

DATE: October 26, 2008

TEXT: Genesis 24:1-4, 10-19, 57-66

TITLE: "Genesis XVI: Rebekah"



We are now moving our study in Genesis. We are moving away from Abraham and to Isaac. We are at Genesis 24. This is the longest chapter in the book of Genesis and deals with finding Isaac a wife. I want to share 4 lessons from this chapter.

**Lesson # 1** People of faith are called to be separate from the world. *Genesis 24:3-6*

**I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, 4 but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."**

**5 The servant asked him, "What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?"**

**6 "Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said.**

It is believed Abraham is now very, very ill. It is likely he is on his death bed. He has one final desire... he wishes to see his son marry....but not to any woman. He desires his son to marry a woman who shares his beliefs.

He puts this task upon his oldest, most trusted servant. He makes his servant promise to go to his homeland and find a wife among his relatives. Isaac was not to marry a Canaanite woman. Why? Why is this important? Throughout scripture Canaanites are symbolic of the

world. They are the unbelievers who oppose the people of God. As Moses was leading the people in the wilderness writing the book of Genesis, he was surrounded by Canaanites. The primary command given to Moses and Joshua as they entered the promised land was the prohibition of intermarrying with the Canaanites. *Deuteronomy 7:3 gives this command*

**Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, 4 for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, 4 for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.**

This prohibition continued from century after century. Even the later prophets reiterated the command. In *Ezra 9:14 Ezra is talking to God. He says...*

**Shall we again break your commands and intermarry with the peoples who commit such detestable practices? Would you not be angry enough with us to destroy us, leaving us no remnant or survivor?**

But let us be clear... this command of God was not confined to the Israelites. This command of God was not limited to the Old Testament. Hear this command given to

Christians given in *2 Corinthians 6:14*

**14Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15What harmony is there between Christ and (the devil)? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them,**

**and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”**

We also read these truths. First, hear these words of our Lord Jesus the night before his death

In *John 17:15*...

**I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.**

Finally, allow me to quote 1 John 2:15,16

**Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.**

Here is the point the Word of God is making...as God children we are to be separated from the world. We are radically changed by the Spirit of God within us. As we mature more and more in Christ we become more and more different than the world. We try to teach this to our teens all the time. They are Christians... this means they are to be radically different than the world around them.

- Do Christians dress different than non-Christians? Certainly yes
- Do Christians listen to different music than non-Christians? Certainly yes.
- Do Christians watch different T.V. and movies than non-Christians? Of course.
- Do Christians date in a different way than non-Christians. Oh yes.
- Do Christians talk in a different way than non-Christians? Yes
- Is the relationship with parents different in mature Christians than non-Christians? Yes.

I could go on and on and on. But let us not just pick on teens. The same is true as adults

- Do Christians have different marriages than non-Christians? Prayerfully yes
- Do Christians have different relationship with bosses than non-Christians? Yes
- Do Christians watch different T.V. and movies? Yes
- Is our language different? Oh yes
- Is our attitudes toward life different? Yes

Again I could go on and on and on. *Romans 12:1,2 commands....*

**Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

We no longer conform to this world.... we are transformed. We are made new. New creations in Christ. Once we were dead.. But now we are alive. Be new! Be completely and totally new. This is the call of scripture. The problem we face is this... too many people believe Christianity is one aspect of their life that they put on along with every other aspect of their life. That is not Christianity. Allow me to demonstrate this truth with a mini skit

(Do driver skit)

Jesus will not sit in the back seat of your life. Jesus will not sit in the passenger seat.

Jesus will only sit in the driver's seat. Here is the question... what seat have you invited Jesus to take in your life?

Notice also in our text Abraham tells his servant that for no reason is Isaac to return to the old country. Remember Abraham had failed God in his journey to Egypt. Abraham knew the ease and comfort of the old way of life can be very, very tempting. Do not go back no matter what the circumstances are. Do not return to the wide path that is the path away from God. Stay walking with God.

