

Godly Character for Real Life

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] Well, with all of the ministries that are kicking back into full swing now after having some time off in the summer with everyone going in kind of different directions.

I do admit we're loading you up now. We're trying not to overwhelm you with it. But as we get started this Tuesday, it'll just keep rolling right into early December. And so it's very appropriate this morning that I get to bring a message to all of you as God's people, but primarily to our men that kind of jump starts the idea of what Pastor Greg put before you.

We're really stepping forward to challenge each of us as men to take the next step up in the. Oh, welcome back, guys. Good to see y'all. Alaska. My goodness, man. I need to hear all about it. You took pictures. Amen. All right. Little pause there. Good to see my brother. Jeremy is one of our deacons and they've been gone for a couple of weeks on a on a trip. So good to see you back. But to have our men gathering together and what Pastor Greg and I want to do is is emphasize in this kind of next level commitment for each of us.

We want to lay the groundwork for you to be wonderful shepherds, faithful shepherds in your home to start with. Shepherding your family. I pastor you and I pastor your family alongside of Pastor Greg.

[1:44] But men, you you are the first and foremost shepherd in your family. And so our responsibility is to come alongside of you and equip you to lead your family in the priorities of heaven.

You hear that to lead your family in the priorities of heaven. Now, please listen to this statement as I as I say it. As goes our men, so goes our church.

It doesn't mean that our women, our ladies, our sisters in Christ are not important. The Lord has already settled that issue. Male and female believers are co-heirs in the gospel of grace.

God sees us as equal value. All right. But men have been given the mantle of spiritual leadership, which involves protection and provision for our families.

And if we welch on that responsibility, many people around us begin to suffer. It is not our wives responsibility to lead our families.

[2:56] It is not our wives or our ladies responsibility to lead our church. It's our men. And so we want to call you to that. Now, we're not doing this because we think you guys are dropping the ball.

You know, sometimes that's a thing. Boy, they're really coming down on it. We must have really. No, this is just the next step. Right. This is the next step. Now, we don't want to belabor it, but.

We do want to impress on you that living out the priorities of heaven is the call that we all have, male and female. And we certainly want our men to lead out as examples in that.

So with that in mind, let's turn to Genesis chapter 24, beloved. We are working our way through Genesis verse by verse and chapter by chapter.

And we've been in it for some time now. And I'm one chapter away because I intend to finish chapter 24 in one fell swoop today. And then I'll have.

[3:54] What are you laughing at, Marie V? Did you hear that? That was out loud. And recorded. All right. Now we need to talk to Pastor Greg about this issue over here.

No, she knows because she has read and she sees there are 67 verses in Genesis chapter 24. And as I'll tell you later, it's the longest chapter in Genesis. And so how in the world am I going to pull this off?

Well, we'll see. We'll see. But as I was saying, in all of this, we want to look at what is happening in this particular chapter.

And allow God to speak into our hearts from what we will see in the characters that are displayed here. So the title of my message is Godly Character for Real Life.

Godly Character for Real Life. Now, the hero of the story doesn't revolve around a human being. The hero of the story is God.

[4:55] And it is what God is doing as he works his character into each of the people that we will highlight. So as we read through the story, read behind what you see happening in the lives of these people as they act faithfully before the Lord.

To remember and to think about it is God who is doing this work and who has prepared these individuals to answer faithfully to what he's now calling them to in their life.

So bear with me now and let me read through this with us. Now, Abraham was old, advanced in age. And the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way.

Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, we understand this likely to be Eleazar, even though he's not named here. He's named in Genesis 15. And he said, please place your hand under my thigh.

Now, what a strange thing to ask. And I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son, that is Isaac, from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live.

[6:12] But you will go to my country, to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac. Well, the servant said to him, suppose the woman is not willing to follow me to this land.

Should I take your son back to the land from where you came? Then Abraham said to him, beware that you do not take my son back there. Now the Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, to your descendants I will give this land.

He will send his angel before you and you will take a wife for my son from there. But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this my oath.

Only do not take my son back there. So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham, his master, and swore to him concerning this matter. Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master and set out with a variety of good things of his masters in his hand.

And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water.

[7:30] He said, O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show loving kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.

Now may it be that the girl to whom I say, please let down your jar so that I may drink and who answers drink and I will water your camels also, may she be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac.

And by this I will know that you have shown loving kindness to my master. Well, before he had even finished speaking, that is praying, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with a jar on her shoulder.

The girl was very beautiful, a virgin, and no man had had relations with her. And she went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up.

Well, then the servant ran to meet her and said, please let me drink a little water from your jar. She said, drink, my Lord. And she quickly lowered her jar to her hand and gave him a drink.

[8:47] Now, when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, I will draw also for your camels until they have finished drinking. So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran back to the well to draw.

And she drew for all his camels, all 10 of them. Now, meanwhile, the man, the servant, Eleazar, was gazing at her in silence to know whether the Lord had made his journey successful or not.

Well, when the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel and two bracelets for her wrists, weighing 10 shekels in gold and said, whose daughter are you?

Please tell me, is there room for us to lodge in your father's house? And she said to him, I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor. Again, she said to him, we have plenty of both straw and feed and room to lodge in.

