

(Genesis) - Part 21

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen discusses the importance of seeking God's will in marriage through the example of Abraham and the qualities to look for in a spouse.

Duration: 57:47

Scripture: Genesis 2:22, Genesis 24:7, Genesis 24:27, Genesis 24:63, Genesis 24:67, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 11:3

Topics: "Genesis"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of looking for spiritual qualities rather than earthly qualities when seeking a partner. He highlights the problems that can arise when people prioritize external appearances or education in their choice of a spouse. The speaker encourages believers to focus on knowing more about Jesus and His glory, rather than getting caught up in doctrinal arguments. The sermon also emphasizes the sense of responsibility displayed by Abraham's servant, who prioritized his task over his own hunger.

Transcript

Let's turn to Genesis chapter 24. Genesis 24 verse 1. Now Abraham was old, advanced in age, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way. And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, Please place your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife from my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I live, but you shall go to my country and to my relatives and take a wife from my son Isaac.

This whole chapter is dealing with Abraham seeking a bride for his son. And there are two things that we can learn from this chapter. One is some spiritual counsel concerning marriage itself and the choosing of a partner, particularly what I'm thinking of.

And the other is, the whole chapter is a picture of God the Father sending out the Holy Spirit to look for a bride for his son Jesus Christ. And it's very interesting to see this chapter in the light of these two things. First of all, the concern that a father has for his son to have a happy marriage.

As far as we know, Abraham and Sarah had a good married life because it says in the New Testament that Sarah obeyed Abraham and is an example for sisters today. And obviously he desired that his son also should not get married to anyone. He had a concern that his son should have a happy marriage.

The same concern that we have in the church, that everyone should have a happy marriage. And for that he says, he tells his servants, I make you swear by God that you must not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I live. And this reminds us of God's word in 2 Corinthians 6, 14-18, which tells us that we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

That God does not want us to be united in marriage with someone who is not born again. And there is a great need to emphasize that way back in the Old Testament. Abraham in type here speaks about that also.

Go to my country and to my relatives and don't take a wife from the Canaanites. And the servants said to him, suppose the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Should I take your son back to the land from where you came? And Abraham said, beware lest you take my son back there.

The Lord the God of heaven who took me from my father's house, from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me saying to your descendants, I'll give this land, he will send his angel before you and you'll take a wife for my son from there. But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you'll be free from this by oath. Only do not take my son back there.

So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter. You see, Abraham was convinced that it was better for Isaac to remain single all through his life, rather than go back to Ur of the Chaldees because his wife did not want to leave that place. And there is a principle here that we need to recognize in Christian marriage.

That Abraham's servant says, supposing the woman says, I don't want to go this way. I don't want to go to Canaan's land. I'm quite comfortable here.

Then Abraham says, forget it then. Then my son will remain single. He's not going to marry anybody here.

And if somebody from there is not interested in coming out here, then forget it. If only we, if only young people took this attitude in marriage. That a young man when considering a girl to stay, is she really willing to forsake all those connections and follow me in the way God is leading me, which she may not understand.

If not, I would rather be single. From my experience, I have come to see that there are very, very few people like this. The vast majority of believers, young men, when it comes to marriage, they are not wholehearted.

They are so keen on getting married to someone that they're willing to compromise their standards. And I believe that is the reason why many, many people do not have God's best in their life. I think we shall discover with the judgment seat of Christ how many people were alright until they missed the will of God in marriage.

And then they got like an engine getting sidetracked onto some other, shunted onto some other line. They got onto God's tenth best or twentieth best or something like that, but they missed the best. So there's a warning here, which also for parents.

Those who are parents with children of marriageable age realize what a burden it is to get children married. But there also we find parents becoming compromisers, that if they can't find someone who really wants to go this way, they are willing to modify their standards and look for someone who is just willing to

get married. And justifying it by all types of arguments, saying, yes, but there are good qualities there.

I'm sure there were good qualities in some of the Canaanite girls too. Sure, if you looked around, you could have seen some with some good qualities. And also, Abraham could have said, well, maybe Isaac can stay in Ur of the Chaldees for a little while and then convince his wife, and then bring her also out to Canaan.

