

Finding Rebekah (2)

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Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 00] Now as we continue our progress then through this section of Genesis, and we looked last Lord's Day at the first part of chapter 24, we saw last Lord's Day evening how Abraham's servant, having been solemnly charged with the business of obtaining a wife for Isaac, was sent to seek one from among Abraham's own relatives, who at least would have a shared knowledge of and reverence for the Lord Jehovah, the God of Shem.

As we saw last Lord's Day, perhaps they weren't as red hot or born again in their devotion and faith as perhaps they might have been, but at least their cultural background and knowledge was of a faith in the God of Shem and the God of Nahar, the God who became the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they had this knowledge of the Lord Jehovah, the true God, the living God, and they did reverence him to an extent.

They knew of him. They could share the faith of Abraham. And we saw further how the focus appeared to be on one as yet unknown individual woman, rather than on a wide potential selection. And how Abraham's servant, having prayed earnestly to the Lord for leading and guidance, was led directly to Rebekah, who fulfilled every category of what was being looked for.

Now, as we read from verse 32 onwards to the end of the chapter, it may seem to us a surprising amount of time and words being put into the latter part of this chapter, being taken up with recanting for the second time what has already been stated once and that very recently.

[1 : 46] We might think, well, is this really necessary to go over it again, almost word for word? Couldn't the narrative just have said the servant sat down and told them everything that had happened right up to the moment when he asked Rebekah if there was room to stay at her house?

Wouldn't that have saved a lot of time? Well, God is the maker of time. And he knows that it is finite, especially for mortal creatures like us.

But he also distinguishes between what is a good and right use of time, when time is actually being saved and or when it is simply being cut short or lost.

If I jump out of a plane without taking the necessary time to harness on my parachute, then yes, I will save time in the short term.

I will get to the bottom a lot quicker and I haven't wasted all those extra minutes tugging about with uncomfortable equipment, at the end of which I'm still going to have to jump out of the plane anyway.

[2 : 48] So, hey, come on, let's just get on with it. There are reasons why we do things. And there are reasons why the story is told almost word for word over again.

First of all, the Bible frequently employs the principle that repetition makes for reinforcement. When something is repeated, it is frequently repeated for emphasis.

You've heard me say, often the phrase, you know, I'll say that again. Because I want you to hear and I want you to understand a particular point that I might be making. Repetition makes for reinforcement.

Telling the story again, as happens in the latter part of this chapter here, reinforces the points, the salient points of the narrative.

It enables the reader to compare the original narrative with what the servant is now saying. To examine the closeness with which he adheres to his charge.

[3 : 52] It emphasizes the Lord's blessing upon Abraham, his solemn concern for the spiritual well-being of his son's future. It glorifies the God of Abraham who answers prayer and prospers all that is done in accordance with his will.

If the statement is worth making, it is worth repeating. If the story is worth telling, it is worth telling again. Again, repetition makes for reinforcement.

It is not wasted time. It is time with God that is well spent. How many times have you heard, you know, somebody giving a particular person, give their testimony, for example? You know, and does it get stale? Well, it might for all I know, you know. Or is it worth telling again? It's time. It's time. Because where the Lord is at the heart of what is done, and when he is being glorified, he will often breathe new life into the old story.

And you may pick up something you never noticed before. You know, like a new fragrance. When you read an old, well-worn, favorite chapter of scripture, or a psalm, or something in particular, there will be a sense of, I've never noticed that before.

[5 : 10] All these years I've read this passage, I've never noticed this point before. There is a sense in which a new life, a new fragrance is breathed through it. You know, like the Song of Solomon tells us in chapter 7, at verse 13, the mandrakes give a smell.

Now, the mandrakes were almost like a sort of medicinal kind of, not quite an opiate, but they were used almost in a medicinal sense. And they were fragrant. There was a strong kind of sweet odor with them.

The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

This is the song of the lover that comes through. There is this fragrance. There is that which is new, and that which is old. And they are both laid up for the beloved.

Repetition makes for reinforcement. And with God, it is never a waste of time. But if we turn now to the narrative itself, we see with Abraham's servant a dedicated focus upon duty first.

[6 : 21] He and his men have had a very long and tiring journey of between about 700 and 800 miles. Everything so far seems to have prospered, but the business end of the trip has yet to be accomplished.

He doesn't just spill everything out to Laban and the family right away. They unpack the camels. They feed them and bed them down. They wash their own feet, and they prepare for company.

