

A Bride for Isaac

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Let's turn again to the chapter we read, Genesis chapter 24.

I know there's a long section to read, but it was important to read, and it is a marvellous story. But if we're to home in on one verse, we'll look at verse 58.

And they called Rebekah and said to her, will you go with this man? She said, I will go. As we said, a couple of weeks ago, we looked at the beginning, first 12 verses of this chapter, and we saw how this servant had been entrusted with really a very delicate and in some ways quite a difficult mission to go back to Mesopotamia and to find a wife for Isaac.

And the wonderful thing, what we already noticed, was that every step this servant took was clothed in prayer. And it tells us elsewhere in Genesis of how Abraham instructed his family, and that was not just his own immediate family, but all those.

That would include all the servants, the male servants and the female servants who were part of that household. He would have instructed them in the way of the Lord. So here was a man who was obviously full of faith, and he brought every step to the Lord in prayer.

[1 : 34] And he sets out a great example for us. Now again, we saw the custom of the day, looked at this before, was that marriages in the Middle East, they were arranged marriages.

And while we don't do that, we also highlighted that at one level, every marriage, if there is, if a person is to marry, not everybody marries, we looked at that.

But if a person is marrying, then it should be an arranged marriage. And when we said that, it was arranged by God. Because the Lord makes it very clear, it says, a prudent wife is from the Lord.

And there is sufficient within Scripture to show that this is an area that God rules and overrules. And it is something that we should bring to the Lord.

And leave these things with the Lord. But of course, Abraham was convinced that his son Isaac was to marry. Of course, not every son is going to marry.

[2 : 34] But Abraham knew that Isaac was going to marry because Abraham had been given great promises with regard to the land and with regard to his descendants. And the only way that there could be a future, because God had said that not only would he, that this land would be his land, but it would be the land of his children, his grandchildren, and all the descendants down.

And that through him and through his children, all the nations of the world would be blessed, which of course was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. So Abraham knew that Isaac was to be married.

And so he sends a servant, as we said, back to Mesopotamia to find a wife. And he told him that the Lord will send his angel and the Lord will guide you.

And so the servant set out, and we finished last time by seeing the wisdom of the servant, that at the well he both prayed and he waited and watched.

And it's something we must learn to do, and particularly in this rushed age that we live in, is learn to pray, to wait, and to watch. Very hard, because we're in a world that demands instant results.

[3 : 52] But God doesn't work that way. That is not his way, though we see on this occasion that he actually does. But he doesn't always. And it is often through the delay that God works and teaches us and breaks us and molds us and reshapes us.

So there's so much of the learning goes through that. Anyway, we find here that the servant prays.

And he sets out before the Lord what it is he wants. Now, we can't tie God down to how he's going to work. Sometimes he won't answer our prayers at all in the way that we pray.

Sometimes he will, but he makes us wait a long time. Sometimes he answers immediately. Sometimes he answers before we finish praying. In fact, it tells us, before they call, I shall answer.

And while I was yet speaking, he will hear. And that's exactly what happened here. Because the servant, even as he was praying, that the Lord answered his prayer.

[5 : 04] That's what we find in this particular chapter. And again, we've got to remember, when we look at this, we're not to, I don't believe we're to follow exactly the example of the servant at one level.

And all the other aspects of what he does, I think we should. But there's one thing that I think today we would have to be very cautious in. And that is telling God how he is to work things.

It was kind of similar to what Gideon did with the fleece. But what we've got to remember is that in those days, they did not have the Bible, that complete word of God as we have.

We have the word of God, which is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. Of course, back then, they didn't have a complete Bible. So we have to understand how the servant, why he did what he did.

And there was wisdom to what he was doing. But the one thing the servant had, and the Lord honored that, he had so much faith. He believed implicitly that God was going to lead him.

[6 : 16] And so he prays in a particular way. God answered the prayer to the very letter. Now, as we said, the servant was looking for a wife for Isaac.

And you can see the wisdom of the servant's prayer. Because he was looking for somebody who was going to be kind and thoughtful. Somebody who was caring.

Somebody who was obviously hardworking. He was looking for qualities. And before he had finished praying, Rebecca appeared.

And we're told that she was very beautiful. That's what it tells us. And it tells, I can't quite find the verse there.

