

*Series: Gleanings in Genesis*  
**“Trusting God in the Details”**

**Scripture text: Genesis 24** (*reading 1-28, 58-67*)

July 13, 2025– 8:15 & 11:00 am Services

Faith Presbyterian Church, Tacoma, WA

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This morning, I will be returning to a series called Gleanings in Genesis where we will examine key passages in this foundational book.

Now, chapter 24 is the largest chapter in Genesis, and I have opted to read a section of the text as it is printed for you in the bulletin, but I will also be referencing the rest of the passage throughout the sermon. So, if you are able, please open up your copy of God’s word.

***Scripture Reading***

Gen. 24:1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh, 3 that I may make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, 4 but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”

5 The servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?” 6 Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there. 7 The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8 But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.” 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.

Gen. 24:10 Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. 11 And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. 12 And he said, “O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. 13 Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Let the young woman to whom I shall say, ‘Please let down your jar that I may drink,’ and who shall say, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels’—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master.”

Gen. 24:15 Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. 16 The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. 17 Then the servant ran to meet her

and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar." 18 She said, "Drink, my lord." And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. 19 When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." 20 So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. 21 The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had prospered his journey or not.

Gen. 24:22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, 23 and said, "Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" 24 She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." 25 She added, "We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night." 26 The man bowed his head and worshiped the LORD 27 and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen." 28 Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things....

*[And now down to verse 58:]*

...**Gen. 24:58** And they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go." 59 So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"Our sister, may you become  
thousands of ten thousands,  
and may your offspring possess  
the gate of those who hate him!"

Gen. 24:61 Then Rebekah and her young women arose and rode on the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

Gen. 24:62 Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb. 63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming. 64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel 65 and said to the servant, "Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

***This is the Word of the Lord.*** Thanks be to God.

**The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.**

*Let's pray together.*

## **Introduction**

We have just had the opportunity to get an insider's perspective on the marriage of one of the most famous patriarchs and characters of the Bible. And while it is an interesting and romantic scene, it is more than that. It is also a picture of men and women who were shaped by *faith*.

Here in Genesis 24, we will focus primarily on the faith of Abraham, the servant and Rebekah. And we will see how *having faith means you trust God even when you don't have the whole picture*.

### ***Abraham – from doubting to trusting***

It is a common practice to idealize people we admire. And throughout Biblical history, Abraham has been known and revered as the “father of faith.” But he was not always as faithful as we would like to imagine. Abraham doubted God regularly and in significant ways.

Even though God had made a very clear promise that he would be his God and his shield, when Abraham found himself in Egypt, he was afraid that the Pharaoh would kill him in order to take his wife. In his despair, and terrified for his own life, he took matters into his own hands and told the Pharaoh that Sarah was nothing more than his sister. In this way, he demonstrated his lack of faith in God's provision and protection and chose deceit.

In another difficult moment in his life, when Abraham and Sarah found themselves childless, God promised them a child, but rather than wait on the Lord, Abraham again demonstrates he does not trust God.

Abraham lost faith in God's promise and timing and opted to have children through his slave woman. Abraham's actions displeased the Lord, and his sin brought grief and trouble to his family life.

But then we begin to see a change in Abraham. God tells Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his one and only son. And rather than make excuses or try to find a way out, Abraham who had previously doubted God and who lied to save his own skin, now in faith, obeyed the call. And right as he was about to kill Isaac, God stopped him.

And here in this chapter, there is something else different about Abraham. While he could have taken advantage of the situation to create an alliance through marriage with the Canaanites or Hittites and so secure his own power and protection, instead we see that Abraham chose to trust God instead.

### ***Marrying in Faith***

This change also spills over into other areas of life. Once a doubting and lying man, here we see a more mature and trusting faith. No longer is Abraham fixated on controlling his future. Here he is faithful in trusting and obeying God in his pursuit of a wife for his son.

How do we see that in this passage? We see it because when Abraham summons his servant to find a wife for Isaac, he makes it very clear that there are strict guidelines for this request that are non-negotiable. And those guidelines were based on God's covenant promises.