Then the man bowed low and worshiped the Lord. He said, Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his loving kindness and his truth toward my master.

[9:57] As for me, the Lord has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers. Then the girl ran and told her mother's household about these things.

Now, Rebecca had a brother. His name was Laban. And Laban ran outside to the man at the spring when he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists. And when he heard the words of Rebecca, his sister saying, this is what the man said to me.

He went to the man and behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. And Laban said, Come in, blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside since I've prepared the house and a place for the camels?

So the man, Eleazar, entered the house. Then Laban unloaded the camels and he gave straw and feed to the camels, water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.

But when food was set before Eleazar to eat, he said, I will not eat until I have told my business.

And so he said, Well, speak on. And so he said, I am Abraham's servant.

[11:02] The Lord has greatly blessed my master so that he has become rich and he has given him flocks and herds and silver and gold and servants and maids and camels and donkeys. Now Sarah, my master's wife, bore a son to my master in her old age and he has given him all that he has.

My master made me swear, saying, You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I live, but you shall go to my father's house and to my relatives and take a wife for my son.

I said to my master, Suppose the woman does not want to follow me. And he said to me, The Lord before whom I have walked will send his angel with you to make your journey successful and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives in my father's house.

Then you will be free from my oath. When you come to my relatives and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath. So I came today to the spring and said, O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will make my journey on which I go successful, behold, I am standing by the spring.

And may it be that the maiden who comes out to draw, to whom I say, Please let me drink a little water from your jar. She will say to me, You drink, and I will draw for your camels also.

[12:21] Let her, let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son. Before I'd finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebecca came out with her jar on her shoulder and went down to the spring and drew, and I said to her, Please let me drink.

She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, Drink, and I will water your camels also. So I drank, and she watered the camels also. Then I asked her and said, Whose daughter are you?

And she said, Well, I'm the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, who Milca bore to him.

And I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. And I bowed low and worshipped the Lord. And I blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had guided me in the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

So now if you are going to deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, let me know that I may turn to the right or to the left.

Then Laban and Bethuel replied, The matter comes from the Lord. We cannot speak to you bad or good. Here is Rebekah before you. Take her and go.

[13:32] And let her be the wife of your master's son as the Lord has spoken. Now when Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before the Lord.

The servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold and garments and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and her mother.

Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When they arose in the morning, he said, Send me away to my master. But her brother, Laban, and her mother, let the girl stay with us a few days.

Say ten. Afterwards she may go. And Eleazar replied this way, Do not delay me. Since the Lord has prospered me, send me away that I may go to my master.

And they said, We will call the girl and consult her wishes. They called Rebekah and said to her, Will you go with this man? And she said, I will go. Thus they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse, Deborah, you'll find out later that this is Deborah, with Abraham's servant and his men.

[14:41] They blessed Rebekah and said to her, May you, our sister, become thousands of ten thousands and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them.

Then Rebekah arose with her maids and they mounted the camels and followed the man. So the servant, Eleazar, took Rebekah and departed. Now, Isaac had come from going to Bir Lahai Roy for

he was living in the Negev.

Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. He lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, camels were coming. Rebekah lifted up her eyes and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel.

And she said to the servant, Who is this man walking in the field to meet us? And the servant said, He is my master. Then she took her veil and covered herself. The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent and he took Rebekah. And she became his wife and he loved her. Thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

[16:00] Wow. What a story. The longest. Now you understand when this was originally written and read to the children of Israel, there were no chapters and no verses.

So this was just all one long, ongoing recounting of what God wanted them to know in the book of Genesis. But for us, in terms of chapter divisions, this is the longest chapter in the book.

Now, friends, last Sunday, I shared this quote with you from John Murray. Here it is. The fear of the Lord is the fear of the Lord is the soul of godliness.

The fear of the Lord is the soul of godliness. The fear of the Lord is to have a high and holy awe of God. In this particular context, fear is synonymous with reverence.

And when we talk about the fear of the Lord in the biblical context, most of the time it is talking about having a very, very deep and devoted reverence to God.

[17:00] It means that you bring your entire being into submissive worship and devotion to God to obey His will. So it has a two-part dimension to it.

It has an inner part and an outer part. But what does godliness mean? How do we understand godliness in the Christian life? We can sum it up with one word.

And some of you have heard this teaching before in other venues that we've had in Bible studies and such. Godliness in one word means this, godlikeness.

If you are godly, you are like unto the Lord. That would be your thinking, your character, your behavior, the priorities of your life are godlike.

They are formed and forged and molded by Almighty God in your life. And so you are known as godly. Alright? Let me give you a couple of more technical definitions that drive into the heart of this idea of the duality that works in you in godliness.

[18:09] You have an inward dimension and then that inward dimension gives rise to an outward dimension of godliness. But it starts inwardly. So look at this definition. Godliness in the biblical context refers to a life devoted to the worship and reverence of God.

It is characterized by piety and a God-centered lifestyle. It encompasses both an inward devotion and an outward expression of that devotion through righteous living.

righteous living has the idea of right living in the sight of God. It is living that is right because God says it is right. Which tells us there is a wrong way to live.

