

A Promise Is A Promise

Gen 24-2-9

² He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. ³ I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, ⁴ but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac." ⁵ The servant asked him, "What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?" ⁶ "Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said. ⁷ "The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring^[1] I will give this land'-he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. ⁸ If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there." ⁹ So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

Intro: A businessman was traveling on a plane for the first time. He had always been terrified of flying but his next appointment required him to do so. The flight was going well when suddenly the plane shuddered. The pilot came over the intercom and announced that the engines on the right side had stopped so the were making an emergency landing. Shortly there after, another shudder and the pilot announced the other engines had stopped. Everyone was informed to assume the crash position with their head between their knees. For the first time the businessman felt vulnerable. He had never felt the need to cry out to God but at that moment he did. "God," he prayed. " If you will allow me to survive this crash I take a solemn vow to give to charity half of all my possessions."

Suddenly all four engines began working again and the plane glided smoothly onto the runway. The businessman rushed to disembark.

As he made his way out of the runway area the man who had been seated beside him spoke to him. "Excuse me sir. I am a pastor involved in several charities. I heard your vow to the Lord concerning your possessions. I can guide you in keeping that vow by recommending some outstanding charities that have needs."

The businessman replied "That won't be necessary. You see I made a new vow with God. I vowed if I ever got on another plane, He could have it all."

. Sometimes the promises people make are nothing more than lip service, aren't they?

. This morning we are going to look at a promise and how it was fulfilled in the narrative of the search for a wife for Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah.

back in Genesis chapter 24.

. It is a love story in a way. The chapter tells of the search and finding a wife for Isaac. It is 67 verses long and is somewhat redundant so I am going to tell you this love story and then we will come back and look at a couple of verses.

. The story starts out by telling us that Abraham was a very old man.(I thought that he was old when Isaac was born 100 years old.)

. He was 140 years old at this time and his wife Sarah had just died and he probably felt in his heart that it was time for his son to marry. He did not want him to marry any of the local girls who were Canaanites and did not worship the one true God.

. Abraham calls his chief servant into the house and tells him that he wants him to go back to Abrahams homeland before God called him into the place they were now living and find a wife for his son Isaac.

. He wants him to find a suitable wife for his son among his relatives. Isaac is 40 years old and it is time.

. The servant agrees to this and he travels back to the ancestral home of Abraham where his brother Nahor had settled.

. He stops just outside of town by the local well and as was the custom the young women from town were coming out to draw water for the evening.

. He looks around and sees all these young women and thinks, how in the world am I ever going to find a wife for Isaac like this. So many choices. So he went back to his default position.

. A little side note here. When we are faced with a situation that seems impossible, where we don't have a clue how to proceed, we also have a default position. The same one this nameless servant had.

. Prayer.

We can learn much from this example of overwhelming doubt and conflict.

. We can always stop and pray and wait for God to answer.

. That's what he did. He prayed to the Lord, help me. Give me success in this quest. There are all these girls walking around here and I have not a clue who to talk to.

. He said Lord, this is what I will do. I will ask one of them if they will give me a drink of water and if she does and then she also waters my camels, that will be the one. If she does not, I will try another.

. About that time a girl named Rebekah came walking up and she fulfilled all of the requirements that he had asked God to do.

. Lo and behold she not only watered everybody, she was also the granddaughter of Nahor, Abrahams brother. She met all the criteria that he had been given. (aint God good)

. There was an added bonus too, scripture says that she was very beautiful.

. The servant gave her gifts and asked if her father would allow him to stay at their house that night and she said that he would.

. Guess what the servant did then, he fell down and worshipped God and gave him the credit for the fulfillment of his prayer.

. The story can get long so I am just hitting the highlights here but the servant would up at Rebekah's fathers house and after dinner, the servant was asked why he had come and he explained to them that he had been sent by their uncle Abraham and he was searching for a wife for Isaac.

. He told them the story of his prayer and how God had led him to Rebekah and how he wanted her to go back with him to be Isaac's wife.

. He wanted to leave the next morning and they went and asked Rebekah if she would agree with this and guess what.

. She said yes to the dress. She agreed to go and be Isaac's wife.

. They left and went back to the land of Canaan.

. Isaac was out walking in the fields one evening and saw some people coming from a distance and he walked to meet them. When Rebekah saw him coming, she asked who he was and was told that it was her husband to be so as was the custom she covered her face with a veil and was introduced to her future husband.

. The wedding went off without a hitch and scripture says that Isaac loved her very much and that she was a great comfort to him since he had recently lost his mother Sarah.

