

GOD ESTABLISHES ISAAC'S FAMILY

Genesis 24:1-67

Key verse 24:60

"And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies."

We thank the Lord that we were allowed to prepare the work of God in the new year through some special lessons. Last week we renewed our task as a holy people and royal priesthood, namely to proclaim the praises of God. God, in His marvelous grace through Jesus Christ, brought us from darkness into His wonderful light. He did this not so that we might live a little better life or enjoy this grace, but so that we might share and proclaim the grace we have received. This year, as a royal priesthood, let us be diligent in proclaiming the praises of God so that students and young people may come from darkness to God's wonderful light through us.

Today's lesson is about God establishing the family of Isaac and Rebekah. The formation of the family is God's matter. He is the initiator, the mediator and the goal of the family of faith. We also learn the mission consciousness of Abraham's servant and how to fulfill God's tasks through faith and with prayer in dependence on God. Today, let us learn about the biblical view of marriage and be used with mission consciousness for God's world mission work in this generation.

1. Take my son Isaac a wife there (1-9)

Verse 1 begins with the words, "Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed him in every way." God had called Abraham and raised him in faith for many years, setting him up as a source of blessing to all nations. He had given him a son Isaac as heir to the promise. In chapter 23 we read that Sarah had died and was

buried. Abraham was already 137 years old at this point. God had blessed him richly in every way. But now it was time for Isaac to take up the baton of God's calling, and salvation history would continue through him. For this to happen, Isaac's marriage problem was to be solved. Abraham knew how important it was that Isaac would marry a suitable woman of faith. He did not leave this to chance or feeling, but sent his oldest servant with this request to get a wife for Isaac.

Let's read verses 3 and 4: "I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac." Why was it so important to Abraham that Isaac should not marry a Canaanite woman under any circumstances? Surely there were nice women in Canaan, too. Abraham had friends, Mamre, Eshcol or Aner, who would gladly introduce one of their daughters to Isaac. But Abraham was forewarned by the sons of God in Genesis 6:2-4 who had married only for beauty, lost their spirits and perished in the Flood. Lot had married in Sodom and his wife was completely bound to the world, so she could not escape from Sodom. Through Moses, God later clearly instructed the Israelites not to conspire with the unbelieving Canaanites or they would tempt them to idolatry. (Dt 7:3,4). In the New Testament, Paul earnestly warned Christians not to pull on the same yoke with unbelievers, but to clearly separate themselves from unbelievers. (2 Cor 6:14-16). God's children are to marry God's

children. That is why Abraham sent his best servant to get a suitable wife from among his godly kin.

Abraham's servant was willing to perform this precious task. However, he was concerned that the woman would not easily leave her home to marry Isaac. But Abraham believed that it was not a matter of man, but a matter of God. Let's read verse 7: ""The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land'--he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there." Abraham firmly believed that God would guide everything according to His will and send His angel before him. Because God wants to fulfill His promise, He will also take care of everything else. This clearly shows that family formation is God's matter. God is the founder of the family. The goal is God's glory and His holy mission. It is done through God's guidance and God's servants.

Abraham had clear principles for starting a family, namely.

1.) Do not marry a Canaanite woman - Isaac was to marry a God-fearing woman who could support him rather than draw him to idolatry.

2.) Stay in the Promised Land - Isaac was not to return under any circumstances. Living with the promise of God and the mission of God is the non-negotiable goal of life.

3.) Marry the woman God is preparing - Isaac should not go in search of her himself with human judgment. He would then be overwhelmed by his human feelings and act without insight. He was allowed to trust in God, that God Himself has prepared the suitable wife, and leads her to Him through the servant.

The modern spirit of the time says that a romantic feeling and human affection are the basis of marriage. Because they have excluded God and listen only to human feelings, they have fallen prey to nothingness. Neither

the good feeling nor the computer algorithm of the dating agency give any happiness. We see how many marriages based on this false foundation fail. Those who have experienced divorce know why God hates divorce. That is why it is God's greatest blessing to establish a family of faith based on the sovereign will of God, according to God's guidance, and for God's mission.

