

GIVING GOD A HELPING HAND

Genesis 25:19-28

Mothers' Day messages come in two major shapes and sizes.

Some Mothers' Day messages celebrate mothers and make everybody feel warm and fuzzy.

Other Mothers' Day messages don't!

They speak to mom's; they challenge them; but they don't make us feel warm and fuzzy.

This second type isn't the kind you preach when you want to win friends and influence people! It's not the kind you preach when you want to go home and have your wife (or daughter) appreciate you!

But they do teach us something we all need to learn about being the kind of people God wants us to be!

When I named our series of vignettes in the lives of the heroes of the faith "WALKING WITH THE SAINTS," I could have chosen a different title: "PEOPLE LIKE US"

When we study the heroes carefully, our idealistic stereotypes of godly people are eventually shattered!

YOU JUST DON'T FIND ANY PERFECT SAINTS!

NOT THEN; NOT NOW!

They *are* godly and they *are* saints

— but not because they have somehow reached perfection

— they are human, *just like us!* They commit serious mistakes!

No ideal Christians! No perfect Christian homes!

Rebekah is that kind of person.

She was committed to pleasing God

But she was very much like us — > Rebekah was human!

REBEKAH'S FAITH 5 demonstrations of her faith:

1. Rebekah met Abraham's requirements for a wife for Isaac, his son

Abraham didn't want his son to marry a pagan, a Canaanite, but someone who would worship the same God and share his values!

Abraham wanted his son to marry someone who loves God! 24:3

We don't know how Abraham's family came to trust Yahweh, but his father, and brother, Nahor, Rebekah's grandfather, did follow Yahweh.

Gen 31:53 May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us."

Abraham wanted to be sure his son's wife follows *the same* God, rather than pagan gods of Canaanites in their neighborhood.

Beautiful, young women abounded. But *that wasn't enough!*

History is filled with beautiful women who didn't love God, that enticed godly men to leave their God and chase them.

Abraham wouldn't take a chance on that happening to *his* son!

Isaac's wife had to be committed to the God of their fathers.

Rebekah met Abraham's requirement.

[2nd evidence of Rebekah's faith:]

2. Rebekah and Isaac were BOTH convinced that GOD was leading them to marry 24:44

This was more than the servant expected.

He left the door open to get out of his obligation, in case she wouldn't come back. 24:5, 8

Her gracious attitude demonstrated there was something unique about her.

She was a godly woman, marked by desire to serve. 24:18-20, 24-25

Everyone, including the servant, was impressed with the way the evidence pointed to Rebekah as God's choice.

Only after all the evidence fell into place, did he discover that she was a relative of Abraham. 24:42-46, 47-48

Her father and brother were convinced. 24:49-51

She was sufficiently convinced that she was willing to go with the servant, to marry a man she had never met! 24:58

Evidence was clear: *she was God's choice for Isaac!*

Everyone knew it!

[3rd evidence of Rebekah's faith:]

3. When Rebekah didn't understand what was happening to her, she asked God 25:21-23

Something wasn't right about this pregnancy! James 1:5

She went to God for an answer – and He *answered* her!

[4th evidence of Rebekah's faith:]

4. Rebekah was committed to follow God's plan 25:23

God told her Jacob would be the blessed son.

She understood God's plan, and tried to help make it happen.

[5th evidence of Rebekah's faith in Yahweh:]

5. Rebekah grieved, together with Isaac, over Esau's marriage to pagan women 26:34-35

She understood that this wasn't God's plan for marriage.

These women would pull Esau away from a whole-hearted commitment to follow God. *They grieved!*

Rebekah was a remarkable woman!

She loved God and wanted to please Him.

She had it all.

She was beautiful 26:7

She was rich

She had a right relationship with the God of the universe
 She had a great husband who loved her
 She had two healthy, handsome boys.

What more could she want?

And yet, although Rebekah was committed to following God, something was wrong with her life — **something was missing.**

REBEKAH'S FAILURE

How did such a wonderful, godly woman fail to fulfill her dream?

Isaac is depicted as passive husband—at least passive in biblical account

Abraham and Jacob are more prominent individuals; maybe because they had more significant roles in the story.

It may not be fair to stereotype Isaac's whole life by that.

From his role in the story, we see a **godly mother's response to a passive father who doesn't accept spiritual leadership in the home.**

REBEKAH MAKES THREE BIG MISTAKES:

1. Rebekah began to **undermine her husband's authority** (she began to work against her husband) **27:5-10**

Notice her behavior:

Spying on his conversation with his son

Working behind his back to undermine Isaac's plan.