So far, so much duty. None of this was relaxation or enjoyment or entertainment. It was work. But eating, especially eating at the end of a working day, wasn't just taking on body fuel.

The evening meal of the day was one over which people lingered. And it would have been most of the day in preparing. While the men were out with the flocks or herds or tilling the fields or whatever, most of the women in the camp would be working on the evening meal, which would take quite a lot of time to prepare.

Eating, it was a social event. People did it together as families and or with guests. They listened to each other's stories. They enjoyed each other's company.

[7 : 29] You might think and say, well, why not relax and just eat and drink and tell your story? Let it come out as we enjoy each other's kind of social company. We don't get many strangers coming here from Abrams country.

So tell us all about it as you eat, as you drink. Or else just relax and enjoy and tell us it all tomorrow. Why not just let things unwind a bit and just tell us in your own time.

But no, business first. Duty first. Then, if the Lord had prospered their way, there would be plenty of time to enjoy the feast. Because potentially, the trip could still end up all being for nothing.

Now, the parallels with life here and life hereafter ought to be clear enough. Not only in terms of duty first and blessing thereafter, but in terms also of the end of the journey, finding potentially that it is all for nothing, if we fail to identify and obtain the reason for the journey being made in the first place.

Abram's servant has not gone with his fellow servant to say, Oh, look at these beautiful sand dunes. Look at the mountains and the hills and the sky at night. Isn't it wonderful? We've had a lovely time.

[8 : 49] Oh, we didn't get the bride that we wanted, but hey, we had a great journey. If it's all for nothing, then it is all literally a waste of time. If we fail to identify and obtain the reason for the journey being made in the first place.

And it is so with our journey of life on this earth. It may seem long, but as those of us who have got to a certain age and older realize it doesn't actually take long in the past.

When you're young, it looks like it's going to take ages and stretch into the horizon. Because we always assume we've got decades and decades ahead of us. We might not. But even if we do, it seems so long in prospect.

And it seems just a blink of the eye in retrospect. Life's journey may seem long, but it is not without purpose. There is an objective.

A reason for traveling this road in the first place. And if you fail to lay hold upon it, all you've had is a long and empty road through the desert to no purpose.

[9 : 56] As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, you know, 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

We've had the journey, but we fail to apprehend the objective. Fail to get the goal at the end of it. Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

If we are not fulfilling that objective, we have made the journey. We have traveled the roads, but to no purpose. We certainly won't enjoy the Lord forever if we don't know his beloved son, Jesus Christ.

We won't glorify him if we don't worship him, if we don't acknowledge him. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

But going back to the narrative, as well as that dedicated focus upon duty, we can learn much from Abram's servant also in terms of how he understands his own identity.

[10 : 58] This servant had a name. And we know from chapter 15, if you turn back with me to chapter 15, see in verses 2 and 3, where the Lord appears to Abram in a vision.

He says, Fear not, I am a shield, and I exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me? Seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus. And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in my house is mine heir. Now this refers to the ancient practice in the Middle East, that if somebody didn't have an heir, then the most senior servant, born in their house, stood to inherit everything.

And this, his most senior, trusted steward, who was in charge of all his goods, who had been born in his house, who had grown up with his family through all the decades, and had now become his most trusted servant, he stood to inherit.

It was in some ways a sensible means of ensuring that all the profit, all the wealth of the family, all the assets of the family stayed together.

[12 : 07] And they were kept under the administration of somebody they knew, and somebody they trusted, and so it wasn't all dissipated and lost. So it was kept together. But this is what they did, that the most senior servant would inherit everything if there was no legitimate heir.

What wilt thou give me? Seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus, behold to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in mine house is mine heir. Cross-reference that of chapter 24, at verse 1, Abram was old and well stricken in age, the Lord had blessed Abram in all things, and Abram said to his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my hand.

This is the same guy. This is Eliezer of Damascus. We know that his name is Eliezer, as we cross-reference these different chapters. It is a name which means, my God is my help.

And he might have said much to Laban, and to Bethuel, and the rest of the family, about who he was, and about his own position in Abram's household, and how before Isaac or Ishmael were born.

[13 : 16] He himself might have stood to inherit everything. He could have laboured the point about how trusted he was, and how important he was in the whole family business, but no, not a word about himself, save to say, I am Abraham's servant, verse 34.

And thereafter, it's all about Abraham, about his son, about his inheritance, about the mission, about the Lord. Do you notice that? And then at the end, it's about Rebekah too.

