Finding A Spouse — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 24 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, June 9, 2024 · *The Patriarchs*

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If you have a Bible, you can open it to Genesis chapter 24. If you're new to Broadview, we have been working through the book of Genesis for a little while now. We typically preach through books of the Bible. We're about halfway there in the book of Genesis. The first half took us about two years. Second half won't take near that long, I promise. We'll get through it much, much faster, if not for you, for me, because it has been tough sledding here lately. But I have really benefited from this journey through the book of Genesis.

I read the Bible like many of you on a pretty regular basis. Actually more than pretty regular. I mean I read the Bible on a very regular basis, but I had no idea how profound and deep some of the truths were in the book of Genesis. I've really grown as a believer and grown in my love for the Word of God through this book of the Bible and particularly the story of Abraham, who's the founding father of faith, the original OG. You can't understand the story of the world unless you understand the story of Abraham, the founding father of the three biggest monotheistic religions, Christianity being the greatest, obviously, from my perspective.

We've seen Abraham, an imperfect man, called by a perfect God to do incredible things. Weakness and all, somehow the Lord used him to carry out his purpose and plan, advancing the seed of promise. And it's just an encouragement to me as a normal guy called by God to do a thing, to be encouraged that he can take vessels of clay and use them in great ways. And we've seen Abraham go through all sorts of stuff. And what we're going to see today in his second to last big event before the focus shifts from Abraham to Isaac is him trying to find Isaac a wife.

How to find a spouse. And some of you in here are single and you're looking for a spouse. Some of you been there, done that. Some of you don't want to do it again. Some of you maybe do want to do it again. Because if you're not finding a spouse, you at least probably have some kind of influence over someone who may be. And so I hope today will be relevant. The question of marriage is a really important question. I think it's probably the second most

important decision you'll ever make, whether you marry and who you marry, next to who you decide to worship.

And in our culture, for whatever reason, this whole discussion of sex and singleness and marriage and family, it is incredibly confused, the month of June being a powerful, I think, example or illustration of just how far we have come from what I believe to be God's design for those issues of sex and marriage in particular. Why is it that we do things the way we do things? I don't know. When I was young it looked a certain way, and now I'm one of those old people. And it looks even worse than when I was young.

You know how I heard somebody say it's like the way we date today is like used cars. We get people on the lot. We emphasize all of the good things, sometimes even a little deceitfully so, put some bells and whistles to make it look fancy. We downplay all the bad things and maybe even lie a little bit on those things and then we get them as quickly as we can into the car for a test drive so that they'll get that warm fuzzy feeling and buy a piece of junk. And I think sometimes that's how people date today and sometimes they end up getting a bad bargain because of it.

And when I say test drive, I don't mean… I mean what you think I mean. Seventy-five percent of college students today are engaged in sex outside of marriage. Three out of four, this was more than I thought it was going to be. Three out of four couples cohabitate before marriage. It's just what people do today. It's very common and even among believers it's very common. I know I get it. And some of you probably in this room are doing that very thing. It's just what people do today, but it is a far cry, I think we can all be honest, from what the original design was and I think it's a far cry from what is really what will ultimately produce what God wants in terms of blessing marriage and family when you decide to reject the world standard and do it his way.

Now I wanted to know the answer to the question of why. Why is it that Satan is so keen on attacking the institution of marriage and family? And what I've come to believe after studying the book of Genesis is that he attacks the institution of the family because for whatever reason he has chosen the family as the conduit for advancing his promise and plan. This is obvious in the book of Genesis, if you'll see it, he blesses Adam and Eve in Genesis 2. He gives them that beautiful wedding ceremony. He says, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth.

But then in Genesis 3, Eve eats the forbidden fruit. Adam and Eve sin against God. There's a curse on the earth, and then God tells them there's going to be enmity between the two of you. Marriage is going to be hard, romance is going to be difficult. Learning to love each other harmoniously is going to be a challenge. But he gives them a promise in Genesis 3:15 and says, from the seed of the woman. In other words, the woman's offspring is going to bring someone who's going to crush the head of the serpent and essentially restore what you've lost because of sin.

