

Text: Genesis 24:28-60

Title: "The matters that come from the Lord"

Time: Sunday, Nov. 2, 2008 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Maureen and I are endeavoring like many of you to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and yet in spite of our best efforts, there are still times at which my kids get on one another's nerves. In the severe cases of conflict among them, one will come into my office and level a complaint of some kind against a sibling.

My practice when this occurs has been to ask that child to tell the sibling in question that Dad wants to see him or her. At this point, the argument between siblings is over. When the offending child is told that Dad has summoned, there is nothing left to say to one another. Now Dad is involved. The matter at this point now comes from me.

In our passage, Laban speaks of a matter that had obviously come from the Lord (v. 50). It is likely that his father, Bethuel, though still alive, was seriously incapacitated, and so the responsibility for what was now his mother's household fell to him. The day before had been normal enough, but on this day an unexpected guest had arrived asking to take his sister Rebekah away to a strange land.

In spite of the stress and concern this caused Rebekah's family, they came to understand that the matter had come from the Lord. There was nothing left to be decided by their deliberations. I want us to use this theme to organize our study of the passage this morning and to see 5 things about matters that come from the Lord.

I. The matters that come from the Lord enjoy His provision (vv. 28-36).

Illustration: I can remember a leadership meeting that I was a part of at our church in South Carolina, and at that meeting Pastor Gray passed out bookmarks with a saying from Hudson Taylor: "God's work, done God's way, for God's glory, shall never lack God's supply." This was an important insight for the ministry of a man greatly used of God. We still have that bookmark displayed in our home, because it is an important reminder about matters that come from the Lord. When it is His work done His way for His glory, it is a work that never lacks his supply. We see this truth in our passage.

Application: When God wants something to be done, He always supplies the needs required to see that thing done. The gifts that the servant presented to Rebekah and later to Rebekah's household demonstrated that God had supplied all that was needed for the union of Isaac and Rebekah in a happy and secure home of their own.

Notice that financial stability is an important prerequisite for marriage. Healthy homes have to be built on more than love, as wonderful as love is (Prov. 24:27, "Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house"). Young men desiring to be godly husbands should have viable jobs and an ability to support a home before a couple gets married.

Notice that the Lord gets the credit for this supply in this passage (vv. 30, 35). He can even work miracles against all odds to accomplish matters that come from Him (v. 36). When God wants something done according to his will and for His glory, He is the One who guarantees that it will be paid for, and He is the one who deserves the credit for all the blessings He bestows upon us in this regard.

Illustration: I mentioned at prayer meeting this past week that Trinity Baptist Church has exceeded a special offering goal of \$225M for buses they need up there. As a small church we

hear something like that and immediately think, “Wow, how did they do that?” We have a sister church in Weare that is trusting the Lord for \$1MM for a building. Well, the issue is not that Trinity is a big church and Village Chapel is too small. The issue is that God pays for matters that come from Him. We can trust Him to meet our needs as we seek to do His will.

II. The matters that come from the Lord serve His purposes (vv. 37-41).

Illustration: I want you to imagine with me for a minute a scenario in which the servant of Abraham, whom we read about in Genesis 24, decided that it was too far a journey and too long a wait to go to the house of Nahor to find a wife for his master’s son. Instead, he had gone to a Canaanite city, asked the Lord to help him find a woman Isaac’s age, and sure enough the first person he bumped into was a beautiful Canaanite girl who just happened to be out looking for a husband to marry on that day.

Application: Some of the matters that come into our lives are not matters that come from the Lord, and they are not from the Lord in the sense that they are not a part of the purposes of His will for us. This is especially true when we are not being obedient to the clear teaching of the Word of God.

Satan has a way of disguising the matters that come from him as matters that come from the Lord. Not every opportunity is an opportunity from the Lord (2 Cor. 11:12-15, “But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be

according to their works"). Opportunities that look like they are coming from an angel of light may not be. For this reason, we need to make sure that we are living lives that are obedient within the establish parameters of God's word. We need to understand that the matters that come from the Lord encourage His purposes for us, which are clearly revealed in the Word of God.