But never is it about himself. I am Abraham's servant. His own identity, his own importance, his own purpose and function, and his very presence there, is because of whose servant he is.

And we see something like this in the New Testament, when Paul opens his letters to the Romans, to the Philipppines, and to Titus, with this description of himself.

The servant of Jesus Christ, or the servant of God. And as we know from other occasions, when we look at this term in the Greek, the word douloi, or doulos, which is a word literally for servant, it literally actually means slave.

[14 : 32] The slave of Jesus Christ, the slave of God, to be God's slave, to be Christ's slave, is to be truly free. This is our true identity, the servant of Jesus Christ.

The reason we are put upon this earth, the reason for our presence here, our importance, our function, and purpose, and identity, is all, all inextricably bound up with Christ.

And it works, this particular approach, just like it did for any other. If he starts off saying, I am Eliezer of Damascus, and I come with important news, they'd say, I'm who?

Sorry? But instead he begins, I am Abraham's servant. And it all falls into place. Abraham, yes, the brother of Laban's grandfather, he's family, he has reason to be here, he is welcome.

In Christ, you have an identity, and a king to represent. His wealth, and power, is all at your disposal, to serve him with, if you but ask for what you need.

[15:42] You have a family, that stretches around the world, and back into the depths of history, and forward into the generations of believers, yet unborn.

You represent somebody, with a capital S, with a reason to be here, with a message to proclaim, with an authority to give it.

Just as John the Baptist said about our Lord, he must increase, but I must decrease. Then, the journey will have been truly worthwhile.

I am Abraham's servant. When Abraham's servant begins with this story, he exalts accurately the credentials, and qualities, and glory of his master, and he also refers to the inheritance of the son. We see this in verses 35 and 36 there. And notice how, the son, Isaac, is not diminished, but rather enhanced, by the acknowledging of the greatness, and blessedness of his father, Abraham.

[16:48] And the father is not diminished, by reference to the inheritance, and the glory, of the son. But rather, they complement one another. To glorify Abraham, is to glorify Isaac.

And all that he stands to inherit. To glorify Isaac, is to point to the glory of Abraham. Neither diminishes the other, but rather they complement one another, and we might even say delight, in each other's glory.

The glory of the father, and of the son. Different in function. Different persons. Literally. But one in spirit.

Without conflict. Without confusion. Here we have in miniature, a living illustration, of a living God. The father, and the son.

Mutually, complementary. Each one glorifying the other. Each distinct from the other. Different persons. And one, in the unity of their spirit. The glory of the father, glorifies the son.

[17:51] And vice versa. And all that he stands, to inherit. So much of scripture. So many of these deep truths, that they're not as complicated, as we sometimes make them out to be.

Because the illustrations, of them are right through the Bible there. In verses 37 and 38, then we have the crux of the matter. Now he comes to the point of why he's there.

My master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son, or the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell. But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

Now this, is what the journey has been about. Rebecca didn't know about this. She just knew, there's a guy asking for a drink, and watered his camels. He says, Can we stay at your house tonight? Is there room at your father's house?

Whose daughter are you? And then he worships the Lord, and he thanks him for prospering his journey. But she doesn't know why he's there. And the family, don't know why they're there. They are connected with Abraham, whose extended family.

[18:51] So yes, they're welcome. Bring them in. Feed them. Wash their feet, and so on. But they didn't know up to this point why they have come. I won't eat till I've told my name.

He said, Speak on. They don't know yet why he's there. Where is he going to go with this story? Does he want to purchase something? Does he want to buy land? Or property? Is Abraham moving back here again?

And this is the advanced party? Or is Abraham sending for them all to come to join him in Canaan? You know, with these verses now, 37 and 38 here, the sound cuts away all the dead with his speculation.

He goes straight to the heart of the matter. They now know what and who he wants. And what he's not interested in. Laban himself is no use to him.

Bethel is no use to him. The rest of the family, no use to cousin, to home, to property, none of it. He knows what he has come for. And this is what he wants.

[19:49] A particular person to fulfill a particular role. And he knows who he wants. Now as we saw last Lord's evening, there never did seem to be a long list of possibles.

Abraham and Eliezer always sounded like, if you look at the early part of the chapter, they always sounded like they had one person in view. And although, you know, verse 41 might sound as if it was opening up the field to a wider potential selection of candidates, you know, thou shalt be clear from this my oath when thou comest to my kindred if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear of my oath.

