

The Coming Together of Young People Through Prayer

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon highlights the vital role of prayer in guiding young people towards God-honoring relationships and marriages.

Duration: 1:12:38

Scripture: Genesis 24:12-27, Genesis 24:54-56, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:21, Luke 16:19-31

Topics: "Prayer Meeting"

Description

In this sermon, the minister addresses the concern of young people not being able to have relationships and get to know one another before getting married. He emphasizes that this concern shows a lack of understanding of God's will. The minister then shares the story of a servant who observed a young girl's actions to see if she would fulfill her promise to draw water for the camels. This story serves as a lesson for young people to seek God's guidance and live according to His will in their relationships. The minister also highlights the importance of having a good heart and character, rather than just focusing on appearances, in order to have a successful and harmonious marriage.

Transcript

Genesis chapter 24 Abraham was now old and well-advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I am living.

But will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac, the servant asked him, what if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from? Make sure that you do not take my son back there, Abraham said. And then from verse 11, he had the camels kneel down the well, kneel down near the well outside the town. It was toward evening, the time the woman go out to draw water.

And he said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will And then verse 14, may it be that when I say to a girl, please let down your jar that I may have a drink. And she says, drink and I'll water your camels too.

Let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this, I will know that you have shown kindness to my master. Before he had finished praying, Rebecca came out with a jar on her shoulder.

She was the daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahar. The girl was very beautiful, a virgin. No man had ever lain with her.

She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again. The topic about which I'd like to speak is this, the coming together of these young people through prayer. I'd like to begin with Abraham.

Jesus said that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are seated at the tables in heaven. And people will come from the east and the west and sit with these men at the tables in heaven. There is so much that we can learn from Abraham, who is the father of the believers.

The father of those who believe, he was upright and faithful to God. He knew God and God knew him. When Abraham was old and advanced in years, God had blessed him in every way.

And then Abraham spoke to his chief servant, the one who was in charge of all that he had. Now this is my first point, that Abraham spoke to his chief servant, the one in charge of all that he had. Abraham spoke to the chief servant in his household.

Now it's amazing, in the Bible, whenever it refers to a household, it doesn't just speak about the parents and the children, but it includes all those who are in the house. All the servants, all of those are included in the household. Even in the New Testament, where it says that the certain person believed and was saved together with his whole household, it didn't just refer to his children, but it included everybody, all those working with him, all those who are his servants in his house.

And God said, I know Abraham, that he will command his household to keep my laws and my decrees. And they will do that. And that's an amazing thing, because Abraham had a large household with many servants, many that worked for him, they numbered in the hundreds.

Now this is amazing, God said, I know Abraham will command his children to obey my laws, to believe in me, and they will do that. Abraham had great authority. A parent that commands and instructs his children, obey the word of God, and they do it.

That ought to touch all of us and stir us, we who are parents. And then it goes further to say, his household, his servants, they too will keep the word of God. Can you, who have children, command your children to serve the Lord in such a way that they do it? And even your servants, can you do that? Abraham was an amazing man, a hero of the faith, highly respected.

And that ought to draw us all that are parents closer to the Lord, in such a way that our children would follow the Lord as well. The Bible says that how can a person be responsible over the church and preach, if he cannot even command and instruct his own children that they obey him. And how can he then be responsible over the church? That goes very deep and it can cause any man to be humbled and drive him onto his knees to cry out to God.

I remember when I was once overseas, a girl came to me who had been a drug addict. And when they instructed and commanded her, she would go back to it. And they spoke to her, they said, our daughter, we see that you do not want to follow the Lord, but here in this home, we serve God, we serve the Lord.

Now we don't want to hold you back, if you want to go your own way, then go, but don't put your foot back here in our house. And she said, Uncle Elo, I want to say to you that no whiplashers ever felt as sore as that, that I knew that I was expelled from my own home. No longer having a father and a mother.

And so that drove me to the Lord, that I cried out to him and I turned back to him. We who believe are children of Abraham. Abraham was seated there in heaven when Lazarus was welcomed into heaven and came to his bosom.

Abraham opened his arms and welcomed him. Now you child of God, are you also a son of Abraham? Do you do that which he did? Will you be welcomed by Abraham into heaven? And that way, where he'll open his arms and he'll say to you, come into my bosom, you are flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone, you parent, and even you that don't have children, but you have servants that work for you, because you are like I am. Do you live a life of the same caliber as that which Abraham lived? Or will you, when you get to heaven, try and hide that he doesn't see you? This Abraham, who is the father of the children of Abraham, of the believers and of those who believe, do we take after him? And do our children take after him? That's my first point.

And the second one is this. Abraham opened his arms and welcomed him. And so Abraham, when he was well advanced in years, called his chief servant to him and said, I want you to go back to my country where I come from and my relatives, and there go and find a wife for my son Isaac.

