

PP The Fellowship of the Ring: God Brought Her to the Man, 3

9/27/2009

Text **Genesis 2:22-23; 24**

Illus A flight attendant spent a week's vacation in the Rockies, captivated by the mountains, the blue skies, and the sweet smelling pines. But she also was charmed by a very eligible bachelor who owned and operated a cattle ranch and lived in a log cabin. At the end of the week, he proposed. But it had all happened so quickly that she decided to return home and to her job, feeling that she would somehow be guided to whatever the right decision was. The next day, in flight, wrestling with what to do, she stepped into the rest room to splash some cool water on her face when they encountered turbulence. The sign in the rest room lit up at that moment: PLEASE RETURN TO THE CABIN. So she did--to the cabin back in the mountains. *Readers Digest*

Is that how we make decisions about who to marry?

Does God have a say in who we marry?

Or are we left on our own to make the decision?

Those who are in painful, terrible marriages, often begin to ask *did I make a mistake?*

Did I marry out of God's will and choose the wrong person?

Some are so paralyzed by the fear of marrying the wrong person that their hearts cannot make up their minds

Others have an alarming lack of discernment in walking to the altar, blinded by the romanticism of love

Last week we saw that God pronounced it **'not good'** for Adam to be alone

So He put the man into a deep sleep, took a rib and with it, created a woman for him

Isn't it such a joy to give a gift to someone and see their joy in receiving it?

I love my kids' birthdays and Christmas days when they open their gifts with smiles from ear to ear

Our God loves to give and I can picture His joy as He brought Eve to Adam

As Adam's blurred vision began to clear after the surgery, what drew his gaze, for this one moment away from God, was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen

His heart is so overwhelmed that it spills out in words and he says:

“Wow, God, are you sure about this? Is this really the one for me? What if we get married and 10 years from now we are both miserable? I don't know if this is the one for me. How can I know for sure?”

Actually, he broke out into the world's first song: ***“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (23)***

No trace of doubt, just glad understanding that they belonged with one another

How could he be so confident and from where did he gain this assurance that she was for him?

PP It came from the verse before: ***“And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man.”***

He had an unshakeable joyful trust in the guidance of His heavenly Father that produced a settled confidence in this woman who would be his wife

He had perfect faith and trust in the knowledge that His heavenly Father was guiding all things to their most satisfying and God-honoring end

And Adam rejoiced in her, and held fast to her, and they learned to love one another
But can we have that same confidence today, or was this a one-time incident
After all Adam only had one person to choose from, it was kind of a no brainer
Does God still bring marriages together? Can you be confident that He will for you, or
has done this for you?
Last week we saw that there is no greater human tool God uses for our spiritual growth
and highest blessings than our spouses

PP *“If you want to have a right understanding of God’s guidance, you must understand that God’s will about which job you hold down for the next fifty years pales in comparison with His determination to present you spotless and blameless before Christ on the last day. In fact, everything else is simply a handmaid to that one great aim. Whether and who you marry, what job you have, which church you attend—all these are simply tools in God’s hand to fashion you into a pure and spotless member of the body of Christ.”* Guidance and the Voice of God by Jensen and Payne

Today, I believe what we will see is that God cares very much about who we marry and
that He invites His children to put their joyful trust in His providential care
PP God’s providence is His faithful and effective care and guidance of everything which
He has made toward the end which He has chosen, our spiritual growth
And this is affirmed verse after verse and story after story in the Bible, and clearly seen in
the search for a wife for Isaac, the son of Abraham
In this story we see Abraham (representing God the Father) who sends his most trusted
servant (representing the Holy Spirit), to find a wife (Israel and later the church),
for his son Isaac (representing Christ)
PP And this storybook wedding contains three scenes

PP 1-First Scene-The Gift of the Father

In ancient days, it was the parents who would arrange their children’s marriages, and a
wife for his son was the father’s gift of love
And the new bride and groom would learn to love one another
Just as God brought Eve to Adam, Abraham would bring a wife to his son Isaac
Except that Abraham is now 140 years old, his wife Sarah having died 3 years before
And Isaac is 40 still unmarried and still mourning his mother’s death
But he must marry for God’s promise of a great nation from Abraham to be fulfilled
So Abraham sent his most trustworthy servant back to his own homeland to find a wife
that would be his life-long gift to his son
It was so important to Abraham that his son’s marriage would be equally yoked, not from
the Canaanites, that the servant took an oath by placing his hand under Abraham’s thigh, on or near his
genitals
This was customary and what it meant was if the servant did not honor his word and
fulfill this task, then the children born to Abraham’s line would avenge the servant’s unfaithfulness
So the servant took gifts for a dowry and ten camels and some men and set out on the 460
mile journey back to Abraham’s people, taking an estimated 17 days to arrive

PP 2-Second Scene: The faith of the Servant

It was early evening when he arrived and he went to the city's well and made his camels
kneel at the watering trough

Camel-herders train their camels to do this by taking their just-born camels and tying
their four feet under their bellies and putting a carpet over their backs with stones on the borders so they
can't rise for 20 days, teaching them the habit of bending their knees to rest themselves or when
they are loading and unloading cargo

They were kneeled at the trough but there was no water yet in it

The fetching of water was usually the job of the young women and they would get the
water in the evening in the cool of the day