See, God had promised Abraham and his children, and his children's children an inheritance. In Genesis 12, God said, "I will make of you a great nation..." and "to your offspring ***I will give this land.***" In Genesis 17, God swore to Abraham again that he would establish his covenant between him and his offspring after him, "to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." [Genesis 17:7-8]

And that is what Abraham references here. He says to the servant that "The Lord, the God of heaven...swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land'" [Genesis 24:7]

From Abraham's very first call, God made it clear that their relationship was a unique one. He was their God, and they were his people.

So even though there was no **explicit "commandment"** against intermarrying with other religions yet, God's covenant with Abraham and Isaac communicated the same standard. For the covenant set God's standard for what he expected and created the basis for what later would explicitly be commanded of Israel.

The covenant agreement was clear that God's people were to have no other gods but God. And the Canaanite culture was the exact opposite. It was polytheistic – they worshiped a group of gods and goddesses. For Isaac to marry a Canaanite woman from a polytheistic culture would be a blatant betrayal of the covenant God had made with him.

Abraham was faced with a difficult circumstance – one that could have easily resolved as he had in the past, by choosing a wife for Isaac from among the women of the land.

But Abraham had grown in faith and trusted that God would provide for Isaac from among the people of God, no matter how complicated it would be. (And as we just read, it would be complicated!)

Abraham's decision here shows us what it means to live out or work out our faith in everyday decisions.

We see that a mature faith waits on the Lord's timing even when we don't have the details of God's bigger picture.

This is a straightforward concept, but what does it mean for us in day-to-day life?

We learn from Abraham that walking in faith is not about our convenience. As God calls us to walk by faith, he also calls us to trust in his timing when it comes to marriage. Sometimes also requiring great sacrifice.

And for the Christian who is already in a marriage with someone who doesn't share your faith, please know that God gently calls you to live lovingly in that marriage (1 Cor 7), and he promises to work through you.

But for those who are single, and waiting, this passage reminds you that faith in God requires trusting in his timing even when it is hard. Particularly in a place like the PNW, where there are simply fewer Christians in this area than in other parts of the US.

And while this passage is not commanding believers to travel to distant lands to find spouses, it does underscore the seriousness of this search and calling.

God calls his covenant children to trust in him and his timing and to refuse to pursue relationships outside of God's covenant people.

In Abraham's life we see that he took this principle so seriously that he knew that even if it meant going to extreme measures to find that spouse, he would make that sacrifice.

And that is what he did. He called his servant and made him swear an oath that he would go to his kinsmen in his homeland to find a wife for Isaac. Commentators note that this was no small distance. The servant would have likely had to travel a large distance – it could entail traveling for a full month just to get there.

But Abraham remained constant in his demands. His faith has matured in wisdom and grown in his trust that the Lord would provide. No longer was he operating his life based on his own wisdom and understanding. Abraham's matured faith shows us that he is trusting God in the details.

### ***The Servant's Faith***

While Abraham, Isaac and Rebekah are certainly the key figures in Biblical history, this long and detailed account of the servant's actions and thought process shows us that God cares deeply for the faith of the poor and lowly. For he takes this time to tell us about a servant, his doubts and his faith.

And this unnamed servant was Abraham's most trusted servant – he was in charge of all that he had. And having grown in his faith, Abraham tasks his servant with a seemingly impossible task.

The servant was to swear a solemn oath. An oath that would require him to travel to a distant land that would take him one month to get to. To a place where he knew no one and was to bring a wife back for Isaac. With no name, no address, and nothing to go on but a family name and a geographical area, the servant was clearly worried and perhaps even skeptical of Abraham's request.

What was he supposed to do when this failed? Certainly, this unknown woman from a distant land would not be willing to return with him. What would happen to him if he didn't complete his vow?

But Abraham graciously allows for the servant to be off the hook if the woman were unwilling to return with him, but then he takes the time to disciple him in his faith. For he reminds the servant of God's covenant promises to bless him.

Abraham tells him that he has no need to worry, for an angel will go before him and guide him.

Relieved that he has an out if the woman refuses, the servant sets off on his journey. And while he highly doubts that there would be any way that a woman would be willing to return with him, he sets out in obedience and in faith we see that prays along the way. And the man prays not only a general prayer, but very specific prayers. So, he can be sure God has blessed his trip.