And every generation post-Garden of Eden, Genesis 3, has been asking that question, is this the seed? Is this the promised Messiah? And God's answer to that prayer comes through sex, marriage, and family. It's the offspring of the woman and what you see in the book of Genesis is God commit to advancing his promise through healthy, godly marriages and family, and then Satan try to thwart and supplant God's plan through attacking marriage and family. You see it in Cain and Abel. Cain kills Abel. So who's the promised child now? Abel is dead.

God brings a new person, Seth. And Seth was a son of Adam in that he shared his father's faith. But even the line of Seth is always in enmity with the line of Cain. And you see this tug-of-war between the two, and even Seth's line is not all great. And on and on it goes until you get to Genesis six where the earth had gotten so corrupt, Satan had the sons of God cohabitate or have sex with the daughters of men. Some people think that was fallen angels, some people think it's just unbelievers and believers getting married.

Whatever your view is, Satan was trying to attack the institution of marriage, so much so that God hits the reset button, decides to flood the whole earth, and chooses one man, Noah, who is a son of Seth, the godly line of Adam to redo things. So he floods the earth. He starts over with Noah. And Noah has three sons. And one of his sons represents the offspring of the woman that was Shem. Japheth was also not a godly man, but then you had Ham, who had the curse of the serpent, who was an ungodly man, and you see it again, the tug-of-war between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman, Satan constantly attacking the seed of God's promise as it advances through family.

And what you see in the book of Genesis so beautifully is that irrespective of the opposition and schemes of Satan to try to destroy the promise and plan of God, God's purpose prevails. Even in the life of Abraham who is warts and all, not a great man, even though he and Sarah didn't do it right every time. You know, you got the situation with Hagar and sexual sin in that arena. Even so, God commits himself to be faithful to his promise. Isaac is born, and the seed of the promise continues.

And now the question in Genesis twenty four is, what's going to happen when Abraham and Sarah are both dead? Will the promise die now that God's man is dead? And the answer to that question is no, he's going to continue his promise through a godly husband and wife. So we got to find a godly wife. And that's what Genesis 24 is all about. And I think it'll be really helpful for us, especially those of you who are trying to find a godly spouse now. Let's pick it up in Genesis chapter 24 verse 1.

And it is the longest chapter in the story of Abraham. It may be the longest chapter in the book of Genesis. It may be even the longest. No, it's not the longest chapter in the Bible, but it's close. So somehow we're going to get it done in twenty-one minutes. So let's start. Abraham was now old, getting on in years, and the Lord had blessed him in everything. So

Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his household, who managed everything he owned, Place your hand under my thigh. I'd have a hard time with that one.

And I will have you swear by the Lord God of heaven and God of earth that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, but that you'll go to my land and my family to take a wife for my son Isaac. So I want you to find a wife for my son, but you cannot take it from these women in Canaan because they don't worship the Lord. So the servant says to him, well suppose that I go to your homeland, and the woman that I choose is unwilling to follow me back to this land.

Should I have your son go back to the land you came from? And then Abraham answered him in verse six, No, make sure you do not take my son back there, because the Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house in my native land, the God who spoke to me and swore to me, I'm going to give you this land and to your offspring. That God is going to send an angel before you and you can take a wife for my son from there. If the woman is unwilling to follow you, you're free from this oath to me, but don't let my son go back there.

So the servant placed his hand under his master Abraham's thigh, and he swore an oath to him concerning this matter. I'm stopping there because I mentioned last week one of the devices in the Old Testament in particular to emphasize the main point is this thing called an inclusio. Big fancy word, don't worry about the word, but it's kind of like bookends on a bookshelf. That's a repeated word or phrase that is the main point of everything in between. And it's really hard to miss that one because it says he puts his hand under his thigh, which is just kind of a weird thing.

It's so weird. In fact, I tried to look into it a little bit, and it's really funny that translators try to wiggle out of what's really going on. If you actually look into it, he's not putting his hand under his thigh. You need to go up into the center of the thigh, and that's where he's put his hand and swearing this oath on whatever you want to call that. You know, I'm not going to say it from the stage, but why is he doing that? You know, people wonder why. Some say, well, God's promise to Abraham was about descendants.

So, you know, grabbing the baby maker to emphasize the promise. Some say Abraham is showing his authority as the man of the house or the master of the house and he's basically saying, swear on my children's life that you're going to make good on this promise. It could be that. But it's a big deal because it's bracketed. This is Moses's way of saying Abraham had absolute confidence in the promise of God, so much so that he swore on his life and the life of his descendants, God will make good on his promise.

