

**Genesis 24: 52-61: “Rebekah’s Willingness” Sermon # 70 in the series –
“Beginnings”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 28th, 2006
in the Morning Worship Service.**

I want to speak to you this morning on the subject of willingness; Rebekah’s willingness to be exact. I have already shown you in past studies of this chapter that although permission was sought for, by Abraham’s servant, from Bethuel and Laban, for Rebekah to become Isaac’s wife, that this was not an arranged marriage. This was a marriage that was formed on the conviction that a godly young man should not marry one of the daughters of the land. And although the courtship was very short, courtship principles were followed.

The servant of Abraham had taken an oath that in going on this 1000 mile errand that he would only come back with a woman who was from among Abraham’s relatives, someone who had been raised in the fear of the Lord. And, if this woman was not willing to follow him, then he would be released from that oath. We have seen that the servant was led of the Lord, and that Rebekah was willing to become Isaac’s wife. There was a willingness not only to become Isaac’s wife, but also a willingness to leave the very next day.

This willingness to agree to go with Abraham’s servant immediately, is the same kind of willingness that each person who would believe in Jesus Christ should have, in order to become his disciple and to please Him. So we want to draw a parallel between Rebecca and every believer in Jesus Christ. In what ways is Rebecca’s willingness like that of the prospective believer in our Lord? It is a willingness of faith. So let me give you 3 ways that it is so.

1st – It was a willingness of faith, in that she had never before seen Isaac, she had only heard of him. So it is, also, with those who come to Christ.

(verses 51-53)

I wonder what feelings must have gone through Rebekah’s heart and mind when she heard the words – “Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master’s son’s wife, as the Lord has spoken.” It must have been quite a mixture of excited joy and wonderment. She probably thought to herself – What have I gotten myself into? I have never even seen Isaac, or his godly father. I am going simply on the word of his servant. And although this servant is very sincere and straightforward, how can I know that it shall go well for me?

Perhaps these thoughts flitted through her mind, but because she had heard a good report she was willing to trust him for the good fulfillment of all that was promised. She was willing because God had worked in her heart to make her willing. How is the will of a person, who has never before thought seriously about Christ, turned to consider Him and is changed to betroth Him spiritually and follow after Him?

There must first be a report given, and then this report must be believed. But there is something else that has to go along with both. God must turn your will to consider Christ and He must work in the heart to awaken you. He must soften your heart, and give you the power to become a child of God. The servant is the faithful messenger. He is the ambassador who brings the good tidings. Romans 10: 14 & 15 says – “How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?” “And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” “And how shall they hear without a preacher?” “And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” “As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things.’”

The Holy Spirit is the One who is applying the Word which is being spoken by the preacher, to the heart. This is a part of the Father’s effectual calling of those whom He has chosen to be His children. He draws them with real bands of love, and tokens of affection, and promises of grace. These gifts are represented by the jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing that the servant gave to Rebekah. This was not only creating faith in the promises of blessing, but gave her the

assurance of the provision of grace to convince her, that she would be supplied with what was needed to live this kind of life, and even to enjoy living this kind of life.

All this would be found through free grace. That is, the love and generosity of the Father and the Son, in accordance with their everlasting purpose as persons of the Godhead. Rebekah didn't know any of this theology and truth that was to be worked out by Christ several thousand years later, but she believed the report of the servant, and God was at work in her heart. And this is the report which you must believe, in order to have eternal life and follow Christ. In Isaiah 53: 1 it says – “Who has believed our report?” “And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

Rebekah had received the report of a young man who was pure of heart. She had heard about one who was submissive to his father's teaching him that he should not marry the daughters of the land. And she believed this report immediately. But the person, who hears the report about Jesus Christ, when they first hear it, they do not necessarily see any beautiful form or comeliness in Him right away. But the report is true, that Jesus Christ is the fairest of ten thousand. He is the fairest of the fair. He is all that your soul could ever desire.

There is no beauty that the man or woman of the world can discover in the report they hear about Jesus, that they should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by the people of the world. The report that should be believed by all, is that Jesus who was rich, became poor for our sakes, that we through His poverty might become rich. Rebekah was a beautiful virgin. And yet even though she had never seen Isaac she went to be married to him.