You know, potentially there was a whole lot of other candidates, but we're not really talking about any of that. There's only one that he actually wants here. It's not opening up the field to a wider selection.

This was only ever going to be about one person. And in truth, she had already been chosen. Again and again in the Old Testament, as I keep emphasizing the point, we see deeper New Testament truths illustrated.

And here we see something of the grace of election, of God's predestination of his chosen vessels, above and beyond their own thoughts or even choices, which are nonetheless caused to become willing and to desire themselves that which is in line with what has been already determined.

[21 : 16] Because we see from verse 58, if we look at it, you know, they say, well, we wanted to stay a bit longer, but you know, Rebecca, well, you're willing to go with this man, which means are you willing to go now, today? And she says, yes, I'll go.

So her will, her spirit is obviously willing enough to go and to go right away. With this man whom she has never met until yesterday, to be given and managed to a man that she has still never even seen yet, that she is made willing.

Although we might truthfully say the choice was not made by her, the choice was made of her by another. For Eliezer may be the human instrument who does the asking, and Laban and the family may do the giving.

Notice, they don't bother to ask Rebecca what she thinks about it. You know, when they reply, they say, oh, well, look, Rebecca's before thee, take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife. Verse 51. As the Lord had spoken, he would say, well, Rebecca, what do you think about this? Are you willing to go and become this man? But not even a question. She doesn't get asked her opinion through Rebecca in the midst of all this. She does get asked whether she wants to go now or whether she wants to go in maybe 10 days or two weeks' time.

[22 : 29] But she doesn't actually get a choice about whether or not she's going. The choice was not really made by her, but the choice was made of her by her mother. And Eliezer might be the instrument.

Lana and the family might be the ones theoretically doing the giving. But, you know, you've got to ask, who caused Eliezer and his men to arrive exactly when they did at the well?

Who caused Rebecca to arrive just then? Who put the prayer in Eliezer's heart and mouth? Who moved Rebecca's heart and words to match that prayer exactly?

Here we see verse 51. And Bethuel answered and said, the thing proceedeth from the Lord. We cannot speak utterly by the good. And that's very true. The thing proceedeth from the Lord.

Now for Rebecca, somebody's choice was going to rule over her one day because of the culture and the way in which they were. She was going to be given in marriage to somebody at some point.

[23 : 29] You know, the idea that people can just marry for love whoever they like and whoever they choose, this is a comparatively recent thing. And it is really only the product of comparative affluence.

In a former age, and not just amongst those who were on subsistence level living, but even amongst those who had comparative wealth and estate, you had to marry in a way that would secure what you had.

Even those who were of great houses or family lines or earls or nobles or whatever, they had to make sure that their children were married in such a way that they would secure and keep safe their estate.

You couldn't just marry whoever you fell in love with. If you were an earl's son, you couldn't just marry the milking maid because that would mean you lost so much potential security for your estate.

You would be married off to somebody who would be matched up for you. And likewise, even, you know, in a former age, it was considered positively sinful to simply marry for your own selfish heart's desire when the well-being of your family might be at stake, the well-being of your loved ones.

[24 : 40] You know, if you're going to be married off to somebody, and in many ways, you know, the male, the son, would have as little choice in it as the female would in many ways. If you're going to be married off to somebody, and at the end of the day, it's not really a question of who do I love, who do I fancy, who do I want, but rather, you know, is this going to bring security?

Is this going to mean there's going to be food on the table? Is it going to mean there'll be warmth in the home? Will I have servants? Will I have a bit of wealth? Here's Rebecca, she's marrying a man who is rich. Okay, he might be a horror for all she knows, but here he is one who honors and reverences the God of their fathers.

That's a good start. Here he is one who has not taken to himself wives of the pagan Canaanites round about. That's another good point. He doesn't seem to have lots of other wives already. That's another good point too. He is wealthy, he is God-fearing, he is God-honoring, she doesn't know what he looks like. People often didn't know what their spouses were going to look like. They met on their wedding days quite often.

So this idea that, oh, I just married you in love, I make my own choice, this is a recent phenomenon. It's a kind of Western obsession in many ways. And it wasn't the way for thousands of years because people had to secure their own living, their own livelihood.

[26 : 05] You know, love doesn't necessarily put food on the table. Love doesn't necessarily secure your land or your tenancy. Love doesn't warm your home.