And so since I'm so confident God's going to make good on his promise, I refuse to allow you to engage in shortcuts, compromise, indecency, violating integrity. You can't do any of those things because it's going to thwart what I believe God wants to do in my family and the

family of my son Isaac. And that's really powerful. That God, that Abraham, I'm sorry, Abraham chooses to do the hard thing, because it was only in choosing the hard path that he could do the right thing. And sometimes when it comes to finding a godly spouse, certainly in this culture, I know that for you to do the right thing in honoring God with your sexuality, with your singleness, with your dating, if you choose to honor God in that, it's going to be a very difficult road, that you will be the oddball out.

To reject the world's way of dating or sexual promiscuity and even believers who engage in that behavior for you to say, I'm going to be someone who wants to honor the Lord in the way that I pursue finding my spouse, it will be extremely challenging. But here's what Abraham knew, and here's why he was willing to take that hard path. And you see it in what he says. He believed that you will never find the right person if you look in the wrong way, or if you look in the wrong place, I'm sorry, and then you'll never find the right person if you pursue them in the wrong way.

And you see that in his two prohibitions. The two things that he says is number one, you cannot choose a spouse from the Canaanites, not because he was a racist, although I saw some people try to make that argument. I think that's crazy. Because Abraham was married to an Egyptian. So he's not a racist. And Moses was in an interracial marriage. So it's not anti-interracial marriage. What it is, is it's anti-unequally yoked. Abraham is saying, these Canaanite women, as beautiful as they may be, they don't worship God. They don't worship the Lord.

They respect us, we get along, but they are not believers. And for the promise of God to continue to the next generation, my son needs a godly woman. He needs a God-fearing woman who worships and honors the Lord. And so you've got to go look for her where she may be found and she will not be found right here, which I think is instructive for people who are dating today. You can't find a woman that God would affirm if you keep looking in places that God wouldn't approve. And I know how difficult that is.

Actually, I don't know, because I've been married for a decade, but I hear it's pretty tough out there. And the internet has made it maybe a little bit easier because you can do the online dating thing and algorithms and filters and whatnot. But it's just very difficult for single people to find a spouse because all of the places where lookers are looking are places that godly people might struggle with compromise. And so it's an important thing, I think, in light of this for local churches to help single people find godly spouses by promoting and doing everything that we can in our power to facilitate those ends.

Because people who are God-fearing people who go to church need to be able to meet up with other God-fearing people in their singleness so they might discover one another and learn about one another. So don't look in the wrong place. Be careful where you look, and then secondly be careful how you chase. Abraham forbids his son from going up there. He

forbids his son from reneging on God's covenant promise because Abraham has painfully learned the lesson. You cannot pursue godly goals through sinful methods. He had already done that with Hagar in Genesis chapter 16.

He knows the painful way that if I try to get what God promised in a way that dishonors the Lord or demonstrates unbelief in the Lord, he will not reward that with his blessing. And why would he? It's a cruel thing for God to bless you in your idolatry. Why would God bless you in what you're ultimately saying when you engage in dating in a way that is sinful? You're saying I don't want to do this God's way. I want to satisfy my passions, my lusts. I want him to love me, and he won't love me if I don't sleep with him or I want to make sure we have chemistry or whatever the reasons are for why people deviate from God's design and maybe they would even say, I know I'm deviating and this is just the way it's going to be.

Why would God bless that when ultimately what you're suggesting is, God, I desire this more than I desire devotion to you. or pleasing you and submitting to your design for this project. God would be cruel to bless that when he, in blessing it, is giving you desires of your heart that are ultimately harmful. When even non-Christian studies show that couples who pursue one another in that way are less likely to stay married, not more likely. And so be careful how you pursue them. Be careful where you look. But if you can settle those two things, I think what this passage is going to show you is a very helpful practical way for how to find that person if you'll do it God's way.

So the servant has his instructions in place, and now he's going to go. So it says in verse ten, the servant took ten of his master's camels, and with all kinds of his master's goods in hand, he went to Aram-naharaim to Nahor's town. Now this was a long journey, as you can see, treacherous, all sorts of terrain. It probably would have been some say 17, some say 20 days on foot or on camel. And he's got ten camels. That's a lot of camels. Why? Not because he has a lot of people, but because he has a lot of stuff.

