't waste your wealth on drugs or ventures or the lottery, but you are able to enjoy sharing with the poor and supporting the work of God's kingdom.
 - And as you do, God keeps giving you more and more resources... he adds to your wealth and to your enjoyment of whatever you have.
 - What joy it brings to use your wealth for God's glory—it is better than having millions that are spent selfishly or held on to in a miserly, fearful way.
- 3) And when you look at Christian nations...
- there is often a pattern of material blessing for them when they follow the Lord.
 - Sometimes it takes a generation or two before they experience this blessing, but often the only thing that interferes with it after that is their own ingratitude and idolatry.
 - As long as prosperous Christian nation remains faithful, the Lord delights in giving them a great abundance.

- It is exactly as it was with Israel...as spelled out in Deuteronomy and as seen in their history...
- blessing when they follow the Lord and curses when they don't.
- That is still the way the Lord works.

TRANS> So you see that it is a pattern with God—a pattern that He shows us and promises to us—that He delights in prospering His people, in eternity absolutely, but also in this life.

- But that is not the end of the story—there is more to the pattern than that...

II. If we belong to the LORD, we should also expect persecution (and other trials) in this present world.

A. There is a pattern of this throughout redemptive history.

1. You can see in our text how Isaac is persecuted because of envy.
 - a. It must have been quite irritating to the Philistines...
 - 1) Here there was this famine and there is this Isaac fellow with a bumper crop—in *their* territory!
 - It did not seem fair—how did he get such a crop when he was a herdsman who was probably using rented land...
 - 2) And this had economic consequences for them too...
 - In a famine, the price of crops goes up, but if one farmer has a great harvest, he floods the markets with his produce and drives the prices down...
 - So he gets richer and richer, as the prices are still higher than usual, and he easily sells his entire crop.
 - The text says that he become very prosperous!
 - b. And you can see how the Philistines respond to this...
 - 1) First, Abimelech comes to Isaac and asks him to leave...
 - You can see that in verse 16: **And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.”**
 - They do not want him to continue farming in Gerar where he had pitched his tent.
 - 2) And you see that the Philistines, perhaps anticipating that he would move down the valley to where his father had dug wells in previous days,
 - filled up those wells.
 - It may be that they did not need these wells themselves, and they did not want it to be easy for some Bedouin type folks like Isaac to come in and find everything ready for them to hang out with their flocks and herds.
 - The Philistines don't seem to complain too much when Isaac digs out these wells that his father had dug,
 - perhaps they recognised the treaty that had been made with Abraham in the past...

- 3) But when Isaac digs new wells—a sign of his expanding household—they quarrel, claiming that the water is theirs because it is in their territory.
 - Understand that a man like Isaac who did not own property would have moved about a lot with his flocks and herds.
 - Often, he would pitch his tent in one place (as he did at Gerar), and his herdsmen would go out to different places to find pasture and water.
 - That is why there were so many wells—because wherever they went to find pasture, they also needed access to fresh water.
 - c. There is no doubt that the Philistines' resistance was a great trial to Isaac.
 - Water was essential to the survival of his household, and because of the size of it, a lot of water was needed.
 - That is one of the troubles that comes from having a lot—you have so much to take care of and so much to worry about.
 - So this whole matter with the Philistines and the wells was surely a great burden to Isaac.
2. We too can expect persecution because of envy.
- a. Jesus was envied, even though He was a poor man, because He had such godliness that He made those who opposed Him look bad—those who were trying to be righteous...
 - And moreover, He was so much more loved by His followers who were willing to follow Him even though He had little of this world...and that infuriated the Jewish leaders so that they wanted to stop Him.
 - As you know, they persecuted Him in many ways and at last delivered Him up to the Romans to be crucified!
 - Jesus warns all that follow Him to expect the same treatment!
 - So again, we see that persecution, as seen with Isaac also, is a pattern.
 - b. My brothers and sisters, you need to realise that you are more envied than you realise...
 - 1) One of the things that makes people envy you as a believer is the assurance and peace of conscience that you have.
 - You are confident in God's word, but they have no such certainty about anything...
 - and you are sure of God's promises and commands as of divine origin.
 - And you have peace of conscience through the cross—the forgiveness of sins—and you do not delight in sin...
 - This brings great agitation to those who have troubled consciences...
 - There is no other explanation as to why they despise what you believe so much.
 - Even Muslims who share some of the same moral standards are much more acceptable to them because they do not proclaim the gospel that through faith in Jesus only is forgiveness of sin.

- We are envied because the people of this world are plagued with guilt and the fear of death—and we are not!
 - It makes them want to silence us—to destroy us—especially if they are religious people who are trying to be righteous but deep down know that they are not.
- 2) And besides these blessings of assurance and peace of conscience,
- You are also envied because of the blessings you have in this life.
 - I already spoke about how the Lord blesses us with relationships and even material blessings in this life that others don't have.
 - The Lord gives His people greater love and greater self-control and true enjoyment of their wealth and their work.
 - The world tends to watch us closely and to envy us.
 - I have talked to a number of feminists about the Biblical roles of husbands and wives, and when they hear what men are called to do in marriage, they like it—they say that they like it and they often cry!
 - It still surprises me, but they like it—but they hate it because they have never experienced it in their relationships...
 - And it fills them with envy and sometimes that envy is militant.
- 3) The persecutions that come our way are difficult...
- We are often falsely accused of being harsh and judgemental...
 - Of being hypocrites...
 - Of being no different than false believers...
 - Of being arrogant and selfish—
 - And often there are consequences.
 - Sometimes we are excluded from their company and even from employment...
 - And sometimes we are mocked and scoffed at or rebuked...
 - It is often a vexing thing...

