

99-06-06b

We resume our study now this morning in Genesis chapter 24. Abraham is old, well advanced in age. You think he was old when Isaac was born.

Isaac is now of marriageable age, and so Abraham is well over a hundred. He's maybe a hundred and thirty or so. The Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.

So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had. Now this is fascinating. Do we know any of Abraham's servants? Barring death or dismemberment, who would be the senior servant in Abraham's household? Turn back to chapter 15.

After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abraham. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward. But Abraham said, Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I go childless? And the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus.

So Eliezer at that time is the senior servant. This of course is some 20, 30, 40 years, maybe as many as 60 years earlier. So you have Eliezer mentioned there.

It is not out of the realm of possibility. It's been suggested, and of course this is the first thing we think of. But it's also, you would think, well if it was Eliezer, why wouldn't it just mention his name? I think there is a reason for that.

But it's a speculation. It could be Eliezer. I think if the word of God wanted to make a point, obviously of his humility in brokering a marriage for Isaac, where potentially in earlier years he might have been viewed as the successor to Abraham, you would see a great deal of selflessness and humility in that.

But because the Bible does not name this servant as Eliezer, we have to hesitate to read that much into the account. I think it's significant that this servant, who plays such an important role, he brokers the link that makes it possible for Abraham to have any seed beyond Isaac. If it isn't for this servant doing his job, the line ends with Isaac.

Or will end badly with Isaac intermarrying with a Canaanite or something. This servant's role is exceedingly important, and yet the servant is not named. And it almost makes a point of not naming him.

So this is significant, and we'll return to it. But what I'd like to do is just read through this account, so that the details of it are fresh in our minds. He said, Please put your hand under my thigh, in verse 2. What is that all about? I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, but you shall go to my country and to my family and take a wife for my son Isaac.

And the servant said to him, Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came? And Abraham said to him, Beware that you do not take my son back there. The Lord God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, To your descendants I give this land, He will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath. Only do not take my son back there. So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.

Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water.

Then he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day and show kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, Please let down your pitcher that I may drink, and she says, Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink.

Let her be the one you have appointed for your servant Isaac, and by this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master. And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin, no man had known her.

And she went down to the well, filled up her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her and said, Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher. So she said, Drink, my lord.

Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand and gave him a drink. And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking. Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

And the man, wondering at her, remained silent, so as to know whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring, weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists, weighing ten shekels of gold, and said, Whose daughter are you? Tell me, please, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge? So she said to him, I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to Nahor. Moreover, she said to him, we have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge.

Then the man bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his mercy and his truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.

So the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things. Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. And Laban ran out to the man by the well.

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. 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. 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. Food was said before him to eat, but he said, I will not eat until I have told about my errand.

And he said, Speak on. So he said, I am Abraham's servant. The Lord has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great.

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. Now my master made me swear, saying, You shall not take a wife from my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell.

But you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife from my son. I said to my master, Perhaps the woman will not follow me. 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 from my son, from my family, and from my father's house. 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.

You might notice there is a slightly different wording in what the servant tells Laman and company than what Abraham said to Laman. At 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, 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. And she says to me, Drink, and I will also draw for your camels.

Let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son. 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. 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.

Then I asked her and said, Whose daughter are you? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, who milked a goat to him. So I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. You might notice here also that the order is reversed in verse 47 from what took place in verse 22 and 23.

In 22 and 23, he put the nose ring and the bracelets on first and then asked the question, Whose daughter are you? But when he recounts it, he says, I talked to her and then I put the nose ring and the bracelets on. 48. I bowed my head and worshipped 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.

Now, this is where we shift from reviewing the past to moving forward in this transaction. Verse 49. 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. I will point out for you that in verse 49 when it says, If you will deal kindly and truly, this is Keced and Emet, which is grace and truth. It's the name of our church.

The same two words were used in the servant's prayer at the beginning when he says, when he gives thanks to the Lord for dealing with him in grace and truth. Verse 27. Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his mercy and his truth.

