

**Genesis 24: 10-28; “The Lord Led Me”, Sermon # 68 in the series – “Beginnings”,
Delivered on June 7th, 2015, by Pastor Paul Rendall
in the Morning Service.**

There is a way that the Lord leads His dear people, in relation to the one that He intends to have them to marry, which is a most marvelous thing in the sight of His people. And when we see it, even if we are only looking on, as Abraham’s servant Eliezar was, we will bow our head and worship if we see that God’s good hand has been with us, and has granted us success. “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord”, it says in Proverbs 18: 22. And in Proverbs 19: 14, “House and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.”

But in order for there to be a favorable outcome in seeking a bride or seeking any other good thing that would greatly benefit us, we must be “in the way” for the Lord to lead us. “I, being in the way, the Lord led me.” The verses that I have just read to you show us what it means to be “in the way” of the Lord’s leading. And Abraham’s servant is a good example to us of what we need to remember to do, if we would be led of the Lord and granted success in attaining what we would have; both in terms of a obtaining a wife, or a husband, or any other good thing in living the Christian life.

So the question that I would like to have you consider with me this morning is this: In what ways was Abraham’s servant a good example to us; we who would also be led of the Lord? We find here that Abraham’s servant prayerfully brought God into every aspect of the mission on which he was sent. And he did so in the following 5 ways.

1st of all – He prayerfully brought God into his stewardship of Abraham’s goods and the strategy that he would use. (verses 10 and 11)

Now it is evident from the outset of his mission that Abraham’s servant was a man who wanted to faithfully represent his master to the young lady whom he hoped to find. And he also wanted to make a good impression on her family. And so he did not “spare the horses”, or in this case the camels, as it was in that day. He took 10 of his master’s camels and departed, it says, for all his master’s goods were in his hands. This is the definition of a steward; one who has charge of his master’s goods and uses them wisely and to the best advantage. He wanted to use these camels not only to carry his own essential provisions needed for the 500 mile journey that he was taking; but he wanted the woman that he would meet to understand that his master was not a poor man.

John Calvin says, “He takes the camels with him, to prove that Abraham is a man of great wealth, in order that he may the more easily obtain what he desires.” “For even an open-hearted girl would not easily suffer herself to be drawn away to a distant region, unless on the proposed condition of being supplied with the conveniences of life.” “Exile itself is sad enough, without poverty as its attendant.” “Therefore, that the maid might not be deterred by the apprehension of want, but rather invited by the prospect of affluence, he loads *the* ten camels with presents, to give sufficient proof to the inhabitants of Chaldea of the domestic opulence of Abraham.” (that is, how wealthy he was) (end of quote)

We need to understand that he was not doing this to show off to the girl or her family. He was doing this to convince them of his master’s ability to provide for the girl whom Isaac would marry. Let’s apply this to you, young men. It is good for you to prepare for marriage and what it will mean to provide for a wife. It will be good for you if you can seek to find a good job and work for a while and save some money away in order to be able to show the girl that you are interested in, and her family, that you are in a position to be able to take care of her.

We see from verse 22 that the servant also came ready to give gifts to the future bride: “a golden nose ring weighing a half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels

of gold.” Now gentlemen I would suggest that you seek for a slightly more modern form of jewelry, if I were you; nose rings are not apropos in our day; at least I hope not, in Christian circles, but I would commend to you the generosity of this man. He had a strategy in mind, and he was bringing God into it. He was going to deliberately position himself in the best possible place that he could, in order to find this girl. That place was just outside the city of Nahor where he was going, to make his camels kneel down by a well of water at evening time, at the very time when the women went out to draw water.

We can learn from this as well. It is good, if you are looking to take a wife, to attempt to put yourself in a place where you are going to hopefully meet a godly woman. No I don't mean that you should move from Tama to Cedar Rapids. You are not looking for just any woman, but a godly Reformed Baptist woman if possible. How can she be found? Well, it says in the book of Proverbs, chapter 13, verse 20 – “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.” Young men, you must seek the truth of God's word with all of your heart. And so it will be good if you can plant yourself in a church where the good word of God is regularly preached and applied to your heart and mind.