Alright? This definition. Godliness is a personal attitude toward God that results in actions that are pleasing to Him.

It involves the fear love and desire of God and leads to godly character and conduct in all aspects of life.

[19:23] Now one of the things that we do when we post these sermons online for you to listen to or pass on to others if you should desire to do that we include all of these slides in a tab there that you can click on and go through them.

I don't always cue the slides in my sermon so when you listen you may have to move around a little bit but nevertheless they'll be there for you. Alright?

So let's sum this up and let's use scripture to do it. Here's a way we can do that. Godliness can be summed up as trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. Now let me ask you do you see those scripture verses being lived out in the characters of our story?

Do you see Eleazar trusting in the Lord with all of his heart? Do you see him not leaning on his own understanding but constantly depending on God in his prayer life and as he goes?

[20:25] We'll talk about this in just a moment. Do you see Eleazar in all of his ways as he goes about this mission that he's been given? Do you see him acknowledging Almighty God and giving God all the credit and the glory?

And do you see God directing his paths? God took him to the doorstep of the very man. Now he didn't know any of that when he set out. He went in the general direction Abraham told him and he said somewhere up there you're going to find a city Nahor Hebron that's that's what I can tell you and so he went now of course we can't do any of this in the way of these scriptures without God first loving us to himself and then working his love and his wisdom into our hearts.

We want him to get the glory for this. Our entire life please hear this friends our entire life as a Christian becomes our devoted response to God's love for us in Jesus Christ his son.

Now did you catch that? Your entire life should be lived as a response of devotion to God for the love that he has ministered to you and goes on ministering to you in his son Jesus Christ.

We get to practice that here and we don't practice it perfectly but one day we'll be taken into heaven where we will do that perfectly. It will be an ongoing response of unadulterated and unmarred worship of almighty God in his son Jesus Christ and we're looking for that day.

[22:13] Now Genesis 24 as I've said is the longest chapter in the book but its importance does not derive from its length it derives from its content regarding God's purposes and promises for a particular family.

We are very glad chapters like this exist in the Bible where we see the almighty sovereign God of the universe condescending to individual people and families that God cares.

He comes to us in his son and he cares for us as individual people individual souls that he's made and his family units that he's formed. He cares about your marriage.

He cares about your husband and your wife and your kids. He cares about you and he works to lead you in his love and we see so much of a track record of this in scripture.

Now to help us keep this event in its proper biblical perspective for our lives I want to share a quote with you from commentator Derek Kidner and here it is putting it up on the screen at this distance from the event now that we're living in this age and we're looking back on this event we can see how decisively the courageous obedience of a few individuals over a family matter was to shape the course of history.

[23:39] Now what I'm saying to you is this just like in the previous chapter you are in this chapter I am in this chapter as a believer because this is God making good on his promise to bring us Jesus and include Gentile believers in his plan of salvation for humanity if God had fudged on any of this but that's not our God is it he is trustworthy now here is a beautiful and very powerful story of this how God worked his will in and then out from the hearts of these family members it gets that nitty gritty that specific oh yes there is a greater more grandeur plan being spelled out here as God fulfills his promise to bring a godly line and protect that godly line from whom Messiah will come yes that is the big picture of this event absolutely but then there is the more microcosm the more micro idea of God working his will into the hearts of these individual people leading them in a family matter that all they know is unique to them they don't know this is going to affect the entire human race they're just trying to be faithful in what they've been given and what's been put in front of them that's how you and

I live you don't know and I don't know how much your life in the Lord Jesus Christ is impacting other people and might go on impacting them after your death you can't know that God hasn't revealed it to you so we have to live by what he's shown us but are we being faithful to live by what he's shown us and are we trusting him to use it this is a story of favor this is a story of faithfulness it is a story of the promise of a future with God it is our story in Jesus Christ because these are the ancestors of our Lord and Savior all right let's look at godliness in Abraham we're going to do kind of a mini character story in multiple levels here but I want you to remember that the characters of the story are serving the higher purposes of Almighty God and so God's the hero okay God's the hero in here what we're dealing with here is a godly man's commission this is

Abraham's commission to his servant now Abraham was old advanced in age and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way now that's very important why because age and a seasoned belief a seasoned faith came together to create a sense of measured urgency furthering the revealed will of God what am I saying listen blessing from God encourages Abraham's thankful faithfulness he has a track record with the Lord this is an aged man he's walked with God through many many trials already remember the one the biggest one where he said you're going to sacrifice your son and he came through that trial and so now we're seeing the seasoning of that faith the purifying of that faith coming out in this aged man's life that's exactly what it should look like in the Christian life as you age in the

Lord as you mature in the Lord there should be a steadiness about you there should be a seasoned aspect of your life that people gather around you and hang out with you as it were there should be more and more of the Lord Jesus in your life as an aged person a person who's walked with the Lord for some time that's very obvious and it's it's enduring but it's also endearing it draws people people want to be around people who had to have a steady faith they're just steady we're not we're not talking about personality now we're talking about faithfulness we're talking about spiritual maturity and that trumps personality and this is what we see in Abraham he's thankful he's fully committed to serve God's agenda for his life Abraham trusts God to be God Abraham doesn't have to have it all figured out when he commissions

