

I BEING IN THE WAY, THE LORD LED ME, Part 1

Text: Genesis 24:1-27

This is one of the most famous stories in the Bible. Abraham sends his steward to find a bride for Isaac. In the personal married life of all the patriarchs, the story of the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah is the most precious. In a culture where polygamy was accepted and even promoted, this couple was monogamous, which was and always has been God's will and way when it comes to marriage (Genesis 2:21-25; Matthew 19:8). The round trip Eliezer took was more than 1,000 miles, by means of camel train, thus illustrating the importance of our story.

The words of Abraham's servant (steward) epitomize what it means to obey the Lord and reap the benefits of doing so: "I being in the way, the LORD led me..." (Genesis 24:7). Let's talk about it:

1. THE TEST OF OBEDIENCE IS OFTEN WHEN GOD'S PLAN DOES NOT PLACE YOU IN A PLACE OF PROMINENCE.

Genesis 24:1, 2

God informs us in Genesis 24:1 that although Abraham was very old, he was blessed.

"The Jewish people regarded old age as being in three sections or stages. The first, extending from the 60th to the 70th years, was spoken of as 'the commencement of old age.' The second, extending from the 70th to the 80th year, was called the 'hoary headed age.' The third, from the 80th year to the end of life, was called 'advanced age'- those reaching it being described as 'well-stricken in years' " (*The Best is Yet To Be* by Henry Durbanville).

There is no age restriction to the blessing of God. We also discover that the Lord is willing to allow the blessings to follow from one generation to the next as we observe in Genesis 26:1a, 27: "And there was a famine in the land...Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him." The blessing of Abraham was enjoyed by Isaac, even in the time of famine and even when Isaac was not living up to his potential.

Genesis 24:2: "And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh." Abraham is about to get Eliezer to make a promise to find a bride of Isaac, assuring him that although he is the steward of Abraham, he would not have or share any of Abraham's inheritance (Genesis 15:1-4). Luke 14:27 and 33 illustrate the necessity of dying to one's self to fully follow the Lord. Colossians 3:3: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." I Corinthians 6:19, 20: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

2. OBEDIENCE ACKNOWLEDGES AND ACCEPTS THAT THE DIFFERENCE IS WORTH THE DISTANCE.

Genesis 24:3, 4

Abraham lived in the heathen culture of the Canaanites. He has just ordered his servant not only to forfeit an inheritance, but to go 500 miles one way to find a young lady who is not immersed in the heathen culture of Abraham's surroundings.

The Lord wants His people to marry "after their kind" (Genesis 1:25). The Bible goes further and forbids marriage of a believer to an unbeliever. II Corinthians 6:14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

In all matters we need to be willing to go the distance with God. Convenience can never be the priority. Right must take precedence.

3. OBEDIENCE REQUIRES NO COMPROMISE IN TAKING THE RIGHT PATH.

Genesis 24:5-9

Eliezer inquired of Abraham that if the woman he finds is not willing to come to the land of promise, should he then come and get Isaac and bring him to Mesopotamia. Abraham's answer came in the strongest of terms when he said to him, "...Beware..." (Genesis 24:6) and "...be clear from this my oath...." In other words, no way should you bring back my son to the land my God called me from.

The Lord Jesus was determined to do the Father's will, no matter how difficult the task (Isaiah 50:7; Luke 9:51).

There is a great story of the reporter and Carl Wallenda which illustrates the danger of trying to walk backwards on the high wire.

4. EXTRAVAGANCE ACCOMPANIES FULL OBEDIENCE.

Genesis 24:10-21

Eliezer prays that God will make it clear to him that he has found the right young lady by asking that she be revealed by her willingness to not only provide water for him, but also for all ten camels. Let me tell you why this would be unusual. The pitchers that have been found in this area of the country by archeology would hold from 2 to 3 gallons of water. So let's say Rebekah had a pitcher that was 2.5 gallons. She gets drink for Eliezer and then waters the camels. When a camel comes in from the desert, it is not unusual for him to drink 25 gallons in one extended slurp without stopping. So at 25 gallons per camel, with one 2.5-gallon pitcher, that comes up to 100 trips to the well and delivering just over one ton of water! This is some young lady!

Mary of Bethany showed the world how unmitigated love calls for extravagant deeds. Mark 14:3: "And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head." John 12:3: "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly,

and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.” Mark 14:8: “She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.”

5. THERE IS A PROVIDENTIAL FLOW IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S WILL.

Genesis 24:22-27

Our text verse speaks volumes. Genesis 24:27: “And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master’s brethren.” If we are in “God’s way,” we will not be in “God’s way.” Great things have a tendency to happen to people who are in the right place at the right time. II Chronicles 16:9a: “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him....” This word was God’s word spoken by the prophet Hannani. King Asa did not heed the word and the rest of the verse says, “...Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.” Asa had a stellar career in the perfect center of God’s will at the beginning of his reign. He was able to defeat an army of over one million, but then when he faltered in trusting the Lord, his reign as a king came to a sad and pathetic end. A sad verse in the Bible reads, “And He [Jesus] did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:58).

Disobedience places us in the way. Obedience places us in His way, in other words, in God’s plan and God’s purposes. Isaiah 46:10b; “...My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” When our will is attached to God’s will, we can be sure that we, like Eliezer will be led by God.

-Pastor Pope-