But no, Abraham was clear cut. What an example of a father. Surely he wanted his son to be married.

He was getting old, it says here. He was old and he wanted his son to be married, and yet he said, if it's the girl who's not willing to leave everything and come here where God has called us to live in tents in God's place, and not there in wonderful houses outside of God's will, he says, even if I'm old, even if I die without seeing Isaac married, that's perfectly alright. But I don't want him to go.

There also we find very few fathers and mothers are so wholehearted when it comes to the marriage of their children. It's a tremendous example. What did Abraham seek? Was he seeking for a girl who was rich? Was he looking, did he say, see if the girl is beautiful? See if the girl is educated? See if the girl has got some money? None of these things.

Only one thing. It must be from my relatives, which in our terms today means those who are born again. That's one condition.

And the second condition is she must be willing to forsake all and come out here where God has called my son. And those are the two conditions we are to look for in marriage today. One, must be born again.

That's number one thing. There are good girls, even among unbelievers. Some Canaanites are very good, well behaved.

But they are not born again. And the second condition is that the girl must be willing to forsake all and follow the Lord and be where her husband is in following the Lord. And blessed is the young man who is firm in this to the point where he says, I would rather be single than get married to someone who is half-hearted.

And the father and mother who say, I would rather my child be single, I would rather I die and see my child unmarried than see him or her married off to someone who is not really wanting to go all the way. Around us we have the sad spectacle of people who are not bothered about these things. They say, I have come to an age now, I am twenty-eight, I am twenty-seven, I have to get married to somebody or the other.

If I don't find someone who is willing to go this way, then at least half-way. If they are not willing to come all the way to Canaan's land, we can settle down half-way somewhere. And usually after a little while they are dragged all the way back to Mesopotamia again.

So we have seen, we have seen that again and again and again. I believe that there are more young people who have missed the ministry God has for their lives through a wrong marriage than perhaps through any other single mistake they have ever made in their whole life. Because they look for earthly qualifications.

Somebody looked at a pretty face and said, yes, she must be spiritual. Somebody else looked and said, she must be a graduate, must be educated. Yeah, there are people who have looked for these things.

And go and look at those marriages today, there are problems. There are problems. The pretty face is not all pretty inside.

And the graduate has got it all in the head but not much in the heart. And there are problems. And so we need to come back to the standards of God's word.

And then we read in verse 10. Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master and set out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hands and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. And he made the camel heel down outside the city by the well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water.

And he said, O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show loving kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. And now may it be that the girl to whom I say, please let down your jars so that I may drink.

And who answers, drink and I will water your camels also. May she be the one whom thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac and by this I shall know that thou hast shown loving kindness to my master. And there we can also see something further.

That in seeking for a partner for Isaac, having arrived in his hometown, he knew that Abraham had said, you have got to get one of my relatives. And of course, he could have gone there and found out where Abraham's relatives were and gone to their house, but he doesn't do that. He says, Abraham's relatives may have many girls in their midst.

Which one will be the one for Isaac? You see, applying it to today, we can say there are many believers. There are many believing sisters. But which is the one whom God has chosen? That was this servant's concern.

Which is the one whom God has chosen? And so he prayed. And because he prayed in sincerity, he got an answer. He asked for a very clear sign.

And he asked for a difficult one. See, sometimes when someone's pretty keen on marrying someone, they may ask God for a sign, but we've got to count on our flesh there. But we can ask for a sign which can very easily be fulfilled.

Because we want to get married to someone. We've got to be careful there when we ask for signs. If you want to ask God for a sign, ask for a really difficult one.

And then you'll know whether it's God or not. He asked for a difficult one. Just think of that.

He stood by the well of water, verse 11, at evening time. He didn't go to the little social club in one of the galleys to see the sophisticated girls who would come there to see if one of them would be suitable for Isaac. The type of girl who goes to the social club is quite different from the type of girl who comes to draw water at the well.

Quite different. The social club types don't really know how to work with their hands. They are most of the time sitting in front of the mirror and decorating their faces.

But Abraham's servant was not looking for one like that. He was looking for someone who knew how to work with her hands. And so he says, if there's a girl I must get for Isaac, it must be the type of girl who knows how to draw water from a well.