Because he's going to impress that woman, whoever she is. Look at all these shoes and whatever he's going to impress her with. So he goes. This is Abraham's hometown, remember? Abraham used to live way down here in Ur of the Chaldeans. And then God called him away from there. They get up here and I can't remember the name, starts with the T and Abraham's dad stops, but then Abraham comes all the way over here and his family, one of his brothers, Nahor. He parks it right around here and he's got a town named after the brother.

So Abraham knows my family worships Yahweh at this point and my relatives are going to be much more caliber spouse material than these Canaanite women. So he takes the camels, he's going up there, and at the evening time in verse eleven, the time, underline this, the time when women went out to draw water, he made the camels kneel beside a well outside the town. And then he prays, Lord, God of my master Abraham, make this happen for me

today. Underline that phrase today. And show kindness to my master Abraham. I'm standing here at the spring where the daughters of the men of the town are coming out to draw water, and so let the girl to whom I say, please lower your water jug, so that I may drink. and who responds, Drink, and I'll have water for your camels also.

Let her be the one you have appointed for your servant Isaac, because by this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master. Now before we keep reading, just a quick note on reading the Bible, applying the Bible. It's very important that you distinguish between what is descriptive in the Bible and what is prescriptive in the Bible. When I say descriptive, I mean it describes what took place. It describes this servant praying and basically testing God to say, God, the way I'm going to know that this is the woman for me is because of a special word that comes out of her mouth.

I think that's dangerous. That is not commended often in the scripture. It happens a lot in the scripture, believe it or not, people testing the Lord in that way. But it is sometimes discouraged to put God to the test in that way, especially if your motives are not pure in doing so. Now his motives seem to be pure. But I'd just be careful of trying to find a spouse and say, well, whatever girl irons my shirt, not one shirt but all my shirts, that's who I'm going to marry. You know, I don't know that that's commended, but what is commended throughout the scripture is humility, dependency on God, faith, conviction, proactivity, intentionality, those things are all commended.

And he demonstrates all of them. And so when he finishes praying in verse fifteen, before he had finished speaking, there she was, Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, coming with a jug on her shoulder. Now the servant doesn't know this is kinfolk yet. This is Moses letting us in on the secret. All he sees is a smoking... a beautiful woman who was, look at this, verse 16, very beautiful, a virgin, she was pure, no man had been intimate with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up, and then the servant notice his proactivity.

The servant ran to meet her and said, Please let me have a little water from your jug. And she replied, drink, my lord. And she quickly, notice the adjective, she quickly lowered her jug to her hand and gave him a drink. And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, I'll also draw water for your camels until they've had enough to drink. And his little brain's going ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. Here she is, God's answering my prayers. She's going to water my camels. By the way, ten camels, I don't know if you know this, camels, they drink a lot, a lot of water, and there's ten of them.

So she would have been like back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. Big job. Very gracious, very generous, very industrious. You know, they don't make them like that anymore. This was an incredible act of generosity. So she draws out the water. She quickly, again notice the adjective, she quickly emptied her jug into the trough and hurried to the

well again to draw water. She drew water for all of his camels while the man, underline this, while the man silently watched her to see whether or not the Lord had made his journey a success.

Now, this verse, verse 21, is in principle really instructive for how dating people should go about dating and really everything leading up to here. But two principles I want to give you from these verses. If you're settled, I will look in the right place and I will pursue them the right way. Okay, how? Here's how you do it. Number one. Believe God or expect God to answer your prayer for a godly spouse. And then number two, live as if He's actually going to do it. It's two levels. Believe, expect God to give you your desire for a godly spouse.

That's number one. But don't just expect it. Live as if He will. Now where do you see that in this passage? In this passage, he lives as if God is going to answer his prayer, number one, by taking ten camels full of stuff. He is believing before he begins God is going to make good on this prayer. Abraham said the angel's going to go before me. I'm not only trusting God to do this, I'm going to play my role. I'm going to do my part so that he can. So he takes the ten camels.

What is the second thing he does? He parks his camel where the women were going to be. As soon as he gets to town, he goes where the fish are, right? Not that women are fish, but you get what I'm trying to say. And then he prays. So you see his dependence on the Lord, his faith, his conviction. But notice how he prays. He says, today, let it be today. I don't just want to wait forever and ever and ever, some indefinite period of time. God, when you get around to it, if it's your will.