When she listened to the servant speak, perhaps it was not at this time that she heard, that Isaac had nearly become a sacrifice, a burnt offering, at the hands of his Father. Eventually she would hear this, and be astonished. But how astonished and glad ought you and I to be today, when I give you the report of what the Lord Jesus has done for you, who are not beautiful spiritually, but rather sinners. Isaac is a good type of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was his willingness to be submissive to his father, even unto the point of being bound, and made a sacrifice at the command of God.

This holds our souls transfixed when we hear of it. But it convinces us that the sacrifice which the Lord Jesus actually did render unto God, was the fulfillment of the type. Isaac was willing to become the sacrifice. But even as fine a young man as he was, he was not perfect. He was still a sinner. And so God stopped Abraham's hand from slaying his son that day. God would have to provide the lamb for the sacrifice. A ram caught in the thicket would have to do that day, until the divine Ram and Lamb would come to take away the sin of the world.

God was saying that His Son would have to die for Isaac that day on Mt. Moriah. And we should know that Rebekah did not consider her own beauty when she went to marry Isaac. She did not say – Isaac really is getting a beauty when he gets me. Instead she veiled her face. She did not say – I am so good at watering camels and being submissive that he won't be able to resist me. That would have been pride. And it would only show that she desired to be married to the law instead of Christ.

It is not our own beauty, our own works, our own feelings, or anything in us, that merits favor with God and Christ. We die to the law, through the body of Jesus Christ that we might be married to another – to Him who was raised from the dead. But those who hear the gospel report, when it is accompanied by power, will listen carefully to the servant's message. They will come to believe that God the Father has all the spiritual riches in the heavenly places to bestow on the one who will have Christ to be their heavenly bridegroom.

He has a rich eternal inheritance to give to the one who will be his wife, spiritually. The one believing in the Lord Jesus, the Son of my Master who is God the Father, shall surely become a joint-heir with Jesus of the joys and the riches of eternal life. You must as surely believe this report as Rebekah did the report of Abraham's servant. It takes the work of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the word of the servant in order for your will to be turned and changed, so that you are led to

receive this report. This work is done in a way that you cannot see it taking place in your heart. But you will know later, that something has happened, which only God could have done.

2nd – Rebekah was willing to leave her mother and father and brother, immediately, when asked. (Verses 54-58)

Verse 54 says – “And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed all night.” “Then they arose in the morning, and he said, ‘Send me away to my master.’” “But her brother and her mother said, ‘Let the young woman stay with us a few day, at least ten; after that she may go.’” “And he said, ‘Do not hinder me, since the Lord has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master.’” “So they said, ‘We will call the young woman and ask her personally.’” “Then they called Rebekah and said to her, ‘Will you go with this man?’” “And she said, ‘I will go.’” So here we find the servant of Abraham greatly desirous to be on his way with Rebekah in order to bring her quickly to Isaac.

I suppose that an argument could have been made in favor of their staying, from the standpoint of the love that this family had for their daughter. Because the chances were good that they would never see their her again. How greatly we love our precious children, and brothers and sisters. In a day when we have so many ways to communicate and actually talk to each other, and see each other, without actually being with each other, it is hard to imagine how difficult it would be, to have your daughter leave on short notice, and perhaps never see her again! But this servant was doing the Lord’s work. And no little part of His work it was, since Isaac was the appointed Seed through whom would come the Messiah.

I like what Luther says at this point. He says – “Here we have a fine example of a faithful servant who was in a great hurry to bring to his master his wife.” “So we, too, should never delay any business, especially that of the Lord, but speedily finish everything which we have begun in His name.” “Even the heathen writers urge us to bring our business to a speedy close.” “Sallust, for example, writes, ‘After you have made the plan, do the work as quickly as you can.’”