And not just draw water from a well, but when I say to her, please give me a drink, that she is so courteous, that she answers, drink, and I will water your camels also. That's when I said the sign was a hard one. You know a camel is called a ship of the desert, which means it's got a fantastic capacity to store water.

And to draw water for one camel would have been quite a job. And it says here in verse 10 that he had 10 camels. That's really a hard sign.

Who in the world is going to volunteer to give water for 10 camels? In addition to all the water she's come to collect for her home, that she says, sure, I'll not only give you some water, I'll give enough water for all your camels. That was a really hard sign. That was not an easy one.

But you see the wisdom of that servant, that he asked God for a sign, and yet there was more than a sign in it. He was saying, Lord, lead me to a hard-working girl. A girl who's got blisters in her fingers.

Not these soft, delicate types, who know how to pull the rope, and whose hands are rough. You see, in the book of Proverbs we have spoken about that, that the woman mentioned there is one who's got rough hands and a soft tongue. And the delicate girls usually have a rough tongue and soft hands.

And we should never be so stupid to inverse this, invert this. It must be rough hands and a soft tongue, and not the other way around. And that's what he was looking for.

He was looking for in Rebecca a soft tongue, sure, drink, and I will give water to your camels also, and rough hands, that are willing to draw water for ten camels. May she be the one whom thou hast appointed. Notice that phrase, the one whom thou hast appointed.

Not one of the two, out of which I can select. Notice that phrase, the one, the one, whom thou hast appointed. In the whole Bible, there are only two marriages, arranged by God.

Only two, in the whole Bible, that we know definitely, were arranged by God. The first, was the marriage of Adam and Eve, and the second, was the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca. There are other marriages in the Bible, but we don't know whether God arranged them or not.

But in these two, we have clear indication that God arranged them. In Adam's case, we know clearly that it was God who brought Eve to Adam. And here also, as we read this chapter, we see that it was God who brought Rebecca to Isaac, in a supernatural way.

In Genesis 2, it was without any human agency, God supernaturally brought Eve to Adam. In Genesis 24, it was through human agency, through a father, and the father's servant, teaching us that even today, God can lead us in one of two ways. Either directly, without human agency, directly to the person whom He has chosen for us, or through human agency, like in Genesis 24.

God is the same. And He still arranges marriages, either with or without human agency. But in both cases, in Genesis 2 and Genesis 24, we know this one thing.

And that is, that He did not select two or five, and give the man a choice, which one do you like. God didn't make five women for Adam and say, now which one do you like? And Abraham's servant didn't bring along five girls from Mesopotamia, and asked Isaac, well, I brought five, you can choose one. In both cases, you find one significant thing, there was one.

And I wish, all young men and women would believe this. Some don't believe it. There are believers that don't believe it.

That there is the one, like it says here, the one whom thou hast appointed. But those who have faith for that, they receive according to their faith. And it's a very blessed thing in marriage, to seek for, to use the phrase here in verse 14, the one whom God has appointed.

The one whom God has appointed. And he prayed, and he sought God, he didn't consult others. He knew that he couldn't go merely by recommendation.

There are people who say, how can we know what the girl is like? How can we know what the boy is like? I tell you, it's impossible, if you don't know God. In western society, they date one another, to find out what each other is like. That's a deception.

Because when a boy and a girl meet together, they are always on their best behavior. No, it's not that way. What about recommendation? That depends on whom you ask.

Somebody may have a personal interest. Most people in the world are partial. It is very rare to find a human being in the world, who has so cleansed himself from partiality, that he is totally impartial.

Even among those who are in the new and living way. Tremendous amount of partiality. So what shall we do? Even we go to a good brother, but he is not free from partiality.

He's got a sympathy towards certain people, and antipathy towards certain others. And it's rare to find a really godly person, who is completely neutral, completely free from all partiality, who's got no favorites, and who's not this way or that way. So you see, it's very difficult, of course, if you can find a brother like that.

You could rely on that person's words. But they are very rare, very rare. One in a million sometimes.

But, we can trust God. Where you can't find a brother like that, who will give you an honest, impartial opinion. We can trust God.