That's quite amazing that Abraham could entrust such a serious task to this servant. So in other words, Abraham must have known him, and Abraham must have known what kind of a life he led. Abraham didn't say, I'll go myself and look for a wife for my son.

Neither did he send Isaac and say, now you go, my son, and look for a wife for yourself. No, he sent his chief servant to do that. That in itself is a very deep matter.

It's unfathomable. And Abraham, having called his servant, said, I want you to go and find a wife for my son Isaac from our own relatives, not one from the heathen, not one from the Canaanites, but from our own relatives. Go and get someone from our own relatives.

You as a believer cannot be married to an unbeliever, to a person of this world. You need to be married to someone who holds the same standards and the same values and live the same life for God. If you don't do that, it will go hard with you, it will be difficult, you will be dealt with, you will really go through the mill because of that.

And so the servant then asked, but what if the woman is unwilling to come back with me? She's stubborn and she doesn't want to come here, should I then take your son and take him there? And he said, no, never, over my dead body, I would want you to swear an oath to God that you will never take my son back to the country from which I come and take him back there where I come out of. And so he said, if she's not willing to come, let it be so, but let my son never go back to the country from which I come from, but let him remain here in the country that God had promised to me. He said, God had promised to me on earth, saying to your offspring, I will give this land, so never take my son back to where I come from.

No turning back, no turning back, no turning back. You know about that prophet that turned back and then met up with a lion on the way and was mauled by that lion and killed by it. God does not allow you to backslide, to go back and to turn back.

God does not allow you to backslide, to go back and to turn back. He knew that if he would go back there, he would never again leave that place. Because it wouldn't happen that the unbeliever would join himself to you as the believer, but he will win you as the believer to stay with him.

There are people that say so glibly, well, I will get married to that person and then I will win that person over to the Lord. No, that will never happen. Instead, that person will win you over to their side.

Make sure, he said, that you do not take my son back to where I come from. Do not take my son back there. Swear it to me.

Now, do you have a way where you can still go back? If that is so, where you are turning back and going back to past things in your life, remember Lot's wife. Do not turn back. Do not ever go back, spiritually speaking, to the life from which you came out of.

And if that is the case in your life, then beware because your life is displeasing to God. God takes no pleasure on those that turn back. And so this servant swore an oath to his master Abraham and said that he would never do that.

And he said to him that God will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. And when the servant got there, he sat down by the well. He had ten camels.

And he had the camels kneeled down near the well. Now, think of this. This servant didn't know that place at all.

He didn't know the people from a bar of soap. He had no knowledge of that area. He had a real problem on his hands.

How was he ever going to find out who the person is that God had intended for his master's son? And then the Bible says this servant prayed. He spoke to God. Can you do that? Can you speak to God? Not just an empty prayer that you say, but where you speak and communicate with God.

And he prayed, he said, Oh God, I need to have this girl, to see who this girl is that you have chosen for my master's son. And before he even finished praying, there was Rebecca on her way to the well with the water jar. And so he said to her when she came up from the well, he said, let me have a drink of water from your jar.

Having prayed to God and saying, Lord, let the girl, if I say to a girl, let me have a drink from your jar. Let the girl who says, have a drink and I'll water your camels as well. Let her be the one that you have chosen.

Now one camel on its own drinks many gallons of water. So he asked a difficult thing here. He said, Lord, if she then says, I will water your camels as well without me asking her to water the camels.

By that I will know she is the one that you have chosen. Isaac didn't get married to someone that he had chosen for himself. I don't know you that are married.

How you started your married life? How did you come together? Did you start in prayer? Did you as the married woman and as a married man, did you pray to God before you got married? One person said to me, how can I ever get married if I don't know the other person? There are people that have the philosophy, they say, well, I won't ever buy a bag of flour without first opening up the bag and testing the flour and seeing what it's like first. Many do that even till today. They say, I can't get married to a person if I

don't know if we fit together.

I've got to get to know that person. And so they open the bag of flour. And one person came to the minister and he said, Now, how are the young people ever get married if they can't have relationships and get to know one another? Well, that just showed that person didn't know the will of God.

Before he had finished praying even, this girl came along and he asked of her to give him something to drink. She said, drink, my Lord. And she quickly lowered a jar of water and gave him to drink.

And she said, and I will draw water for your camels too. And I'll draw water for them. So this servant just stood there quietly and he watched as she was going about drawing water for the camels, observing to see whether she was going to fulfill her promise to draw water for all 10 of his camels.

He observed her closely to see whether she was going to fulfill what she had promised. After all, talk is cheap. It's easy to make promises.

