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Let's resume our study now in a combination of Genesis chapter 24 and Ruth chapter 2. We have already seen that there are clues in these stories that tell us the frame of mind, the priorities, the type of people that are involved here. And we sometimes focus on the forward movement of the story, the events, the happenings that take place. And we've heard some of the stories so many times that it almost seems like a foregone conclusion that people act the way they act and say what they say and do what they do.

And it's good for us to slow down and think about why people have chosen to do what they do and to act the way they act. There is a school of thought that thinks, well, God in certain cases just foreordained that people would make certain choices and act in certain ways. But God uses people who have prepared their hearts, who have responded to the calling, responded to the opportunity that He has put before them.

And it is possible to look at it as though, well, God just ordained that these people were going to make wonderful godly decisions at every turn. But it does a disservice and an injustice to these people who, in some cases, made extraordinary decisions because of their faith, because of their confidence that what God had said He would do. That God would reward those who diligently seek Him.

That God would not suffer the righteous to be moved or allow the sea of the righteous to be begging bread. And it's a great thing to recognize the faith of these believers. Hebrews chapter 11 is the classic review of some of these believers in the Old Testament.

Boaz is a wonderful figure. You get the idea that he's a little bit older than maybe Isaac is in the Genesis 24 story. He's been around a while.

He's got quite an extensive holding of land and so forth and yet is unmarried. Why is that? You think about the daily life of a man living in a culture where marriage and offspring is everything. Who are you going to leave this great agricultural enterprise to? Who's going to help you run it and tend it? To have sons was a very high priority.

But Boaz didn't compromise by just finding the first available and tolerable woman that he could find so that he could get his family underway. He has apparently waited for a period of years and hasn't found a person to marry that met the criteria that he had in his soul of someone who would be a good mother to his children and a wonderful companion for life and so forth. And many times when you think about the things that God does when He brings together believers who are like-minded in their pursuit of God's plan, we know from what Jesus said that such believers are relatively few and far between.

Jesus said narrow is the way and straight is the gate that leads to life and few there be

that find it. There is going to in some cases necessarily be a waiting period to find believers of like-mind in some cases. And this is also a test of our faith.

Do we really trust God over the long term? It's easy to trust God for a day or trust God for a week when you're hoping for something, praying for something. But what if several weeks go by? What if months go by? What if years go by and there still doesn't seem to be any forward progress in some area of life that's very near and dear to our hearts? Is there really substance to the promise of God? Is it really worth the wait? To wait for the thing that is genuinely reflecting of God's priorities and God's best? And to live in faith and to wait for that hope even unto death. Abraham never did build a city.

He never did strong back his tents. You know in the military a lot of times you go out on operations or something you live in tents. They got some real nice canvas tents.

But the tents are put up in such a way that they could easily be taken down and you can be out of there. They have a term for that in the artillery of quickly gathering your stuff and moving out. And it's called CSMO.

Collect your stuff and move out is one way of interpreting that. And that has to be done rapidly. So you have a portable and temporary shelter.

If you wind up having to stay in one place for weeks and months on end, they'll reinforce the tents. That's what they call strong back. They'll put a wooden framework inside them.

They'll put some decking underneath them and they'll make them more of a permanent establishment even though they're still essentially made of canvas. But Abraham dwelt in tents all his life. You think how long he lived.

He lives to be 175 if I remember correctly. And that whole time he lived his life in tents in the land. And when you go to Hebrews chapter 11 it says that Abraham never built himself a city.

He waited for a city whose founder and builder was God. And in his first go-round in this life he never did see that. But it didn't shake his faith and it didn't shake his belief in the promise that it would come to pass.

And Abraham's faith will be justified on the day that the Lord Jesus Christ returns in the second advent, plants his feet on the Mount of Olives, and the dead of the Old Testament age are raised. Abraham is going to march into the city whose founder and builder is God. And he's going to enjoy those blessings that he could not enjoy until we came to faith.

Until we were made a part of the household of faith. And the Bible tells us that those Old Testament saints had to wait because without us they could not be made complete. And

that was a long wait.

But it was real in Abraham's mind and he waited. It was real in Abraham's mind that God would bless his son with a life characterized by faith. And Abraham knew where she had to be.