That God will lead. Whom did Abraham's servant consult in Mesopotamia? His case was more hopeless than any of our cases. Think, he was going to a strange country, and he had to pick out Z1.

It's really an impossible situation. But God did it. Adam's was more impossible.

There wasn't any girl in the whole world existing. And God created one for him. All these things are to indicate that the two cases mentioned in the Bible, of God ordained marriages, were, humanly speaking, more hopeless than any of ours.

And yet God did it. And that's for the encouragement of those who feel that my case is so hopeless, how can God lead me? It depends on your faith, brother and sister. It depends on faith.

If you can trust God, nothing is impossible. God can lead you to the one whom he has appointed. And there is one whom he has appointed, somewhere on the face of the earth.

And if he sees that it is your longing, and he will test you, by bringing a Canaanite across your way first. Or by allowing you to see some girl who doesn't want to leave Mesopotamia, or wants to come half way to Canaan. And when he sees that you are really not interested, that you take that position that Abraham took, I would rather be single, I would rather let my son be single, than marry someone who is half-hearted.

Then God will lead you to the right person. So it is important that we pass the earlier test, and seek God's best in this. And then we read, it came about before he had finished speaking.

There is a very wonderful promise in Isaiah, verse 65, it says, Before they pray, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. Before they call, I will answer. Because your Heavenly Father, knows that you have a need of these things, we read, Isaiah 65, verse 24, Isaiah 65, verse 24, It will also come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are still speaking, I will hear.

Before they call, I will answer. In other words, before we begin to pray, God has already prepared the answer. I mean, you have got to believe that.

If a young 27-year-old man says, Lord, please lead me to the person whom you have appointed, the chances are God must have worked on the answer to that at least 20 years earlier. It is not that he suddenly decides to let some girl be born somewhere. He has already got the girl born many, many years before the person prayed.

So it says here in Genesis 24, verse 15, Before you finish speaking, Behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Melchizedek, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with a jar on her shoulder. It's amazing, the sovereign leading of God. I want you to just think of this, the beauty of it.

This man had travelled for 450 miles, all the way from Canaan to Mesopotamia, and he had probably taken 30 days. And think of the timing, that God got it all worked out so wonderfully, that the moment this chap lands up at the well, after this 30 day long journey, and prays this prayer, the next girl who comes there is Rebekah. You can't arrange it better than that.

It's amazing what God can do. He's got it all worked out, when Rebekah should start from her home, and timing it so that by the time this person comes to the well and prays about it, she'll be near the well. And she's there.

It's amazing what God does in this area, if you can have faith. This whole chapter is a beautiful picture of the sovereignty of God, in bringing two people together, at the right time, that that person starts out on this long 30 day journey, at the right time, and this girl starts out on her 15 minute journey from her home, at the right time. And they meet, bang on time, at the well.

Think of that. It's wonderful. You can't do it better than God.

And blessed are those who can commit their cause to God, and let Him work it out all, work it all out for them. And then we read in verse 16, and the girl was very beautiful, virgin, no man in relation to her. She went down to the spring, and filled her jar, and came up.

Now, it must have been obvious to Rebekah, that this man standing here is a stranger. She must have been coming to the well every day, and she'd never seen this man before. And you know what curiosity is like, to gaze at who is this strange fellow here.

And you see, there's nothing of that in her. There is a modesty, and a reserve in her. She's got nothing to do with him.

She just goes up to fill her jar, and she goes home. In the appropriate way for a girl, no need to talk unnecessarily to the man standing at the well, the strange man, and to talk to him, and say, where are you from, and to strike up a conversation. There are things we can learn from there, sisters.

The modesty and reserve that is becoming of a girl. It's alright for men to talk like that, but there are ways in which a man can talk in which a girl should never talk. And that's what we see in Rebekah.

A modesty and a reserve in not talking to men unnecessarily. Have you got that, sisters? A modesty and a reserve in not talking to men unnecessarily. And then, as she was going off, a servant ran to meet her, and said, please, let me drink a little water from you.

And she said, drink, my lord. And you see something of the respect with which she speaks to a man. Drink, my lord.

And she quickly lowered her jar to her hand, and gave him a drink. A ready hospitality. And when she had finished giving him a drink, she saw the camel, and she said exactly what that man had asked for as a sign.