No, no, I believe God wants to do this. The context, my recent circumstances suggest he wants to do it in a pretty quick period of time. And so today, would you make this happen? Now the sign that he asked for. The sign is not up to God necessarily. The sign is up to him and it's up to the other girl. He doesn't say, God, if you want me to marry this girl, spell out marry her in the clouds. You know, he doesn't do that. He says, let the girl to whom I say.

So it's his responsibility to take the initiative. He's got to go and engage her in conversation. And I really believe if it hadn't have been Rebekah, who just so happened to be the first woman and she was everything he wanted, so God was gracious in that. But even if it hadn't have been Rebekah, I think this servant would have just went up to every single girl at the well and been like, Can I have a drink? Can I have a drink? That weird guy at Walmart. You're like, do not get with that guy.

He would have been that guy and he would have been waiting and trusting on the Lord, not passively resigned, hoping and praying. No. Engaged, proactive, intentional, out there, and I think that's instructive for people who are dating today to live as if it's going to happen. There is a balance between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. There's a

difference between the providence of God and the responsibility of man. Those things work in tandem. God is sovereign. God is provider. He is faithful, but he uses means to achieve his will and one of the means that God uses is human agency.

Now there's all kinds of theology and people will debate about how is our will enslaved or free or whatnot? And I'm not talking about that debate so much as I am a conviction that God uses means and I am going to be at least partially the means that God uses to answer this prayer. And I just know some people who are trying to date, and some of them just don't pray. They're like, oh, God knows I need a spouse and I know God knows, so I'm just going to, you know, not pray.

That's foolish. Some people don't pray. Some people pray, but they don't live as if God wants to answer their prayer. They're just kind of Eeyore, resigned: if it happens, it's a miracle. And then some people pray and expect God to answer, but then when God answers, it just goes right over their head. They don't act on the opportunity. It just passes them by. It reminds me of, you probably heard this story, the preacher sitting at the house. The weatherman says on the news, We got a flood coming. Get out of your house, go to safety.

But the preacher is this godly man. He says, I love the Lord and trust the Lord. He's going to provide a way for me to be delivered. And so he sits there on his porch while the rain comes, and then it gets crazy. I mean, the water's rising, and so one of his congregation members comes in his boat. Pastor, get in the boat. The water's coming. You know, we commend you for being confident in God, but this is going to kill you if you don't get in my boat. So the pastor says to the congregation man, O ye of little faith, I trust the Lord.

He's going to deliver me from the flood that's coming, and so the boat goes, and then the city boat comes, you know, the city people who are like you're going to sue us if we don't get you out of here. And so they plead with the pastor, please get in the boat. And he says, no, I believe in God. I'm trusting him to deliver me. And then finally the helicopter comes, you know, the Red Cross or whoever it is, and they drop down the ladder. Pastor, please, you're going to die if you don't take the help that is coming your way.

And he says, no, I trust God to give me what I need to be delivered from this flood and the helicopter leaves, the flood waters rise, the pastor drowns, and he dies. And then he stands before God in judgment and he says, God, why didn't you deliver me from the flood? And the Lord says, I did, you dummy. I sent you two boats and a helicopter, and you didn't take them. And everybody's not laughing because they've heard the story. But I think it's a beautiful illustration of how some people date.

You're just kind of waiting for magic to happen instead of getting in the game and letting God use you. Give the Lord something to work with. So expect God to act, live as if He will. Number two, evaluate who God brings to ensure that they're fit. This is a beautiful picture of

that because he goes in with a checklist, right? My mom told me when I started dating, Wesley, she called me Wesley. I don't like that name by the way. Wesley, but you can say that, Mom, just nobody else. Wesley, you need a checklist for who you're going to marry.

You don't just want to date anybody. And so I made a checklist. And I'll never share it with anybody because I was a teenager and very shallow and, you know, you don't need to have those thoughts. But that's not to say physical attractiveness is unimportant. This passage says that she was beautiful, but it also says that she was a virgin. It says that she was generous. It says that she was humble. It says that she was service-oriented. So you do need to be physically attracted to your spouse. Don't listen to anybody who says you don't.