But he wanted to see whether she was actually going to fulfill what she had said. It was only at the end, when she had completely done all that she had said that she would do, that he then responded and he gave her a ring and he gave her some gifts and went to the next step. Just look at how much fighting and arguing you find amongst married couples today.

It's a cat and dog affair. But you're not surprised because they after all chose for themselves. Now let me say to you one thing that happened many years ago.

There was a certain young man that went to other young men and he said to them, Look, this story there at Kwasi Zabantu that they say they pray and see and find out in that way who they should get married to. That's nonsense. No such thing.

He said, I'm going to go around to all the different congregations and I'm going to pick a beautiful flower for myself and I'm going to have a close look and see who I'm going to get married to. I won't get married to anybody that I don't know and I'll make sure that she's beautiful. And so indeed he put that into practice which he said and he went and he picked his beautiful flower.

Little did he realize that a peach that looks so beautiful on the outside might be rotten at the core with a worm inside. So he chose his girl, he got engaged and got married to her. And everybody was so happy that he got married in such a Christian like manner.

It didn't take long, it was about three months after that, when I got the news that this young bride was very ill. With a big growth in her stomach which would require an operation. I said, well why don't you take her then to the doctor.

So when they went there, the mother said I'd also like to come in with you and hear what the doctor has to say. And she declined, she said no, I'll go on alone. So when they went there, the mother said I'd also like to come in with you and hear what the doctor has to say.

And she declined, she said no, I'll go on alone. So when they went there, the mother said I'd also like to come in with you and hear what the doctor has to say. When the doctor examined her, he didn't find cervical cancer, but he found that she had been pregnant for a few months already.

And had just fallen pregnant like a wild animal. She was pregnant for three months. They came back from the doctor and they related it to me.

They said, we really don't know how to break the news to the husband. Won't you rather tell him? I said, okay, bring him. And we met there in my old office that I had many years ago.

He sat there on the chair. I said, so and so, something serious has happened. And I said, your wife has come back from the doctor because the husband had been very worried.

They had just recently got married and so he was worried that she was so ill. And I said, they found a child in her. Now you know that whites, if they get angry or upset, they get very red in their faces.

But he turned as white as a sheet. And I was afraid that he was going to topple over and I always wanted to get up to help, to stop him from falling over. He was shocked.

For this wasn't his child. He never had any relations with her. This was somebody else's child.

What did he do? He got divorced from her. He had chosen out this most beautiful girl. Now Rebecca was very beautiful as well.

But she wasn't just beautiful on the outside, skin deep, but she was beautiful on the inside. The Bible says that God looks at the heart of man. Even though that person doesn't have a good appearance, but if that person has got a good heart, then that person is gold.

If that person doesn't have the right heart, then that person will trouble everybody. She will bring about friction between her husband and her parents-in-law and separate him from them. And it will be a cat and dog affair.

Now I know the young man and the young girl getting engaged today. Both of them have been here for quite a number of years. Now this morning I phoned Dietmar's wife, Brigitte, and I said, Now tell me, what is this young girl like? Because she works with Brigitte.

And Brigitte is very straight. She doesn't beat about the bush. And she said, Oh, how I wish that all the DSS students would be like her.

And she said, Oh, how I wish that all the DSS students would be like her. She said, She is upright, she is faithful, diligent, and she does whatever you ask her to do. And she will be faithful in that.

And she said, Even though at the beginning I really dealt with her, but she was like soft clay. Or like a skin that you work and it becomes soft. Because if you don't work a skin, it never becomes something usable.

It will be something hard and rigid that you can't use. But she obeyed and she listened and she was teachable. And she couldn't say enough of her praises.

Sing her praises enough. She said, She is upright, she is faithful, she is diligent, and I cannot even express it as well as Brigitta did. I almost felt that I wanted to ask her to come and explain it and say it to you.

Because I can't say it as she did. And I was only thankful on behalf of Van Figuele that he got such a bride or person getting engaged to him with such a heart. She is the same every day, day in and day out.

No matter what problems there are, what difficulties you never find her having, moods like you find with some people, it's up and down, up and down all the time. She would be friendly and unperturbed no matter what the circumstances. Now excuse me if I say all this to you, but I wanted you to hear that.

And I wanted the young man to hear what kind of a wife he is getting and that indeed she was chosen for him by God. I don't want the young man to come to me and say, Well, this is the person that he feels God has laid on his heart that he should get married to. Where he didn't pray about it, but he chose that girl for himself.

And I asked the young man, Did you pray about this? Are you sure she is the one that God has chosen for you? Or does it just come from your own flesh and your own desires? I asked the young man, Did you pray about this? Are you sure she is the one that God has chosen for you? Or does it just come from your own flesh and your own desires? So Isaac and Rebecca got married. And then their child that they had, their son, also became a man of God. Because the Bible says that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they are seated at the tables in heaven, all three generations.