I will draw also for your camel until they have finished. And I want you to notice here in verse 20, two words, two phrases, she quickly emptied her jar, and ran back to the well to draw. Notice the use of the words quickly, ran back, here was no lazy girl, one who was quick to do her job, quick to run back to fill the bucket again with water.

And she drew for all his camels. No doubt she found it tough, but she didn't go back on her promise. She promised to feed all the camels, to fill up the trough for all the camels to drink, and she did it.

And that's the type of girl that God chose for Isaac, one who was hardworking, one who was quick, and who would run, and who would keep her word, and complete the job, even if it was tough. And the man was gazing at her in silence, verse 21. He could have been taken up with her beauty, as it says in verse 16, she was very beautiful, and could have said, oh boy, this is the one.

No, he waited to see if she would finish. To see if the sign he had asked for would be complete. Whether she would keep her word.

No impatience. No being taken up with her good looks. Is the sign which I asked for going to be fulfilled or not? And then when he saw it was, he rejoiced.

When the camels had finished drinking, he waited till the camels finished drinking. There was a patience to trust God. That if this is the one, God will make it clear.

No half-fulfilled sign. A completely fulfilled sign. The camels had finished drinking, then the man took a gold ring, weighing a half shekel and two bracelets for her wrist, weighing ten shekels in gold, and said, whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room for us to lodge in your father's house? And she

said, I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahar.

Out of all the girls there were in Mesopotamia, God leads Abraham's servant to be one. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards him. He knows how to lead us to the right person.

And she said, we have plenty of both strong feet and room to lodge in. A ready hospitality again. And then notice what the man does.

We often forget to do. He had asked, and when he got the answer, he immediately thinks first, not of the answer, not of the girl, but of the Lord, who answered his prayer. He bowed low and worshipped the Lord.

He said, Lord, thank you. Here is a good example for us to follow. That when we ask, and we get an answer, that we are to be taken up not with the answer, or the person, whom God has chosen a wonderful partner, but the Lord himself.

Verse 27, The God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his lovingkindness, and his truth toward my master as for me, the Lord has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brother. Then the girl ran and told her mother's household about these things. And Rebecca had a brother whose name was Laban.

And Laban ran outside to the man of the spring and came back when he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists. And when he heard the words of Rebecca's sister saying, this is what the man said to me, he went to the man. And behold, the man was standing by the camels of the spring, and he said, Come in, blessed of the Lord.

Why do you stand outside, since I have prepared the house and a place for the camels? So the man entered the house, and Laban unloaded the camels, and he gave straw and feed to the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the feet of the men who were with him. But when food was set before him to eat, he said, I will not eat until I have told my business. You see, there we see that Abraham's servant had a sense of responsibility.

No doubt he was hungry after a long journey, but he had such a sense of responsibility to Abraham, that he said, I've got to forget about my hunger now. I've come here on a task. And let's forget about food now.

I have to, first of all, explain what I have come for. I said in the beginning that this is a picture of, Abraham is a picture, a type of God the Father. His servant is a type of the Holy Spirit, and because he is a type of the Holy Spirit, he is also a type of a spirit-filled servant of the Lord.

That's what you and I can be. Every one of us can be a servant of the Lord, spirit-filled servant of the Lord, and so Abraham's servant is a picture of the Holy Spirit, and of the Holy Spirit's co-workers. And Rebecca is a picture of the bride of Christ, and Isaac is a picture of Christ.

This is God the Father sending the Holy Spirit into the world, saying, go and find a bride for my son. And going all over the world looking for those who are willing to give up everything, and forsake all and come. Those who are diligent and hard-working and zealous, who are simple, who are found in the well and not the social club.

And it's also a picture of a spirit-filled servant of God, who is seeking, not just for believers, not just to save people from hell, no, but seeking for those who will be part of the bride. That is what the Holy Spirit's looking for. And that's what a spirit-filled servant of God is looking for, wherever he goes.

To look for those who have a calling to be in the bride of Christ. And that's why we need prayer. Lord, lead me to those who have a ear to hear the gospel that calls people to be the bride of Christ.