**Lesson #2** Notice the power of prayer when we walk in the will of God. *Genesis 24:12-15*

**Then he prayed, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13 See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. 14 May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'-let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master." 15 Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor.**

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> petitionary prayer in the Bible. It was not made by a great patriarch. It was not made by a famous person in the bible. It was made by a servant. It was made by a man who we never know his name. It was made by a man of faith. It was made by a man who trusted in God. Notice how quickly God answered this prayer... before he was finished praying. Rebekah had begun her walk to the well before he began praying. God answers prayer. *Beth Moore on a*

*study of this text states....*

**Sometimes God reveals His will so dramatically and obviously that all who have left to do is bow to Him. Opinions don't matter. Votes are inappropriate God has revealed his will, and that's that. Any of us who have any lengthy history with God have most likely experienced occasions when God clearly revealed his will. The most memorable times probably involved a revelation of God's will that might have painfully differed from our own. Let's not minimize the personal cost of the marriage to Bethuel's family. Certainly they wanted Rebekah to marry and to marry well, but certainly they would have preferred to keep her nearby.**

I remember a number of times God has closed a door and opened a new path in my life. I had a girl friend all throughout college I was planning to marry.. God closed a door and gave me a new wonderful path. I had a job offer I was all set to take... in many ways what I thought was a dream job.... at the very last minute... god closed that door... but within weeks God opened a new path and a new pastorate. Upon occasion I will be reading the Bible... when suddenly a light will be turned on in my head. I have read the passage many times before... but suddenly it speaks to me. God will revealed to me.

This is certainly not say God always answers our prayers instantly. We know from experience that is not true.... but God does answer. God guides us into the path of truth.

**Lesson # 3** Notice the quality in a person that is most sought after in marriage... in

friendship... and in faith. The quality of hospitality and service. A couple minutes ago I read the prayer of the servant... let me now read the actions of Rebekah. *Genesis 24:17-22*

**The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."  
 18 "Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. 19 After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking." 20 So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. 21 Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful. 22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.**

Understand the actions of the young girl. She immediately drew enough water for the servant. And then she drew water for the camels. How many camels? 10 and how much can a camel drink? I know.... 25 gallons of water. Rebekah drew 250 gallons of water. It is estimated that this took between an hour and a half to two hours. And the man watched.

The text later states that Rebekah was a virgin and beautiful... that was a bonus... but that was not critical. She was a servant. She was willing to put another person ahead of herself.

Most of the rest of the chapter is the servant of Abraham dealing with Rebekah's brother Laban. He too opened his house. He too demonstrated his attitude of servanthood.

Here is the lesson for today... be wise in your choice of mates and your choice of friends. I

have said this before and will say it again... the # 1 reason for misery in marriages and families is selfishness. More times than not the selfishness of the husband... but at times also the wife.

Often the selfishness of the teenager can destroy a family. Selfishness can destroy a friendship.

A number of years ago society was described as the "me generation." That is a terrible, terrible condemnation... and the truth of the label has lead to great, great misery.

Those who overcome selfishness by the power of God and the Holy Spirit in their lives are the people God blesses. Finally...

**Lesson # 4** Notice the love that developed between Rebekah and Isaac. *Gen 24:62-26*

**(Isaac) went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. 64 Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel 65 and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?"**

**"He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself. 66 Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. 67 Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her**

By the way.. This is the text that began the custom of brides wearing a veil. Isaac was praying.. He looks up and sees the caravan. He marries Rebekah and falls in love with her. As a matter of fact.. His love for Rebekah caused many problems in the future as we will see in the next few weeks. An interesting observation... today we believe marriage should follow love. But

we know this is a fairly recent formula. Before it was love would follow marriage. I am certainly not advocating arranged marriages... but I do believe we see that love is a choice.

Emotions follow actions. When we allow emotions to dictate actions we often are in trouble.

Love is a choice. Begin with actions of surrender and sacrifice... in marriages.... in friendships... with children.. And discover the love that follows.

This chapter is a wonderful story of obedience... of surrender... of servanthood and love.

AMEN