Verse 16, the young woman was very attractive in appearance. And of course, that was great. But what we do know is that beauty can sometimes be only skin deep.

[7 : 18] And the beauty of a person's character, the beauty of the person, is far more important than just the beauty of their outward appearance.

But for Rebecca, obviously, there was beauty with regard to how she was, how she looked. She was a very beautiful woman to look at. But she was also, as it's obvious, a very beautiful person from within as well.

And Proverbs tells us that very thing. It says, charm is deceitful and beauty is vain. But a woman who fears the Lord, she is to be praised.

Now, we might not think that it was a great deal, big deal for the servant prayed. When he asked the Lord, he said to the Lord, I want to say to the woman, can I have a drink?

And she will say, yes, and I will also water your camels as well. We might not think that's a big deal. And when I was wee, I didn't think it was a big deal because I thought all she would do would be to take the camels to where there was water and they would drink.

[8 : 25] But what we've got to remember is that it was a well. And she had a jar or a pot, which was probably around a bit, I would imagine, a five-gallon pot. And camels, after a long trek, are so thirsty that they'll drink around about 40 gallons.

There are 10 camels. So we're talking there of 400 gallons in a five-gallon jar, which is 80 trips of lowering down, bringing up the water, and putting it in a trough for the camels to drink.

So that is no mean feat. In fact, it's really quite extraordinary what she does. And all the time while she's doing this, the servant is watching.

And little did she know, Rebecca had no idea that this extraordinary kindness that she is performing for the servant and actually for the camels as well, was being observed so carefully.

She didn't know that. She didn't realize that by what she was doing, that she was part of God's great plan, and that she was going to become an integral part of the salvation of this world.

[9 : 46] Because one of her sons, Jacob, who was renamed Israel, of course was the father of the Israelites, and so Rebecca is really the grandmother of the Israelites.

Although Abraham and Sarah are the foundation, or the founders by God and God's purpose of the Israelites or the Jewish race.

And so all the time the servant is watching and taking note. And you know, you and I have no idea the impact we may have for good or for ill in a watching world.

Because the world is assessing all the time. The servant was standing back and he was watching, watching what would happen.

And before him he was seeing something wonderful taking place. And so we have to, we've got to be careful as we live out our lives. And of course when she had finished doing what she did, the servant gave her a gold ring and two gold bracelets and he asked about accommodation.

[10 : 59] And one of the lovely things is, as this story is unfolding step by step, every so often the servant stops. It's one of the features, I don't know if you took note of it as we read through it.

He was always stopping to thank God, or to praise God, or to acknowledge God. And that's what he did again at this particular point. He stops to worship God.

There's a sense of thrill and amazement in his heart. A sense of hum, of humility. As he's seeing God at work, step by step, leading him along the way.

We've got to ask ourselves, do we do that? Are we stopping as we go along and saying, Lord, thank you for what you've done. Even although sometimes the Lord might be not doing it exactly the way that you wanted it or expected.

You're still able to see that God is at work. Well, that's what this man was doing. He kept stopping to thank God. Do we thank God for the answers to our prayers? Well, we should.

[12 : 01] Anyway, Rebecca raced home to tell about the wealthy stranger and her brother Laban. Now, it's very, it's interesting that it's one of the wee things that it highlights. When Laban saw the jewelry that was given, there was straight away, he took note of that.

And we discover as we go through, if we carried on and went into the life of Isaac and of Jacob, that Laban features from time to time. And he doesn't always come out in the best light.

He comes out as a very greedy, manipulative man. So straight away when he saw the jewelry, there was something saying, oh, I'm in on this. So there was an added interest in Laban for possibly the wrong reasons at one level when he saw the jewelry.

But anyway, Laban goes down to meet the servant. But when the servant comes back, before he is going to eat, he said, I have to tell my story.

I have to tell you why I'm here. And so he tells, he gives this glowing testimony regarding his master. And all who, he tells in the most glowing terms what God has done for his master.

[13 : 16] And he is here now, he tells, to find a bride for his master's son. And he wants to take Rebecca back to become the wife of his master's son.

And as he shares this story, he tells of all the riches and all the honor that Abraham has. And that all the riches and honor will be bestowed upon Isaac.

And if Rebecca goes back, she will share in all the riches and all the honor that is Isaac's.