Will you sit with them in heaven as well? They were people, men, who knew God, who spoke to God, who could pray. So Isaac and Rebecca got married. And then their child that they had, their son, also became a man of God.

And then their child that they had, their son, also became a man of God. Don't listen to your feelings. Don't listen to your eyes, what your eyes see.

Let all that come to naught, but let it be the will of God, and listen to His voice. We could say, well, we live in this millennium of 2000. This is ancient.

These ways, it doesn't work anymore. But we want to still meet with those men. If you pray, you really pray to God.

God is able to lead you. With some people, if you see the outcome of their married life, then it tells you the story that it wasn't God that brought them together, but it was their own desires. If you would change from that which I've said and the report that I've given to God's people, then we will really become disappointed.

And if that be the case, that you change and that you turn, then you won't bring forth children that will be seated at the heavenly tables, but that will go to hell. Now, this matter is very deep. Many, many people fail, but in their marriage it will be the same.

The parents of this couple, of the young man and the young girl, ought to rejoice that they have such a son and such a daughter. Oh, oh, oh, Umakoti, Kamalume, that they have such a son and such a daughter. Now, Ditma's wife said, I even looked at the way in which she dressed, and I closely observed that.

Never did she dress in a worldly fashion, but in a modest way that is exemplary to all. The young man came to me and he said, Uncle Elo, I feel that it is God's will that I should get married to her. And I said, indeed, go and pray about it and make sure, make double sure.

And so he came back and he said, Uncle Elo, I'm sure. And after that, I went to the young girl and I said, Now, this young man feels in his heart, he should get engaged to you, he should get married to you. What do you say about that? And I won't influence the person in any way to say yes or to say no.

It's between that person and God. And I said, Uncle Elo, I feel that it is God's will that I should get married to her. And then she came back and she said, Yes, I feel it's God's will.

And I said, Are you sure about that? She said, Yes. Don't you doubt at all? No. I said, Well, then I'm happy as well.

And the future will show whether this is from God or not. Because I can't see the heart. But the future will reveal it.

Now this is an amazing story. This matter of Isaac and Rebekah. And even as they returned home, the servant with Rebekah, they found Isaac in prayer.

And so Isaac received her and took her into his mother's tent. And he was comforted concerning the death of his mother. Now friends, I don't know whether you understand and grasp the way that we do things.

But we want to do it in a biblical way. We read God's word. We study God's word to see what does God's word teach us.

And then we pray and we say, Oh God, lead us now according to your word. Now, we've addressed all of you in this matter. You as a father, as the mother, you as the children.

And I'll be so glad if you take this word to heart. And God wants us all to be pure and clean before him and to walk in a pure way. This way of seeking God's will doesn't only start and end with marriage.

It must be your life. Now some people, it's the first time and the last time that they hear God's word and voice. When they want to get married.

And you ask the girl and she prays and she says, it's God's will. She's heard his voice. But you never ever hear that from them again afterwards.

They never come and say, well, this is what God has shown me. This is how he's leading me. So you young girls take this matter, store it away and go and ponder over it and chew the cud.

And the same with you young men. Don't go and choose things and take things for yourself. Because that thing you will drop it like a hot potato afterwards.

It will burn you. But rather go and pray and say, oh Lord, teach me to live as Abraham did. And lead me in the same way.

So father, mother, son and daughter. I've taken my time now this morning to clearly lay it out before you. What God's word says, how it goes.

Because there are many people that still don't hear and understand. So that's why I said I'll take my time and explain it carefully that you might understand. It's wonderful when God brings people together.

Now I don't have time to relate to you my personal testimony and how God brought me and my own wife together. I didn't even know her very well, but I said, Lord, if this is you, then let it come to pass. But if it is not of you, then take it away.

And then God led us until we got married. And until today, I don't have any doubt whatsoever that it was God who brought us together. It doesn't only pertain to marriage.

It pertains to everything in life. Those that have just finished school. Those that have matriculated, written their grade 12.

That you pray what you need to do afterwards. Whatever you start, whatever you want to do. That you pray that it will be God who leads you.

And that you too would be an example to all the believers, to all the past peoples, to everyone, great and small. Jesus said, not everyone who calls me Lord, Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven. But only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Woe to you if God takes you from this world and you are not in his will. You won't sit at the tables together with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But you will burn in hell together with the rich man.

Shall we close in prayer? Lord, won't you indelibly inscribe your word on the tablets of our hearts and minds? Make us to be a people, Lord, that won't only hear what you say, but that will be doers of your word. We thank you, Lord, for this couple that got engaged today. We thank you for their lives.

They have brought joy to us. And we pray, Lord, that you will keep them and bless them until the day of their wedding. Amen.

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