TRANS> But the LORD give us guidance.

B. We are to meet persecutions (and other troubles) with patient trust like Isaac does.

1. Isaac is a super example—when wells are taken away, he simply keeps looking for more water!
 - a. They ask him to leave Gerar, so he leaves...
 - He does not put up a big quarrel—he just goes and digs again the wells that the Philistines had filled in.
 - He just finds more water for his flocks and herds.
 - b. And then when he has need of new wells, he digs new ones and the Lord continues to prosper him—he finds artesian wells in the valley of Gerar.
 - And the Philistines come and claim the first well, so Isaac names it Esek (v. 20) which means *contention* or *strife*.

- So he moves on to dig another and the Philistines claim that one also—
 - So Isaac names it *Sitnah* related to the word *Satan* which means *adversary*...
- c. And he moves on to dig another and this time they leave him alone...
 - Perhaps they figured he had moved far enough away, but in any case, Isaac in a very godly way gives the glory to God...
 - **v. 22: They did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth [which means *room*], because he said, “For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”**
- 2. So when you are persecuted, just do as Isaac did...look for more water...
 - a. What I mean is, look for God’s provision in the whole matter.
 - You don’t have to quarrel and fight and protest and put up a big fuss.
 - The LORD knows all about it—and when you are persecuted just lift up your eyes to Him and He will take care of you!
 - b. Am I saying that Christians must be pacifists?
 - No, of course not!
 - Christian kings and governments have a God-given responsibility to defend their people.
 - And we are given liberty (and even responsibility) to defend ourselves when we are attacked.
 - But a lot of Christians in our day could learn from Isaac not to join in to the ways of our litigious society!
 - Paul, on occasion, uses his Roman citizenship when the rules of it are violated, but many times he receives persecutions without objection.
 - God is the one who is taking care of you, so you don’t have to fight like an unbeliever who doesn’t know the one who provides his bread.
 - c. God will give you fresh water—whatever you need in persecution.
 - Go looking for the water that God has for you—
 - it is there if you lose your job for Christ’s sake,
 - it is there if you are put into prison for following Him,
 - it is there if you are banished or tortured,
 - it is there if you are just ostracised or looked at as being strange,
 - it is there if you are falsely accused or unjustly given a fine.
 - The LORD always has water for you and you need to look for it.
 - Do not get all perturbed and agitated—just quietly go and find the water that God has provided for you.

III. Patience in persecution will bring great reward.

A. God brings special encouragement to His people in persecution.

1. It is His way to come to you in such times and give you a special sense of His love as He does to Isaac.

- a. In verse 23, we are told that Isaac goes up to Beersheba now.
 - We are not told just why he decides to relocate, but it appears that he is in some distress from the persecutions—
 - perhaps needing more room besides what he had found at Rehoboth and knowing that he was not welcomed in the Valley of Gerar...
 - But it appears that he is in some distress because the Lord appears to him and tells him not to be afraid.
 - On the very day that he gets there, we are told in verse 24 that: **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 My servant Abraham’s sake.”**
 - b. This is so much the way of the LORD!
 - We saw Him come to Abraham and to Sarah when they were in distress and in need of encouragement...
 - We see Him come to Paul in a special vision when he is persecuted both at Corinth and in Jerusalem. He comes to promise that He will be with him and keep him that he may testify for Him...
 - The LORD loves to do this for His servants.
 - c. In Romans 5, we are encouraged to rejoice in tribulation of any kind because God will use it...
 - He will use it to produce patience or perseverance in us—making us strong to keep going on for Him....
 - And perseverance will produce proven character—it will establish us as His true servants—as those who belong to the faithful in Christ...
 - And proven character will bring about hope—greater hope in the promises of God, the hope that Jesus speaks of that makes us rejoice in persecution because we know that our reward is great in heaven...
 - And then Romans 5 says the best thing of all—that God will, by His Spirit, pour out the assurance of His love in our hearts!
 - In other words, He will reveal to us in a fresh way the great love that He has for us—we will see the love of Jesus in the cross.
 - That is what Romans 5 goes on to talk about...
 - And what Isaac experienced.
 - God came to Isaac in a vision to renew the promise of blessing He had given to Abraham...
 - And to us He will renew the promise which is now fully revealed in Jesus Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit.
 - We will see His love through our sufferings as we have never seen it before!
 - God promises to do this—it is a pattern we can look for.
2. And you see how Isaac responds.
 - a. He immediately sets up an altar at the place where God has appeared to him to worship Him.