. We will read more about Rebekah as we continue to go through Genesis but suffice it to say that not everything was sweetness and niceness in Rebekah.

. Now what can we glean from this chapter of Genesis. I have read and heard many sermons that focus on the sacrifice and commitment of Rebekah and that is fine but in the time we have left, I want to take a look at what God can teach us through the servant.

Let's look at three verses: 2&3 and then 9.

. 2 One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man in charge of his household, "Take an oath by putting your hand under my thigh.

3 Swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women.

9 So the servant took an oath by putting his hand under the thigh of his master, Abraham. He swore to follow Abraham's instructions.

. The servant took an oath or made a promise to Abraham.

. He promised him that he would do what he wanted him to do.

. Now that promise could not have been easy to keep.

. It was about 700 miles from where they lived to Paddan-aram. When you go by camel, you maybe what, two miles and hour. That's a 30 to 40 day trip.

. Most folks around about day 20 or 25 would start thinking , you know, the old man will never know the difference. I'll just tell him that i found no suitable

woman for his son. lets just find us a oasis around here in this desert and get a little r&r and he will never know the difference.

. Or once he got there, he could have looked and seen all these girls and threw up his hands and said you know what, this is impossible. The old man will understand.

. He didn't though. You know why, because he had took a vow or an oath. He had made a promise and after all, a promise is a promise right.

. Have you ever watched little boys when they make a bet or a promise that they have a gesture that they use. What do they do, they shake hands don't they.

. Well the servant had shook on it.

. He placed his hand under Abrahams thigh as he made his promise.

.Thank God for culture change. If not, we would still be placing our hands under each other's thigh to seal a deal.

. The problem is that a handshake doesn't mean much anymore when it comes to a promise does it.

. You old geezers out there like me, do you remember when your handshake was your bond. That was someone's promise and you could depend on them to keep that promise.

. You see, that is God's standards _ We are to lift up the standard!

. In telling the people about God's expectations of how they were to live, Moses told the Jewish people this in Numbers 30:2

. 2A man who makes a vow to the LORD or makes a pledge under oath must never break it. He must do exactly what he said he would do.

. Then Jesus in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5: 37 gives us this standard.

. Jesus is talking about making vows before and to God and says look it is just this simple.

. 7Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' ...

. Jesus tells us that our word is our bond. That a promise is a promise.

. Sadly in our world, promises don't mean much anymore do they?

. Look at the lawsuits and controversies in our country. It's easy to solve all of those issues.

. God says that a promise is a promise.

. We have moved for handshake promises to contractual promises and they are not even honored anymore.

We are forgetting God's standard of letting our yes be yes and our no be no.

. Our word is no longer our bond anymore.

. While it is helping to decimate our society, it is also destroying our churches.

. We looked at The apostle Paul warning us to guard our testimony within the church a few weeks back. This concept of not keeping promises will not only allow us to lose our testimony within the church but it will also destroy your testimony and the church's testimony.

I heard a story of a fellow pastor

. He drove up to a job one day to give a guy a price on a job and the customer went out and started walking around his truck. The pastor thought he was looking at the lettering and the great logo that he had. The pastor asked him if he liked the logo and he said sure but that was not what he was looking for. The pastor asked what it was that he was looking for and he said that he was looking for the fish that many people have on their vehicles.

. The pastor asked why, thinking that he was looking for some kind of proof that he was a Christian. The pastor was about to assure him that he was a person of faith when the customer said that he did not do business with those people. The pastor asked why and the customer said that in his experience, they were the most dishonest people that he had ever dealt with.

. What an indictment on the church and Christians.

. Want to know why we are losing the battle for our faith in the world today.

. Want to know why folks are leaving the church never to return, some of the reason is because of the testimony of the church. The people who proclaim faith and salvation through Jesus Christ. We are the church and many have lost sight of living by God's standards.

. Christian, we must let our yes be yes and our no be no.

. A promise is a promise and our testimony as Christians will hinge on this standard that God has put forth.

. While God expects us to keep our promises to each other, we can rest assured that He will keep his promises to us.

. He promises to never leave us or forsake us.

. He promises be there for us, just like He was for the servant of Abraham. We just have to trust in Him.

. Most of all He promises forgiveness of sin through our belief in the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for that sin on a cross on a hill that we call Calvary.

. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, which is death, so that we could have eternal life through our acceptance and belief in Him.

. Do you believe in God's promise today. Unlike many in our world today, God will keep his promise.

. After all, a promise is a promise.