He knew that that the time was getting short and he made the arrangement by sending his servant. So these souls, these people, because they're scattered, Abraham didn't have a whole bevy of young maidens in his immediate household that had grown up and were cousins or relatives. He didn't have his nieces, lots of daughters on hand.

They weren't women of faith. And so it may, just because of the scarcity, you can't always get together a large group. You can't always assemble a large church.

You can't always have a lot of great Christian fellowship. A lot of parents when their children reach teenage years think, oh, wouldn't it be great to have wonderful Christian fellowship for my son or my daughter or my young teenagers. Well, where is the first place to look? It's just where Abraham looked, within the household of faith.

But you're not always going to find like-minded, wonderfully well-oriented young people like that. They may not have arrived even if they're going to become that later in life. Maybe they haven't reached that point yet.

They've got some learning to do from mistakes and so forth. But we see in Ruth chapter 2 and the parallel situation over in Genesis 24 that the people involved here have reached a point in life where they are now habitually functioning as people of faith. This is not something they just took on.

Abraham didn't suddenly decide, you know, my wife doesn't have a, my son rather doesn't have a wife. I think I need to really get down on my knees and appeal to heaven and I'll have a big sacrifice and ritual and I'll do a bunch of things to get God to provide my son with a wife. Boaz doesn't suddenly decide that well now he's in his 40s or in his early 50s and he still doesn't have a wife and so I better go, maybe God can get a wife for me.

I'll suddenly become a great man of religion and I'll be down at the temple every time they have a sacrifice and I'll redouble my efforts to be a spiritual man. These men had already decided that God was the most important thing in their life. They had already decided that pleasing God in their daily life was the most important thing and as we saw when we studied divine guidance proper, it is the establishing of this priority that puts us in the position to be recipients of divine guidance when it comes to circumstances.

We don't do the thing backward where we look at a circumstance and we say I need to make a decision and I really want it to be the right one. God knows the right answer. I'll go to him and try to get a right answer as though this is a new and unusual sort of thing.

Our life ought to be characterized from the greatest to the smallest detail by the desire to please God. This is a part of our thinking. It's a habit where even in the small things we say, well, I want to do what's pleasing.

Nobody's looking. It doesn't seem to make a hill of beans of difference whether I've gotten this \$4.50 refund in the mail by mistake or whether someone has given me excess change or I've gotten too much or there's some minor discrepancy here. It is desiring to please God regardless and it becomes a way of thinking and a pattern of life.

That's what you see reflected in Boaz. That's what you see reflected in Abraham and in Abraham's servant. This puts us in the position to be in tune with those things that God reveals in his promise and in his principles and in his word that are applicable to daily circumstance.

Abraham has figured out based on the promise of God that God is going to bless this excursion to Haran to obtain a wife for Isaac. He has figured this out. We talked about it on the break.

How did he know that an angel was going to accompany the servant? There's no record of any divine revelation to Abraham on this score or that an angel appeared. We don't see any evidence of the angel in the travel account of the servant. But was he there? Abraham was convinced that there would be because he had carefully considered all of the implications of God's word to him that in Isaac his seed would be called.

That through Isaac all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Isaac has to get married. Isaac has to have offspring.

Abraham looked around and there are no candidates in terms of women of faith in the immediate vicinity. She has to be a woman who's willing to make the same step that he made. So she's going to probably come from the same place.

So he sends his servant there and he's confident that God is going to bless this endeavor. And of course his confidence is justified because God does bless it. And Rebecca does return, one of the great women of the Bible.

Same thing here with Boaz. Boaz isn't shopping women in the area trying to find a wife. He doesn't inquire of the woman and say, well is she, is that woman over there married? Is she datable? That's not the uppermost thing in his mind.

He's concerned about the aspects of the gleaning that are going on. The servants in verse 6 of Ruth chapter 2 answer and say, it is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. They know she's a Moabite.

They mentioned it twice in this answer. It's the Moabite woman who came from Moab. It's almost redundant.

She came back with Naomi. And this is a story that's well known in the area. But there's no prejudice.

They didn't despise her for being a Moabitess. They've treated her fairly. They've been generous with her.

And Boaz is going to go above and beyond. They recount what she said. She said, please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.

