

Genesis

Chapter 24:1-20

✧ **Gen 24:1-4** ¹ *Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. ² So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, ³ "and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; ⁴ "but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."*

Last week we looked at God's blessings in Abraham's life and ours. We also noticed that Abraham was over 137 years old at this time.

Two weeks ago we were studying Genesis chapter 25, with the death of Sarah, Abraham's wife, and preparation for Sarah's burial. This week we are looking at a happier subject, marriage between a young man and woman.

The first thing I noticed about this chapter is the fact that Abraham's servant is never called by name. Even though he was the oldest and most trusted servant, he is still not mentioned by name. I also wonder if this is the same servant Abraham was talking about in chapter 15

✧ **Gen 15:2-4** ² *But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" ⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."*

If this the same servant we are reading about in chapter 15 as here in chapter 24, then his name would be Eliezer. But we don't know that, because Eliezer could have died between chapters 15 and 24.

Even further on in the story, when he introduces himself to Rebekah's father, he says:

✧ **Gen 24:34** *So he said, "I am Abraham's servant."*

The world today says you need to make a name for yourself. But that is the opposite of what Jesus teaches.

✧ **Luke 9:48** *and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great."*

But the sad thing is, we as Christians do the same thing, even though Jesus taught us not to. Let me give you an example.

If I were to ask you who you really admire, and think is really great in your church, who would you say that is? Maybe your pastor, or one of the elders, what about someone on the worship team? It could be a Sunday school teacher or even one of the ushers. Did you think of that person by name? What about the person who does the setup in the morning, or cleans up after everyone is gone? What about the person who cleans the bathrooms? What you don't know who does this in your church?

I admit, it doesn't seem like a glamorous job, but the person or persons that are doing it are called servants, just like Abraham's servant. No name, no formal title, no pictures or people wanting to be like him. No he just wanted to serve his lord (Which mean master), which was Abraham. We say we want to serve the Lord, but we desire the so-called GOOD ministries.

"As long as I can do it when I want to, I don't have to serve people I don't like, and it's clean, then I'll do it."

This is the so-called GOOD ministries, which are comfortable; they don't interfere with our life styles and you don't have to take a shower when you are done.

But for Abraham's servant, it wasn't a good ministry (according to the worlds terms), as we would think of it. He had to leave his comfort zone of Abraham's house, I'm sure it interfered with his life style (He wasn't able to watch his favorite soap opera or football game on TV.) and leave his family, and being out in the hot desert with not even a McDonalds around to stop and eat or go to the bathroom.

Maybe you should rethink your favorite person in the church, because God loves those who are never recognized but serve the Lord with joy anyway. Sure God loves those who are recognized too.

Next thing is, this servant was to place his hand under Abraham's thigh and swear by the LORD God of Heaven and earth. What is this all about?

I read a few commentaries that stated:

In Abraham's culture, putting a hand under the thigh was how an agreement was sealed or a covenant ratified. It's like us shaking hands; swear an oath or sign document in the presence of a notary public.

The rabbis interpreted this as "by the seal of circumcision". Which God made with Abraham and his family, as we read back in chapter 10.

† **Gen 17:10** *"This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;*

Now that's pretty personal, and this type of oath you don't make with just anyone. And this oath the servant was to make was to get a wife for Isaac, Abraham's son. And not just any woman, but to travel far away to Abraham's homeland and get a wife from there.

Why Abraham's homeland, to keep the family line clean is one reason. Another is, if it was a woman from Canaan then there was the possibility of Isaac serving other gods because the Canaanites served other gods and not the God of Abraham.

The bible still teaches us the same thing about marriage today.

✠ **2 Cor 6:14-18** ¹⁴ *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." ¹⁷ Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." ¹⁸ "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."*

This means in marriage also. But what if you are married and your spouse is not a believer? Should you divorce them?

The answer is NO!

God hates divorce; Paul even mentions this situation in the bible.