And the beauty of this passage is that it shows us the sheer astonishment the servant experiences as his very specific prayers were answered. For as he prayed, he was interrupted by the young woman at the well. And every last detail of what he had asked from God, God granted him.

The servant could not help himself and fell down in worship giving all glory to God. And later he became a tremendous witness to the power of God to Laban and family, telling anyone and everyone who would listen of God's answered prayer.

This servant was learning the value of trusting God even in impossible scenarios.

As we examine this man's faith, certainly we see ourselves in him.  
How often do we doubt that God will be with us in any particular time and place?

### ***Rebekah's Faith***

In several places throughout the Scriptures, we see that important events occur where women are met at the well. In Genesis 29, where Jacob meets Rachel who was watering her father's sheep, in Exodus 2 where Moses defended Zipporah, which later lead to their marriage, and this passage here in Genesis 24.

Another of those important moments was when Jesus was speaking with a Samaritan woman at a well in John 4. This woman had had many husbands, and looking at John 4, we can gather that she was a little bit snarky, sarcastic and even confrontational. For example, when Jesus asked her for a drink of water, her response was, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" and "<sup>12</sup>Are you **greater** than our father Jacob?"

In these few lines we are clued into the fact that this Samaritan woman was abrasive and certainly ungodly.

But here, in this passage about Rebekah, we are left with a completely different impression.

With Rebekah, we see a young woman whose character was revealed through her actions and words in a positive way.

When she received a request for water, she did not ask him why he was talking to her. Instead, she immediately, quickly and generously responded to the servant's request for a drink and then offered to draw water for the camels as well.

Having watered the camels, the servant gave her gifts, and then she responded immediately with gracious hospitality, running home to tell her mother's household about all that had happened.

When the servant arrived to the family home, he bore witness to how God had answered his prayers so miraculously and retold the stories of God's faithfulness in his journey.

Undoubtedly Rebekah would have listened to the whole story and would have heard her brother Laban exclaim [v.50] **“the thing has come from the LORD; we cannot speak to you bad or good.”**

When Laban and his mother ask Rebekah if she would like to stay for a little while before going on the trip, or go with the servant immediately, Rebekah answers *in faith*, **“I will go.”**

Having heard the servant's faith and witness. How he spoke of his master and the covenant relationship that God had with Abraham would have been moving. All things that would have strengthened Rebekah's faith.

It seems that Rebekah was largely unaware of the details of the arrangement. She didn't know what Isaac was like, where she was to go, but with a believing faith, Rebekah responded in faith with the simple words – *“this is from the Lord.”*

It is hard to imagine a response like Rebekah's.

Most of us don't do anything without doing some level of initial information gathering. Whether it is buying something or going somewhere to eat or taking a vacation, we do internet searches and we look up reviews and only then will we consider moving forward with a decision.

And often times that process can be so taxing. I mean, which of the 10 phone chargers do I really want? Now what about car chargers? Of the 2 million phone cases out there, which one is the best one? Do I want a soft bristle toothbrush, a medium or a hard? Do I want electric or regular? So many choices, so many reviews and we just can't stay on top of it. But at the same time, we want to be able to make those choices for ourselves.

But the reality is that so much of life cannot be controlled.

Rebekah's faith shows us that we don't need every detail and every answer. All we need is a God we trust.

### ***Isaac's Quiet Faith***

And last but not least, we have Isaac's quiet faith.

When we consider Isaac's role in this, we don't really know how informed he was. Was he aware that the servant was getting him a wife? We don't know, but commentators suspect that he might have been in Negeb preparing a home so that he could start his own family.

In any case, Isaac went out to the field to meditate or pray. Ancient translations of the Scriptures<sup>1</sup> translate the Hebrew word for *meditate* to mean praying or meditating. [Victor Hamilton]

And so, in the midst of his faithful praying or meditating, Isaac is interrupted by God's provision of a wife. In his quiet faith, with probably no real details on who his wife would be, the Lord answers his prayer with a beautiful and godly wife.

