

Genesis (Quality: Good)

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Date: 27 November 1983

Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

[0 : 00] Good evening to the 24th chapter of the book of Genesis.

And we are considering today a clause that is in the 27th verse. Verse 27.

I, being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.

I need hardly explain or repeat, but I'll do so for those who were not present this morning.

In the way.

[1 : 38] And we were looking at this remarkable character that we have in the book of Genesis, who was Abraham's chief servant, had been in his service for many years, had risen to a place of authority and responsibility, and had every kind of responsibility placed in his hands by his master Abraham, who at this time was growing old and coming nearer and nearer to the end of his journey.

And we saw this morning how he addressed himself to this formidable task of going into a far distant country, searching out of people that he did not even know whether they existed or whether they did not, and bringing back from that one particular people or family a suitable damsel for his master's son Isaac to be his wife.

And I want us to continue with that striking feature again tonight, trying to draw forth from it, some teaching that may be helpful for you and me, in seeking to be found in that way, the way, the way of life and the way of salvation.

Now, some commentators, I know, I have seen, I can't agree with them, they tried to make types and figures out of almost anything in the Bible, and they take these three characters, Abraham, Isaac, and his servant.

as representing the Trinity. But, when you come to examine that fairly closely, you'll see how it cannot possibly hold any validity at all.

[4 : 40] Because the Father had perfect foreknowledge foreknowledge of the bride for his son, Jesus Christ.

There was foreknowledge of the Father of everyone who would be born again and would be joined to Jesus Christ in love and in truth.

Then again, Isaac, as if they represent us, being Christ. He came himself, the Lord Jesus did, he came himself into this world to seek out his own bride.

He came and he laid down his own life for that bride. To wash that bride in his own precious blood and to save them.

And then again, the Holy Spirit is the one that calls and quickens. You see, the whole such teaching falls utterly to the ground when you come to look into it for a moment.

[5 : 56] And we therefore reject such an interpretation. that we shall find, I believe, far, far more of wonderful teaching and encouragement for our own personal lives here in this part of the Word of God if we have hearts to receive it and to understand it.

Now therefore, let us return to this journey of this Abraham's servant. I said this morning, he had been more than 40 years in the service of Abraham.

He could be well trusted. And Abraham made him swear that he would carry out his wishes as far as he was able to do.

And if he could not do so, he could return and would be clear of all his oaths, his promises, and no redress would be required from him.

We come to the point then this evening where he has reached the house of Nahor and has met with the daughter, Rebecca, in that most wonderful way in answer to prayer by the well where he had asked the Lord for a clear, definite sign that he was coming to one who had been chosen not by him but by the Lord as a bride for his master's son Isaac.

[7 : 55] And when he reaches this house, Rebecca offers to provide provender for his cattle and everything that he might require himself.

Now the first thing I want us to take notice of and to beware of also, there are one or two things that we need to beware as we take illustration from this remarkable account of the journey of Abraham's servant which I believe will help you, you young people, in seeking to walk in the ways of the Lord and to find that one way that leads to life eternal.

There always will be something wherever the children of God may go and however prosperous their journey may seem to be, there's always something in their lot that seems to spoil and for a moment at least to undo all the blessedness.

Now this was first of all a subtle pretension. I want to show you to point out how it comes in and I want you also to beware of it.

especially the young people when they are beginning to follow after the things of God. They will be confronted, there's no question about it whatsoever, from some quarter or other some subtle pretension.

[9 : 51] That is to say some person who will come along with all the fair pretensions in the world and yet really in the heart, deep down in his heart, there is nothing but evil design and purpose.

Now that was Laban, brother of Rebecca. And we read his words in the 32nd verse.

The man came unto the house or rather in the 31st verse and he said, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord.

Wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared thee house, for I have prepared the house and room for the camels.

He had done nothing of the sort. Rebecca had done all the preparation. This was sheer pretension on the part of Laban.