That's what we can learn from Abraham's servant. Lead me to that one person. There may be 101 good people here, but lead me to that one person whom you have a calling for to be in the bride of Jesus Christ.

And when he found such a person, he forgets all about his food, just like Jesus. It says in John 4 and verse 32, when he was in Samaria, speaking to the woman, even though he was so hungry, he told his disciples, I have food to eat, which you don't know anything about. I have found a woman who wants to turn to God.

And that is my food. And that was Abraham's attitude, Abraham's servant's attitude. He forgot about food.

He says, I've come here on business. Food is not so important to me. But to find this one who will be in the bride, that is more important to me.

We can learn a lesson there, brothers and sisters. My own material necessities are not the main thing. If I can find someone who will be in the bride, the Holy Spirit is looking.

Abraham's servant didn't come to Mesopotamia to make money. He didn't come there just to go sightseeing. No doubt there are wonderful sights there.

The old tower of Babel was somewhere around there. You could have gone to see that. No time for all that.

He's come to look for the bride. And that's what the Holy Spirit is looking for and that's what every spiritual servant of God is always looking for. He's not looking here how to make more money.

He's not interested in sightseeing. He's interested in finding people who will be in the bride of Christ. And think of Abraham's servant standing there and the only thing in his mind is who will be the bride.

The more we are filled with the Spirit, the more our thinking will be like that. Not how can I make more money, but whom can I contact. Is there someone who will be in the bride? Someone here, someone there.

And God has got amazing ways to bring us in touch. I mean we've experienced a little bit of that in the last few years here in India and Bangalore. How God has brought us in touch with different ones in a wonderful supernatural way.

It's the same God who is even today calling out His bride. But He can lead them only to those who are looking for them. Not those who are looking for other things.

Be one like that brother and sister. Have a mind like that as you go around wherever you live and whomever you contact. That you can have that mind of Abraham's servant.

Is this person ever calling for the bride? Let me see. That is my calling in life. God placed me here like Abraham's servant to find a bride.

To find the rest of the bride of Jesus Christ. Let me look for them. Let me be alert and not go to sleep.

Let me not be taken up with eating. Food. Forget about food He said.

My business. I will not eat until I've sold my business. Like Jesus said, didn't you know I must be about my father's business.

That was more important to Him. And then He said, I'm Abraham's servant. The Lord greatly blessed my master.

And he's got a son now. And my master said, you're not to take a wife from the Canaanites. Verse 37.

He tells the whole story. And he said, I told my master, supposing a woman doesn't want to follow me. Verse 39.

Then he said to me, that the Lord before whom I walked will send His angel with you. That was Abraham's faith there. The Lord will send His angel and you will take up your journey will be successful.

He had faith. God will make it successful. But, if the woman, if they do not give her to you.

Verse 41. Then you are free from my oath. In other words, Rebecca had to be told very clearly the price that she has to pay.

You have to leave all this. You have to leave your father's house, mother's house. Forget your relatives now.

And go to be where your bridegroom is, where God is calling him. He didn't try to hide that. He said, that's the price you have to pay if you want to come along with me.

Otherwise, forget it. I believe that's how we should preach the gospel today as well. That there's a price to follow Jesus, to be in His bride.

You really got to forsake everything. And we must not be afraid or ashamed to present that clearly. When we preach the gospel, and equally a man who is considering marriage should not be afraid of presenting the picture clearly.

That this is the way God's called me to go. It's a hard way for people to misunderstand. Do you want to follow? If you want, all right.

If you don't want, then obviously you're not the one God has chosen for me. Finish. Think of the dignity that a man has.

As I said, it's rare to find such young men, but I trust there will be more and more in our midst like that. Who will take that position, who have the dignity to believe that if they stand up for God, God will give them the best. The one who needs to find it.

And so he describes the story how he came to the spring, and how he asked for a sign, and how Rebecca came along at that time, describes the whole event, and how he discovered that that was Abraham's

brother's granddaughter, and how he worshipped the Lord for, look at that verse 48, I bowed low and worshipped the Lord and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had guided me in the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. The Lord who guided me in the right way. Beautiful phrase in relation to finding a marriage partner.