That's nonsense. But looks are not the only thing that matters when you're evaluating a person. You need to evaluate their character. You need to evaluate their faith. You need to, as this man did, watch them from a distance. Everything checked the boxes early on? And some people see that. Oh she's pretty, he's nice. He's popular, whatever girls are into. And they jump in on the relationship, but they become so committed early, or sometimes they introduce physical, sexual elements so early in the process that that lust blinds them from things that they should have seen.

I certainly was delivered from women that would not have been good for me, but I was blind to it in the moment because I was being driven by other things. I didn't have eyes to see. And for women in particular, thank you Lord. But it wasn't until after we broke up that I had the necessary distance to say, oh wow, well that's not good. So you need to have eyes to see what the Lord wants you to see so that you can determine is this or is this not a godly spouse for me?

So expect God to act, live as if he will, evaluate who he brings, ensure that they're fit. He does both of those things. He thinks things are looking good. And so he engages in a formal commitment. So he says in verse 22, as the camels finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing half a shekel, and for her wrist two bracelets weighing ten shekels of gold, and he asked the question, Whose daughter are you? He asked, please tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?

Now he's not like, hey girl, you want to go to bed? This is not that. This is him formally suggesting, hey, I am looking for a suitor or I'm a suitor looking for a spouse. The gifts were a very subtle but direct way of saying my intentions are XYZ. He's asking to go to the father's house, not so he can sleep with her, but so he can talk to her parents about the viability of that kind of a result. And so she says, well yeah, these are some nice bracelets. I'd love to have you come over and have that conversation.

And so she answers him, we have plenty of straw and feed and a place to spend the night. And then notice this, the man kneels low, he worships God. He says, thank you, Lord.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not withheld his kindness and faithfulness from my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relative. So he's praising God. Now for us, you know, we would say, man, that girl's really good looking, but you know, she's my cousin.

I said that a lot growing up in Roby. I was related to all the girls. But in the Bible, at least in the book of Genesis, it wasn't like, man, she's good looking, but she's my cousin. It was like, she's so fine and she's my cousin. Yes! You know, let's go. That was the criteria. Again, I don't recommend that, but, oh, just, yeah, don't do that. But what he sees is this is God's answer to my prayer, and he obviously recognizes, thank you, God. But then he goes to her house and he engages in a formal process and it's instructive for us.

If you're going to find a godly spouse you need to establish some kind of formal commitment and be clear with your intentions. I think so many people engage in the dating game like it's a game, like it's trivial, like there's no there there. It's just kind of like let's go have fun together. I enjoy your company. That, I don't think, is the purpose for dating. The purpose of dating is to establish a relationship, to pursue conversation of whether or not this should be so. And so that's exactly what he does.

He goes to the girl's house. She knows that's what's going on. She, verse 28, she runs to her mother's household, tells mom about everything. And Rebekah had a brother. His name was Laban. Uncle Laban's a bad dude. We're going to learn about him a little bit later. When Laban hears about it, he runs out to the man at the spring. And as soon as he had seen the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrist, and when he had heard his sister Rebekah's words, that this man said this to me, he went to the man, and he was standing there by the camels at the spring.

So what Laban is all about is money. We're going to learn that later on in the story. Laban says, man, that's some nice gold bracelets. That's a nice gold ring. This guy wants to take Rebekah as a spouse. This is a great opportunity for me to get rich. That's what Laban is thinking. And so he goes out to talk to the servant. And Laban said, come, you who are blessed by the Lord, why are you standing out here? I've prepared the house. I've got a place for the camels. So the man came into the house, the camels were unloaded, straw and feed were given to the camels, and then water was brought in to wash his feet and the feet of the men with him.

This is the full meal deal. They set a meal before him, but notice this, the servant said, I will not eat until I have said what I have to say. So Laban said, please speak. So when it comes to finding a godly spouse, I think this guy is so instructive. He is no nonsense. I'm on a mission. Here's why I'm here. Here's what I'm set out to do. And if you're not interested, that's fine. Just let me know. And that's essentially what he does. We don't have time today to read the

rest of the text because the rest of the text is essentially this servant repeating verbatim everything in the first 30 verses.

He says, he gives them this speech. He says, I am the servant of my master Abraham. Abraham is super rich. He's blessed by the Lord. Abraham had this wife named Sarah. She was super old. She couldn't have any kids. But then God miraculously gave her this baby named Isaac, and Isaac is a blessing of the Lord. He's advancing God's plan. And so Isaac is going to receive everything that Abraham owns. And did I mention Abraham's super rich? And Isaac needs a wife. So my master Abraham sent me up here to find a wife for Isaac.