The same two words you find in verse 49. So the servant says, this is what God has done. God has dealt in Keced and Emet.

Now, he turns to Laban and says, If you will deal in the same vein, grace and truth, with my master, tell me. If not, I need to turn to the right hand or the left. Verse 50.

Laban and Bethuel. You might put a circle around Bethuel because it should not be there. Laban answered and said, The thing comes from the Lord.

We cannot speak to you either bad or good. Here is Rebekah before you. Take her and go and let her be your master's son's wife as the Lord has spoken.

It came to pass when Abraham's servant heard their words that he worshiped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth. Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold and clothing and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.

And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning and he said, Send me away to my master. But her brother and her mother said, Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten.

After that she may go. He said to them, Do not hinder me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away so that I may go to my master.

So they said, We will call the young woman and ask her personally. Then they called Rebekah and said to her, Will you go with this man? She said, I will go. So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men.

They blessed Rebekah and said to her, Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them. Then Rebekah and her maids arose and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.

And that's a good place for us to stop. We'll move forward after we've analyzed this portion to see the meeting between Isaac and Rebekah that follows. What strikes you about what we have just read? We have two complete tellings of this story, don't we? We get the actual events as they occur.

Then once the servant arrives at the household of the brother Laban, he retells the story. Does it have to be this way? Couldn't there just be a verse that says, And behold, the servant recounted to Laban all the things that had transpired at the well. And we could just move forward.

But there's a conscious retelling of the entire sequence of events with some small changes as Abraham's servant tells this story to the household of Laban. Well, we ask ourselves, why is that? It's important, first of all, for us to understand what happened at the well. That's why we have the first account.

Then we can understand better why the servant retells it in the second half of the chapter. So we go back to the commissioning of the servant by Abraham. He's old.

This is, in his mind, one of his last acts. He's realizing that he's not going to be around forever, and it's time for Isaac to be married. The first thing that strikes us here, at least it strikes me, is you've got Abraham.

He's got his son Isaac. When Abraham is sitting there thinking, I'm old, I'm advanced in years, God has blessed me greatly, but I need to start planning for the future, I need to get things squared away with Isaac, make sure he's ready. Sarah is gone.

The tent of the matriarch of the family is empty now. It's time that Isaac got married. Why doesn't he call Isaac? Wouldn't this be the natural thing? Isaac, go seek your fortune.

Go find your wife. He doesn't call Isaac. He doesn't say, Isaac, you need to go to the land of our people and get a wife and bring her back.

He doesn't do that. He calls his most trusted servant. It tells us in verse 2 that this is the oldest servant of his house.

This is the most senior. This is Abraham's executive officer. This is right-hand man.

This is the chief operating officer for the whole Abraham Incorporated. He calls this man and gives him the commission to find a wife for Isaac. Isaac is nowhere in the picture.

We don't even see Isaac until, as it says in the Old King James, until Rebekah falls off her camel toward the end of the chapter. It says in Hebrew, it's literally the word for falling. The Nephilim are the fallen ones.

That's the verb that's used when she sees Isaac afar off. It says she fell off her camel. Was she just love at first sight and just swooned? We'll have to study that when we get there.

But that's the first time that Isaac makes any appearance. Isaac, ever since he's been born, has been a passive figure, hasn't he? Back when Ishmael gets driven out for laughing and scorning Isaac. Isaac is a wee one.

It's the celebration of his weaning. But he's passive. He has no involvement in that story.

Going up the great act of faith, Abraham, on top of the mountain, Mount Moriah and the raising of the knife to slash Isaac's throat and so forth. Isaac asks one question. I see the wood in the fire.

Where's the sacrifice? And outside of that, he hauls the wood up. But he's basically passive. It doesn't even mention him returning from the mountain.

It says Abraham and the servants that were with him returned. And so he's not presented in the Bible as a man of action. So down through the centuries, it has always been assumed that he was kind of a wimpy type.