[Rebekah's 2nd mistake:]

2. Rebekah taught her children that it's OK to **scheme and manipulate people for a good cause!** **27:11-17**

She encouraged her son to deceive his father

She conspired with him to cheat his brother

Cooking the food; Making skins, etc.

This was a FAMILY thing!

The "Z" Chromosome *Marriage to Helen*

Interesting dynamic whenever 3 or 4 of her sisters, aunts or kids get together

Our kids invented the name: THE "Z" CHROMOSOME!

It didn't start with her. It's in the sisters' genes too!

This was **THE "R" CHROMOSOME!**

It infected the whole family: **Laban, Rebekah, and Jacob**

Jacob is even *named* for it. His name is **"the deceiver,"** "the tricky (sly) one"

But they all have it!

He bears the name, but they all bear shame—they go down in history as **"THE DECEIVERS"**

[Rebekah's conduct in dealing with Isaac reminds me of . . .]

Elsa's story: "Don't pay any attention to your father, he's an unbeliever!"
[Rebekah's 3rd mistake:]

3. Like many wives, Rebekah schemed and manipulated to get her husband to do what she thought was right. (what SHE wanted!) 27:41-28:1

[Footnote to husbands: Don't put your wife in that place!

This doesn't justify HER strategy; that's HER problem.

But we are often guilty of pushing them into that corner!

Establish a reputation in your home for doing what GOD wants!

Establish the pattern of talking to your wife.

Err on the side of GIVING

Even God is known as "*the giving God!*"

He's in charge! He has the last word.

But James calls Him: "*the GIVING God!*"

We can be in charge, and still be known for giving. **Err on the side of GIVING!**

MY PROBLEM—27 years of living for myself!

WHAT WAS REBEKAH'S REAL PROBLEM?

Rebekah thought she had to help God out!

God had said how it was going to be.

He could have accomplished it a *better* way, had she not decided that she had to help him out.

God accomplishes His purpose *by means of* what we do—NOT *in spite of* it!

Because she did it *this* way, she had to learn some hard lessons and pay a price.

She had to live with the consequences of her actions.

She had to send Jacob away

She lived with the fear that Esau would kill him—and he would have—but

God had a better plan. God promised to protect him.

Again she schemed with her own way to protect him from Esau.

HAVE WE EVER DONE THAT?

HOW DO WE SOMETIMES COMMIT THAT ERROR?

We get the idea that God can't handle things Himself.

We have to make things happen!

We have to help Him out!

If it's not working the way we think it should, we jump in to help God out!

If we don't help Him, "**God *might* lose!**"

Phil Kerr's choruses. "I'm His to Command"

*If the dreams that I dream would come true, . . . If the schemes that I scheme I could do, . . .
Then it seems there would be contentment for me, But I know that He knows what's best for me.
So I'm HIS to command, where He leads me.*

That was Sarah's struggle.

She had her own dreams; she was scheming her own schemes.

It seemed that they would bring contentment—BUT it all blew up in her face!

If she had let God have HIS way — given herself over, for Him to do things

His way, she wouldn't have had to go through all the pain!

That's just as true today as it was in Rebekah's day!

We sometimes fall into the same trap, don't we?

We get the idea that **God can't handle things for Himself.**

We have to help Him out!

Can any of us identify with Rebekah this morning?

We love God alright.

We're just not sure we can trust Him with our lives and our situation.

We're not sure He can pull it off without us!

Now, here's the critical question: **DID IT WORK? DID IT GET HER WHAT SHE WANTED?**

How did Rebekah's plan work out in the end?

How do OUR plans work out when we come up with our own schemes to "help God out?" => James 4:1-3

Practical lessons for us:

Isaac's failure to follow God's plan

drove Rebekah to follow her scheme.

Rebekah's failure to trust God to fulfill His plan

led to her scheme—which ultimately destroyed her dream!

If WE would trust God and follow His plan,

we'd avoid many disastrous results that our schemes bring on us!

When we decide we have to help God out, we can expect similar results!

Is that what we want for our lives? For our families? For our children?

***When are we going to stop trying to scheme
to work it all out for ourselves?***

Are WE ready to tell God,

"I'm Yours to command, wherever, however YOU may lead me?

You're in charge; I'll follow YOU!"