And they let her. They honored that request. They treated her with respect.

They let her glean just like they would any Israelite. Nobody argued about whether she really was or not or if she was qualified. They graciously let her.

And she came and has continued from morning until now. Though she rested a little in the house. And how many gleaners are out there? They let her come and rest in the house.

They took care of her. Even before Boaz gives any instructions. But then you see Boaz's reaction.

Because Boaz goes over and introduces himself to Ruth. And he says, you will listen, my daughter, will you not? And this in Hebrew is a very polite introduction. He's basically saying, please listen to what I have to say.

Please let me do this for you. Do not go to glean in another field nor go from here. But stay close by my young women.

You're going to be treated just like the women of my own household. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap and go after them. These fields are contiguous.

There are no fences. The reapers know where the boundaries are. And Boaz's people are going to reap Boaz's fields.

There are other fields that are adjacent. You can catch this earlier on in verse 3. She was gleaning in the fields. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz.

Not all of it belonged to Boaz. So Boaz says, stay in my part of the field. Because that's where my people are going to be.

They can look out for you. They can protect you. They can keep you from harm.

You're a single woman out here. Not everybody out here is as honorable as I am. I don't want you to come to harm.

Naomi is going to reiterate that same thing later on. There's some concern for her safety

and her physical well-being that toward the end of the day somebody might just bundle her up along with the sheaves and take her off and have their way with her. Some people are not so kindly disposed to the Moabites and think, well, they're fair game.

So Boaz says, stay with my young women. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? When you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn. You can tell from the example of Rebecca and elsewhere in Scripture that it's normally the women who draw the water.

She would have to go down. She would have to make the trip to wherever the nearest well was, which could be at some distance, and wait her turn to go and draw water to refresh herself during this reaping process. Boaz says, I've already got women who are drawing at the well and they fill vessels and the young men bring these vessels out to the field.

You just go right to the vessels and the young men will draw from these vessels for you and you'll be able to be refreshed. So just like the well at the well was sown with Moses and with Jacob, and especially with the servant and Rebecca, here you have the imagery of water. Water from the well, water of refreshment, water that's freely given with no thought of strings attached.

Water, of course, often in Scripture is a picture of the Word of God that is freely given. The washing of water and renewal of the Holy Ghost, that verse speaks of the combination of the Word and the Spirit, by which the power of God is implemented in the lives of believers. The tree that is planted by the rivers of water gives fruit forth in its season.

Innumerable references to that. So here, when she's thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn. She fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, why have I found favor in your eyes that you should take notice of me since I am a foreigner? She recognizes that being a Moabitess, she can't really necessarily expect a lot of warmth and hospitality in Israel.

She has come to Israel out of love for her mother-in-law and a recognition of the God of her mother-in-law. But she doesn't necessarily expect that people are going to understand. Of course, many of them probably would not, but Boaz does.

And Boaz, because he is familiar with this, look at what he says in 11. He says to her, it has been fully reported to me all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth and have come to a people whom you did not know before. Remember Genesis 12.1 when God says to Abraham, get thee up from your nation and your kindred and your father's house and go to a land that I will show you.

You have a strong echo of that in this verse. Boaz says, I recognize you. You're one of those people who's willing to leave.

You're one of those people who's, it's been reported. I know the full story of your devotion to your mother-in-law and your willingness to serve God and to please God in what you do, the integrity that's come in your soul. We're going to find out later that Ruth also knows a good deal about Israel.

She knows about the custom of the gleaners. She probably found this out from her husband Milan and her brother-in-law Kilian and her father. She's married into an Israelite family and she has familiarized herself with the custom.

She knows how this gleaning the corner of the fields works. She understands the system of charity, if you will, in the nation, in the land. It has been fully reported to me all that you have done for your mother-in-law.

Boaz, when he heard the story of this young woman, was impressed. He thought, there's an admirable young woman. She's really exceptional.

It wasn't anything that she ever said. She didn't stand up when she got back to Israel and give her testimony. Boaz wasn't in a revival meeting, listen to her give her tale of woe.

This is one of the ways that we recognize one another in the family of God. It is the light that shines through our souls in our daily decisions, the choices that we make, the priorities that we set. It is the reflection of integrity.