And that may be true. It's interesting to me, later on, most of us are familiar with the broad outline of these patriarchal stories. And we know about Isaac and Rebekah.

When Rebekah has twins, you've got Jacob and Esau. And each son is favored by one of the parents. Rebekah, who's her favorite? It's Jacob.

And who's Esau's favorite? It's Esau. Esau is a, right? Isaac's favorite is Esau. Oh, yeah.

Who did I say? Jacob? Esau's favorite is Esau. Oh, yeah. Well, it probably was.

No, Isaac's favorite is Esau. Esau is a hirsute man. He's very hairy.

His name means red, you know, Edomites. But he's a man of the field. He goes out and hunts with a bow and brings back game.

And you get the idea that Isaac likes this testosterone-soaked son, Esau. And is that because they are similar, or is that because they're different? We also find out, toward the end of this chapter, that Isaac is not living with Abraham. Isaac is off in the wilderness, living at Bir Lahai Roy.

In fact, I think we found that out. I've been looking at so many different things, I don't remember where I found that out. But I believe it's toward the end of this chapter.

And that's way out in the wilderness. You remember that got its name because that's where the angel spoke to Hagar. And she said, this is the place where God sees me.

The God who sees me is where that name comes from. So Isaac is living out in the wilderness. So he doesn't sound, I wouldn't automatically conclude that he's a wimpy type.

He's gone out into the rough country, out there into the wilderness, that's between the dwelling place of Abraham and Egypt. You'd wonder what made him go out there. What was out there? It's a desolate place.

Hagar thought there wasn't any water and they were going to die out there. But that's where Isaac is dwelling. So is he out trying to find himself, or is he also a man of the fields? Does he see a kinship with Esau, or is it a matter of contrast? He sees in Esau everything that he is not.

There's no real way of knowing because we have very little information about Isaac. But it is interesting that he is so passive, even in the Jacob and Esau story. When we get there, you know that he's sort of hornswoggled by Rebekah and Jacob, and he seems to be manipulated.

Other people seem to be the shakers and movers and making the decisions, and he's just kind of there. So in this case, it's interesting that when Abraham decides something needs to be done, he doesn't send for Isaac. Even if Isaac is off at Beerlehai Roy, he could have sent somebody and said, call my son Isaac.

Have him come in and say, Isaac, you need to get yourself a wife. One of the reasons is the reason that he gives the servant. Under no circumstances do I want my son to go out of this land.

Beerlehai Roy is out there in the wilderness, but it's still in the land of promise. It's still in the boundaries of what God has promised to Abraham. Abraham mentions it twice to the servant.

Under no circumstances are you to take my son out of the land. So Abraham doesn't want to call Isaac and send Isaac out of the land. Why? Does he think that if Isaac leaves, he may get enamored with the pleasures of sin in Haran with the hustle and bustle of the big city? They've been living a wilderness, agricultural life of following the herds and flocks.

Does he think that Isaac might go and not return, that he might be swayed? Abraham has bought the land, the field, and the cave of Machpelah. That's where he and Sarah are going to be. He wants Isaac to stay in the land of promise.

Under no circumstances, he tells the servant, are you to take my son out of this land. Well, this is a mission that requires going out of the land to find a wife. Abraham is looking for a daughter-in-law from his own people, from his own kindred.

Why? What difference would it make? Why could he not marry a Canaanite? Why could he not go to Abimelech or one of these other friendly sons of Heth? The sons of Heth have some daughters in their family. Why couldn't Isaac marry a Hethite, a Hittite woman? There is a principle here, and we have to sort of have our spiritual antenna on, because it's not spelled out in so many words. But the suggestion which permeates the entire story of Abraham and his seed, and we've talked about it before, is that this physical line is the place where believers are located.

God, in his management of human history, for convenience, because you don't have modern technology where just anybody can order a tape or listen to the radio or tune in a television broadcast. How are you going to make provision for believers to learn the word and the will of God, to understand how to worship, to receive the ministry of prophets and priests and kings? In the ancient economy, you've got to get them in one spot. Otherwise, you're going to have to be sending people to the farthest reaches of the globe trying to find this ancient Chinese believer or this ancient South African believer that's the one person on the continent that is faithful to God.

