

April 12th, 2020
Isaac and Rebekah
Genesis 24

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Apr 5	2 Sam. 1-3	Apr 9	2 Sam. 16-18
Apr 6	2 Sam. 4-7	Apr 10	2 Sam. 19-21
Apr 7	2 Sam. 8-12	Apr 11	2 Sam. 22-24
Apr 8	2 Sam. 13-15	Apr 12	1 Kings 1-2

Lesson Introduction: *Our passage this week covers the story of Abraham's servant finding Isaac's wife, Rebekah. Abraham was "well advanced in years," and in the previous chapter we see that Sarah, Isaac's mother, had just died. Knowing that he may not be around much longer, Abraham desired to see his son married, and thus called on his servant to go back to their homeland to find Isaac's wife. Our lesson this week will highlight the importance of prayer, remind us of how God is so faithful to answer our prayers, and give us an example of how we are to respond to God in gratitude.*

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:

- **The Lord is always at work (V. 7-8)**
- **Prayer is an act of dependence on God (V. 11-14)**
- **Grateful worship is the proper response to God's provision (V. 26-27, 50-52)**

Discussion Section 1: The Lord Goes Before You

Read Genesis 24:1-9

*1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, 3 that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and 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 will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac." 5 The servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?" 6 Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there. 7 **The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I***

***will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.** 8 But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there." 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.*

-Why was Abraham so insistent that his servant find a wife for Isaac from his homeland?

-Why was Abraham so insistent that Isaac not be taken back to his homeland?

-What made Abraham so sure that his servant would be able to find a wife for his son?

Note: *Abraham was nearing the end of his life, and the marriage of his son weighed heavy on his mind. He was eager for his son to have a wife, that his bloodline might be continued as the Lord had promised. Although he was eager to find Isaac a son, Abraham took great care to specify two things regarding this arrangement. First, the wife of his son needed to come from his homeland, not from the land of Canaan. Although it was customary in that day for people to marry those from their own household, Abraham's primary motivation for this stipulation would have been to keep his son from marrying in with the pagan society that they were surrounded by. He also made sure that his servant did not take Isaac out of Canaan and back to his homeland. Abraham was trusting that God would provide a wife for his son without requiring him to leave the land which the Lord had promised.*

*We see in this section that Abraham had great faith that the Lord would come through for Isaac in providing a wife for him from Abraham's household. He tells his servant that, "**The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.**" This statement shows the kind of faith that Abraham had in God. After many years of uncertainty, he had seen God continue to be faithful to keep His promises. There was nothing that could shake Abraham's confidence in the Lord, for he knew what the Lord had promised him, and he had seen the hand of God move time and time again on his behalf.*

Abraham did not have any special revelation from the Lord that His angel would go before his servant, he simply knew that God was always at work, thus he had faith in the Lord. For those of us who are in Christ, we too can be confident that our God is always working on our behalf. God has made a covenant with us through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ, and has sealed us with the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 1:13**). Just like Abraham, we cannot see the future. We do not know what tomorrow holds, but we do know that we are children of God, and that He is at work all around us to fulfill His perfect purposes.

Discussion Section 2: Dependence on the Lord's Provision

Read Genesis 24:10-15

10 Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. 11 And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. **12 And he said, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. 13 Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master."**

15 Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder.

-What does the servant's prayer tell us about his mindset on his mission?

-What is your first reaction in a time when you need help?

-What does verse 15 tell us about the way that God works through our prayers?

Note: In his book, *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church*, John Onwuchekwa said this:

"Where prayer is present it's saying something – it's speaking, shouting. It teaches us that we really need the Lord. Where prayer is absent, it reinforces the assumption that we're okay without Him."

This statement is so true, and our passage today reminds us just how important prayer really is. Abraham's servant gives a beautiful example of what it looks like to rely on God completely in prayer. Rather than charge into town and pick the first girl he sees, or make a selection based on his preferences or the preferences of Isaac, the servant stops to seek the Lord's will. First, he asks that the Lord would **"grant"** him success. This is a recognition of the fact that no success could be had apart from the Lord's hand being on the situation. He also asks that the Lord show **"steadfast love"** to Abraham by helping him in this endeavor. Praying in this way shows again that the servant realized that his only hope was that the Lord would be gracious by giving his love, not because of who Abraham was, but because of who God was. Then we see him ask for clear direction from the Lord. He does not want to act according to his own will, but according to exactly what God desires.

We see that God answers the man's prayer before he even finishes praying! This shows that the prayer itself (the words that the man was saying) were not what ultimately caused anything to happen. Prayer is not an incantation that we must get just right in order for God to act. Rather, it is an act of faith and dependence which allows us to be a part of what God is doing. When we pray, we are simply stating how desperately we need God, and asking Him to move on our behalf. God is not required to do anything, but He loves to act in accordance with the faithful prayers of His people for His glory and our joy! May we, like Abraham's servant, be quick to go to the Lord in our time of need. May consultation with the God of the universe be our kneejerk reaction in all circumstances. We desperately need Him, and He is faithful to hear our prayers and respond with the perfect answer!

Discussion Section 3: Blessed Be the Lord!

Read Genesis 24:22-28, 50-52

22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, 23 and said, "Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" 24 She said to

him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." 25 She added, "We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night." 26 **The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord 27 and said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the Lord has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen."** 28 Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things.

prayers. He has been so good to us, and His name should be praised at every turn.

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing has come from the Lord; we cannot speak to you bad or good. 51 Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken."

52 When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the Lord.

-What is the significance of bowing in prayer?

-How does the servant's response differ from how we often respond to answered prayers?

-What prayers has the Lord answered in your life recently, and what has your response been?

Note: *This passage is a beautiful reminder that God answers prayer. We see at the end of the passage that God unites Isaac and Rebekah in marriage, bringing comfort to Isaac after the death of his mother (V. 57). One thing this passage makes abundantly clear is what our response to God should be when He answers our prayers. Too often we view God as a cosmic genie in the sky who is meant to grant our wishes and is at our beck and call. But God owes us absolutely nothing. In fact, if we got what we actually deserved from God, we would simply come under His judgement and spend eternity separated from Him in hell (**Ephesians 2:1-3**). The fact that God allows us to come to Him at all should absolutely bring us to our knees. But God does not just allow us to speak to Him, He encourages us to approach His throne of grace with boldness (**Hebrews 4:16**). We have been made righteous through Christ and have direct access to God our Father because Jesus bore the wrath that we deserved. Like the servant in this passage, we should be quick to bow our heads to God in complete awe and wonder that He would love us and work for our good. May we never forget to show gratitude to our Lord for the way He has saved us and continually answers our*