So bowed his head and prayed to God for success on this mission

He didn't ask for a miracle, like Gideon did with the fleece

He simply asked that a young woman would respond with abundant grace to his request
for a drink of water

Illus Me and my list that I burned up to the Lord

We read (15) that before he could even finish his prayer, a woman came to the well

PP Her name was Rebekah, which means *flattering*

For she was '**very attractive**' and a maiden, meaning a woman of marriageable age

This would have been obvious to the servant because there is no mention of her wearing a
Veil, which meant she was unmarried and unpromised

He asked her for a drink after she had drawn her water and she willingly gave it, then
she volunteered to water their camels, all ten of them

To get an idea of how incredible this was, you need to know that camels drink between
20 and 25 gallons a day

The ancient water jars typically held no more than three gallons

At least 200 gallons for the camels and nearly 70 trips to the well '**until they have
finished drinking**' (19)

All the while, '**The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had
prospered his journey or not.**' (21)

Yes she was beautiful, but he was gazing at the look of her character,

If Isaac was to be given a wife, she must be lovely in who she was as a woman

And Rebekah's character was absolutely stunning

She was modest, polite, gracious, caring, hard-working, and serving

She was perfect for Isaac, but would she say '**I will**'?

Her brother Laban, the future father in law of Jacob, came down to the well and extended
hospitality and while there the servant explained the mission that Abraham gave
to him and how God had led him to Rebekah

Rebekah's father and brother initially consented to allow her to go to marry Isaac, but the
next day they tried to delay him

But the servant insisted he must depart that day, and so the family brought her out and
simply asked her "**Will you go with this man?**"

She answered with her choice, "**I will go.**"

No one forced her to marry Isaac, she was not coerced, she was allowed a free choice

Yet, through all of this God was guiding all things according to His sovereign will

PP 3-Third Scene: The Joy of the Son

We have seen the character of Rebekah, here we see the character of Isaac
The third scene finds the group approaching Isaac who was out in the fields meditating
He was a man of God who worshipped God and thought much on the goodness of God
As the sun was setting and the evening sounds began to emerge, Isaac was there to take in
the beauty and reflect on the handiwork of God

Not during the day, because then he was hard at work where he should be
But in the evening so that he could worship and pray, perhaps even at that moment for the
success of the servant who would be soon bringing to him a woman to marry
Isaac was trusting in the Lord with all his heart, leaning not on his own understanding but
in all his ways acknowledging God, and God was about to direct his steps
The Scriptures tell us in verse 62 that he had just returned from Beer-lahai-roi (be-ar
lachay ro iy)

PP The place means in Hebrew the *well of the Living One that sees me*
God was seeing Isaac who was walking with him

PP And He saw Isaac, *whose name means laughter*, but whose laughter had turned to
mourning at the loss of his mother

Though it had been three years since she had died, he still had no comfort
He was alone with no wife and like Adam, it wasn't good for Isaac to be alone

Now notice how the Scriptures records this in 63-64: *'And he lifted up his eyes and saw,
and behold, there were camels coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she
dismounted from the camel...'*

This was extraordinary, for masters make their servants come to them, but here Isaac
goes to them, eager to meet this woman, trusting that God had guided his servant
to the one for him

PP And when she saw a man approaching she *'dismounted'*, or in the Hebrew sprang off
her camel and she asked who this man was

And when she learned that it was Isaac, she immediately put on her veil, a woman's sign
of modesty, submission and being spoken for

In ancient weddings, the veil symbolized authority and in the ceremony the groom would
take it off the head of his wife and lay it on his shoulders, signifying that he bore the responsibility of
leading in this marriage

Did you notice that Isaac demonstrated no doubt that this woman was to be his wife?

He asked the servant no question, he needed no time to decide if he would receive her

Was it her beauty that convinced him? Or his loneliness?

The Bible gives one clue, and it is found in verse 66: *"And the servant told Isaac all the
things that he had done."*

Not all that the servant did, but all that God had done in his journey

He described to Isaac what happened at the well, how clearly God answered his prayers

And Isaac, who trusted in His God and discerned His guidance in his servant's journey,
joyfully received her as his wife

There is actually a fourth scene in this story because no doubt much transpired between verse 66 and 67, between first introductions and the day of the wedding
And in this final scene, we are allowed to peek in on their marriage in verse 67

“Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.”

Genesis 24:67

Note the order in this verse

Isaac brought her to his mother’s tent on the day of their wedding

It was common in those days that husbands and wives each had their own living quarters

They were married

And he loved her

He was comforted and his grief was taken away

Love came after the wedding because it more something you walk into than fall into

It was loving her, and being loved by her that took away his grief

God brought the two of them together, from 460 miles away

He brought Rebekah to Isaac as a gift, just as he had brought Eve to Adam

Yet they were not compelled or forced to marry

They freely chose to love one another and give to each other the rest of their lives

They each placed their trust in God and learned to love one another!

God truly is the Lord of the rings

PP Application

Do you express appreciation for the gift that God has given you in marriage? Praise your spouse at least one time a day, not only for what that person does, but for the character of Christ you see in him/her.

Watch what happens when you exercise sincere, spontaneous praise!