How are you going to manage this? God, for convenience, if nothing else, as well as for the symbolism and the teaching points that are involved, has located those who are positive, those who are responders to God. He's put them in a physical line. They're in this line that descends down through Shem, and before that through Seth, and down to Abraham.

So Abraham knows that for Isaac to have a wife who is a believer, who is sensitive to the things of God, who is going to perpetuate not only the physical heritage but the spiritual heritage that he represents and that he has placed his faith in, the covenant relationship he has with God, it has to come from his clan. Well, there's nobody else available. Lot, who is his only other kin in the land, has had incest with his two daughters, and their offspring are all tainted.

He can't send his servant down over to Lot and say, find a Moabite or an Ammonite for my son to intermarry with. Lot is symbolic of those who disregard the opportunity to engage in covenant relationship with God. So that's not going to work.

The only other kith and kin that Abraham has is back in Haran. So this is where the wife is going to be found, and it represents the fact that Abraham knows that you can't be unequally yoked, not just in the matter of is one saved and the other not, in the sense of lake of fire type of salvation, but like-minded in the area of faith. And this tells us that Isaac is a man of faith.

We'll see this in the later portion of his life when we do get a little more of an insight. Right now, we don't know anything about Isaac other than he's willing to carry the wood, he's willing to allow his father to bind him on the altar. Outside of that, we know virtually nothing about Isaac, but we will find later that he is knowledgeable, he is a man of faith, despite the passive presentation that we have of him in Scripture.

So this is the point. Abraham has to go to the household where faith will be found. It's outside the land.

Abraham, under no circumstances, wants Isaac to leave the land, so he's got to send a servant. So he finds his oldest and most trusted servant, may have been Eliezer, it would be interesting if it is, but the Bible purposely, and it's almost awkward through the chapter, you remember as we were reading, it has to keep referring to him as the man or the servant of Abraham, it makes a point of not naming him. Why is that? Well, in looking at this account, and I'm going to digress just briefly here, this observation is not original to me, but I think it's valid.

This servant suggests to us, and I'm not going to say that he's symbolic of or that he's a type of, but certainly he is an illustration of the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. The reason is, you think about his characteristics, what does he do? He doesn't come up with original ideas on his own, he carries out the will of the one who commissioned him. He is a trustworthy emissary on behalf of the one who sent him, the one from whom he proceeds.

He is not out to glorify himself or to seek his own goals or his own ends. He's not like some of the other servants in the Bible who, remember the servant of the prophet when Naaman came and got dipped in the water seven times and was healed of leprosy, and he said, let me give you gifts, and the prophet said, no, I don't want anything from you, go in peace, and so he goes. And then the servant runs after him and says, oh, the prophet changed his mind, let me go ahead and take some of this stuff, and he is struck with leprosy.

This is not the kind of servant that Abraham has. He's not interested in glorifying himself, and his name is not even given. You think about the three members of the Trinity, we

have names for the first two, but we have a description of the third.

The Holy Spirit doesn't have a proper name, does he? The Holy Spirit is a description, not a name, and that's why it varies in the Word of God. Sometimes you have ta-numa, ta-hagia, so you have various different ways it's construed in Greek. They're all descriptions, Spirit of Holiness, Spirit of Power, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, they're all descriptive.

He doesn't have a proper name. God the Father has many proper names, but Elohim, Yahweh, Yahweh is his proper name. God the Son, Jesus Christ, He has a proper name.

God the Holy Spirit doesn't have a proper name, because He proceeds from the Father, He's commissioned by the Son. He works to fulfill the Word and the will, and to glorify those for whom He works. And this servant is the same.

This servant does something for Isaac that Isaac cannot do himself. Isaac is not allowed to leave the land. This servant can do that.