The Lord who guided me in the right way because he did not ask God for a pretty girl, he did not ask God for a rich girl, he did not ask God for an educated one. The only condition he had was that she must be hardworking. Born again, one is willing to go where the husband is, and hardworking, a soft tongue and hard hands.

If we follow that example, we can't go astray. And if we see God in prayer, on top of it all, God will lead, even today, young people to the right person. Then he says, now you've got to decide, he says, if you're going to deal with me kindly and truly, tell me, and if not, let me know that I may turn to the right hand or the left.

No compulsion, no trying to force them. He says, here is the price you have to pay, tell me yes or no. And Laban and Bethuel answered and said, the matter comes from the Lord, so we cannot speak to you bad or good.

It's very wonderful when we can go into marriage and say, the matter comes from the Lord. They could say that. Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go.

Let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken. And it came about when Abraham's servants heard their words, that he bowed himself to the ground before the Lord. He doesn't thank them.

No, he doesn't thank them. He first thanks the Lord. He says, thank you, Lord, for answering my prayer.

And notice how the attitude that Abraham's servant has to pray, to seek God's will, and as soon as he gets an answer to bow down immediately and worship the Lord, to unashamedly bow down there and say, thank you, Father, thank you, Lord. And I believe that must have been the result of Abraham's influence. It's a wonderful thing when servants have seen something in our lives that has influenced them.

Well, Abraham's servant didn't get all these ideas himself. He must have been watching his master, just like our children and our servants watch us, and think if we can influence them like this, that they see something in our lives, certain habits in our lives, of trusting God, of believing that God can do the impossible, and when God does it, to thank him wholeheartedly. That was the result of Abraham's influence, he had such an influence on his servant that it became his way of life, too.

A tremendous example. Abraham was a forerunner for his servant. And the servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold and garments and gave them to Rebecca.

He also gave precious things to her brother and mother. Then he and the men were with him, ate and drank, and spent the night. After everything was settled, then only would they think of eating.

And when they arose in the morning, he said, send me away to my master. But her brother and mother said, let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten, afterwards she may go. And he said to them, no, do not delay me.

I thought of that. Why couldn't he wait for ten days? After all, they were never going to see her again. Sounds a bit unreasonable, not to let her stay for ten days.

More, but he says, no. Send me away immediately. I've done my job and I've got to take her.

She's lived with you all these years. What are ten more days going to do now? Let's go. If you have decided, you don't have to wait ten days.

If your longing is for your bridegroom, you can quit your father's and mother's house immediately. Not after ten days. And he said to them, don't delay me.

Since the Lord's prospered mine, they said, we'll call the girl and consult her wishes. There again, she has to choose. Just like today, each individual has to choose.

Do I want to pay the price to be the bride of Christ? And they called Rebecca and said to her, will you go with this man? She said, I will go. She also, no doubt, had some witness given by God. And thus they sent away their sister.

Rebecca and her nurse, with Abraham's servant and his men, and they blessed Rebecca and said to her, may you, our sister, become thousands of ten thousands and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them. Then Rebecca arose with her maids and they mounted the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebecca and departed.

He was a pretty wholehearted man to travel for thirty days and not even to take a rest and start immediately on a thirty day journey back. What a zealous servant. Zealous to bring the bride to the bridegroom.

And that's a tremendous challenge for us, for that is our calling also. As I said, to look around for those who have the calling to be in the bride of Christ and to be zealous to bring them without delay to the bridegroom. And it's just in that one verse that we have a description of the 450 mile journey back to Canaan.

The thirty day journey through wilderness, desert. It's a beautiful picture of the journey of the bride of Christ today. The long journey to the bridegroom.

And all that way, Abraham's servant guards Rebecca as a precious treasure. If they were sleeping in some dangerous place, I think Abraham's servant would have stayed up the whole night because he had a precious treasure to guard, to care for. And it's very wonderful when we think of how the Holy Spirit seeks to preserve us as a pure bride for Christ in this long journey, this long wilderness journey with many trials, many temptations, many handsome young men coming along, looking at Rebecca, perhaps wanting to marry her.