✠ **1 Cor 7:12-16** ¹² *But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. ¹³ And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. ¹⁶ For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?*

What kind of a witness would you be showing your unbelieving spouse if you leave them. Would they think God or Jesus would leave them also because you did?

So the servants reply to all this is:

✠ **Gen 24:5** *And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?"*

What if she doesn't want to leave her family, should I take Isaac there to marry her and they can live there? Good question.

Abraham responded with:

✠ **Gen 24:6-8** ⁶ *But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there. ⁷ "The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. ⁸ "And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there."*

Abraham was now sharing not only his son's future with his servant, but also his God and revealing to him God's promise.

A few key things here;

First Abraham revealed to his servant that God promised to bless his descendants with the very land they were on, not in a far away place, so it was important for this woman to come to them.

Second, Abraham builds his servants faith and trust in God by letting him know that one of God's angels will prepare the way and choose the woman before the servant even gets there.

Now that's pretty encouraging words knowing that God would prepare the way of a person, and even have the final outcome determined for His glory.

Wait a minute; that happens for us even now!

✠ **Isaiah 62:10-12** (NLT) ¹⁰ *Go out! Prepare the highway for my people to return! Smooth out the road; pull out the boulders; raise a flag for all the nations to see. ¹¹ The LORD has sent this message to every land: "Tell the people of Israel, 'Look, your Savior is coming. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes.' "* ¹² *They will be called the Holy People and the People Redeemed by the LORD. And Jerusalem will be known as the Desirable Place and the City No Longer Forsaken.*

✠ **Psalms 18:35-36** ³⁵ *You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great. ³⁶ You enlarged my path under me, So my feet did not slip.*

✠ **Psalms 119:35** *Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.*

✠ **Psalms 119:105** *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*

- † **Psalms 119:132-133** ¹³² *Look upon me and be merciful to me, As Your custom is toward those who love Your name.* ¹³³ *Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me.*
- † **Prov 3:6** *In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*
- † **2 Thess 3:5** *Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.*
- † **John 14:2-3** *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

Lastly, if the woman refuses to come back with you, then you will be released from your oath. So the servant's reply was:

- ✧ **Gen 24:9-12** *So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter. ¹⁰ Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. ¹¹ And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. ¹² Then he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham.*

So the Servant said he would do it. And he went to the city of Nahor. Now where have I heard that name before?

- † **Gen 11:24-26** ²⁴ *Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begot Terah. ²⁵ After he begot Terah, Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years, and begot sons and daughters.*
²⁶ *Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.*

That's right; Nahor was Abraham's grandfather and also the name of Abraham's brother. So the servant was obedient and returned to Abraham's people as he was instructed to do to find a wife for Isaac. Then the servant prays to Abraham's God. Why would he pray, "**LORD God of my master Abraham?**"

Remember that there were many gods in the world at the time. Everywhere you went there was some sort of god there that the people made up. So he wanted to be specific and only pray to Abraham's God and not any other.

I think since he was Abraham's oldest servant (meaning he was with him more than any other) he too believed in Abraham's God because he saw all the ways that God was with Abraham. Also notice the word "**LORD**" is all capitals.

This is the ultimate name for God that we can speak. It means in Hebrew: **Y@hovah** pronounced **yeh-ho-vaw'** or as we know it, Jehovah which means "**the existing One**" This was not a name that was used for any other god.

So the servant speaks to God, and since he heard or even saw the things God did in Abraham's life, he also asked for some help in serving his master, Abraham.

✚ **Gen 24:13-14** ¹³ *"Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴ "Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'--let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."*

Notice he didn't ask God for her to be the best looking, or specified her build, or color of her hair or skin. No mention of what she should be wearing, or that her voice was the sweetest one he ever heard. No, he knew that Abraham was a servant and this future wife for Isaac must also have a servant's heart.

How do we know this? Because of his request to God. You see, it was a common practice for women to give a weary traveler a drink of water, but not for them to offer water to their animals. And these were not just animals, but camels, and not just a single camel, but ten camels.