But I can only find a wife that is of this particular religion and of this particular family. And it just so happens that your daughter Rebekah, as soon as I was done praying and I was giving God this sign and all these things, that she matched up immediately with the sign and I was like, thank you Lord, this is from the Lord. And so I asked her if I could come into your house, and that's why I'm here. And he closes the whole speech in verse 49, and he basically says, if you are with me on this situation, then tell me, and if you are not with me on this situation, then tell me, and I'm going to go elsewhere.

And this is so instructive for dating today. Number one, it is an indictment on casual dating that says you just kind of play around and mess around with whoever you want to mess around with. It's almost as if it's an avenue for gratifying your sexual desires. Divorced from a pursuit of marriage. And that is damaging. It's damaging to you. It's damaging to your soul. It messes up your commitment apparatus. It robs you of the gift of purity that you do want to be able to give to your forever spouse, whoever that may be.

So I would be very careful of casual dating. Be clear with your intentions. Date to marry. And I know that's weird, especially if you're a young person. Well, I'm 17 years old. You know, well maybe you shouldn't be dating if you're 17 years old, or maybe you should date, but don't waste the time because from whatever age is appropriate, ask your father or mother to whatever age it's too late, that is a definite short period of time. And you've got to steward it well. And there is a wave in our culture that says you need to postpone marriage or you don't even need to be married.

Marriage is a waste of your time and marriage is a bad bargain. There's a whole red pill movement for men that, you know, women aren't any good anymore and it's very hateful and cruel and ungodly. But all that, I think it's an attack from Satan. I think it's a counterfeit of the genuine. The genuine approach to dating based on God's word is I am dating to marry and that in the dating process I am looking for confirmation this is or this is not who God has for me. And when it is clear it is not who God has for you, then you should end it.

You should say, be clear: it either is or it isn't. And if it isn't, that's fine. God bless you. You know, go on your way, but I am not going to waste my time. And if it is who God wants for

you, then don't waste your time. Don't be like, oh I got to make a certain amount of money and I got to meet certain criteria of my educational goals or whatever the case may be, you need to be a wise steward, but I see so many people miss incredible joy, marital bliss, because they're adhering themselves to some standard that is not from the scriptures that they think they have to pass in order to tie the knot.

And I don't know that that's always wise. Be formal, be clear, be direct, be honest, but don't waste your time with people who are going in a different direction from who you are. So he doesn't waste his time and they basically hear his speech and they're like, well, this is clearly from the Lord. So let's see here. Verse 50, Laban and Bethuel answered, this is from the Lord. We have no choice in the matter. Notice they are believers in Yahweh. They see God has clearly orchestrated all these events, and so they affirm the agreement and they say, Rebekah's right here in front of you.

Take her and go and let her be a wife for your master's son just as the Lord has spoken. So he rejects delay. They are believing by faith that this is what God wants. And so the servant's like, all right, let's go. What's crazy is Rebekah's mom is like, can we wait ten days, and Laban is like, can we wait a little while? Can I get a little more money out of you? And the servant essentially says, no. No, if this is who God wants, if God is blessing this, then we need to go now.

We don't need to waste our time. Again, reaffirming the principle of don't waste your time. Don't be a bad steward of your singleness, especially when God is blessing. The last thing you're going to see from this text is that when it comes to finding a godly spouse, you need to entrust God with everything and wait on him to bless. And that's essentially what these people do. If you'll go back to that verse. Nope, backwards. Let me grab it. They basically say, here's Rebekah, take her. And then they begin to bless Rebekah, verse 60, saying to her, our sister, may you become thousands upon ten thousands, may your offspring possess the city gates of their enemies.

Then Rebekah and her female servants got up, they mounted the camels, they followed the man, and so the servant took Rebekah and they left. What they're doing in that little phrase there, may your generations be thousands upon ten thousands, they're affirming God's promise to Abraham. All of that language was used of Abraham in his covenant promise in Genesis 17 and in Genesis 22 and some other places. They're essentially saying, we believe the Lord. We believe. Rebekah, God is inviting you into this union that is going to advance his promise and plan.