It's the reflection of God's glory in small things, in decisions that we wouldn't think would necessarily make a difference to someone else. But Boaz recognizes, here's a young woman that really has integrity. She's willing to leave everything and come to the land of Israel.

You've come to a people whom you did not know before. The Lord repay your work and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge. Boaz is a, I mean those words speak for themselves.

You know what's in Boaz's mind. You know what Boaz thinks of Ruth. And he recognizes that she has come to the Lord God and has taken shelter under his wings for refuge.

And she, in her response, reflects the same understanding. Let me find favor in your sight my Lord. You have comforted me and spoke kindly to your maidservant.

Even though I'm not like one of your maidservants. I'm not an Israelite girl. I'm not in your tribe and from your clan and family.

But you're treating me just like one of them. You're treating me just as you would treat

your own daughter or your own niece or your own family. And so the similarity of viewpoint is expressed in their choices and their actions and the way they think and the way they express themselves to one another.

So Boaz at the mealtime, he doesn't stop there because he recognizes the beauty in her soul. And he says come here and eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar. She sat beside the reapers.

He passed parched grain to her. She ate and was satisfied and kept some back. There is an abundance.

There's an overflow of generosity in what Boaz gives her. You remember at the well in Genesis 24, we had that same pattern take place. Turn back to Genesis 24 when the servant arrives with his camels.

If you think about this, you know, the what do they call them? The schooners of the desert or whatever. Camels and they're famous for their ability to go for long distances and many days without water. Why is that? Because camels can drink water and store it.

If you get into the details of camel anatomy and you find out that they are a ruminant like cattle and other animals that have more than one stomach. Most ruminants have four stomachs. Camels only have three.

But in each of those, in those first couple of stomachs, there are pouches in the stomach and each of them has their own little opening-closing muscle. A little sphincter type of muscle in these pouches. When they drink water, they can retain that water.

It's not stored in their hump. The hump is made of fat. These, by the way, are the one hump camels.

The Asian camels, not the two hump camels that are elsewhere in the world. These are one hump camels. The hump is made of fat.

They don't store water there. They store the water in these stomachs that are part of their rumination system. These first couple of stomachs have these pouches.

Each one can hold water and then be closed off by a little muscle. Then as they need water, they can release it back into their system. They can give themselves a drink from their internal thermos.

They can go for many days. These camels have made the trip all the way from down where Abraham lives up to Haran, a great distance. They are thirsty when they get there.

You get the idea that the servant didn't really make a lot of stops along the way. He is in a hurry. He gets there and he is in a hurry to get back.

These are thirsty camels. When he shows up at the well there, what does he do? In verse 11, 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. He makes the camels kneel down and he doesn't water them.

They are thirsty. They have made this long trip apparently without a drink. They have been running on their stored water from down south.

He makes them kneel down and he makes, because he figures this is going to be the way I will know. If anyone is generous enough, it isn't anything they are going to say, it isn't all their protestations of oh how I love God, oh how I want to go down and be Isaac's wife. He is going to give them a character test.

This puts me in mind of the old story about Daniel Boone when he met his wife whose name by the way was Rebecca, at least in the TV series. I haven't come back to read his life lately to know if that was really her name. I do know that this story is factual.

When he was courting Rebecca, before he proposed to her, he sat down next to her one evening. They were sitting on the stoop of her cabin. They had stoops back then.

They were sitting there in the evening and without warning, she had come out and still had her apron on. He reached over with his big hunting knife and just ripped that apron in half with his knife. He just looked at her and didn't say anything.

Her response, which was patient and gracious, she didn't stand up and rant and rave and throw a fit, convinced him that she was in fact a woman for him. Right after that he proposed to her. It was a little character test.

How does she take pressure? All this courting stuff was very formal and proper. You always see people with their best foot forward. He wanted to see her when things were not ideal.

It wasn't easy to come by aprons and cloth and stuff in those days. They had to make everything by hand. This was a much bigger deal than it would be today.

He wanted to find out what kind of gal she was when the chips were down. Whatever he saw satisfied him because he married her. They lived happily thereafter.

This is the same sort of thing. The servant, again, no guidance from Abraham, no blinding revelation from God. He says, the kind of woman I'm looking for is going to be generous of heart.

