

**Genesis 24: 61-67; “Isaac’s Godly Meditation”, Sermon # 71 in the series –
“Beginnings”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on June 4th, 2006,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

I wonder if you believe in love at first sight. It is a romantic notion, I know. And it could be very inappropriate to think about it if the sin of sensuality is in the heart. But I think that it applies well in a godly sense to our study of the courtship and the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. Proper courtship principles were being followed in this case, and there were no false romantic notions that had been formed in the minds of this young couple. It was just that the distance had prevented them from getting to know each other better before this. But I do not think that it hindered the holy excitement and anticipation that existed in both of their minds on this momentous occasion.

Isaac was going to get a bride. And he was going about it in the right way. In this passage he is catching his first glimpse of the one whom he has hoped for years to see. She would be God’s gift to him. It is apparent from our text that he was a man of prayer and godly meditation. The Hebrew word for meditation in our text is the same word for prayer in some translations. And it was during the time of Isaac’s godly meditation that Rebekah, the answer to his prayers for a wife, finally came to him. Therefore I would like to assert to you that godly meditation is the proper activity for every Christian to engage in, as the precursor (that which goes before) God’s giving them a favorable answer to their prayers.

So I would like to lay before you this question for your consideration: What is the significance of Isaac’s godly meditation to us who are Christians today? And we will answer the question by saying that godly meditation is the proper activity of the Christian’s heart to engage in, if you would see answers to our prayers (whether in a situation of courtship or otherwise) for the following reasons. I have 4 of them for you.

1st of all – Godly meditation sets the heart upon God Himself before any other person or object of consideration. (verses 61-63)

It is always the right thing to do when you are looking for an answer to your prayers for a godly wife, to bring the matter to God continually. No matter how far along in the courtship process you are, this is right. Here we find in verse 61 that the answer to Isaac’s prayers was already on the way. And yet we do not find him all agitated and complaining. We do not find him saying: Why is it taking so long for Eliezar to get back? We do not find him pacing the floor of his tent and becoming downcast or angry because he has to wait.

Why is this? It is because this godly young man believes in waiting upon the Lord for the answer to his prayers. He believes that he can be fully satisfied when he comes before the presence of God in prayerful mediation. The text says – “Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South.” “And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening.” He comes to meet with God in the cool of the evening. Even as the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the evening at the beginning of the world in the garden of Eden, so by His presence with Isaac now, He would do the same here.

Isaac would be refreshed and strengthened in his waiting by his thinking about God Himself. He was setting His affections on things above. He was content to rest all of his hope upon God in relation to finding a wife. This is something, young men, that is particularly important to God and so it should be to you. Are you willing to be content to be single until His appointed time? Because what God is looking for from you in this situation of pre-courtship and courtship, is for you to develop your relationship with Him first. He would have you to do this by prayer and meditation.

He wants you to be completely willing to find your greatest satisfaction and happiness in Him, before He entrusts to you the care and love for the person whom you will become one

flesh with. This is of very great importance to God, because He has purposes for your life. He has purposes of what He would have you to do and to become in His sight. He has important lessons for you to learn while you are single. How to manage your money, and how to provide for a wife, would be one. How to pray and minister to others in the church who have needs, is another. He is looking to see holiness in your life, it is true. But He is also looking for faith from you in His ordering of these things, in their timing and in their particulars in your life.

Perhaps you remember the saying found in the biography of Hudson Taylor which goes like this. “Enough that God my Father knows, nothing this faith can dim; He gives the very best to those who leave the choice with Him.” He had become acquainted with and engaged to a young woman who he was very attracted to, and yet she did not have the same desire to go into the mission field as he did. Eventually she told him that he was going to have to make a choice between her and going to China. And Hudson realized that God was behind her request asking him to make the choice. So he broke the engagement off.

And then we read that later when he was on the mission field in China that he met Maria who would be just the right person to help him and be his companion and wife there. God knew what would be best. The important thing to remember is that this is what God would have for us before we get into the courtship process. He wants us to be those who meditate upon what He is like, and to pray and ask what He is looking for from us. And then being satisfied to trust Him, He will give us what will be right and best. This is certainly what Isaac was meditating upon; God’s ability to give what is best, and who He would be able to see, was the best person to be his wife.

I wonder if you believe this today? God knows better than you do, who the person is that would be best for you to marry. Remember that in waiting upon the Lord to lead you and show the that right person, that you should not be passive. But you will pray and meditate upon what God’s choice will be like. She will be a person who you can talk with, who you can pour out your thoughts to. She will be someone who you can pray with, and make plans with, in a thoughtful and respectful way. You will meditate upon God’s Word and pray together, and ask God to show you the promises that apply to you both.

Psalm 1 is a good passage in this regard. “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” “He shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” You will not walk in the way of the world, looking for every outward circumstance to be perfect and pleasant in regard to one whom you will marry.

You will look for virtue in her. You will look for a desire in her, that compliments yours to pursue after godliness. You, together will desire to live according to the principles of His Word. And You will believe that He will be helping each other to walk together, through this life, according to the grace of Biblical love. This woman then will do you good all the days of your life. You will meditate upon the greatness and goodness of God to bring such a thing about in His time and in His way. Because your meditation will be upon God, she will be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for you, as it says in verse 44 of the chapter we are studying.

2nd – Godly meditation is the Christian’s lifting up the eyes of their heart to look to God for the answers to what their heart is meditating upon. (verses 63b and 64)

It says that Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming. And in verse 64 it says – Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel. Both, it says, lifted up their eyes to look. Godly meditation will not only pray, but it will also look. It says in Psalm

5, verses 1-3 – “Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation.” “Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You I will pray.” “My voice you shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You and I will look up.” The Psalmist David not only directs his prayer to God but he looks up for the answer to his prayer. When Isaac looked up, it was the camels coming with Rebekah.