In that setting you may just be able to find a godly woman to be your wife. Abraham had to look a long ways away from where he lived in order to be able to find Isaac a godly wife. But this did not deter him from the expense or the time that it would take his servant. And since this was the case, what should we think of going to conferences to find a wife or husband, or looking on the internet for a person who might be spiritually compatible to yourself? Well, these are means which have been successfully used by some people to find a husband or a wife, but I would caution you to be very careful in this regard.

Seek to go to conferences of those churches which you can clearly see will be representing the convictions which you have been taught to develop here in this place. Do not set your standards too low, either in doctrine or practice. Rather reason this way: If I cannot find a person who will share my spiritual and doctrinal convictions, over what I believe, and how I think that God should be worshiped, I will wait until God leads me to that special person. I believe that both Abraham and Isaac, and even Rebekah, held to these kind of standards.

Think about godly Rebekah. Was she just simply looking for someone who was romantically inclined towards her; or was she looking for someone who would be spiritually sensible and morally good to her, all of her days? Remember, she had never seen Isaac, and so she had to sort through everything from the standpoint of the servant's words and actions alone. But, young ladies, let me ask you a question which will come closer to the mark. Are you looking for someone who will lead you into the truth of the Bible because he himself wants to better understand the truth of the Bible and wants to submit to it himself?

Is he a man who is a doer of the word of God? Is he doctrinally sound? Is he a man who runs with wise and holy men; a man who loves God's worship and God's people; someone who everyone around you can readily believe is a good man? A godly young man will not simply want to marry you for your good looks. He will want to provide for all of your needs, he will want to protect you from all evil. He will want to be a help to you, to lead you on the path of righteousness. He will want you both to be able to better serve the Lord. He will want to pray with you and talk over all the things which will relate to your being faithful to God.

Both young men and young woman should purpose wisely in this regard. Say this to yourself. I will associate with the wise and holy in my church congregation. I will observe them and their marriages. I will seek to know what has made their marriages strong. And in regard to the person whom I will seek to marry, I will seek to find out all that I can about that person; not only by my own observations, but also from the standpoint of what these godly people in my church, might think as well. I will plan holy strategy in this regard. My parents and these godly people in my church will help me to see things rightly. Abraham's servant was a man who

sought diligently to help his master's son to find just the right person; the person that God wanted for Isaac.

Now 2nd – Abraham's servant is a good example in that he prayerfully sought God's providential ordering of the specific person that he would meet. (verses 12-15)

This servant believed in praying about God's providence. This is apparent from the wording of his prayer. He said in verse 12 – “O Lord God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham.” “Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.” “Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, ‘Please let down your pitcher that I may 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.”

He is praying in a way that shows God that He knows that God is able to providentially lead the woman who should be Isaac's wife to come to this place at just the right time; at this particular time. He has said that the “daughters of the city” were coming out to draw water. How difficult this would have been if he had had to conduct a number of interviews. But God knew this too. And in the very next verse it says, “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.” It happened before he finished speaking.

God's providence is His holy and wise governing of all His creatures and all their actions. You know, sometimes I think that we are so used to the idea that God is a God who usually takes His time to unfold His providence in the great matters of life, that we forget that God is easily able to intervene quickly, at any time, and to come to our aid. It is not as though He is unable. Psalm 139: 1-3 says, “O Lord, You have searched me and known me, You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.” “You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.” “For there is not a word on my tongue, but you know it altogether.”

It is perfectly apparent that Abraham's servant was being led. God had searched him and known him, and he knew exactly how much he wanted to be faithful to God and to his master. This is what God does with all who are his children, by faith in Jesus Christ. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. He knows what the thoughts and intentions of your heart are. He knew, here, how to answer the prayer of Abraham's servant. In verse 14 he says – “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.”