And you know, when we look at this, this is a spiritual picture of what we do as well. Because as Christians, part of our duty is to tell people and to share with other people the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We can't drag people into the kingdom. We don't bribe people into the kingdom. We don't push people into the kingdom. God's work is to take people from darkness into light.

[14 : 21] It's God's work to take people into the kingdom. But like the servant telling about his master and the master's son, So we tell people about God the Father and the Father's son, Jesus Christ.

That is our job. And we are to tell of his beauty, his wealth, his spiritual riches, of all the glory that is his. And we are to invite people.

We are to plead with people that they will go to the king. That they will go in order that they will become the bride of the bridegroom. That Jesus Christ is the bridegroom.

And we must always be seeking, like the servant, a bride for the bridegroom. And that is our duty. Because every person who comes to faith in Jesus Christ becomes part of the bride of Christ, who is the bridegroom.

And so we don't talk about ourselves. We talk about Jesus Christ and what he has done for us. And now, as the servant told the story, as we said, you notice how the Lord features in everything.

[15 : 40] And Laban and Bethuel and the family, Rebecca's family, they had to agree. And they said, well, you know, this, the Lord's hand is in all this. They couldn't go against it.

And they said, the thing is from the Lord. And it's a very important thing when we see God's hand in something. And as we go through our lives, we must submit to the rule of God in all things.

We submit to his rule in his word. We submit to his rule as we see it unfolding before us in providence. And then we find the servant.

And he took out loads of gifts and presents of silver and gold and clothing and ornaments and so on. And he gives them. And then he says, now that this is all sorted, I want to be on my way.

And it's at this point you'll notice the stalling tactics. And you can understand it from Rebecca's family's point of view. They said, oh, okay, we'll let her go.

[16 : 45] But can you not wait 10 days? Now the servant knew, if I stop and if I wait 10 days, the 10 days might turn into 20 days.

And the 20 days might turn into 60 days. And I might end up Rebecca and the family will change their mind. We have to go now.

That's what the servant is saying. And again, when we spiritualize this, this is what so often happens when people hear about the bridegroom, when they hear about Jesus Christ.

It might happen in church. When through the reading or the singing or the preaching. And people's hearts are stirred. And they say, you know, oh, I need to close in with Christ.

I want to become a Christian. I really need to. I'm going to, in fact, as I sit here right now, I'm going to ask the Lord, Lord, will you come into my heart? Will you become my Savior?

[17 : 45] And there is becoming a desire and an urgency within the heart. And all of a sudden, there's this voice goes off. Hi. Hold on. Yeah. What you're saying is right, but not quite yet.

Leave it. That's a good decision. Yes, you need to become a Christian. You need to have Jesus come into your heart. But hold on. Hold on. Just give it a little. You need a bit of breathing space.

You need to think through this first and foremost. Come to that decision later. Leave it. The spoiling tactics of the devil. The spoiling tactics of the world.

The spoiling tactics of the flesh. Hold on. Well, that's exactly what was happening here. They were saying, hold on. Don't rush into this. You wait.

But the servant knew, as we said, you've got to have it now. And so the question, he says, I need to speak to Rebecca. So they said, we'll get Rebecca.

[18 : 43] So Rebecca comes and the question is asked. They ask him. They ask him. They ask him. They ask him. They ask him. They ask him. As the servant stands there. Will you go with this man? And Rebecca's answer is beautiful.

It's so simple. She said, I will go. And you know, today the same question is being asked of you. Will you go with this man? The man, the son of man.

The man Christ Jesus. Will you today go with him? Because he's asking you. If you're here today without Jesus Christ as Savior. Today in the gospel.

That is the question that Jesus is asking you. The bridegroom is asking into the visible church today. Will you go with this man?

What is your answer going to be? Are you going to say, I'll leave me ten days. Or come back again another time. Or are you going to say, Lord I will go.

[19 : 45] I want to go. Lord will you take me? Jesus is inviting you today. And this is a very serious and a very solemn question. And you know it's possible.

It's Spurgeon who says this. And he's talking about the delay that can sometimes happen in the offer of the gospel. And this is what he says. One day does not seem much.

But one day more may be one day too late. And one day too late is to be too late forever. One minute too late is an eternity too late.