Love doesn't make sure you've got food to put in the mouths of your children necessarily. Love is great, it's wonderful, but as a romantic notion on a basis on which to build marriage, it is a recent phenomenon.

And it is a luxury which most people could only afford because we are now in a state of comparative affluence where we don't have to worry so much about these other things.

But for most people, for most of this world's history, you had to choose marriage partners on the basis of what would ensure your security.

Rebecca is going to somebody she's never met, but she's going to have servants, she's going to have comparative wealth, she won't want for anything. Yes, she'll probably have to produce heirs, but everybody did.

[27 : 03] She's going to have to be given to somebody that she won't necessarily know, but then she'll spend most of her time amongst her own women servants and with her own people. She won't actually have to spend that much time with the men folk and with her own husbands because that wasn't the culture.

So although she doesn't have a lot of personal choice, most of us wouldn't actually. We think, oh, that's not true, I get to choose exactly where I want.

Okay, fine. You choose exactly where you live? Oh, yes, of course I do. Yes, okay. So the house that you're brought up in or the house you're born in, did you choose it or did you inherit it? Or if you choose and bought and built your own home, was it dictated by you chose exactly where you wanted it to be, exactly the dimensions and space and everything, or was it dictated by how much you could afford and where you could get a set and what materials you could have?

The car that you drive, if you drive a car, is it determined by your own choice and what you saw in a magazine or is it by what you can afford and what the insurance would be like and how much you could actually afford to drive it or put petrol in the tank or whatever?

The person you met, the person you married, is it just purely your choice of all the people of the world or is it limited, in fact, by those that you've encountered within what is for most of us a comparatively limited circle of acquaintance?

[28 : 26] I'm not saying it's not our own choices, I'm saying that we don't usually recognise how much our own choices are in fact curtailed and determined by factors outwith our control.

The same is true of God's choosing and selection of his own people. We think, oh, it's going to be my choice, it's going to be my determination, but if it is left entirely up to us, we will all fail, we will all lose, we will all end up in a lost eternity.

Thanks be to God, he does not leave it entirely up to us. He makes choice, he makes determination, he pays the price, he goes ahead of us, he causes our heart to become willing, he saves some by his great mercy and he freely offers salvation to all.

And our choice is made willing in line with his choice. For Rebecca, she's going to be married off to somebody, who would be a better match than this?

Oh, she might be able to think of other people, but here is a good match. He is a God-fearing man who can provide for her, who can look after her, who will potentially love her and care for her.

[29 : 48] Is there going to be a better match than this? Is there going to be somebody better than this? Will there ever be a better match? The only choice she really had was not if, it was when.

Will you go with this man now? Or do you want to wait with us a wee while? If the Lord has his hand upon you, and is calling and inviting you to go with him, and to follow him wherever he may reach, and you might be thinking, oh yeah Lord, I would love to, but you know, I'm just not quite ready yet. I want to do this, I want to do that, I want to do the next thing. When is the time that you think is going to be better than this time? When is the time that you are so convinced it will be a more opportune moment, it will be a better time, because I won't have this to worry about, I won't have that to worry about, it will be so much better in the future, at that time, you don't know what the future holds.

When is the ideal time that you are so convinced it is better to put off going with the Lord and answering his call?

Paul writes to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 6 verse 2, he said, I heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I suffered thee, behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.

[31 : 08] Will thou go with this man? She said, I will go. She doesn't have to travel alone, verses 59 to 61 tells about her nurse going with her, and her damsels, her maidservants that are going with her, these voices from home, familiar faces that she probably didn't think much about, but now she's going to be glad of familiar faces, now she's going to be thankful for the voices from home that will surround her, she'll have her own wee entourage, she doesn't have to travel alone, and there are always those who will make the journey with us, when the Lord calls you to follow him, he doesn't expect you to venture out in complete isolation, he will provide people for you, to go with you, to be a support for you, to uphold you along the way, he will not leave you comfortless, he will provide those who will be travelling companions with you, faces from home, familiar voices that perhaps we took for granted before, but soon we are glad of them, and thankful that they are with us on the journey, so they make the journey back to

Canaan, and some interesting details emerge, first of all, we see at verse 62 there, we find Isaac in meditation, and presumably prayer, but where is sea?