I hope that you can see that it was only God's providence which could have orchestrated such a response. In laying out his request in this way before the Lord, the servant is saying to God, “I know that you can do all things, and no purpose of yours can be thwarted.” He is saying: It is by this Lord, that I can know that you have shown this kindness to my master. This is indeed how the Lord's kindness is shown to the person who is seeking to be led. He shows mercy to His beloved ones; He has mercy upon them. He shows tokens of His leading like this, in the response of Rebekah, who could not have possibly known his thoughts.

Not only was he being led by the Lord, but Rebekah herself was being led. God's providential ordering of these first interactions between Rebekah and Abraham's servant tell us that we should be looking for the tokens of God's providential ordering of things in our lives; not only in the search for a wife, but also in regard to every good thing that we would have or obtain. Ours is not a name it and claim it faith. But we do have a God who orders all things after the counsel of his will. And we do have a God who works all things after the counsel of His will, for those whom He loves; for those whom He has called according to His purpose. This whole

errand on which the servant was sent was right in the heart of God's purpose. How little we think of how these decisions that we make will affect generations to come. This is why we should study to seek the will of God in relation to anything we would have; and more especially, anyone we would marry.

God Himself is able to convince us; God Himself is able to show us whether we are headed down the right path and whether we are proceeding in a way that will glorify Him. We look into His Word to see if we have met the Biblical requirements. And then we pray to seek God's will and His help in the matter. And having done that, then we expect that God will act. "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." "And if we know that He hears us, in whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him." (1st John 5: 17)

3rd – Abraham's servant prayerfully looked to see if this girl met the requirements of his prayer. (verses 15-20)

The immediate requirement related to the prayer was that she would give him a drink. Abraham's servant runs to meet her and says, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher." He knew that he didn't have a moment to spare, and evidently Rebekah was the closest young woman of those who were coming toward him. He noted that she was "very beautiful to behold," "very fair to look upon" the King James says. The comment of the Holy Spirit through Moses is "a virgin; no man had known her". This is a very great and meaningful statement.

We are living in a day and a time when to many people it seems unimportant whether a young person keeps their virginity or not. It is seen as wisdom by people of little understanding, to lose it quickly at a young age; and that having sexual experience before marriage is somehow a wise and wonderful thing. But this is not what the scriptures teach. They teach that virginity is a state to be protected and treasured and prized as a godly thing until marriage. Virginity is moral purity in sexual things. It is saving yourself, and the use of your body sexually until marriage.

The sexual relationship between a man and a woman in marriage is a most beautiful thing; God's having joined them together, so that their greatest expressions of desire and love for the one whom God has given to them, may be expressed. But oh how it needs to be guarded, even as the heart needs to be guarded, with all diligence, lest it be lost and the purity of loving the one person whom God has given to you, be tarnished. Oh the beauty and the power of virginity, not so much for its own sake, but for God's sake, needs to be better considered.

Again, if God is the One providentially leading you, He's going with you through all of your experiences, before marriage and afterwards. Notice how this statement of Rebekah's beauty is placed right next to the statement of her being a virgin in verse 16. To be a virgin, saving yourself for your future husband in a sexually pure state; what beauty there is in it, in the sight of God and people who are wise. What joy, then, it is, in marriage, to give yourself freely, fully, and completely to the one who you love; to the person who you are committed to, to love them until death do you part.

When Eliezar asked her for a drink, she quickly lets her pitcher down to her hand, and gives him a drink saying, "Drink, my lord." He notices that she had the good qualities of respect and eagerness to help, both of which are good qualities in a prospective wife. And after she finished giving him a drink, she says, "I will draw water for your camels also." Ah, the words of delight! The very words that he was asking God to hear. These are the words which indicate not only respect and helpfulness; but kindness, and consideration, and a willingness to go beyond what was immediately asked for. And all of this for a stranger. Certainly this girl met the requirements so far, but there is more that he is praying about.

4th – Abraham's servant remained prayerfully silent until he could determine whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. (verses 21-25)

Verse 21 says, “And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.” Sometimes it is good just to quietly take stock of the situation of courtship. You can remain prayerfully silent and the Lord will speak to your soul as you think over all that you have seen in the person that you are interested in. Courtship does not always end in marriage. Sometimes in thinking things over, you may conclude that you were wrong in your initial evaluation of things. This girl you have taken such an interest in, does not appear to be the right match for you. If you have conducted yourself in respect and purity toward her, nothing has been lost. There may be someone else for you and for her.

