

Trusting God's Timing Genesis 24:49-58

In Genesis 24, we have learned about “hurry up and wait.” But our understanding has been enlarged to understand how to overcome our feelings about his. Rather than being frustrated with “hurry up and wait,” we have learned to be faithful with “hurry up and wait on the Lord.” This has helped us learn how to be persistent people who humbly trust God’s provision, and God’s timing. So today, let’s continue to trust God’s timing.

In 1791, Pastor William Carey preached a message about missions and missionaries from Isaiah 54. In this message, he repeated this statement: “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.” This statement (which is often misquoted by placing the last phrase first) describes the approach of Abraham’s servant in Genesis 24. Knowing that the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things (verse 1), he expected great things from God. In verses 12-15, the servant had presented his plan and prayer petition before the Lord:

- O LORD God of my master Abraham
- Give me good success today
- Show kindness to my master, Abraham
- Let it come to pass
- Let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant, Isaac
- This is how I shall know you have shown kindness to my master

And according to verse 15, it came to pass – before he had finished speaking! Earlier in the series, we named these “B.D.I.D.” answers “before day is done!” But in this case, it was before his prayer was done. Since we studied the earlier part of the story, many brothers and sisters here in the congregation have testified about “B.D.I.D.” answers. We have experienced the amazing privilege of knowing that our prayers were answered – sometimes in the very moment! And this can cause the people around us to see the Lord. Those who know the Lord, and even those who are lost, can recognize that God blesses us with answers to prayer.

When we finished the last message, we left the servant sitting at Laban’s table explaining how God had answered prayer. So, the servant said, **“And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master’s brother’s daughter unto his son.”** (v. 48)

The servant knew that his prayer had been answered; God had granted his petition, and his plan was fulfilled. So, how should we respond when we see God answer prayers, sometimes before we even finish praying?

Worship the Lord Who Leads His People with Perfect Timing

The experienced servant/leader knows the Lord well enough to recognize His leadership, and he will praise Him for His timely blessings. 48

You can just imagine the impact this made on Laban and Bethuel. And this is the same kind of influence we can have among our friends and co-workers. How many people do they know who receive direct answers to specific prayers? You and I could be pioneers among the local populace. They are looking for genuine hope in a society full of despair. They need to know that God answers prayer.

Undoubtedly, it was this kind of experience that caused Pastor William Carey to proclaim, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." And we could rightly add, "*And give the highest praise to God.*" And as you know, William Carey is considered to be "the father of modern missions." As a Baptist pastor, he became convinced that God wanted the Gospel proclaimed among the nations. Carey and his family led the way. They landed in Calcutta, India in November of 1792 and began learning the Bengali language. Many others joined him. William Carey trusted God's timing, and you can too.

Years ago, Dr. Richard Snively, one of our pastors named our "Carey Room" after William Carey as a reminder of Carey's faith. So what kind of attitude launches a missions movement that transformed the way we look at missions today? It is answered prayer. It is learning to "expect great things from God" and then "attempt great things for God." This is the spirit of the servant in Genesis 24. He bowed his head and worshipped the Lord, because his prayer was answered.

But now it was time for Abraham's servant to make a direct appeal. There was no need for him to place pressure on the people before him. Why not? He trusted God's timing! If he had tried to manipulate them, he would have found himself to be outclassed in every way. This was Laban he was dealing with. So, with the Lord's great blessings in mind, how did this servant appeal to Laban and Bethuel?

⁴⁹ And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left. ⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceeds from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. ⁵¹ Behold, Rebekah *is* before thee, take *her*, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken. ⁵² And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the earth.

In verse 49, the servant patiently appealed for those at the table to show "loyal love" [*chesed*] to his master Abraham. He was willing to wait for the Lord's timing about their answer. His appeal was simple. Would they love what God loved? Would they enter into the enormous blessing that God alone could give? Diplomatically, he placed the matter before them for their careful consideration. And if they refused, he was willing to continue to search for the woman whom God had appointed. Surely this is the right approach for us. As the psalmist said of the Lord in Psalm 18:35, ". . .thy gentleness hath made me great." Those at the table agreed with Abraham's servant, and the servant bowed to thank God for His mercies. What should we do when we see God answer prayer in this manner?