And there is Abraham's servant like Paul says, I have betrothed you to one person. There is a godly jealousy in me, he says in 2 Corinthians 11. And I will not allow your affection to be taken away from Christ to whom I betrothed you to all these other things that attract you in the world and in the flesh.

Paul was like Abraham's servant, a zealous, spiritual servant of God. So we can learn two lessons there. One, how the Holy Spirit preserves us as individual believers on this long journey till we meet our bridegroom.

And the other is how we are to be shepherds to those who are younger to us, to preserve them in a godly jealousy in the church to be protected from the influences of the world that would corrupt them, preserve them. And I can imagine how he would have been talking to Rebecca only on one subject all those 30 days. You know what that would have been? It would not have been doctrine.

The subject of their conversation would have been Isaac. And that's what the Holy Spirit seeks to do for us too in this long journey. Jesus said, when the Holy Spirit has come he will take of the things which are mine and show them to you.

The Holy Spirit seeks to tell us more about Jesus in this long journey till we see the bridegroom face to face. Are you hearing him? Are you hearing the Holy Spirit showing you the beauty of Jesus? It's a sad thing when I see believers taken off with doctrines and arguments about this and arguments about that and I say I have no time for all these things. There are doctrines we believe in and we stand for but I praise the Lord for the glory of Jesus that the Holy Spirit has shown me again and again and again and again from the Word through all these nearly 28 years that I've been a Christian.

More and more about Jesus. Tell me more about Jesus. That's what I want to know.

I want to see the glory of Jesus more and more and more and more. And that's what Rebecca heard from Abraham's servant. More about Isaac.

So that she knew quite a lot about him by the time she finally met him. Yup. And that's our calling too if we are to be like Abraham's servant to tell others about Jesus.

How wonderful Jesus is. The preciousness of Jesus Christ. We can't do it if he had lost our first love.

We can't do it if we don't have that simplicity of devotion to Christ. Then finally it says Isaac had come from had come from going to Deir el-Hairi where he was living in the Negev in the desert. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening.

It's a beautiful picture of this man who's at rest. He's not all he's not running around in circles. He's just going quietly to meditate in the field.

Sixty days have gone by. He's at rest. Well Lord I commit the matter to you.

Like Adam at rest. And he lifted up his eyes and looked while he was meditating praying before he called the answer coming. And the camels were coming.

Wonderful answer to prayer. God had not forgotten him. He had waited waited and at the right time God brought There again we see the result of Abraham's influence upon Isaac that he went out to meditate in the field.

Blessed are we if we can bring up our children like that that they go out to meditate in the field and pray to God. And Rebecca lifted up her eyes and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from the camel immediately. She didn't know who it was but she saw a man and she saw knew that it's not proper for a woman to sit high up on a camel with a man around.

Her modesty her respect and she said to the servant who is that man walking in the field to meet us? Doesn't know who it is? That's my master. And immediately she took a veil and covered herself her modesty. Not one of these modern types who run up and say hi.

She wasn't a door. She was a wall. She covered herself.

Lessons to learn. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent.

I want you to see something very beautiful here. We talk about falling in love and then getting married. It was the other way around here.

Isaac got married and then loved his wife. It says he took Rebecca first she became his wife and then he loved her. Thus Isaac was comforted even after his mother's death that love follows the marriage.

How did he find the girl? Not because he fell in love with her but because it was God's choice. You see this is where the world's gone astray. The world says I've fallen madly in love with this girl I can't think of anybody else.

Yeah she's spiritual she's wholehearted but you're madly in love with her that proves that you're wrong. That proves you're not a disciple. We've got to be madly in love with Jesus Christ that we want so much wonderful will that we will not set aside that will for any human being.

Those are the type of people whom God can pick up and fulfill a ministry to build up the church in the days to come and I want to exhort every young brother and sister to rise up to that challenge. Don't get into the stupid worldly habit of falling in love with someone but say Lord I want to be guided by your choice. You've called me on this earth for a task for a ministry not to just drift along like a believer and just alright I get victory a little bit victory over my anger and my lust and work out my salvation there's more than that there's a task to build a church but you've got to be tested you've got to be proved be wholehearted God He many young men and women will put him first will put his choice and then when God has chosen made it clear He loves us wholeheartedly a good example for us to follow

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