

## What Do You Do In The Time Of Famine?

### Gen. 26:1-3, 6, 12-14

“There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar.

Then the Lord appeared to him and said: **DO Not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.**

**Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you;** for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.

**v. 6 - So Isaac lived in Gerar.”**

**v. 12- “Then Isaac sowed in that land, [what land?; the land that was in famine] and reaped in the same year a hundred fold; and the Lord blessed him.”**

**v. 13- “The man began to prosper and continued prospering until he became very prosperous;**

**v. 14-for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants – employees. So he Philistines envied him.**

[the ungodly envied him]

## **What do you do in the tough times, times when things have dried up?**

Americans don't really understand famine in the blessed conditions we enjoy:

- Famine is usually the result of either war or weather.
- People who are starving have not only the lack of food to deal with but the diseases, water pollution and unsanitary conditions of living.

This is what Isaac and the people were dealing with:

- People dying, crops failing, bad situation, hopeless conditions.

It was so bad to the point they were going to leave where they were to go find a place of food and shelter.

The Lord said to Isaac:   **STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE; DON'T GO ANYWHERE!**

Let's move to two other stories to show a contrast of Isaac obeying God and staying in a place that God said was his land, “I've given it to you, and just because you're in a famine; you don't walk away from it.”

- Just because it's not producing for you right now; you don't quit, pack your bags and go somewhere else that looks better.

- “You stay right where you are; I’m giving you a **Stay Here Command** – God tells him.
- Don’t do like your father Abraham did, don’t do like Naomi did and leave the land that I have given to you.

Book of Ruth: Naomi & her family lived in Bethlehem [House of Bread] when a famine came and they left the House of Bread and went to Moab [25 miles away] in search of resources.

- **Norfolk** is 21 miles away from NN; **Gloucester** is 21 miles; **Matthews** is 24 miles.
- It would just make sense when a famine is happening and there is something better close by to go there. Everybody’s going and all the other families have gone.

While in Moab - Naomi’s husband and two sons die, leaving her and her daughters-in-law without any means of support in a foreign land where God is not known.

- Naomi hears there is bread again in Bethlehem and decides to return home.

**When you are in Bethlehem – God’s House of Bread, there will be famines:**

- When you have a job, a marriage, a relationship, a ministry, a church, a position – there are times when you experience seasons of famine or dryness.
- There are times we go through leanness –
  - We just heard at XO about marriage:
    - You will have rough days
    - You will have rough weeks – months.
    - You may even have rough years – BUT ITS WORTH IT STAYING IN THE MARRIAGE AND SEEING IT THROUGH TO A BETTER DAY.
- Life is made up of those times we have to go through battles, we have to persevere and hang in there and hold on.
- It’s hard and tough to stay where God has put us.

We are so quick to jump ship and go somewhere we think will be better. God tells us to stay & sow into that land, that marriage, that business, that job, that relationship.

We fail to understand that all the things we need; God has given us if we: **SOW INTO THAT LAND.**

MOAB was a cursed place – Lots descendants came from Moab and Israel never had a good relation with the inhabitants of Moab.

- It was really a compromise for Naomi’s husband to have gone there.
- They left a type of Gods’ House – Bethlehem when it was dry:

- We go through those times of waking up not feeling saved, blessed.
- Coming to WOWC and not getting anything out of it.
- You come and just are here and it's another service because you're not feeling God – you're just not getting it.
- It feels dry!

**What do you do in the time of famine when you know this is your House of Bread & it feels dry?**

**When the House of Bread is breadless - You stay there until the Bread comes back!**

- When you can ever find a place where God fed you, stay there, it's just a matter of time and the bread will come back.

Sometimes God allows us to go through famine:

- To prove you and test what is in your heart.

Notice that Naomi and her daughter in laws traded three funerals for one famine:

- It's better to stay in the House of God's Bread than to leave and seek for something else.
- My and your worst day in God's House is far better than our best day in the world.

It may look like everything out there in Moab is great:

- Freedom from parents.
- Freedom from restraints of church and believers.
- Lots of fun, music, drugs – alcohol, parties.
- You may have been in church and served Jesus and now it's kinda dry and lost its excitement and freshness –
- What do you do – You take the Word of God in that land and sow it into your life, and keep sowing it into your life, sow the dreams of God into your life.
- If you will stay in God's House even when it is breadless; it will come back 100 fold.
- You won't get the 100 fold unless you make it through the famine in “**that land.**”

Prov. 17:24

**“Wisdom is in the sight of him who has understanding, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.”**

When you are a wise person:

- You learn to appreciate what you have.
- You appreciate the people around you who really love you and care about what happens to you – not fake friends.
- You learn to appreciate the things/resources/blessings you have around you.

