

The Servant's Mission is Successful

Genesis 24:29-49

Genesis 24:29-29 - *"Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban, and Laban ran out to the man by the well. ³⁰ So it came to pass, when he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, "Thus the man spoke to me," that he went to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well. ³¹ And he said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels." ³² Then the man came to the house. And he unloaded the camels, and provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³ Food was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told about my errand." And he said, "Speak on."*

³⁴ So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶ And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to him he has given all that he has. ³⁷ Now my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; ³⁸ but you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.' ³⁹ And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' ⁴⁰ But he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. ⁴¹ You will be clear from this oath when you arrive among my family; for if they will not give her to you, then you will be released from my oath.'

⁴² "And this day I came to the well and said, 'O LORD God of my master Abraham, if You will now prosper the way in which I go, ⁴³ behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the virgin comes out to draw water, and I say to her, "Please give me a little water from your pitcher to drink," ⁴⁴ and she says to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,"—let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.' ⁴⁵ "But before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew water. And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' ⁴⁶ And she made haste and let her pitcher down from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels a drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels a drink also. ⁴⁷ Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. ⁴⁸ And I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. ⁴⁹ Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. If not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

Background Notes

Abraham's servant had traveled about 500 miles to find a wife for Isaac, Abraham's beloved son. The servant had prayed that his mission would be successful, and he had prayed specifically that the Lord would lead him to the right woman. The Lord answered his prayer in the most amazing way. The first woman the servant met was Rebekah. In fact, Rebekah arrived on the scene while the servant was still praying! Verse 45 says, *"before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah..."*

Have you ever had that experience? When you were praying specifically about something, the Lord sent the answer while you were still praying? In Acts 12, when the early Christians were praying for Peter's release from prison, Peter arrived and was knocking at the gate while they were praying. The answer to their prayers was so direct and so rapid that they had a hard time believing it! They had forgotten Isaiah 65:24, where the Lord said: *"...before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear."*

Genesis 24 recorded another wonderful account of how God works behind the scenes to answer prayer. After Rebekah showed her kindness and proved she was a very responsible and capable woman by watering ten thirsty camels, the servant confirmed that she was one of Abraham's relatives. He then gave her a gift of gold jewelry - a token of things to come! When Rebekah told her family about the servant and showed them the expensive gifts, Rebekah's brother Laban seemed almost *too* anxious to welcome this stranger into their home. Perhaps here we catch a glimpse into Laban's materialistic character (that we'll see later).

In verse 36 the servant said, *"Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to him he has given all that he has."* This statement indicated to the family that not only was Isaac the heir of great wealth, but he was not too old for Rebekah. You can imagine that Rebekah was wondering how old Isaac was, because Isaac and Rebekah were in different generations. Bethuel, Rebekah's father, was Isaac's first cousin, but Sarah was 90 years old when Isaac was born, so the age difference between Isaac and Rebekah was not as great as it might seem.

Doctrinal Points

1. Faithful servants stick rigidly to their priorities.

Look at what was said of Abraham's faithful servant in verse 33: *"Food was set before him to eat, but he said, 'I will not eat until I have told about my errand.'"* His master's business came first. You can imagine how tired and hungry Abraham's servant was after the long journey, but first things first! The faithful servant was eager to communicate the urgency of his mission.

Would we have stuck as rigidly to our priorities - or would we have satisfied our own desires first? We have an urgent mission, too. We have been commissioned by our Master to share the good news of Jesus Christ and make disciples for Him. Those are our top priorities. Do we stick to our urgent mission - or do we indulge our own appetites and desires first?

Notice that I didn't say that faithful servants stick rigidly to their own *traditions*, or their "*set-in-their-own-way*" *patterns*. No! Faithful servants stick to the *priorities their master has set for them*. Our priorities are to lead people to Christ and to help them grow in Him. We may have to flex in the matter of our own man-made traditions and practices - but we can't flex in our priorities! Faithful servants stick rigidly to their priorities.

2. Faithful servants speak highly of their masters.

In verses 35-36, Abraham's faithful servant said: "*The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to him he has given all that he has.*" Notice that the servant didn't speak about himself, or his achievements, or his problems. **He spoke only about his master.** He highly exalted his master.

What a lesson for us! We too have a Master! Do we highly exalt Him? Do we tell others about the love and greatness of our Master, or do we tend to speak about ourselves? Do we glorify our accomplishments, without mentioning the Master? Do we draw attention to ourselves by our complaining and constantly talking about our problems? When we talk about ourselves - even about our failings and shortcomings - we're not following the model of the faithful servant.

True spirituality does not spend a lot of time looking inward, even though that may *appear* spiritual. **True spirituality looks outward to Christ**, and thinks and speaks about Him. In Ephesians 3:8, Paul said: "*To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...*" Recently I spoke with an employee of a small company who did nothing but complain about his employer. I happen to know the owner of that company, and I know that he has been very good to his employees – but all this employee did was complain. He was not a "faithful servant."

How well do we speak about our "spiritual Employer"? Do we complain about the conditions God has allowed in our lives? Are we dissatisfied with our situation in life? Are we bitter towards God, or do we praise and exalt Him? Faithful servants speak highly of their masters.

Practical Application

1. Remember that God has “put the ball in your court”!

When the ball is in your court, you’re responsible to make the next move. After Abraham’s servant told Rebekah and her family about how great his master and his master’s son were, he said, *“Now if you 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.”* In other words, the ball is in your court! You must make the next move. Do you believe my testimony? Are you ready to make a commitment to this marriage?

The testimony of God’s greatness and the message of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ has been clearly communicated in the Bible. If you are not a Christian, the ball is in your court. It is decision time. Are you ready to commit – or will you be like the Jews of Jesus’ time whose decision was, “We will not have this man to reign over us!” Or will you believe the testimony of the Bible and, like Rebekah, make the right decision? Will you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? Remember - God has put the ball in your court!

2. Use your answered prayers as a testimony.

Genesis 24 has a lot of lessons about prayer: lessons about how prayer and human effort work together; about how praying about the right person to marry; about how God’s answer is on the way before we pray. Well, here’s another lesson about prayer: use your answered prayers as a testimony! That’s exactly what Abraham’s servant did. He told Rebekah and her family how God answered his prayer request to find a wife for Isaac. It was a very moving testimony. Even Laban, who was not known for his godliness, was moved. *“Then Laban and Bethuel answered...“The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good.”*

I’m currently witnessing to a neighbor who is an engineer, so we have some common ground. The other day I told him how God answered my specific prayer about leaving my job as a research engineer and going into the Lord’s work full time. I used this answered prayer as a testimony, and you can do the same! Use your answered prayers as a testimony.