Eliezer to go there were many details about the trip he couldn't tell him he couldn't give him in the way of instruction he could only tell him what he knew and so he trusted God to fill in the details as he went now this isn't presumption this is faith this is a good lesson in how we're to approach our life given the unknowns but more importantly given what God has spoken to us are we living by what God has spoken or living more in the unknown if you live more in the unknown you're going to be found somewhere trying to get anti-anxiety medication and God knows what else you live in what God has spoken and it brings a calm and a peace to your life because you realize I don't have to forecast I don't have to know all the details God has called me to be faithful in this moment with the light that he's given me that is what is required and I can trust God with the outcomes I can trust him with the process whatever it is I'm facing whatever trial or situation hardship I might find myself in now if you look at verse 2 Abraham said to his servant the oldest of his household who charged all that he owned please place your hand under my thigh then drop down to verse 9 so this servant [29:34] Eleazar placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter now these two verses bracket the commission the specific instructions Abraham gave to this servant the servant he trusted most with this most important task where can I find a man to give the most important task I have in my life right now I can't go I'm too old I cannot do this or I would do it I need to find a man I can trust who will take this task on for what it is so Abraham's role is faithfulness to God and to know what he knows as the Lord has spoken it to him I can only know what I know in the Lord I can only operate with what God has made known to me what he's spoken to me so Eleazar here's what I know it's very important now you go and you trust God to work out the details now what are we seeing in Abraham well obviously when we see this gesture about the hand going under the thigh this is a very very intimate gesture now we're

grated here and so I can only go so far with this but listen carefully and I'll move on this concerns the area of a man's intimate parts and that is the point why now just listen I he says I am entrusting you with something extremely important to me so the two men engage in a ritual intended to convey that transfer of trust and responsibility all right I'm just going to leave it there if you want to know more you can read about it and it'll tell you all right you back with me yep we needed thank you Lord we just needed the transition there so verses three and four and I will make you swear by the Lord the God of heaven and earth so you see how serious this is I'm going to make you swear an oath by God the God of heaven and earth that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I live but you will go to my country to my relatives and take a wife for my son there so

Abraham has this dual concern that forms the heart of the charge to Eleazar what is it his concerns are put in perspective by making Eleazar swear by the sovereign God in two ways not take a wife for Isaac among unbelievers this is not going to work it's not God's plan and God's design to yoke my son to a woman who does not believe as we believe in the Lord but do take a wife for Isaac among my relatives now in verse 5 we have the first of several obstacles that will have to be overcome now they're not obstacles for the Lord we see them as obstacles and so here it is the servant said well suppose the woman isn't willing to follow me should I then come home and then take back Isaac to where she is for her all right suppose that happens if she refuses to come I come back home I get

Isaac I take Isaac to her and and Abraham goes epileptic here he's he he is adamant in his reply in verse six he said beware and he starts be you see Jesus do this beware boy this is a big slap in the face kind of warning do not do not take my son back there now folks one of the reasons this is so important is because it shows and teaches us when God calls us to himself he calls us out of unbelief doesn't he he calls us out of a lifestyle that we were pursuing where we were surrounded probably surrounding ourselves with people who probably thought like us and pretty much acted

like us we get called out of that now we become witnesses for almighty God and Abraham Abraham is saying I have been given a different commission from God that that family of origin and that land that place is no longer what God has for me and my family and our future and he's made that clear do not take my son back into what God called us out of it hearkens to the idea of what Jesus said that when a man takes a wife he will leave his father and mother and cleave only on unto her and they will become one flesh so we've got a new one soul union and so that whole extended family thing that that falls into the background you're forming a new family now husband you become the head of that new formed family and your wife becomes the most important person in your life because you're building soul union with her in your marriage relationship reflects according to Ephesians five the way that Jesus feels about his bride and the way the bride is to respond to the groom you're you're testifying to that in your married life and we see this happening in this do not take him back into what God saved us from we don't want to run back we want to move forward very that's why he's

I'm just trying to tell you why did he get so okay all right I hear you now Abraham's answer shows you what is defining his life what's defining his decisions and his actions in these three verses six seven and eight if you look at seven the Lord the God of heaven who took me from my father's house from the land of my birth spoke to me swore to me to your descendants I will give this land he that God he will send his angel before you and you will take a wife for my son from there Abraham is confident I can't give you all the details Eliezer I just know God will go before you because this is his will I wouldn't send you on this Aaron if I didn't believe this was the will of the Lord to honor God look look and notice notice where his heart is centered notice where Abraham's heart is focused notice the desire that he has most in his heart he is giving all of the credit and glory to God and he is saying I want to see

[36:03] God honored in this God this is God's commission Eliezer and we are his servants to fulfill it we are his chosen instruments in this moment for God to use us in this way and so notice how he expresses his heart toward the Lord he says the Lord the God of heaven and I'll put him up here on the screen took me from the Lord the God of heaven spoke to me the Lord the God of heaven swore to me Abraham doesn't know how this is going to turn out any more than you and I know what tomorrow brings what an hour from now brings he's doing what we need to do as we follow the Lord in faith what's he doing pastor Jeff he's believing he's trusting he's deciding and he's acting so this waiting on the Lord isn't sitting on his spiritual hands he's acting on what God has told him on the truth that God has revealed that's how we live folks we don't live in the dark and in the unknown and what we can't know we live by what he said the more you order your life the more you know understand and order your life by what God has said the more you will be living in the confidence and peace of your heart I am in the will of the