What a beautiful picture of God's provision and answer to prayer.

### ***God's faithfulness***

And so, we come full circle to the answer of Abraham's prayers and faith. A request that seemed so absurd that even his most faithful servant questioned him, is met with God's abundant blessing. And we see that in faith Abraham trusted God's call, and God honored his request for his son with a beautiful, kind, generous, hospitable and god-fearing wife.

How often do we doubt God's purposes? When you are face-to-face with the different challenges in our lives, and the obstacles that seem so overwhelming and unnecessary, do you wonder if you are doing something wrong? Doesn't it sometimes seem irrational and confusing to continue to walk the path God has placed before us?

A smooth path, an easy road would make sense, but what should we make of these deep valleys?

It is often repeated by well-intentioned people that when we face difficulties, we should remember that "God never gives us more than we can bear." And while this is meant to encourage, it only confuses. First of all, because it is almost always said in response to a moment where someone is dealing with more than they can bear.

And if you have been in the church for some time, and you know your Bibles, you have seen that God regularly gives us more than we can bear. He calls us to live holy lives in a world full of sin and temptation. He calls us to trust in him and his way, even when our lives and the world around us seem to be in utter chaos.

And every time, God is faithful. He has not forgotten his promise, and he does not disregard our needs.

As we look at this passage through the eyes of Hebrews 11, we see that much of Abraham's life was lived in the dark. From the very start, Abraham was called to *leave everything* and to travel to a place God would direct him to. The passage literally says, "*he went out, not knowing where he was going.*"

There are few things more frustrating than not knowing where you are going, what is next in life, or what is happening. And Abraham knew none of that.

**Abraham's instructions to the servant paint a beautiful picture of the reality of all the servants of God.**

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<sup>1</sup> The Septuagint (LXX) and Latin Vulgate among others.

See, Abraham didn't give his servant specific instructions.

He sent the servant to a land, but he didn't give him an address.

He told him to find a wife, but he didn't say, "and at the well you will find a young woman named Rebekah, who will look like this, and say this, and will willingly come back with you."

Abraham, in faith, simply told the servant to go and told him that the Lord would direct him. The servant despaired because he didn't have any details. He must have been so frustrated and felt so incapable of completing the task.

And Rebekah was presented with this amazing proposal of sorts, but think about the details she had to work with. She didn't know Isaac at all. She didn't even have a picture to look at to see if he was handsome or just had a nice personality. She didn't know what type of living conditions she would live in, she didn't know if she'd ever see her family again. She didn't know if this was all just an elaborate trap. She had just met the servant, and yet trusted in God's leading. Talk about faith!

There is so much more we could talk about.

But what we see here is a sketch of what it means to follow God.

And to follow God means not knowing where we are going or what is next. Following God in faith is trusting in what we cannot see.

Hebrews states it clearly: faith is the "**assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen**. For by it the people of old received their commendation." [Heb. 11:1-2]

This passage in Hebrews teaches us that the people of old received these honors of commendations because they trusted in what **they could not see**.

And that is what this passage calls all believers to embrace in faith. The fact that God wants us to have faith in him *in the details*.

*When we cannot see... trust in him.*

And brothers and sisters, we cannot see tomorrow.  
We cannot know what will happen in the future.  
We don't know if we will breathe another moment.

And we aren't supposed to.

Those are God's details.

Our trust isn't in our capacity to anticipate the danger or problems ahead. Our hope is not in our quick reactions. Our trust is in the Lord our God, who holds all the details of our lives firmly within his grip. And he calls us to trust his plan.

### ***In Conclusion...***

What we have here in Genesis 24, is the beginning, middle and end of a story – all at once. God, in his wisdom, has given us this perspective, so that we might see the path of faith lived out in the lives of the patriarchs and their servants.

So that through their struggles with faith, their trusting in what they could not see, and their commendations, we too would grow in our own faith.

Knowing that while God promises to provide for us, he doesn't tell us when, where or how he will provide, but he does assure us that he will.

And he shows us, time and time again, that he is faithful. That he is with you, and he is worthy of being trusted...in all the details of life.

Amen.

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