When Charles and Priscilla Studd established a family of faith, they gave the great inheritance to various missionary societies. They also served missions themselves throughout their lives in China, India and Africa. While Charles lived in Africa, Priscilla supported him from England. They never sought their own happiness, but gave themselves completely for the mission of God.

M. Peter and M. Sarah are good examples to us of a God-centered and mission-centered house church established according to God's guidance. When M. Peter decided to marry a missionary according to God's guidance, it was a decision for God's mission. In the mission field, they serve the disciple-making ministry by opening their home to many co-workers and sheep. The blessing of God has flowed on through them to many missionaries, shepherds and next generation who have also established mission-centered house churches according to their example and live with God's mission. On the other hand, we see many unhappy families in the world. For example, my sisters-in-law are both divorced. But God has given grace to my house church to work well together for God's mission until today. Let us know the biblical marriage view by centering God and forming blessed God-centered and mission-centered house churches.

2. The Faithful Servant of Abraham (10-56)

The servant swore an oath to Abraham. Then he took 10 camels, loaded them with all kinds of gifts, and set out for Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. Once there, he camped at the well and waited for the women to come to fetch water. As he did so, he prayed for

God's guidance with very specific requests. Let us read verse 14: "May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too' - let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master." The servant had very specific prayer requests, for a servant, devoted mother of faith. He did not rely on his experience or good feeling, but prayed with the specific request. Before he had finished his prayer, Rebekah came from the city and wanted to draw water at the well. He addressed her, "May I have a drink!" Rebekah immediately gave him her pitcher. Then she ran and fetched water for all his camels as well. It was the exact fulfillment of his prayer.

The servant's prayer shows that he was totally dependent on God. When he trusted in God 100%, he was able to experience how God led a suitable wife to him for Isaac. We can fulfill God's mission when we pray and depend on God. Without prayer, we quickly become overconfident or act out of self-confidence and fail in the end. However, God answered the servant's prayer for a diligent woman of faith. Rebekah was willing to serve even many camels. The servant did not act rashly, but according to verse 21, he quietly contemplated her and waited with a praying heart until he would have known whether the Lord had given grace or not. Then he gave Rebekah a gift and asked her about her family. How glad he was when he heard that she was a relative of Abraham. He bowed down and worshiped the Lord, praising God for leading him the right way.

When Rebekah's brother Laban heard about the story and saw the beautiful golden bangles, he immediately invited the man to come and stay at their house after all. He showed a warm hospitality. However, when they were about to eat together, the servant stopped. Verse 33 says, "Then food was set before him, but he said, 'I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.'" "Then tell us," Laban said." This verse teaches us his mission consciousness. Even though he was very hungry from the

long journey, he would not eat or be distracted by anything until he had first accomplished his mission. When we try to do several things at once, we usually don't do anything right. In the same way, we should also focus on fulfilling God's mission before doing our own things. In the invitational ministry, I learned that I could not invite if I still had a secondary goal, such as doing some shopping. I know a man who often got distracted by the coffee machine. For the mission of God, one must always be totally focused and work with prayer. At present, we see Peter Joseph fulfilling the mission with concentration and giving many interesting lectures on history by practicing Deep-Work. God's mission must have the first place. God's mission is much more important than eating. Let us fulfill our mission with mission consciousness, so that we can be used for spiritual revival.

The servant first told in detail the whole story of Abraham and how he sent him out, he prayed and finally met Rebekah. He told matter-of-factly and clearly so that God's guidance was revealed. Then he asked the family if they were willing to send Rebekah out to marry Isaac.

How did Rebekah's family respond? Let's look at verses 50 and 51: "Laban and Bethuel answered, 'This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. Here is Rebekah; take her and go and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed.'" Based on the servant's detailed story, they recognized God's leading. They were willing to send Rebekah out without any further conditions. This incident shows their fear of God.