Sometimes you are so amazed by the good qualities of this person, whom by God’s leading you have found, that all you can do is to sit silently and wonder that God should have brought such a person into your life. I like what Adam Clarke says in his commentary on verse 21. “He was so lost in wonder and astonishment at her simplicity, innocence, and benevolence, that he permitted this delicate female to draw water for 10 camels without ever attempting to afford her any kind assistance.” He says, “I know not which to admire most, the benevolence and condescension of Rebekah, or the cold and apparently stupid indifference of the servant of Abraham.” “Surely they are both of an uncommon cast.”

But this servant was not a man to conclude that this was the girl for Isaac simply on the basis of God’s hand of Providence which had been with him so far. He still had some questions to ask her that would be very necessary to ask in order that he could be assured that she was not simply one of the kinder “daughters of the land”. You and I should be the same way in regard to determining whether the Lord is leading us and blessing us. Things that fall out pleasantly and conveniently are not always the final indication of whether we are being led of the Lord.

Jonah, you remember, when he was fleeing from the Lord, went down to Joppa, and (very conveniently) “found a ship going to Tarshish”. And a person may be of a kind and helpful disposition, but not at all interested in following Jesus Christ. And therefore it is good for those interested in finding a godly mate, to ask some basic questions. The servant is pretty confident that this is the girl and so he takes out the gifts of the golden nose ring and the two bracelets before he asks her a question. He wants to assure the girl of his good intentions and that the marriage of his master’s son is the errand that he is on.

By the way young men, it is a good thing to tell the young woman that you are interested in, of your intentions as to the kind of relationship that you would like to have with her, before marriage. If the relationship is not purely friendship and companionship it needs to be said to the girl. You could say something like this: I am interested in finding out whether this relationship could become something more than a brother and sister friendship in Christ. What do you think? Can I ask your father about it? I believe that this text is also an indication that it is appropriate that when you ask the girl to marry you that you take an engagement ring with you, a token of your pledge of love and faithfulness.

But I also want you to notice that the questions that the servant asked, they both related to her family. Ah, how important is the family of the girl that you are thinking of marrying. This will tell you much about what kind of spiritual background and life exists in the one that you are considering. He says, “Whose daughter are you?” And he also asks: “Tell me, please, is there room in your father’s house for us to lodge?” It is a good thing to know what kind of family life your prospective spouse has, and what other members of the family think of faith in God and Christ, and probably a hundred other questions that Abraham’s servant did not have time to ask, or to have answered.

But you will want to find out whether your spouse to be, is one for whom the worship of God is precious to them. That is why the answer to both the questions was the greatest indication yet that this was the right girl. “I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah’s son, whom she bore to Nahor.” Oh how wonderful were these words to the servant of Abraham! These were close

relatives of his master. They were those who do worshiped the true and living God, even though they may have had much to learn about Him. They were willing to let him come in and stay with them and present his case before them. Surely it is a very good sign to any courtship relationship when you are shown hospitality by the family of the bride to be; if you have come from a distance that they are willing to house you or find a suitable place for you to stay. They can then inquire of you and you can inquire of them.

5th – Abraham’s servant bowed down his head and worshiped the Lord who had led him in this way. (Verses 26-28)

“Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my Master.” When God answers your prayers by leading you in such a way that they are answered, do you worship Him at that time? A person who understands God’s leading him, will do so. “As for me, being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master’s brethren.”

That is what you should pray for yourselves if you are single and wish to find a godly mate. “Lord lead me to those who also know you; and to those who hopefully will be compatible with the things that I believe and hold dear as to God’s blessed Word.” “Oh, Lord, may you lead me and guide me to such a place and to such a prospective spouse; one who draws from the fountains and the wells of eternal life.” “Guide me to that special person who has good qualities and the virtue of grace in their life.” “Do it for Jesus sake.” Amen.