When Rebekah lifted up her eyes she saw the one who would be her husband. You say to me – Oh, that it was this simple for me! This text is given to you beloved, to show you that it can be, when God’s hand is in it. Perhaps there is unbelief in your heart, even now. Perhaps there is skepticism. You have not found the one who you have been looking for, and so you are not meditating in prayer at all. Does it mean that when you do not have the answer to the prayer that you are praying, right away, that God has no plan for you at all? No, such a thought is not right.

In Jeremiah 17: 7 and 8 there are almost identical verses to Psalm 1. “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord.” “For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.” These are good verses, but I’ve never considered the placement of the following verse in relation to these good verses on trusting. It says – “The heart is deceitful above all things, and is desperately wicked; who can know it?” “I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

You see the connection don’t you? It is easy to become anxious when you don’t see the answer to your prayers when you have prayed for some time. Our hearts are deceitful enough to come to the place where we are resigned to God’s will that we do not have a wife or husband now, but we have lost all sense of expectancy in regard to what He might do, what can do. He can do great and marvelous things. He gives to every person according to their works and according to the fruit of their doings. He is not going to withhold any good thing from you if you are walking uprightly before Him. He is the great watcher and searcher of your heart. And He is wise, and He knows exactly what to do. But He will also challenge and build your faith in the process.

3rd – Godly meditation will inquire into the providential circumstances that brought about the answer to your prayers. (verses 65 and 66)

We find this kind of inquiry taking place in both Rebekah and Isaac when they first met. In verse 65 you find Rebekah asking the servant when she first set eyes on Isaac – Who is this man walking in the field to meet us? And she does not run directly to him and throw her arms around him. But she veils her face to show her modesty and her submission. She is saying to Isaac by her actions that she is not bold to put herself forward, but she will be of a gentle and quiet spirit, one who would cultivate submission to her husband. She will be a wife who will be seeking his approval. And she won’t mind calling him “lord” as was the custom of that day.

This is probably somewhat shocking to the minds of the liberated women of our day. But this kind of a spirit is precious in the sight of God. (1st Peter 3: 4) I am sure that Rebekah had meditated upon this encounter much on the 500 mile journey to get to Isaac. She wanted this to be perfectly clear to him, and so she would ask and find out from the servant who this man was. It is never wrong to ask these kind of appropriate questions of others when you are in the courtship process. What kind of a person is this person that I am interested in? You will want to get the opinions of others who have been close to them, and who would know them well.

They will not mind telling you about their good qualities. But you should also be willing to ask about their not-so-good qualities if they have them, in a respectful and concerned way.

Perhaps your own evaluation might not be correct in some respect. That is where relatives and friends of the one who you are interested in can be of great help to you. And then look at Isaac's actions when he first meets his bride to be. He doesn't immediately go to her but he goes to his servant first. And he inquires of him, and he hears the very excellent report concerning her. Of her being led by the Lord to Abraham's servant. How she was so very helpful, and how she had good qualities that became apparent to him during the time she had been in his presence.

Godly meditation will inquire into all the providential circumstances that brought about the answer to your prayers because you want God's part to be seen by you, in His answering your prayers. Psalm 145: 4-7 says – "One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts." "I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works." "Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness." "They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness."

I am sure that this was the case of Abraham's servant with Isaac. By the time that he got done relating all that the Lord had brought about, Isaac was a very happy and thankful man. This is how we ought to be when we find the one whom the Lord has appointed for us. We ought to be happy and thankful. And we ought to remember the events of those days, going over and over them in our minds and praising God for His goodness to us.

4th – Godly meditation will bring comfort to your heart and soul, as a believer.
(verse 67)

It says – "Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her." "So he was comforted after his mother's death." It is obvious from this that Isaac had grieved deeply the loss of his mother Sarah. And is this not true of the loss of all godly mothers? If they have believing children, it is often the case that they feel the loss of such a one greatly. There is something about a godly mother that is always comforting to a young man who would walk in the ways of the Lord. She is someone whom he can talk to, and learn from, and receive kind instruction from her in a thousand different ways over the years.

She is someone who thinks about him, and prays over him, and even cries over him at times. She is the one who would care for him in every situation. She will hold him close in her heart and in her thoughts. When he loses her in death, there is no one and nothing to replace her, except when he finds the same kind of virtue and tender feelings when he finds a wife. There is a difference, to be sure, in the deeper relationship of intimacy with one's wife. But in this case there was something to be gained, that, if it did not make up for the loss, it brought solid comfort to the soul of Isaac.

All good gifts which come from the Lord are intended to do this for the believer. Listen to Psalm 86: 16 and 17. David says there – "Oh turn to me, and have mercy on me!" "Give Your strength to Your servant, and save the son of Your maidservant." "Show me a sign for good, that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed, because You, Lord, have helped me and comforted me." David was in a desperate situation, unlike that of Isaac. But then, perhaps not being able to marry one of the daughters of the land, had brought Isaac closer to desperation, than we can understand in our own day.

Both men when they were in great difficulty thought of their mothers. Isaac had difficulty in obtaining a wife, and David had difficulty with men who hated him. Every good gift is from the Lord. And so, when you meditate upon what the Lord can do for you, and what He has done for you, then will you not learn to expect that you can trust Him for what He will do for in the future? Meditating in this way will bring great comfort to the most troubled soul. You should often meditate upon what God has given you, in giving you the Lord Jesus Christ; to

be your Husband and your Friend, your King and your Guide. God will give you good comfort by grace through Christ's saving you from your sins. "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work."