III. The matters that come from the Lord execute His providence (vv. 42-48).

Illustration: That the forefathers of our great nation understood the role that God's providence plays in our lives is evidenced by the name of many American cities and towns. We are all familiar with Providence, Rhode Island, the home of the first Baptist church in America and our first experiment with the separation of church and state.

I found a story about how New Providence, NJ got its name. Evidently, the place was populated by a lot of wild turkeys, so the first settlers there called the place Turkey, NJ. These settlers were Methodists, and they built a meeting place that stood for many years until the day the roof collapsed.

The church family was thankful that the disaster happened while the building was unoccupied during the week rather than on a Sunday while everyone was in the building for a service. They saw the timing of the collapse of the roof as the protection of providence, and so they agreed to rename their town from Turkey to New Providence (quite an improvement in my humble opinion).

Application: Have you recognized the providential hand of God at work in your life recently? God has worked providentially to bring you to this service this morning. He has a purpose for your being here. He is in control of all we face when we are living lives of obedience, and so we never need to fear

when things seem to be going wrong. God's angels are instruments of his providential care for us (v. 40; Ps. 91:9-12, "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone").

IV. The matters that come from the Lord require a proper response (vv. 49-58).

Illustration: I mentioned earlier a method I use to deal with my kids. I said that I will tell one child to let the other know that Dad wants to see him or her. When that message is delivered, it calls for a response, and I always take that response very seriously. If my kids fail to come when they receive that message, and if I have to get up and chase after them, the spanking comes first and then we work on getting the argument with the sibling worked out.

When the Lord shows us clearly His will regarding a matter, it too is a solemn thing that calls for a consequential response. On the whole, we see an example of a positive response here from which we can learn a couple of important principles.

A. We must respond to matters from the Lord with faithful submission (vv. 49-54).

Applicatoin: The word in v. 50 translated *the thing* and that I have been calling *the matter* is actually also the Hebrew word for *word*. The verbal form of this root means *to speak*.

Laban is recognizing here that God had through the circumstances of that day spoken on the question of whether Rebekah was to be released to accompany the servant back to Isaac. Once God has spoken, the only correct response is faithful

submission. Men want to argue with God rather than faithfully submit to what He has said. They have a whole lot to say for themselves, none of it good and most of it bad, in protest to what God has said on a matter. To argue with God is to take up the cause of a fool, and it is to fail to respond with faithful submission. We cannot know His blessing without this response.

B. We must respond to matters from the Lord without fearful delay (vv. 55-58).

Application: Time is a precious commodity. When God shows us that a matter is from Him, our response of faithful submission must not be delayed. Laban's effort at delaying the servant of Abraham is not successful, because the servant was focused on what God wanted and what God was doing (v. 56).

Later in Genesis Laban will have an opportunity to try his delay tactic on Isaac's son Jacob, and it works for 21 years in Jacob's life because Jacob was focused on what he wanted, not on what God wanted.

What matter from the Lord are you putting off? Who is that person you know God wants you to witness to? Perhaps it is the matter of baptism, or joining our local church, or even of trusting Christ as your Savior. Time is precious. Delay is very costly, and it is so because of the last point we want to make this morning.

V. The matters that come from the Lord offer rich blessings to our lives (vv. 59-60).

Application: Here we see one of the precious seed promises of Genesis, this time given to Rebekah. We saw such a promise go to Eve, to Seth, to Shem, to Abraham, to Isaac, and now to Rebekah. Rebekah's descendent would be the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom thousands upon thousands would find salva-

tion, and in whom the consummation of final victory over evil would come. God brings the things He does into our lives in order to richly bless us with the descent of Rebekah.

Conclusion: And so the greatest matter that has ever come from the Lord is the coming of His own dear Son to earth as a man to die on Calvary's cross for our sins. Have we responded to this matter that has come from the Lord in repentance from sin and faith in Christ?

And having begun this way, every new day for the believer is a new set of matters that come from the Lord. For us, each day from Him must know His provision, serve His purpose, and glorify His providence. When we see that our days are matters that come from the Lord, we will live in obedience to His word and do so without delay. If we are willing to live our days this way, we can expect to know the same blessing Isaac and Rebekah knew as they experienced their matter from the Lord.

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*