Lord why well God's going to use his word to give you the desires of heaven you're going to want what God wants you to want his word is doing that work in your heart your prayers are going to reflect wanting what God wants for you change my wants God that I would only want what you want for me change my life Lord change my actions Lord where I'm living the best life I can live given the wisdom of the Lord working in my heart it's not rocket science folks but we can't do it apart from the spirit of the Lord living in us we've got to give ourselves to these realities these graces that God provides so Abraham is carefully and fully investing himself in what pastor he is investing himself in his household and furthering the purposes of God he is marshalling all the resources of his life and household to further the purposes of God I'm going to say it five more times he is marshalling all of the resources of his entire household to fulfill the purposes of

God his wife knows that his kids know that his servants know that his friends know that the pagans around him know that my life is lived for God and everything that I have belongs to him I am his servant and there is nothing too much for God to ask of me as I serve him I am marshalling all of the resources of my entire life and household to serve the purposes and priorities of Almighty God and that is not too much to ask it's what God commands of us what did Jesus said if you love me you will obey follow and and that's what Abraham is doing look I'll put it up here on the screen godly people define themselves by God's truth and they fully commit themselves to serving God's truth in every area of life now none of us do this perfectly friends it's why we have to go before the Lord and confess and ask for forgiveness and the only I can all right here we're going to see a godly man's mission so we have a godly man Abraham giving the commission and then we have Eliezer as the his master servant receiving that commission and now he's been put on a mission and out he goes

now you notice

I'm not jumping back in and out I'm going to be in and out of some verses in just a moment we're not I can't reread this whole thing and go verse by verse right that's why she laughed what I'll do instead is I'll come in and out and hit the high points with you now Abraham fades from the scene Eliezer takes center stage and again in verse 9 he swears to give himself fully to his master's charge to complete this as Abraham instructed him so this is a trustworthy guy he's not going to go out here and make this up as he goes he's going to follow the plan in verse 10 that's very interesting then the servant took 10 camels from the camels of his master and set out with a variety of good things of his masters in his hand and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor now this is interesting because then right into verse 11 he made the camels kneel down outside the city of Nahor by the well of water at the evening at the time when the women go out to draw water well that's just fine except somewhere between 10 and 11 he traversed 500 miles all right this was a long journey that would take him the better part or over a month depending on the way that he went I did all the math and I came up with well this is probably 500 plus miles and it would have been at least a month's journey with 10 camels moving through this terrain so this was an arduous trip in verses 11 through 14 here's what we see Eliezer has had time to form a plan that's going to help him obey and complete his mission that Abraham's given him and now he puts all of that into play it's a good plan it's very simple most of the best plans are pretty simple he figures to position himself in the path of young women whose role it was to draw water for their families this is just a cultural thing ladies again this doesn't have to be demeaning it was just the thing that the young women did the guys were doing other stuff the women went out to draw the water particularly the younger women and so he's he knows this so he he figures that's that's the best place for me to be that's a good plan now here's the deal though Eliezer cannot know what God has not revealed so he doesn't know who she is he knows he's on a spiritual errand as he acts in the stead of a godly man because Abraham has said I'm making you swear by this God this is a God thing Eliezer you're on a godly mission it's not just my mission it's the mission of the

Lord and he knows that so he does exactly what needs doing what does he do he prays now isn't that instructive he prays do we are we tempted to skip that one or maybe just to shoot up a quick one well I sure hope this is your will because I'm doing it or whatever but he prays folks and boy what a prayer what a prayer he seeks God's help and direction and notice notice in this his humility oh Lord the God of my master Abraham see it's he it's not about him is it and what is he please grant me success today he knows if God doesn't show up and do this there's no success for it please show loving kindness to me God please bless me God please make me look good in the sight of Abraham God please help all of these people think I've got all my stuff together God no you don't see any of that please show loving kindness to whom Abraham behold I'm standing by the spring Lord the daughters of the men of the city are coming out he what he's saying here to God is Lord you know this is my plan I can only trust you that it's a good plan now may it be the and look how specific let it be the girl who lets her jar down so that I can take a drink and then let her go a little step further and say she'll water all my animals for me and then notice what he says she will be the one who has appointed who's appointed