[11 : 03] And why was it done? Because he saw the earrings and the golden bracelets. He saw the jewels that had been brought right out from that far distant country.

to reward and to encourage Rebecca to make the journey back home to Isaac. He thought he was going to make himself rich and really to profit by this man's ignorance, perhaps, shall we say.

And therefore, first thing that this man had to confront and be confronted with was subtle pretension on the part of Laban.

Now you see, it's not all things that are fair that are always right. You have to sift a great deal in your lives, young people.

people. You come into contact with various persons and also with various things. They seem on the surface to be quite good and profitable and possibly there's something in it that will be beneficial.

[12 : 26] Perhaps we could make use of it. but you have to be very watchful and very careful lest behind it all there's nothing more than subtle pretension.

That is to say, an outward profession which has no real intent and no real purpose.

Now you know, that is a very common sort of thing. And a good many people are carried away by it.

Those first confrontations in a believer's life following after Christ are often some of the greatest difficulties that they have to confront.

in their spiritual experience. And they need a great deal of prayer. I noticed one thing, the Abraham servant was a wise man.

[13 : 35] He did not fall for these words of flattery. Blessed art thou come in, thou blessed of the Lord. He didn't take any notice of that terminology or that address.

He could see through it. He was a man of experience. And above all he was a man of prayer. And I'm quite sure of this, that he had prayed not only to be guided to Rebecca, the right person, but he had prayed also to be delivered from all others that were not of the same mind and of the same purpose.

Now that's the first thing I want to bring before you. And you see it here very clearly. When he saw the gold, the silver, the earrings, and all the things that this servant of Abraham had brought, he says, come in, thou blessed of the Lord, you're welcome.

It wasn't really the servant of Abraham that was welcome, it was the gold, the silver, and the possessions that he brought with him. Beware, my dear young people, of people who are more after what you have than what you are.

Beware of such, because subtle pretension is a real danger to us all, and especially to those who are young.

[15 : 24] Then secondly, there is superficial promise, superficial promise. He said, I have prepared, 32nd verse, I have prepared everything for you, 31st verse, I have prepared the house and room for the camels.

Of course, the servant of Abraham could see through this. He hadn't had the time to do it. And the servant of Abraham could well see the real value of his promises.

They were superficial, superficial promises. And you can get many of those sort of things. People who will promise you all kinds of things, but they will never carry them out.

They promise you liberty, but they will make you more bond slaves of sin and Satan than you were ever so before.

they will promise you greater opportunity and all the result is they will contract and hem in and reduce the activity of those who are seeking after the way, the Lord's way, the way of life salvation.

[17 : 04] And then thirdly, we find also surreptitious postponement. Now you see, Laban, and we shall have and as we go through the book of Genesis at some time in the future, we shall find a good deal about Laban.

Jacob knew him well, he had to suffer a great deal at his hands, and he knew how much surreptitious postponement was one of the arts that Laban employed in attempting to divert Jacob from his purpose and his intent.

Now he comes now, we read here, in the same way and the same manner, and it's the 55th verse, we read these words, and her brother and her mother said, let the damsel abide with us a few days, at least ten, after that she shall go.

You see, surreptitious postponement. They wanted, in other words, to delay the great purpose of this Abraham's servant, and their sister, his sister Rebecca, and her daughter, in going forth to meet her husband, her bridegroom, Isaac, for which he had come the whole way from the land of Canaan, to find a bride for his son, his master's son, Isaac.

Yes, my friends, beware of what may appear to be very reasonable. Ten days, well, that's very little, isn't it?

[19 : 22] But what would be beyond the ten days when that was finished and that was over? Another ten days? What would take place during those ten days to divert the mind of Abraham's servant from returning with Rebecca?

They wanted to keep both he and Rebecca with all the wealth that he had brought and therefore there was this attempt, subtle attempt, at surreptitious postponement.

but here Abraham's servant has the answer. He has the answer of a good conscience. He has sworn to his master that he will bring back a bride for his son Isaac.

And there were no conditions in that swearing, that oath. He said, let me be gone. Let me be up and going. I must be about this business.