She's going to be selfless. She's going to be hospitable. There's going to be certain things about her.

That's what I'm looking for. I'm going to wait by the well. I'm going to go where the

women are found.

This is where the young maidens go. It's their job to draw water. I'm going to go where they are.

So he does. These are young women who are not being spoiled. It's not the servants coming out to draw.

This is going to be a young woman of a family, but she's still doing her chores. She's doing her work. She's from a wealthy family, but she's still doing her part.

She's chipping in. This is not an idle family where they're the idle rich sitting on cushions waiting for the servants to bring stuff. She comes out and by her dress he is going to realize that she's not a servant girl, that she's a girl from a good family, but she's still out doing these things.

So people who are trying to figure out how to go about dating and so forth, are you going to go to a nightclub or a strip joint or something? Where does the servant go? He doesn't go to the bazaar. He doesn't go to the evil entertainments in the city of Heron. He goes to a place where girls of good family who are willing to do their work and have a good attitude about it are going to be found.

Then he's going to look for one who will go above and beyond, who is that generous of heart. He's praised and he goes to God. He says, Lord, I need you to superintend this process.

O Lord God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day and show kindness to my master Abraham. Here I stand by the well of water. The daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.

Let it be that the young woman to whom I say, please let down your pitcher that I may drink. She's going to have this jug on top of her head. This is how they carry those things.

She's got that thing wrapped around her hair and it makes a little platform and they carry these heavy jugs of water. Now how much water do you realistically think you can carry in one of these jugs? It has to be light enough that they can carry it on their head. I seem to recall from physics that one gallon of water weighs something on the order of 7.7 pounds.

You think about a two-gallon jug of milk. You figure, well, how many gallons of water can you fit on your head? This is not going to be a huge amount. She's not carrying 50 gallons of water on her head.

She's not carrying 25 gallons. She's not carrying 10 gallons. This is going to be, what,

three to five gallons of water at most on her head and you have to account for the weight of the clay jar on top of that.

She's making a trip out from the city to get this water and go back. Do you think that's too much? That's a lot. Well, they were sturdy women in those days.

Here I stand by the well. The daughters of the men are coming out to draw water. Let it be that the young woman to whom I say, please let down your pitcher that I may drink.

Remember, this is kind of a tricky thing to get this heavy jug of water up on your head so that you can walk the distance. You don't want to be taking it this is arm work to take this up and down. I'm going to ask for a drink and she says drink and I will also give your camels a drink.

Now, 10 camels. How much water is a thirsty camel going to drink, do you suppose? When they get a chance to take a drink, they're going to drink. They're trying to replenish that store.

They've been on a long journey here. You've got 10 thirsty camels and you get the idea that the servant, these camels serve multiple purposes. Camels were a great sign of wealth.

He doesn't have to bring a whole lot of other stuff to prove that his claims are legitimate, that Abraham has prospered, that God has blessed him, that Isaac is the heir. He just brings the 10 camels. He doesn't have to bring all the other flocks and herds.

If you've got 10 camels, it'd be like driving up in a fleet of 10 Lexus cars or 10 Cadillacs or 10 Mercedes or something. If he brings these up, you don't have to see the mansion, you don't have to see the pool, you don't have to see the stocks and bonds and bank balance and so forth. You come up with those cars and they all belong to you, okay, that'll vouch for it.

But, you know, is somebody going to be willing to pump gas into the 20 gallon tanks of all 10 of these cars? I mean, even that would be minor compared to what she's about to do. Let her be the one that 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, in verse 15, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milchah, wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder.

Now, we know who she is, but the servant does not. Interesting narrative technique here, because we know and he doesn't. So, we're not worried about whether or not she's the one, we're worried about how he's going to figure this out.

The young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin, this is the Hebrew word *betula*, no man had known her. *Betula* is used for women of marriageable age. Actually, all the

way up, it can be used for women as old as 40, back in these days.

But it says she's a young woman, a nahara, another Hebrew word, but the word for virgin here is not Alma, the famous word, behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. This is betula. Alma will be used later.

No man had known her. She went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. Now, what does it say? Went down to the well.

When you're living out in a desert land like this, the water, it's not like an artesian well where it's bubbling up and you've got the little...