If Isaac is the wimpy type that some people think he is, and Abraham doesn't think that he has the strength of character to perform this mission, to leave the land and come back, this servant does. Well, what's the mission of God the Holy Spirit? To help in weakness. Remember in Romans 8, it talks about the fact that God the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.

You have Romans 8.26, Romans 8.14, those who are led by the Spirit, He leads, because we're not capable of determining our own direction apart from His leadership. If you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. So He is an enabler.

He facilitates. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but He helps us in our weakness. You have the idea of presenting and persuading the opportunity from the Master.

It is this servant who goes and makes this opportunity known in the household of Laban, and gives the opportunity for Rebecca, and by extension her family, to respond. This is what the Holy Spirit does. He convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

He leads believers into all truth. He shows us where the right path is. He's the one who uses the sharp sword of the Word of God to lay us open and show the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow, and the thoughts and intents of the heart, and brings us to that decision point.

That's what this servant is going to do. The Holy Spirit has been with God the Father from the beginning. He's co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.

This servant has been with Abraham. It says Abraham is old, and this is his oldest

servant. He's been with Abraham longer than any of the others, so he is a long-time companion and knows the heart of Abraham.

You have the mission that this servant fulfills. What does he do? He is the one that is going to enable the future life of the descendants of Abraham. He's going to be the means of Isaac bearing the fruit of children and having offspring and descendants and fulfilling this promise.

This, of course, is what the Holy Spirit does as a mission. He is the life giver. He is the renewer.

He is the regenerator. He is the one that gifts and enables us to bear fruit, to have lasting witness, lasting heritage. This servant goes and gives gifts.

He gives the nose ring and the bracelets. He gives silver and gold to Rebecca and to the family. He's a gift giver.

He prospers and gives treasures to these. Of course, it's a cliché in Christianity, the gifts of the Spirit. You go to Corinthians and to Ephesians where it talks about spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12, the whole chapter talks about the fact that it's God, the Holy Spirit, who gifts believers. No glorification of self. His own destiny, his own will, his own well-being is subordinated to accomplishing the will of the one who sent him.

That, of course, is characteristic of the Holy Spirit. It's fascinating to look up the passages with regard to this, these ministries of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a communicator.

In Romans 8, verse 16, Romans 8 is a great chapter to describe many of the New Testament ministries of God, the Holy Spirit. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Holy Spirit relays information. He's the one that makes the Word of God understandable to us, and he takes what we say and, in effect, makes it understandable to God.

We don't know how to pray as we ought, but he intercedes on our behalf. He communicates with groanings that cannot be uttered in the course of communicating our needs and desires to God. You have Galatians 4.6, 1 John 3.24. 1 John, you might turn there, there are three passages in 1 John that describe the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit.

In 1 John 3.24, John says, Let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. What is it that abides in us from the beginning? That which you heard.

It's the Word. What makes that understandable and meaningful to us? Now he who

keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in him. By this we know that he abides in us by the Spirit whom he has given us.

The Word of God that we have in our souls is made meaningful and understandable and applicable in our souls by God the Holy Spirit. That's how our knowledge becomes active, does us any good, is through the ministry of the Spirit whom he has given us. Same thing when you turn over a page to 1 John 4.13. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us because he has given us of his Spirit.

We have knowledge. We understand. We have communication from God, and it's because of the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

Apart from the Spirit, the carnal mind can't understand any of the divine truths that are applicable or pertinent. And then in 1 John 5.6, This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

The Spirit bears witness of those truths that we can't see. This servant is going to go give testimony to the household of Laban. They can't see.

They don't know anything about Abraham or Isaac. But this servant, like the Spirit, is going to go bear witness to them. So there are a lot of similarities.

We've already mentioned the association with prayer. You see this servant praying and worshiping and reflecting the glory of God several times in this account. This, of course, is one of the Holy Spirit's primary functions, is to reflect the glory of God.