You know when the Lord Jesus Christ was here, the first words that the Holy Spirit records in the word of God, of him speaking, were these words, Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?

[21 : 13] Wist ye not, they were spoken to his mother and Joseph, Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business.

Twelve years of age, the dear son of God knew, like Abraham's servant knew, that he must be about the business for which he had been sent, and which he had come all this distance to undertake.

And nothing must be allowed to divert the child of God, the seeker, the soul that would walk in the ways of the Lord. Nothing must be allowed to postpone, to put off or to deter such souls from pressing heart after Christ and after his truth and after life eternal.

God. Now, you see, there are three things in this most striking and wonderful narrative in the word of God, and three things that speak volumes to you and to me, if we would indeed be among those who would be found in the way, the Lord shall lead us.

I being in the way, the Lord led me. You know, there's indescribable value, preciousness in those words.

[22 : 59] If you can say those words for yourself, my friend, with truth and reality, they're very, one, and you're in a very blessed place and position, I being in the way.

Oh, I know how easy it is today to hear of those who are in all kinds of ways. You know, there was a time in the book, in the Bible, when King Ahab was joining up with Jehoshaphat, and they were going to battle against their enemies at Ramoth Gilead, and Ahab said, let us find out first whether we have the word of the Lord with us.

And they went and got 400, I think it was, prophets of the Lord, 400 of them. And they all came down to Jehoshaphat and to Ahab.

And Ahab asked them all the same question and he got from them all the same answer. Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the Lord will be with you.

But you know, they weren't easy about it. Even though there was all that overwhelming weight of opinion, they were all these prophets were saying this is the way, there's one way, you must go along that way, that's the right way.

[24 : 42] They weren't somehow or other truly comfortable about the testimony of these prophets. Jehoshaphat said, haven't you got one more prophet?

Yes, he said, I have. But he's my enemy, he's always preaching against me, he's telling me the truth and I don't like it. If we ask him, he'll tell us something very different from all these others.

Jehoshaphat said, I'm not going down to that battle until I hear what this man, this one man has to say. So they fetch him, Micaiah his name, and he comes, stands there in the face of these 400 prophets.

And these two great kings, and they say, what shall we do about Ramoth Gilead? He says, go up. And they know full well that he's just mocking the united voice of these prophets.

He said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains, and the Lord said, these are like sheep without a shepherd. Let them all return unto their own house.

[26 : 08] And Ahab said, did I not tell you? He would profit ill against us, and not good. But he was the right word. You see, it was a case of Old Testament ecumenism, pure and simple.

There were 400 of them. they were all saying, let us go one way. Let us tell the people one thing. Let us have one voice in this great important matter.

Eerie disregarding truth. Let us all say one thing. We shall be united at least. But there was one man with the courage of his conviction who would tell what God the Lord had spoken to him.

And he said, thou shalt surely die and perish in the battle of Ramoth Gilead, which came to pass. You see, that very day, Ahab was slain in the battle.

now then, there will be many in these days in which you live, you dear young people, there will be any amount of people who will come along and say, now you must join up with us.

[27 : 30] Here we are. We're a great number of people. We're on the side of the majority. Surely you can recognize we must have the right thing. If there's so many of us, listen not for one moment.

Take heed to the word of the Lord. We were reading tonight that great passage in the book of Proverbs and what does it say? Generally speaking throughout the whole of that chapter, regard not man, take heed to the Lord, bind his word in thy heart, sit it before thine eyes.

Let not man intervene in the affairs of thy soul. Look onward, look upward, keep steadfastly pursuing the way, I being in the way, the Lord led me.

You won't be led by the Lord in any other person's way. You may think, well, though so and so is a good man, I'll fasten on to him, but you won't be led by the Lord.

I being in the way the Lord led me. That's the whole truth and the only truth. Take it much to heart, my dear young people.

[29 : 07] God's love. Well, then let us go on. We find then that Abraham's servant returned with Rebecca.

He must have felt a wonderful satisfaction at a task that was completed, practically completed, and I'm sure he felt sure of this, that God would bring him safely back again to Abraham his master.