[44:08] God God appointed her here's something he knows God knows who it is I don't so I'm working the plan and I'm trusting that as I work the plan the Lord will work through my life to help me understand boom here it is now isn't that how you live it's not how I live there's no spiritual crystal ball at pastor Jeff's house better not be I live like you live I live by what God has revealed has spoken to me I don't make prayers to God and say oh Lord now speak to me Lord and help me know if we're supposed to sell this house and get another one or you know I've been less than after that Porsche Lord so please Lord you know make it clear to me Lord just speak to me just speak Porsche language to me and let me I don't do stuff like that I know I'm being silly right now but we we expect God to say special things to us outside of his word to give us direction when you have absolutely no idea if what you're quote unquote hearing is from the Lord but you do have a place you can go where you can know for a hundred percent certain that is of the Lord and it's called his word because he has already spoken and so you live by the principles of his word the principles of God's word and wise counsel from believers will help me make decisions like that and and God will lead me in the way as I seek to be faithful to him in the way in the going you see these people they're not sitting around no they're not doing that they're praying to God and they're moving out in an activity that says Lord I'm doing all that I know to do to marshal the resources of my life to make this about you to bring honor and glory to you so that whatever my part in it is I want it just to be

faithfulness that's what I want Lord and that's what he's doing I think it's a beautiful beautiful example of humility trust dependence loyalty the steadfastness of heart toward the Lord that we see in this prayer look look what he says oh Lord God oh he recognizes who it is that's sovereign and it ain't me right what does he say please grant me success today show loving kindness that is hesed that's the covenant love the loving kindness is sometimes translated the faithfulness of

God we see that Eleazar is praying in specific ways he says you have appointed you have shown loving kindness you have a plan you have a will and so Lord help me to live in that will I can't know who she is you know who she is so please Lord this is the best way I know of to ask you to make it clear to me your servant folks look at this scripture I'm putting up here on the screens for you the mind of man plans his way but the Lord directs his steps now isn't that comforting you plan your way as best you know to bring glory to God you're trying to factor out selfishness and you're trying to move forward because this seems wise and good and wonderful this is another way you're you can honor the Lord and you're trusting God to direct your steps because part of what you're asking God is tell me no if I need to hear no right okay no is an answer it might not be the answer you want but it is an answer all right now here's the question and I understand this I understand this as a as a as a man and a leader of my household okay but but pastor Jeff what if I get it wrong what if I get it wrong what if I zig when I should have zagged what if I miss what

God really wants me to say or do well I think there's a possibility here that Eliezer would fail his mission listen due to fear worry anxiety impatience it's a long trip there are bandits there are bad people he's living among pagans and unbelievers on the way he's not going to find grace church or first Baptist and he's that's not that doesn't exist these people worship false gods and they do it in profane ways he's got a meander all through that to get to Nahor a whole month's travel there's all kinds of ways that Eliezer could have forecasted and and ruin the whole mission as far on a human level is concerned and he could have come back a failure in all of it and made excuses couldn't he now couldn't that happen yeah yeah but that didn't happen why well let me show you what this means you think about well maybe I'll fail folks man I'm telling you you cannot live your Christian life worrying about failing you need to be concerned with faithfulness faithfulness and the fear of the Lord will help get you out of that worry that anxiety that angst that lack of peace the fear of the Lord is so critical to this and so here's our our biblical antidote in in just a quick minute for this idea of what if I get it wrong what if I fail look the steps of man are established by whom the Lord and he that is God delights in his way when he falls not did you see that there's not if there's not if when you stumble he will not be you will not be hurled headlong because the

Lord is the one who holds his hand now isn't that beautiful all right so now you got a little bit more scriptural confidence to step out in the Lord not presumption confidence in the Lord so this whole idea that came down the pike years ago that you could pray prayers that put God in a corner and obligated him to bless you is nonsense do not allow yourself to go down that road please beloved don't do that you cannot put your God in a corner anymore you can put him in your little matchbox he won't fit and we cannot pray prayers that obligate God God has already made himself obligated to us in Christ Jesus we need to walk faithfully with him and we need to love him Eleazar was chosen for this task because he had walked faithfully with God in his service to Abraham all right now guys please perk up here and pay attention for this all right I want you to see this about Eleazar he's a good role model we could do a wonderful character study on

Eleazar and I don't think many people do look at this Eleazar he was a proven he was proven as a man of prayer Abraham knew Eleazar as a man of prayer one of the reasons Abraham chose him was because he knew this man is going to be prayerful and he's going to be dependent on the Lord and so Abraham was confident in that Eleazar he was trusted with much because he had proven faithful with little Eleazar had to start somewhere as a servant and over time in Abraham's household Eleazar proved himself time and time again that he could be trusted and so it's he started off with little and he was trusted with more and more until Abraham made him the overseer of everything that he owned in Genesis 15 he went so far as to say to God Eleazar will be the heir that will get everything when I die and God said oh no he won't that's not the plan remember that in [52:07] Genesis 15 well that's how much Abraham thought of Eleazar so this is a big deal guys he was trusted with much because he proven faithful with little over time Eleazar depended on God for his life he didn't let fear drive him let the fear of the Lord define him and then he proved himself dependable in godly service to others and Abraham saw that time and again in his life he was a servant to others he was a humble man a meek man he was a man that could be trusted now in

verses 26 and 27 look what we have here then the man bowed low and worshiped the Lord Eleazar and he said blessed be the Lord the God of my master Abraham who has not forsaken his loving kindness and truth toward my master but as for me the Lord has guided me in the way to the very house of my master's brothers Wow once once again this guy drops to his knees and bows low before the Lord and praises him so we have about three times in these scenarios where this guy is honoring the