To help in weakness, we mentioned Romans 8.14 and Romans 8.26. The Holy Spirit is a faithful representative of God. You have Hebrews 10.29 in this regard, as well as many other passages. Hebrews 10.29, To reject Jesus Christ is an insult to the one who communicates Him, the one who bears witness to Him, and that's God the Holy Spirit.

And this is an indication of the high esteem in which God holds His own Spirit, God the Holy Spirit. He is a faithful representative. And to reject the message is to reject the messenger, because they are one and the same.

He is qualified to speak for God. He is God. And to reject the Son of God that He represents.

Remember, there's reference several times in this passage. Abraham, when the servant asks and says, What if the woman will not come with me? What if she rejects the offer, she rejects the opportunity? Abraham says, You're released from the oath. You see the servant waiting to see if she's going to be the one to accept when they're at the well.

And then he repeats the full account, including the doubts that he had. Why does he

include the doubt? What if the woman will not come with me? He tells Laban about his conversation with Abraham. And he tells Laban about the fact that Abraham said, If she will not come with you, if the family will not let her go, you are released from this oath.

You're under no obligation if that person to whom the message is delivered, or the family, rejects it. And it's not God the Holy Spirit's fault if someone rejects His communication ministry, whether they're an unbeliever or a believer. He is a faithful representative.

So it's fascinating to see the similarities. Of course, we know the fruitfulness that's a result of the ministry of the Spirit in passages such as John 6.63, Romans 8.11, 2 Corinthians 3.6, 1 Peter 3.18. We don't have time to turn to those passages. I'll mention them again, though, for you to look up.

John 6.63, Romans 8.11, 2 Corinthians 3.6, 1 Peter 3.18. This is the idea of life from the Spirit, fruitfulness, the ability to function and to have lasting results through the ministry of the Spirit. Of course, 1 Corinthians 12, the idea of the gifting of the Spirit. And, of course, these gifts.

He is not the owner of these gifts. He conveys gifts that belong to Abraham, doesn't he? And this, of course, the gifts that we receive through the Spirit are gifts from God and from the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is why in some passages, like Ephesians 4, you have the idea that the gifts that are given to the body of Christ are from Christ.

But in 1 Corinthians 12, they are specifically said to be from the Spirit. But he is a faithful representative, and in that gifting, he accomplishes that mission. So, it's a fascinating thing to think about.

It's not an analogy to be pushed too far. Is Isaac representative of Jesus Christ and Abraham of God the Father and the servant of God the Holy Spirit? Then you start to cast aspersions on Jesus Christ because he's passive. You can't push these things too far.

But I think in the ministry of this servant, particularly, you see the principles of faithful service, which, of course, God the Holy Spirit is going to be an ultimate example of. But we all have areas of service as well. And in all of these areas of being faithful, of being a selfless representative seeking to be an ambassador for the one who has commissioned us, to know the heart of the person that sent us and to fulfill their will in every way, realizing that once we have fulfilled the will of the Master, regardless of the results, we are not held responsible.

Sometimes we tend to feel bad if we have the opportunity to speak the truth to someone in love or to give the gospel, and they don't respond. We feel like it's something we have failed. We have somehow not done right, and we feel accountable.

I used to be taught this as a boy in Sunday school. Their blood is on your hands if you

don't drag them kicking and screaming into the kingdom of God. But there's an emphasis on this in the story, isn't there? If the servant does his best to fulfill the mission and there's not a response to the offer, it's not the servant's fault.

He's blameless. He's free and clear because he's done his best. He has fulfilled his service.

And this is something we need to remember. We are, as children of God, also servants of God and representatives, ambassadors for Christ, not only as evangelists but also in our daily lives. And our life presents a far greater light than any words that we speak on any given occasion.

And we let our light so shine before men, and they see that life, and they ask us perhaps a reason for the hope that is in us. But regardless of the response, we don't gauge our faithfulness by whether or not there's a response. Abraham doesn't say to the servant, well, if she doesn't respond, then you go hang yourself or throw yourself off a cliff or beat yourself up and go offer sacrifice for your transgression.