He had taken him out. He had with great miraculous and marvelous wonder of providence guided him to the right person, the right place, and now he was returning back, and we have one of the most touching, one of the most blessed accounts in the whole of the scripture of the arrival of Rebecca, where she saw Isaac walking in the field, and she says to Abraham's servant, who is this man?

And he says, this is my master's son. In other words, this is thy bridegroom, this is the one whom thou has come all the way from the city of Naples, to be the bride.

God, all this journey, has been for one end, one object, to bring you to him.

[31 : 05] Now, can you not see in this a very sweet and wonderful teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ? Christ. And oh, how wonderful it is when a believer walking in the ways of the Lord, seeking to walk in those ways, striving to avoid the various pitfalls on the right hand and on the left, keeping with their eyes looking right onward, they come at last to the field, the field of the gospel, I would say.

And there they see Isaac, the greater Isaac, the heavenly Isaac, walking to meet with them.

What a beautiful relationship. What a beautiful experience. How unfathomable in wonder and in blessedness.

She lifted up her eyes and she saw Isaac. And then what did she do? We read that she put a veil over her face.

Shame facedness is one of the signs of true spiritual sincerity. and I believe that is common to all those who are really in the way.

[32 : 44] If they come near to him who is the great object of that way, the ultimate purpose of that way, they veil because they are ashamed of themselves for him to behold them.

And thus Rebecca veils herself before the eyes of Isaac. But she lights off her camel and they meet.

And when Abraham's servant has told Isaac all the details of his path, his experience, of the readiness and willingness of Rebecca to come and leave her father's home and house and to come to one unknown as then, to be his bride and to love him with all her heart.

When he tells her all this, she lights from off the camel and falls at the feet of Isaac.

Beautiful illustration of a believing soul in the way coming to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[34 : 20] I being in the way, the Lord led me. Oh, you may say, I wonder whether the Lord will lead you.

If you are in the way, he will. He has assured his people that he will guide them with his counsel.

And that's a firm, true, glorious promise and assurance. He will guide them and lead them.

Just as sure as Abraham's servant brought Rebecca safely to the very spot and place where Isaac was, so the Lord Jesus will bring his people.

Though they often in the dark, often feel a group like the blind man without any eyes, they come at last to where he is and they behold him.

[35 : 23] first of all they behold him as their Lord, their Lord. Rebecca said, my Lord.

She called him Lord. Then she beheld him as her husband. I was very struck with that hymn that we were singing a few moments ago.

Behold him as your head, your husband, and your friend, your saviour, and your God, your way, your life, your end.

Behold him. What an S to say that is in experience, when a believing soul beholds Jesus. as their husband and their friend.

Do you want him? Do you feel that's the great desire of your heart, to know him? Paul said, I, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection.

[36 : 44] Surely there can never be anything greater in the life of Rebecca than that moment when she came to know Isaac. And Isaac came to know her.

And there can be no greater spiritual experience among the children of God than when they first begin to know the Lord.

And to know that he is a blessed savior to their souls, a friend in us, a husband, and one that will never leave them, nor forsake them.

well, I've tried today to bring before you, my dear friends, this wonderful matter, the way of life, and what an important subject it is.

Don't dismiss it. Don't look upon it as just another subject. Take it to your heart. Ponder it. Pray about it.

[37:56] Seek with all your soul to find him whom to know is life eternal.

Amen. Amen. In 1978 to the June Brookfield 310 310 How blessed are they who truly see their emptiness and poverty whose souls are huddled in the dark and who in Jesus are the trust.

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[41:15] It is the song that gives me strength.

■ ■ And heaven beyond Till Christ's Hannibal The George Lbetrot Peace upon his soul to
Christ will rest with all the riches of

His grace and His King whose sin shall rise to the King of the earth skies Dear Lord, do show us thy way.

Teach us to walk in thy paths and grant us to reach that glorious destination of heaven through Jesus Christ.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with us now and evermore.

[43 : 41] Amen. Amen. Amen. hum and g the matter!