It's not solemn. One day too late. One minute too late is an eternity too late.

So as the bridegroom, Jesus Christ today is asking you, what is your response going to be? I hope it's positive and not in a negative.

[20 : 48] Now of course for Rebecca it was really a huge step of faith. Because Rebecca was going only on the news, the story.

That's all she was going on. She was only going on the word of the servant. And you know when you take a step of faith. And when you seek the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when you receive and accept Jesus as your saviour. You are going on the word as well. Because you haven't seen. Rebecca hadn't seen Isaac.

She hadn't seen Abraham. She hadn't seen the wealth that the servant talked about. But she believed it all to be true. And that is why the word is at the centre of our salvation.

Because we accept this word. We accept that every word is true. And we base our belief upon what the word says.

[21 : 47] And so we are seeking that the Lord will take us into his kingdom. It was a huge step of faith as we said of Rebecca's. But it was the right step.

You know if Rebecca had stayed and said. No, it's too big a step for me. We would never have heard of Rebecca ever again. She may have remained single. She may have married one of the local men.

We don't know what might have happened. But instead she went on to her journey of faith. She became one of the great saints in the Bible. She became the mother of Israel.

That's what happened. When she took that step of faith. And her story became a wonderful story. And it's always going to be the same for you and for me as well.

When we take that step of faith. Because our lives will never be the same again. And the Lord has promised you so much.

[22 : 45] You know when we come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We experience. We're told like the first fruits. We get a little taste. A little glimpse of what is yet to be.

Whatever the best that you have ever known as a believer. Is only a little foretaste. Of what is yet to be. And that is the wonder of it.

All the jewelry. All the riches. That were given to Rebecca and to her family. Were little foretastes. Of what was to be.

And similarly Christ gives us. Some of his riches. A little of them. To experience. And to know. This is but the beginning. This grace is.

But the very beginning. Of glory. And it tells us that when. Isaac saw Rebecca. Like he was bowled over. It was love at first sight. Of course it would be. Because God was in it.

[23 : 44] It was all of the Lord. Here was the prudent wife. From the Lord. And the. The. The. The. Isaac took her to her tent.

And he married her. And she became his wife. It's a wonderful story. Rebecca. Is one of my favorite characters. From the Bible. Her faith. Is great.

But today. As we close. We ask the question again. The question that was asked. Of Rebecca. Will you go. With this man. Only you.

Can answer that. Let us pray. Oh Lord. Our God. We. We pray. That. As we have considered. The great question. And the great story.

In fact. As one person. Wrote of this. The loveliest story. Ever told. We pray. That. We may indeed. See. How spiritual. It is.

[24 : 39] That it is all. Speaking to us. Of the great union. Between Jesus Christ. And his people. Oh Lord. We pray. That you will bless us. We pray. That we will.

Hear your word. That we will know. Your light. Lighting up our path. That you will fill us. With yourself. And you will go before us. The rest of this day.

And bless us. Pray to bless. A cup of tea. And coffee. In the hall afterwards. And bless the time. Together there. Do us good. We pray. Cleansing us. From our every sin. In Jesus name.

We ask it. Amen. We'll conclude singing. From Psalm 71. From verse 14. To 17. In the Scottish Psalter.

The Tunis. The Cathro. This is on page. 311. Psalm 71.

[25 : 32] From the Scottish Psalter. On page 311. Verse 14. But I with expectation. Will hope continually.

And yet with praises. More and more. I will thee magnify. Thy justice and salvation. My mouth abroad. Shall show. Even all the day. For I thereof. The numbers. Do not know.

And I will constantly. Go on in strength. Of God the Lord. And I know. In righteousness. Even thine. Alone. I will record. For even. From my youth. O God.

By thee. I have been taught. And hitherto. I have declared. The wonders. Thou hast wrought. 14 to 17. Of Psalm 71. But I with expectation.

But I with expectation. Will hope continually.

[26 : 35] And yet with praises. More and more.

I will be magnified. Thy justice and salvation.

My mouth. My mouth. A broad child. Show. Even all the day.

While I thereof. The numbers. Do not know. log in pick of the Lord.

I will. Righteous. Maison.

[27 : 50] I will be called, for even from my youth, O God, by Thee I have been taught, and hitherto I have declared the wonders thou hast wrought.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.