And this goes along with what we've been seeing a lot in our recent studies, that we do not measure the worth of our lives or the worth of our decisions, the worth of our priorities by outcomes in circumstances. We measure by faithfulness to the one who commissioned us, to the one who has called us. And if we do what we do heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men, it doesn't matter if we do something and it results in financial problem, or if it results in a relationship problem, or if it seems to result in some sort of bad outcome.

That's not the measure. The measure is, did we do what we, did we decide, did we act? Because in our best understanding and in acting in faith, this was the thing that we were convinced was pleasing to God. And in accordance with His Word, under the ministry of His Spirit, we're asking, we're seeking, we're knocking, we're trying to tread that narrow road selflessly in the interest of our Heavenly Father.

This is the example we have in this servant of Abraham. It's the example we have in God the Holy Spirit. And it is the example that we find most importantly in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And that is our pattern. That's our goal. So Abraham says, please put your hand under my thigh in verse 2. Now what's this hand under the thigh all about? The servant repeats this when he's, it's repeated that he actually does this after the conversation.

In verse 9, the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter. Well, this is a little chancy here, but the most important idea here, the whole idea of this chapter is offspring. You have the idea of circumcision, you have the idea of offspring.

Putting the hand under the thigh, this is a suggestion of the seat of life of Abraham. This is, I don't know a very delicate way to put it, but this is basically, rather than swearing with your hand on the Bible, this is swearing with your hand on the family jewels. That's what this is.

It is a close proximity or actually touching of the genitalia of the person to whom you are swearing. And if you don't think that's a solemn oath, that's about as solemn as it gets. This is not the only time this occurs.

You're going to find this again later on in Genesis 47-29 with Jacob asking Joseph to swear that he will bury him in Machpelah and nowhere else. And this type of oath has to do and emphasizes the physical descendants of Abraham. And you can't get any more symbolic of physical descendancy and the fulfillment of the seed covenant promises than swearing in this way, with your hand under the thigh.

And you have to wonder if this was a broader custom, but there's no attestation of this that I'm aware of outside of the scripture. It is interesting though, in 1 Chronicles 29-24, there is perhaps a reference to this with regard to Solomon. It says all the elders in Israel and all the other sons of David, it probably says in your English something along the lines of they swore allegiance or they promised fealty or something to Solomon.

But it literally says they gave the hand to Solomon. And whether this is a reference to this swearing with the hand under the thigh, the idea of the hand of course is this is what I will do. Your hands are what you perform your actions with.

And when you swear by your hand or you give someone your hand, putting the hand under the thigh, this is committing your actions, what you do to the person to whom you've made this oath. So it's a very solemn thing and of course the servant fulfills this very faithfully. I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth.

This ought to ring a bell with us. We've heard this oath formula before. And it was back, if you don't remember, it was back in Genesis chapter 14, I believe it is, with the episode of the captivity of Lot and the people of Sodom and so forth.

And the confederation comes down and takes everyone captive. Abraham gets together some sons of Heth and his servants and he goes up there and defeats them, rescues everyone, brings them back. Then in verse 18 of Genesis 14, Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine.

He was the priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High who has delivered your enemies into your hand.

We've seen this particular name of God, El Elyon, in connection with our study in Luke

chapter 1, where Gabriel, in talking to both Zacharias and to Mary, he tells Zacharias that his son, John the Baptist, is going to be the servant of God Most High. Gabriel tells Mary that her child is going to be called the son of the Most High. This is God's royalty.

This is God's sovereignty over the entire universe and everything that happens in human history. And it is God's role in government, as the head of the kingdom of God in its broadest sense. And there is nothing greater that you can take an oath by or that you can invoke than God's sovereign rulership over the heavens and over the earth.

This is what Melchizedek mentions. Abram, when he refuses the gifts from the king of Sodom, in this same chapter, verse 22, Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have raised my hand, there's your swearing again, to the Lord God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take any of this stuff that belongs to you. Not even so much as a shoestring.