he came from the way of the well, Lahai Roy, now we have come across this place before, if you turn back with me to chapter 16, we will see at verse 14, it says, wherefore the well was called Beer, that means well, Lahai Roy, the well Lahai Roy, behold it is between Caddish and Bered, and this is the place to which Hagar had fled, when she fled from Isaac's mother, Sarah, because we read in verse 7 of chapter 16, there the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water, a well of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur, and that's when the Lord persuaded her to go back to Sarah, her mistress, and to lift herself under her hands, and he promised her that her son would grow to be a strong, wild man, and so she called the well, the well of him that liveth and seeth, thou God seest me, and that's what Beir Lahai Roy means, the well of him that liveth and seeth, and this place which was the place to which

Hagar ran in the wilderness, this was really out in the wilderness for her men, that was the limit of her exertions, of her fleeing from her mistress, what is the wilderness to one person, is like a retreat of peace to the man of God, he goes there to get away from all the noise and tumult and interruption of the world, what is a forlorn wilderness to some the man of God seeks out as a place of peace, a place of retreat, free from interruptions and distractions of the world, the wilderness holds no fears for those who dwell in it with the Lord, this is where Isaac chooses to live, chapter 25, verse 11, came to pass after the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac, Isaac dwelt by the well that I ride, this is where he makes his home in the wilderness by the well of the God who lives and sees, thou God sees me also we find in verses 63 to 65 we see a subtle but interesting shift of headship it is Abraham who sent the camels and the servants off on this mission, so now why are they coming back to

Isaac rather than going back to Abraham, verse 63 behold the camels were coming, you know why specify only Isaac at verse 62, he dwelt in the south country, why does it say he dwelt there with his father Abraham or Abraham dwelt in the south country and Isaac was with them, you know we assume they live in the same place, we assume they're part of the same camp but the context would suggest not, why not say he dwelt with Abraham, why not say that Abraham dwelt at

Lahaiway along with Isaac, the last we heard of Abraham, he was at Mamre near Sarah's grave, chapter 23, verse 19 perhaps when she died, you know perhaps he moved further south to Beersheba where he had been before, chapter 21, verse 33, it was three years previously that Sarah had died, I won't bore you with the arithmetic but you can't calculate it, the maths from the verses and chapters that we've had just now, so the most likely scenario is that at the nearest he is settled at

[35 : 51] Beersheba perhaps 30 or 40 miles to the north of where Isaac is just now and the most likely scenario is that on the way back down from Syria that the servant has already brought Rebecca back to Abram's camp who has met her and sent the servant and his entourage on with Rebecca south to where Isaac lives and told him to take Sarah's tent with him for the new bride and has more importantly told the servant that he should regard Isaac now as head of the family, not himself Abram.

Now this might account for the fact that when Rebecca asks the servant who the man in the field is, he doesn't say, oh that's my master's son, Isaac. Rather he replies, my master, it is my master. And she took a veil and covered herself. It is almost as though in successfully finding a wife for Isaac, Abram considers his work to be finished.

Now there's still life in the old man, as we see in the next chapter. Takes another wife, has another six kids and so on. But his work as head of the family, head of the clan, the tribe, is in a sense over. Finally, we have what in Old Testament terms must be a unique detail. Verse 67, Isaac brought her to his mother, Sarah's tent, to Rebecca, she became his wife, and he loved her.

[37 : 21] And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death, and he loved her. Well, do you that, I think, well, of course he would, you know, why wouldn't he? But of how many other Old Testament or indeed New Testament characters do we read that they loved their wives?

They think, oh, come on, I mean, oh, okay, give me an instance. Yes, we can say that Jacob loved Rachel, but that was before they were married. That was when he was still longing after her before he'd been allowed to marry her.

And yes, we read that Samson loved Delilah, but not quite in the same way. I think we can safely take it. Michael, Saul's daughter, loved David, but we don't read that it was reciprocated.

It's actually quite scary. This is such a rare description. Isaac loved her. He loved her. But it does credit to Isaac that he is the one about whom it is written, because this is obviously how the Lord Jesus intends that things should be.

And he takes not Isaac, but himself, as the example. In Ephesians 5, we read, Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

[38 : 49] So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourished of it and cherished of it, even as the Lord, the church.

Isaac's love is good and noble and faithful and seemingly all too rare. If we would see true love in action, we must look to Christ and see his own love for his own people.

For the church of Jesus Christ is the one for whom he has given himself. He chose her. He traveled far. He came from heaven itself down to this earth and sought her out.

He prayed over her. He brought her home. He lived for her. He died for her. And he loved her.