And we bless you, which by the way, man, is a good thing to get the blessing of whoever it is that you're going to marry. It's an important thing because it invites them to affirm God's will. And you want everybody involved in the family to both know it is God's will and affirm it's God's will, even though there's unanswered questions. I'm sure Rebekah had unanswered

questions. But she gets on the camel anyway. And I'm sure Isaac down here in Beer-lahai-roi doing his thing, I'm sure he has unanswered questions. I'm sure every good looking Canaanite woman that walked by, he thought to himself I hate my father.

You know, he's so strict. He's such a prude. I could marry her. I could convert her. You know, missionary dating is always a success. But he can't. He's waiting on the Lord. But here's what happens. When you will wait on the Lord, he will be faithful to his promise and he will bless you. So entrust everything to God, wait on him to bless, and then don't let unanswered questions keep you from the reward of faith. Let's read the rest of the passage and then we're going to be done. So he says, don't delay me, the Lord's made my journey a success.

So they called Rebekah. She goes with him. It says in early evening, verse 63. In early evening, Isaac went out to walk in the field and looking up he saw camels coming. I bet that was a beautiful sight. And he saw a little silhouette of a good looking lady on that camel. Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she got down from her camel, and she asked the servant, who's that man coming in the field to meet us? And the servant answered, oh, that's my master. So she took her veil, covered herself.

And then the servant told Isaac everything that he had done, and then Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he took Rebekah to be his wife. Isaac loved her, and he was comforted after his mother's death. And so he didn't allow uncertainty about an unknown future to rob him from the reward of faith. And I would encourage you to do the same. Now I know you live in a culture, single people, where there are all kinds of reasons why you shouldn't. There are all kinds of reasons why they aren't.

But the culture is confused on this issue. And it's obvious they're confused because look at the fruit of how the culture does marriage. Half of marriages end in divorce, if not more so. The practices of our culture of cohabitation, premarital sex, adultery, all of it is destroying marriages. It's making it less likely of happily ever after. And so reject the counterfeit and embrace God's design. Will it be hard? Yes. But sometimes you've got to choose a hard path to do what's right and honor the Lord. Sometimes the hard path is the good path.

And if you will trust the Lord, be wise and discerning in where you look and how you look. God will bring you. He will answer your prayer for a godly spouse. And when he does, don't allow your uncertainty of this or that or the other thing keep you from the reward of faith. Because God has chosen marriage. He has an invested interest in marriage, because he picked marriage to be the mirror of the gospel. He is so for your marriage because your marriage is attached to his plan to advance the promise of the covenant, to display the glory of Christ and his love for his church.

And so if you will commit yourself to him, he will commit himself to you and enrich your married life so that it becomes a beautiful testament of Christ's love for his church. And so as

we enter into a time of invitation, if there's a way that I can pray with you or for you as an individual or maybe you have children that are walking through this arena of life, I'd be happy to do that. I'm going to ask a handful of people. Jeff's right back there in the back and Jace if you don't mind posting up over here.

For people who want to pray in the back, you can go back there and pray with them about anything that's on your heart. But let's use this time of invitation to wrestle with God's word. The invitation is an invitation to respond to God and what he has spoken through his word. And if there's a public decision you would like to make, you can do that now by coming forward or by scanning the QR code and taking initiative on what God's leading you to do. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time and your word.

I'm so thankful that the word is not just about spiritual things, but it's about very earthly things like dating and romance and sex and marriage, childbirth, all of that. You have a design, you have a way, you have an invested interest in blessing that and rewarding that and promoting that so that it displays your wisdom and your power and your goodness. And so I pray that for every individual in this room and every individual they represent because of their children or grandchildren. I pray that you would raise up a generation of believers who are courageous and strong, who choose the hard path because they know that's the path that you will bless.

I pray that you would give them discernment. I pray you'd give them humility, a heart of repentance where they have deviated from this to not live in shame, but to hear the invitation of their Heavenly Father that there is a better way. That I want to bless you. I want to make this what it needs to be, but I need you to trust me. I need you to let me have the wheel. I know that induces fear, anxiety, frustration. I know all of those things. And so I pray that, Holy Spirit, you would overcome the temptations of the evil one, that you would overcome fear and anxiety of an uncertain or unknown future, and that you would give us, like you gave Abraham, a heart of faith that is confident, strong, unapologetic, and that you would reward that faith with a demonstration of your faithfulness and your provision and your commitment to your promise.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.