The servant bowed down to the ground before the Lord. He thanked God for the fulfillment of the mission. Then he gave Rebekah, Laban and the mother beautiful gifts that he had brought. But when the servant was about to leave the next morning, their decision was already put into perspective and they wanted to keep Rebekah at home for a few more days. But the servant did not tolerate any delay. He did not want to rest or go

sightseeing, but only to fulfill his mission to the end. He was a man of mission as 2 Timothy 2:4 says, "No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs - he wants to please his commanding officer." With mission consciousness, let us fulfill God's task with top priority, fulfill God's salvation work through one-to-one Bible study, GLEF, master course and give glory to God.

3. A diligent mother of faith Rebekah (57-67)

What can we learn from Rebekah?

1.) She was a diligent servant woman.

When she met the stranger at the well, she was willing to give him water and also care for the camels. Drawing water for 10 camels is a strenuous task. One camel can drink up to 200 liters of water. But she drew water willingly and with joy because she had a servant's heart. She didn't say, "I already have another job." Or, "Someone else can do it." She served with a joyful heart. She even had a heart for the camels. She possessed the serving inwardness of a mother of faith.

2.) She was a beautiful and pure woman.

Let us read verse 16: "The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again." Rebekah was very beautiful. She had kept her life pure. She had not tried to get the attention of boys, but rather waited for God's time to start a family. Her purity made her a beautiful mother of faith.

3.) She was a woman of decision and mission.

Let us read verse 58: "So they called Rebekah and asked her, 'Will you go with this man?' 'I will go,' she said." Rebekah's decision was much clearer than that of her family. She simply said, "I will go." Rebekah made a clear life decision. She had prepared herself in prayer and followed God's

leading to marry a man she had not yet seen. She was able to do this because she had faith in Almighty God. Trusting in God, she was able to give up her old life, her home, her family and friends. She could put her whole life in God's hands, move to Canaan to be used in God's salvation history. Her decision was similar to Abraham's decision for God's calling. It was a very precious and important decision in God's salvation history.

Rebekah did not want to impose her own idea or will. Instead, she made a decision for the best guidance of God in her life. Her goal was also not to find her personal happiness through a suitable partner, but to fulfill God's purpose and live as a family of faith in the land of promise. She was a God-centered woman of decision and mission.

A life of faith is a life according to God's guidance and for God's holy mission. We may trust in God's guidance not only regarding family formation, but also regarding study and regarding God's mission. God always blesses the obedience of faith and wants to use us precious for His work of spiritual revival and world mission.

Finally, Rebekah was sent out. Let's look at verse 60: "And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, 'Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies.'" The family blessed Rebekah not for her personal happiness, but for the mission of God. They blessed her with a magnificent long-term vision that her descendants would grow great and become a nation of millions. They also blessed them with the promise of Abraham that their descendants would have spiritual victory and possess the gates of their enemies. This refers to Jesus' victory over death. Here we see that the family of faith is founded on the promise of God.

God is also calling us with a great vision for 100,000 Bible teachers and 5,000,000 prayer servants. He wants to pioneer through us the 1700 campuses in Europe and establish 120 bases for world mission. God will

surely richly bless the faith decisions of our next generation for the world mission work and use them preciousy for His salvation work in M-world, North Korea, Cambodia, Colombia and to the ends of the earth. In obedience of faith, let us follow God's guidance and be used according to God's word of promise for the world mission.

Let us consider verses 62 and 63: "Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching." Isaac was a man of prayer who waited patiently for God's guidance. When Rebekah arrived and met Isaac, she first took the veil. She did not try to win Isaac over, but humbly served him. Verse 67 says that he became fond of Rebekah and was also comforted over the loss of his mother.

This shows that Rebekah did not expect him, but was like a mother to him. Isaac loved Rebekah and Rebekah loved Isaac. When they trusted completely in God's guidance, they could experience happiness in the family of faith. God used this God-centered house church to continue His story.

Through today's lesson, we have learned that family formation is God's matter. The family of faith is God's blessing to live according to God's calling and fulfill His holy mission. We may trust and follow God's guidance in all areas, thus be needed for God's saving work, even for the next generation. With mission consciousness, let us pioneer all faculties and colleges and establish base camps in the M-world according to God's guidance.