- You appreciate the health you have.

But the fool – his eyes are on the ends of the earth:

- They think – “If I only had that...”
- “If I could only work over there”
- “If I could only have her or him as a girl/boyfriend.”
- “If I was just in LA, or Chicago or Florida or wherever!”
- “If I could only have him or her as a husband or wife. They don’t seem to have any problems like the one I have now.”
- **You’re crazy – they all have problems!**
- **You’re just going to trade out problems!!**

**Sow into this land, sow into the marriage you have now, [instead of sowing into an affair], sow into this church, sow into the job you have now.**

Sow into “that Land” when it’s in a famine; God says it can produce 100 fold.

Sowing into the land of Moab or wherever you are wanting to go will produce:

- Divorce – separation and pain among the children and family.
- Court costs.
- Alimony costs.
- Attorney fees.

The fool is always thinking:

- “If I could just get over there.”
- “If I could just get that job.”
- “If someone would just discover me.”
- They don’t appreciate what they have.

**People who live in the country:**

- Get tired of it and want to move to the city.
- Tired of cutting so much grass, feeding chickens and other animals, fixing fences and taking care of property.
- I’m moving to the city.

**People who live in the city:**

- Tired of so much traffic.
- Tired of so much noise and crowds.
- I’m moving to the country to get some acreage.

**You can see them pass each other in U-Haul trucks thinking that if I can just get to where they are; I’ll be happy!**

“The eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.”

**We need to learn to value what the Lord has given us:**

- There are Christians that need to learn this.
- They go from place to place always looking for something.
- You never stay in one place and sow into that land in a time of famine. You come and go – in and out.
- Never get rooted, never sow, never bear fruit, never get enough discipline to come to services and Bible study when you feel like it and when you don't -

**But the blessing comes when you sow into the land when you feel like and when you don't, when its exciting and when it's not; you just keep doing what God said to do.**

**“Get up family, we're going to God's house” – and you do it consistently.  
As you sow into “that land” – there is a harvest for you and your descendants -  
Gen. 26:3**

Anytime your children ask you if you're going to church means you're backslid.

- You have sent the message to them that it's not that important to be in God's house with God's people and worshipping Him.
- Sometimes, we go and sometimes we don't. You are telling them it's up for question.

Gen. 12:10 “Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.”

- This is where he asked Sarai to lie and say she was his sister to save his life from Pharaoh.
- This is where he picked up many possessions and servants; among them Hagar – who later became Sarai's handmaid with whom Abram had the son Ishmael which has caused many problems in the Middle East we are still reaping consequences from today. Gen. 16.
- One trip to Egypt caused Abram to get involved in situations that brought serious consequences not only upon himself but his generations that followed and the rest of the world also.

This happened because he left the Promised Land and went down to Egypt.

- Every time you have to pass through a security scanner, see our men and women deployed to Muslim nations, see them come home in body bags, ISIS, it goes back

to one trip to Egypt he took in a time of famine when he should have stayed in the house where God put him and sown into “that land” in the time of famine.

**You don’t need to be looking for another place, another job, another marriage, another whatever – you need to be sowing into “that land” that the Lord has given to you and believing Him for 100 fold.**

**GOD USES LESS THAN PERFECT PLACES IN OUR LIVES  
TO DO SOMETHING IN FAMINE  
THAT HE CAN’T DO IN A TIME OF FEAST!**

**God says:** “Isaac, I don’t want you to do like your daddy – Abraham did.  
I don’t want you to do like Naomi did.  
I want you to stay in this land and don’t go nowhere.”

- I know it’s not a perfect place, it’s not beautiful like Egypt with its Nile River and lush fields.
- The enemy always wants to show you the glitz and glamor of the world and say: “If you’d just go do that.”
- But the truth is it’s better to stay where you are, even though you’re in a famine.
- I’ll sow the truth even though I may not be prospering right now;
- All my friends have gone over somewhere else, and they’re doing fine without God & a compromised life, without all this discipline and the Word and prayer and seeking God’s will.
- **BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT SOWING INTO YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU’RE IN THE FAMINE.**

Stay in this place – “**Gerar:**” Gerar means – “**combat, dispute, rough handling, to drag off forcibly.**”

- Stay in this place where you are going to be treated roughly, drug around, disputed against.
- You are in the land of the Philistines where they are enemies to you.
- It would be so much easier to go over to a place where you will be respected, treated better and have a softer life – but I want you to stay here in Gerar.
- Everybody isn’t going through what you’re going through – but God says He wants you in that land of famine and He wants you to sow into that land of famine.