Lord and worshipping him and being thankful when God answers prayer in your life are you thankful do you take time to say thankful things to him well once Eleazar heard that Rebecca was in the line of Nahor Abraham's brother he had his confirmation right there so God led him right to Nahor's granddaughter by his son Bethuel you'll remember go back over into Genesis chapter 20 or excuse me 22 and look at verse 20 Genesis 22 20 remember this now it came about after these things that it was told to Abraham saying behold Milcah also has born children to your brother Nahor and we got us we got buzz we got Kim you well we got Keshed we've got Hazel we've got pill dash jid lap or whatever we've got Bethuel and now what verse 23 Bethuel became the father of Rebecca all right so how did Abraham know about Rebecca well it came to him it just says he got knowledge that his brother God was blessing him fruitfully and he's having all these kids and so a plan was hatched and now all these years later Abraham did not forget and so he sends his servant wait on the Lord wait on the Lord and he did that now please notice what Eleazar so grateful to God for in answering his prayers he's thankful because the Lord has not forsaken his loving kindness and his truth to God's servant Abraham boy he loves his master he loves Abraham and then we can't read it all but 33 through 56 Eleazar sets himself to the task of negotiating the marriage between Isaac and Rebecca with Rebecca's dad Bethuel and with her older brother Laban all right the men of the house come together the two oldest and

Eliezer shows these two men much honor and respect as he represents Abraham very well in this interchange now why do I mention this guys I want to say it real quickly and then jump out of it this is integrity this is integrity this is a man who can be trusted who sent on a mission and he has a lot of integrity in the way he carries out his mission and in the way he represents his master before others we have a master don't we and we need to be very highly concerned about how we represent our master to other people and folks the more we do that the more we display spiritual integrity I taught my kids growing up particularly my two boys integrity means doing the right thing even when no one is looking it is doing the right thing because God says it's the right thing and you could be trusted to do it even in private all right so Eliezer's recounting of all the details of his mission is putting emphasis on God guiding the enterprise if you wonder why did he get with Nahor and

Laban and our Bethuel and Laban and go through this whole thing again we had to read that whole thing again you think oh my goodness just give us the man version give us the reader's digest version or something he went through well why because he wanted to emphasize God's role in it he is highlighting God sent me on this mission through my master Abraham this is a God thing that's what he's telling him so the details of this story reflect the main point God faithfully and fully provides his servants with what they need to do his will because when Laban and Bethuel heard all of this it was like wow God did all that and brought you to our doorstep yeah man he even used the word appointed with these guys well real quickly I can jump in and out of this one with Laban and Bethuel I don't want to belabor this I just want to show you a couple things that are important this is godly wisdom and compassion being shown here I think we can summarize the actions of these two guys with how they respond to

[57 : 45] Eliezer in verses 50 and 51 if you go there with me then Laban and Bethuel after they heard this long story from Eliezer Laban and Bethuel both replied the matter comes from see they got it the Lord so we cannot speak to you bad or good here is Rebecca you have to take her and you have to let her be the wife of your master's son as the Lord has spoken see if they've got it it's all about God we're doing God's will here we're all on the same page we just want to see the Lord honored and you'll find this as you as you are around like-minded people and you begin to discuss these things and you seek out wise counsel you will receive counsel from people you'll have to weigh it up as to its biblical veracity and applicability when a Eliezer declined to allow Rebecca to remain with her family for those 10 days it reflects well on them that they said okay and it's interesting to me you know they had a plan and everybody went to sleep with the plan and then the next day they get up and mama got involved somewhere in the night mama talked mama was hurt

see mama can't be part of the negotiations but the men retired and mama said what's going on and so they told mama and mama said well that's just fine but I need my baby to stay with me a little bit longer and so they went out and said let us stay a few days 10 and he said I'm on a mission for the Lord here and those guys should have made that clear to you your husband and your son should have made it clear to you

I'm on a mission of the Lord here and I can't do that but to her credit okay and and then they blessed her they blessed her guys spiritual leadership is a beautiful thing it's a protection because we're told by Peter that we better not lord it over our wives first Peter 3 7 they're in the weaker position of submitting to you as a woman and don't lord it over them you be careful how you lead them you live with her in an understanding way you make a study of your wife you know her strengths and her weaknesses and stuff all right I can't go there we'll do that one another time all right let me do this because this is the one that I wanted to get to godliness and Rebecca all right this is a godly woman's love and submission and I can do this quickly with you because we've read the story and you've seen Rebecca's response you've seen how she treated Eleazar you've seen how she ran back to mama and told mama what was going on and the brother saw the gifts and everything and everybody's like what in the world and they found out that this is Abraham's servant oh my brother Abraham okay this is a godly woman's love and submission now it's a beautiful display of godly feminine character through humble submission it started at the well with Eleazar this was quite a task for her to water and I don't have time to go into this 10 thirsty camels but folks this wasn't just go fill up a little pitcher and go over and put a couple of pitchers full in a trough and we're done can't a camel on a journey like that if they didn't drink regularly could drink over 30 gallons of water a piece this was quite a task that this young young girl so what am I saying to you Rebecca is showing a very humble heart in a servant spirit oh it's so beautiful and she's kept herself pure all right the text makes a big deal of saying this is a gorgeous woman she is unusually beautiful like stand out beautiful right but she's kept herself I'm imagining she didn't have any shortage of bees buzzing around the honey but you know what she's kept herself pure before the Lord she's a virgin and she's not vain about it far from it her demeanor is sweet kind gentle and attractive attractive she's no princess she's willing to sweat and work with her hands and so Rebecca like