- **25 So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there;**
- b. That is what we are to do when God renews His promise to us...
 - We are to worship Him in the place He has appointed—for us, in the public assembly where the elders have their seat and where the gospel is proclaimed and the sacraments are administered.
 - Jesus established this worship when God raised Him from the dead and proclaimed the forgiveness of sins for all of His people through His suffering and death on the cross.
 - God reveals Himself to us in word and sacrament, and we respond with praise, thanksgiving, and prayer.
 - If we are not able to go to the public assembly because we are being burned at the stake or something,
 - We can turn the stake or the cross or the prison into a place of worship and give thanks wherever we are.
 - But if we can call on God’s name publicly, let us do so as Isaac did that we might testify openly before the world and for the encouragement of our brothers and sisters in the church.

TRANS> And that leads us to a second blessing that comes to us in persecution...

B. God uses us as powerful witnesses to Him when we are patient in persecutions.

1. It causes our enemies to see our attachment to the LORD and the love between us and Him.
 - a. That is what happened in Isaac’s case.
 - They saw that the more they persecuted him, the more God blessed him.
 - They kept depriving him of wells, and the LORD kept providing new ones for him.
 - They saw how Isaac did not even appear to be agitated, but just kept on going to find another well, thanking the LORD as he did!
 - King Abimelech testifies to Isaac in v. 28 that **“We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you.”**
 - That is the same thing that his father or grandfather had said to Abraham 70 years before.
 - b. This is a pattern...that when we are faithful to the LORD in persecution, our enemies will see that the LORD is with us.
 - They see our great love for Him, that we are willing to suffer for His sake,
 - And they see His great love for us—how He sustains us even in the deepest afflictions...
 - There have been many conversions in this way—that believers are persecuted and the persecutors see the peace that the Lord gives to His servants as they suffer, are deprived of their goods, and die for Him...
 - And they know that the LORD is real and they confess it.
 - Like the centurion who saw Jesus die and said, “Surely this was the Son of God.”

2. It also unnerves our enemies and causes them to make peace with us.
 - a. Over and over in history, this has been the way of things...
 - 1) The gospel is introduced to a nation.
 - It is opposed and the first believers are persecuted.
 - The more they are, the more it is seen that God is with them.
 - And soon the people start to fear God—many of them convert and those who do not are afraid and ashamed to keep persecuting.
 - They show respect for believers and they fear them.
 - 2) Paul reminds the Philippians in Philippians 1:28 that their patience in persecution is to their persecutors **a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.**
 - b. You see in our text how humbly Abimelech comes, asking Isaac to make a covenant of peace with his kingdom...
 - 1) Isaac seems to be quite surprised by this...
 - In vs. 27 he says, 27: **“Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?”**
 - Like us, he did not realise how carefully these men were watching him.
 - Haven’t you been surprised by unbelievers revealing how they have been watching you?
 - There is a reality about our faith and it gets people’s attention—especially when they are persecuting us.
 - 2) So Abimelech and his officers come and they say: **“We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, ‘Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.’ ”**
 - This is the pattern that the LORD shows us here.
 - It can take more than a generation for this to happen, but as we persevere, we can look for it and pray for it.
 - This was easily a sixty year period here.
 - c. And you see how Isaac responds...
 - He has raised a complaint already in asking why they have come since they hate him,
 - but now that he sees their intention to make peace, he welcomes them and he enters into a covenant of peace with them.
 - He does not question their sincerity—he simply accepts their overture of good will...
 - **Verse 30-31: So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.**
 - If the world wants to be at peace with us, we should rejoice and welcome it, even if they have been our persecutors...

- We, of all people, being forgiven by God, should not harbour resentment or bear a grudge.
- We are debtors to all men, to love them as Christ has loved us.
 - It should bring great joy to us that they want to make peace with us.

TRANS> So you see how the LORD has special blessings for us when we are patient in persecution...

- He gives us special assurance of His love and of His promises;
- And He makes even our enemies to be at peace with us...
- But there is one more thing that is brought out—or perhaps I should say, reemphasised in verse 32-33...

C. That LORD graciously continues to supply us with even more water!

1. That is, He keeps on blessing us just as He has promised to do—He continues to provide us with what we need to serve Him.
 - That God’s blessing keeps on going is beautifully demonstrated here in that on the very same day that Abimelech made peace with Isaac,
 - Isaac’s servants come and declare “We have found water!”
 - What better way to show that He is with us and will keep on blessing us—
 - That is what this chapter is all about!
2. And Isaac, following the pattern of his father Abraham who also made a covenant at this place and who also found a well here,
 - again names the place *Shebah*...
 - **Verse 33: So he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.**
 - And it still is—even to *this* day—to our day!
 - Beersheba is a city of about 200,000 in Israel at the junction of highways 25, 40, and 60.
 - A city that is named for the well that Abraham and Isaac dug there that testifies to God’s faithfulness to provide for His servants!

Conclusion: My dear brothers and sisters, you can trust the Lord in persecutions.

- He has shown you a pattern that persecutions will come, but that He will provide for you the living water that will keep you alive though them all.
 - This chapter began with a famine and it ends with a well of salvation for God’s servants.
 - Drink deeply and live!