**You don’t quit, you don’t go back to the alcohol, the drugs the other lover – you stay in that house of bread & bread will come to you again, even though it seems breadless now.**

**You stay there, plant there – don't leave there.**

**Isaac stayed there – where? that place, the place of famine.**

- It hasn't rained in weeks, months, years – but he's hitching up the donkeys and plowing and dust is flying. He's sowing precious seed into the ground and covering it with his foot as he goes.
- That seed determines whether him and his family lives or dies. His neighbors are thinking he's crazy, all his friends have left – but God has told him to stay there.

**Some of the greatest things God will do for you is when you learn to stand in the middle of the famine and keep sowing the truth of God's Word until you see it break through.**

- God located Lazarus on the fourth day when he was smelling of decay.
- He found David on the back side of a desert; God works in unusual places.
- He found Moses in the desert.
- He found Job in the trial.
- He found the Hebrew young men in the fiery furnace.
- He found Daniel in the lion's den.
- He found Elijah under the juniper tree contemplating suicide.
- He found Jeremiah in a pit and Peter in a storm and Paul in a prison.

God uses surprising places to bring His glory out of them.

If God has you in one of those places:

- **Don't run**
- **Don't pack your bags, stand and sow into that land and do the best you can with what you have & God is faithful!**

**Question:** How well do you respond to God's "**Stay here command?**"

- Even when you don't understand – pray and nothing's happening?
- When there is no breakthrough!
- How well do you respond to God's Stay Here Command?
- God doesn't want you to be like everybody else who leaves and goes off seeking something different when they should have stayed and sowed.

There are some Isaac's here today that God is speaking to "whose eyes are on the ends of the world," that He wants you to learn to Stay and Sow in This Land you are in now.

- Everything you are dreaming of is right here where you are if you would just sow into it.

v. 12- "When Isaac sowed into that land-

- Not what he wished it was.
- Not what it ought to be.
- But what he had – reality.

He reaped in that same year 100-fold in that land.”

- For every seed he dropped in the ground, he reaped 100-fold.
- Every 1 tomato seed, he reaped 100 tomatoes, etc.
- Isaac stayed where he was.
- He endured the famine.

### **Perseverance:**

**Per = through**

**Severe – severe**

We have to have perseverance through severe, hard times, when the business, the family, the marriage, the finances are struggling.

If you’ll hold on – God is faithful.

I’m putting my foot down; I’m not going anywhere.

**True story:** The Civil War came late & hard to the state of Louisiana.

12 years before the Civil War, a soldier came from Mexico and he gave some dried peppers to a man named Edmund McIlhenny. Having come from Mexico, no one had ever tasted this type of peppers. He lived on an island in S. Louisiana called Avery Island.

Avery Island is situated on a salt dome. The man planted these peppers among his other garden items and the family enjoyed them.

When the Civil War came, he and all the families on that island fled leaving his farm and as well as other farms to the destruction of fire and war.

When they returned home after the war, everything was a loss, homes, fences, farm, crops all was a total loss.

All the other inhabitants of the island left to live in other places. But Edmund McIlhenny stayed and refused to give up.

Everything in fields was dead except the overgrown fields of peppers which was the only plants that survived. Now they had spread all over the place being the only plant that would grow.

He surveyed his situation. I have plenty of peppers, plenty of salt and he found some vinegar in a barrel.

He took the peppers with the salt and mixed it with the vinegar into a special recipe. He and his wife enjoyed it. He had an idea, he found some old cologne bottles at the dump.



Washed them out and filling the bottles with his sauce, he traveled to grocers and markets selling his new sauce. It was the first of its kind in America. It caught on and the rest is history: WE KNOW IT TODAY AS TOBASCO SAUCE.

It came from a man, who when everybody else said it's over and there's nothing left, this land is useless; he refused to give up and sowed into "this Land."

This Tabasco sauce is in 22 different languages, over 175 nations, it's a five generation family organization; all of whom are millionaires. Privately owned.

In 2014 it sold over \$200 million worth of peppers, salt and vinegar.

That's the simple recipe.

Five generations would have missed the mega blessings if their father had said: "I'm in a famine but my eyes are not on the ends of the earth like a fool, but there is something right here God can bless if I'll sow in the land in the time of famine, I'll reap 100-fold and God will bless me and my descendants for generations to come."

God is giving you a "Stay Here Command"

Jesus said: Mark 10:29-30

"Jesus answered, there is no man that has left house, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, but **he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.**"

If you want God to give you that spirit of Isaac that will not give in to the famine:

- You will commit to God to stop hopping from job to job, place to place, church to church, marriage or relationship to relationship.
- And sow in the time of famine because there is a 100-fold blessing on that which is sowed during the time of famine.
- If you're in a hard time, this is God's message for you – **Persevere = Through the severe, go on through and God has a harvest on the other side.**

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