Eleazar she shows the marks of God working in her heart we give God the glory but we see the beauty of God working in this wonderful woman's heart he is preparing her for Isaac so as it relates to finding a soulmate in life and I couldn't resist this this this hear me because we do have a few in here that would love one day for God to bring them a mate now so hear this from pastor Jeff as it relates to finding a soulmate for your life the lesson here isn't so much about God leading you to that one perfect person I'm going to bust your bubble he or she don't exist there there is no perfect person out there you're going to marry a sinner all right we done now listen I don't think that person exists in real life however finding the right mate might be more about God joining together to imperfect people who learn and grow together in being useful to God and I know that's my testimony my wife definitely married an imperfect man but over the years God has whittled our marriage and our life together and our soul relationship to make us useful to God two imperfect sinners brought together in the power of Jesus Christ to live and serve him and that's what it ought to look like in your married life so stop looking for the perfect one marry a faithful one and then you guys get moving get together have grandbabies give us some grandbabies bring the next generation of believers up man come on and live for the Lord Rebecca was that kind of woman she was a wife who would commit herself to serve the Lord with her husband by supporting him loving him encouraging him in godliness now look folks listen to this the capstone of Rebecca's godliness is seen at the end of verse 58 and it's in three words what does she say I will go those three words showed her belief that this was in the Lord I don't think she'd have done this if she wasn't convinced this was in the Lord so in other words Rebecca has this heart that says I will do difficult things I will do unknown things to me if I'm convinced that it's in the Lord because I believe the Lord would have have me do it all right we end rather abruptly in the text it's just two verses 66 and 67 this is a godly man's love and submission godliness and Isaac Isaac loved Abraham his dad now Isaac was probably about 40 years old and still not married he was allowing himself to bow to the authority of his father because his father is in charge of finding Isaac a wife you know did he did he go to him and said dad I can handle this no he everything suggests to us that this arranged marriage was something that Isaac was humbling himself in with his dad he trusted his dad so God

had worked this deference and humility into Isaac God had led Isaac to wait patiently on the Lord you see the wait on the Lord theme coming all through here these details will be brought together now here here's the statement I want you to hear it was worth the wait to wait on the Lord and it is always the case it is worth the wait to wait on the Lord God will always give you his best he never deals you something that says you know I know this would have been better but he that's not God you just look at the cross he gave the best he had to give when he gave us Jesus on the cross he went to the highest place he could go to show his love for us if you knowing how to give good gifts to your children right how much more your father in heaven would give to you so these two verses wait for the Lord be strong let your heart take courage wait for the Lord the Lord is good to those who wait for him to the person who seeks him a waiting heart is a seeking heart the only reason I'm waiting Lord is because I'm seeking you I'm seeking you and right now it seems wait is the best moment well it has a beautiful if not understated end right Rebecca places Sarah as the major replaces Sarah as the matriarch of the family by going into the tent she went into Sarah's tent that's a big deal the text is telling us here's the new matriarch of the clan very very interesting in the fullness of time from Isaac and Rebecca coming together as man and wife God will bring forth his only son born of a virgin in the power of the spirit so Isaac's godliness extends to his love for Rebecca it's it but it listen folks it's not a and they lived happily ever after story if you keep reading through Genesis you're going to see some stuff now they're just people but they're people that are serving the

[67 : 24] Lord and God's blessing them and God's using them and God's disciplining them there's going to be a lot of trials but he's going to guide them through it now the point of the story is this it's the provision that God makes to fulfill his promise to Abraham Isaac and Rebecca are the next step in God making good on his promise down the line Jesus will be born the hope of salvation from sin and death will come to every tribe tongue and nation on earth but this is the next step in God's promise and program did Abraham Sarah Eleazar Isaac Rebecca know all these details of God's plan nope they did not know each of these people were living the life they knew but they were living it for the Lord each of them depended on God in their efforts to live out his priorities in their daily life their prayers showed their desire to do God's will not their own those are the prayers God listens to they submitted themselves to do God's will in everything folks and the Lord blessed them he provided for them he guided them and then this they obeyed God by intentionally investing themselves and their resources in God's higher priorities for their service to him it wasn't half measured it was full and intentional so are you measuring your daily decisions and actions by God's truth by God's truth by what he had spoken ask yourself is this helping me live God's priorities for my life is this godly let's pray together well father God we have covered much ground today in this beautiful story that you meant for the people of Israel to be encouraged that you are a God of promise and you keep your promises so thank you father for your sweet and wonderful word full of the promises of your heart toward your people whom you have saved and given the hope the certain hope of being in eternity with you help us to open our mouths and speak this truth in love to those in our sphere of influence people who need to know the hope of Jesus help us to have broken hearts but also servants hearts to bring them the message of Jesus crucified buried and raised again on the third day for the forgiveness of sins and help us almighty God to walk in your way to wait on you and to trust you to believe you and to act in every way according to the principles you've laid down for us in your word help us to be a people of the book as we follow Jesus in his name we pray amen