Do you know how much water a camel can drink? Let alone ten of them. I bet it took her a long time. That's if he found a woman who would do this. Let's read on and see.

✚ **Gen 24:15-16** ¹⁵ *And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. ¹⁶ Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up.*

There are only a few women that are called beautiful in the bible. Who do you think the first would be? No not Eve, all though she was a perfect woman, she is not the first one. No, the first one is Sarah, Abraham's wife, second is Rebekah, the third is a woman named Abigail who married king David, (I would suggest reading about her in I Samuel chapter 25). Another is also one of king David's wives, which was Bathsheba, and another is one of King David's grandchildren who was Tamar, the daughter of Absalom, and finally there was Queen Esther.

So why would this woman offer to give water to not just the servant, but his ten camels also? Did the angel go ahead and tell this woman to do it? Was the servant caring a sign saying "I'm looking for a wife for Abraham's son."? Maybe she thought she could get some money out of this guy if she gave water to the camels.

The answer to all of these is NO. Rebekah had a servant's heart, and did it for no other reason then to help someone in need.

Also notice that before the servant could even finish his pray to God, that God had already answered it. That's what happens when we pray in the spirit according to God's will not our own. As we saw with this prayer, it wasn't for anything specific that would benefit Isaac or Abraham, but rather it was asking God for His will to be done. Once again not for Isaac's, Abraham's or even the servants sake, but that God would be glorified.

And how does God answer the prayer? He shows the servant the sign that he asked for, and she was also beautiful also.

This should be a lesson for us in our prayer time. We should be seeking the Lord's will, not our own. We sometimes get to specific with God wanting God to answer in our way, and if He doesn't then we think He hasn't answered our prayers.

Another example of this type of praying is in I Kings chapter 3:

† **1 Kings 3:5 & 9 (NLT)** *⁵ That night the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!"*

⁹ Give me an understanding mind so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great nation of yours?"

Solomon could have asked for riches to rule of Israel, but instead he prayed God's will, which was to rule Israel with wisdom and compassion. Why, because Solomon knew that these were God's people, not his own (see the second half of verse 9).

God's response to Solomon was:

† **1 Kings 3:11-14 (NLT)** *¹¹ So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people and have not asked for a long life or riches for yourself or the death of your enemies-- ¹² I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding mind such as no one else has ever had or ever will have! ¹³ And I will also give you what you did not ask for--riches and honor! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! ¹⁴ And if you follow me and obey my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."*

So when you pray, first ask for God's wisdom or will when you pray, that you can pray according to His will.

Don't be too specific. An example would be: "God I need a new car, a red convertible with a Bluetooth sound system. It has to be worth at least \$50,000 and you can let me have it for dirt cheap, or what about even free God?"

I know it sounds kind of ridiculous, but that is how we pray sometimes. If you need a Car go ahead and ask God for a car. He won't get mad or bite your head off if you do, but allow God to bless you with the car you really need, not what you think you need.

Also next time you pray, observe how much time you pray for yourself verses how much time you pray for others. Maybe it's equal time, but God knows your needs. It's OK to ask God to provide for those needs, but we should be spending more time in prayer for others needs, not our own.

Ask someone else pray for your needs, they will be more honest with God about your needs and more in tune to how God really wants to bless you.

So the servant's response when he saw her was:

✎ **Gen 24:17-21** *And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher."*

Notice the servant only asked for water for himself and not the camels. That would kind of be forcing the point, don't you think?

And the woman's response was:

✎ **Gen 24:18-20** ¹⁸ *So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. ¹⁹ And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." ²⁰ Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.*

I wonder how many trips she had to make to satisfy the camels thirst? I'm sure it was a lot, especially for ten camels.

✎ **Gen 24:21** *And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.*

Or as it says in the NLT:

✎ **Gen 24:21 (NLT)** *The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not she was the one the LORD intended him to meet.*

I wonder if this is the one for Isaac? You too? Well, we'll find out next week, if the Lord permits!