“Similarly, Cato says, ‘If you miss your opportunity to do a thing at once, you may miss it altogether.’” “Bonaventura puts it still better thus, ‘If you miss your opportunity, opportunity will also miss you.’” “But promptness is still more important in spiritual matters, for if you miss the opportunity when the Holy Spirit calls you, you will hardly find Him afterwards.” “The Holy Spirit bestows His gifts not upon those who are indolent and neglectful but upon such as make haste to keep the Lord’s commandments.” (Psalm 119: 60)

What can happen when you put off coming to Christ immediately? You may delay coming when you know that you have been instructed that Today is the day of salvation, and now is the accepted time. If you delay believing in Him immediately, that kind of delay can be dangerous. Some people want to make sure of the reality of their faith, and of counting the cost before they become Christ’s disciple, and becoming a part of his bride the church. Certainly there is nothing wrong with this, for Christ Himself commands it. I am sure that Rebekah knew that even though Isaac was well provided for, and even though it looked as though that she would be well provided for through him, she still knew that there would be many trials that would come. But this did not deter her.

Rebekah knew that she would be giving up everything that was familiar to her to start this new life, even her life with her parents and brother. But she knew that this is what God would have her do. Let me tie a few verses to this thought from both Old Testament and New. Psalm 45: 10 and 11 will show us the greatness of the relationship that Christ calls each believer to. The relationship of being betrothed to Him is greater than any earthly relationship even our immediate family. It says here – “Listen O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your own people also, and your father’s house; so the King will desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him.”

When I read this to you, I want you to understand that it does not at all mean that we look down upon our family or our family life. Quite the contrary. We value very highly the family and all that God designed it to be. And a part of growing up and coming to a place of maturity,

spiritually speaking, is when by God's grace you come to the place where you are able to see how Christ would lead you, in relation to the establishment of your own family. As a parent, you see what it will mean for this new family, which will come through the marriage of your daughter or your son, how it will bring glory to God. In order to see this happen, your son has to forget his own people and his father's house.

Speaking of our relationship to Christ, it says in Ephesians 6: 30 – “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” And Matthew 10: 37 – “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.” “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.” “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake shall find it.”

This was what Rebekah was doing even though it might seem to us as though this was only a very adventurous and romantic thing to do. She was giving up everything she had with her family to find her life with Isaac. So too, the person who comes to Christ will consider this relationship to be more important than any relationship in their immediate family. Being betrothed to Christ is of greater value than every other relationship, because Christ is your Lord and you worship Him. He will desire your beauty when grace is at work to give you the right priority to all of your relationships.

3rd – Rebekah's willingness was a willingness of faith because it was decisive.

(verses 59-61)

The question was put to her by her relatives – “Will you go with this man?” It was put in opposition to the request of Rebekah's mother and brother to stay for at least 10 more days. And yet when she said, “I will go”, you do not find her relatives complaining about it. Rather they turn and bless her. They blessed her and said to her – “Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them.” Her decisiveness to leave, convinced them even more that her going. And it was of tremendous importance and significance to the coming of the Messiah, the promised Seed, Jesus Christ.

If you are decisive about the things of Christ; if you will love Him, serve Him, and go with Him wherever He would have you to be, then great things can be expected in terms of His kingdom's advance. Her going meant Christ's coming. Her going meant that she would, indeed, become a “mother of thousands of ten thousands”. Not only of physical descendants, but even more, those who would be born again by the Spirit of the living God, based on the sacrificial death of the Son of God. So, too, when you are decisive about coming to Jesus Christ for salvation, and you are willing to leave all the familiar behind in order to serve Him, you shall truly find your life.

Jim Elliot, the missionary to the Auca Indians in South America said – “He is no fool to give what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” He died trying to reach those savage natives, but oh the great results that have come, because of his decisive willingness. He found his life in losing it. Rebekah's willingness to leave in this way, helped her own relatives to be convinced of the great spiritual issues involved in her leaving them and going to Isaac. Even so, when you are decisive in your willingness to leave your self-centered and worldly thinking behind, and come to Christ, your relatives who know the Lord will most certainly rejoice. They will look for God to do great things in you and through you.

There will be victories won in advancing the kingdom of Christ when it is so. The gates of our enemies shall be possessed. We need to be decisive, decided followers of our Lord Jesus. You will do this when you are willing to live by faith. Even as Peter says in 1st Peter 1: 8 – “Whom having not seen you love; though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith- the salvation of your souls.” I am sure that this is the kind of willing faith that Rebekah exercised. I pray that each of us would have this kind of faith to the saving of our souls, willing to leave all and follow Him.