Worship the Lord Who Speaks and Demonstrates That He Provides with Perfect Timing

Since they know that the Lord leads them, God's servants can make patient, yet straightforward appeals to others.

Several years ago, one of the men in our congregation said to me, "I could have led a man to the Lord yesterday if I had been a good salesman!" I immediately made an appeal to him. In evangelism, God gives us the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to men in a Spirit-filled manner. We plant and water; it is God who gives the increase. In John 6:44, Jesus said, **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."** If we really believe that, then we don't need to beg, wheedle, and squeeze people to trust Christ. The very next week, this man related the rest of the story to me. He told me that the man he had been witnessing to came to him and said, "I'm ready!" Knowing that the Lord alone could draw him, the man asked the other man to explain the Gospel back to him. As the man did, he bowed his head and trusted Christ right there on the spot. Our man had the joyous confidence of knowing that it was God who had done the work.

Think about this in the way we conduct our services here. There is a difference between an invitation to trust Christ and an "altar call." A presentation of the Gospel is incomplete without the appeal for the hearer to place his or her faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. But if we think that extended altar calls with moving music and pressure from the pulpit will save someone, we are mistaken. We have seen many people come to Christ here at Calvary without squeezing or manipulating them. We have the confidence that God really did save them, and there is evidence in their lives to show the reality of that salvation. But we have also met many in the community who insist that they were saved by going forward at an altar call, and their lifestyle today indicates that they are still lost.

So here is our appeal, our invitation to the lost. Would you not accept the blessings of God and enter into fellowship with Him? He fulfilled the promise to Abraham by sending His Son to die for you. His Son rose again from the dead to prove the reality of this claim. He may be drawing you at this moment. You may be in the condition that one of our men testified about recently. Realizing that he was lost, and remembering God's great drawing work described in John 6:44, he trusted Christ while he knew that God was drawing him. My friend, if God is drawing you today, do not delay. If you will read the last several verses of Proverbs chapter 1, you will realize that it is possible to "sin away your day of grace." Place your faith in Him while you still can, before it is eternally too late. We don't want to manipulate you. We want to motivate you to enter into the great blessing and love that our God has given us.

Knowing that all of this proceeded from the Lord, Laban and Bethuel agreed to send Rebekah to Isaac. I am appealing to you today by repentance and faith to become a part of the Bride of Christ, knowing that all of this proceeds from the Lord.

How did they celebrate the agreement around the table?

⁵³ And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave *them* to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. ⁵⁴ And they did eat and drink, he and the men that *were* with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. ⁵⁵ And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us *a few* days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. ⁵⁶ And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. ⁵⁷ And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. ⁵⁸ And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

Now it was time for a party! The servant brought out the jewels for the bride-to-be. He gave gifts to the family members. They ate a joyous meal of celebration together. But the next morning held a surprise. In the culture around Haran it was customary to have an extended celebration. But the servant had other ideas. Knowing that God had given him good success, he was ready to complete his mission. But the family objected. Let's look at the way he persuaded them. He humbly appealed in typical servant fashion, **"Send me away unto my master."** He acknowledged their authority, and had made a respectful appeal. But they objected. He appealed to the Lord's providence to make his point: **". . . since the Lord has prospered my way, send me away that I may go to my master."** Rather than raise a ruckus and resist him, the family chose to place the matter before the bride to be. Her answer was, **"I will go!"** What do we learn about waiting on the Lord's timing in this part of the story?

Worship the Lord Who Prospers Your Way and Persuades Others to Follow in Perfect Timing

Since God's servants know that God alone makes them a success, they wait on Him joyfully while awaiting the next move.

Let's continue to trust God's timing. We can praise Him for His timely blessings. We can worship the One whose timing is always perfect. We can trust Him for success as we persuade others to follow His path to blessing.

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