

Text: Gen. 24:62-67

Title: "Ready to be a Good Dad"

Time: 6/16/2024 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction – I am very thankful for my dad. I grew up in a home that allowed me to think that it was perfectly normal to have a sacrificially loving and providing father who loved our mom and his kids more than he loved himself. That was my dad. As I have lived and ministered, however, I have come to appreciate the fact that not everyone was blessed with a dad like my dad.

We read this morning from the fatherly wisdom of Solomon to his son in Proverbs 4. As we read again those words together, we recognize that we are reading the infallible Word of God. The Bible has much to say about a healthy home and godly family relationships in the book of Proverbs. One of the tragic ironies of the instruction of the book of Proverbs on the family, however, is that God used a man to write these instructions, who ultimately did not follow what he wrote. One explanation for the contrast between the teaching of the book of Proverbs on the family and the home-life of Solomon is that the book of Proverbs is God's Word, not merely Solomon's word.

Solomon wrote of the responsibility of a godly man to his home when he wrote, "he who troubles his own house will inherit wind" (11:29). And yet he was a man who did exactly that. He troubled his own house, and his legacy was the loss of the ten northern tribes and the downward spiral of a once great nation into idolatry toward eventual captivity. With few exceptions, it is all downhill after Solomon for the nation of Israel, and this was so because Solomon troubled his own house.

The word *father* occurs 27 times in the book of Proverbs, and 1,511 times in our King James translation. Our God is a Trinity, and the Trinity includes fatherhood and sonship. God the Father and God the Son exist with the Holy Spirit as one indivisible essence and as three co-eternal persons. We have learned from Hebrews 12 that God is the best example of a faithful father, and that a father must discipline his children as God does. God is a Father who desires that we fathers here this morning minister fatherhood the way He does.

*Fatherhood* is certainly an important theme in the Book of Genesis, where the word occurs 172 times (KJV). Genesis is about Israel's patriarchs, and of these men the patriarch Isaac seems to be an especially good dad. As the promised son of Abraham, Isaac often pictures Christ in Genesis, the perfect husband of the church and the everlasting covenantal father of a seed of promise.

Genesis 24 is the wonderful account of the way in which Isaac became married to Rebekah, the wife God had chosen for him. The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah was to be blessed with children in the will of God (v. 60), and so it was important in this chapter that Isaac was ready to be a good dad.

I want us to notice three ways in which I think Isaac was ready to be a good dad.

I. Isaac was ready to provide for a family (v. 62).

Illustration: My dad was a faithful provider. When my mom became sick a few years ago with dementia, dad was unable to provide for some of her needs, but finances was not one of those needs, because Dad worked hard all his life

to provide for the finances of our family. He and Mom were married very early in life. I was born about a year later, and all this happened while Dad was earning a college degree in Accounting. I went to my Dad's graduation.

He worked hard to give his young family a good start. On this Father's Day, I am glad for a dad who provided for the needs of our family.

Application: Isaac was ready to be a good dad because he was ready to provide for his family. Abraham is 140 years old when Isaac marries Rebekah (21:5 - 100 years old at Isaac's birth, 25:20 - Isaac 40 years old when he married Rebekah). Abraham died 35 years later at 175 years of age (25:7), at which time Isaac inherited his estate (25:5). In the meantime, Isaac had learned to make it on his own in the vicinity of Beerlahairoi (24:62, 25:11). So Isaac had moved out of the house to pay his own bills long before he received an inheritance from Abraham and long before he married Rebekah.

What all this indicates is that part of Isaac's preparation for a home of his own was the development of a discipline that would care for the home financially. A young man and a young woman are not ready for marriage until that young man has the willingness and ability to pay the bills incurred by a home with children. A good dad will work hard to provide for his family.

Prov. 24:27, "Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house." That direction is clear. God gave Isaac Rebekah when Isaac was ready to provide financially for his new home.

II. Isaac was ready to lead his family spiritually (24:63, 25:21).

Illustration: Pastor Ashbrook, in his book on the family, relates the story of Pierre Loti, a French writer and naval hero of the 19th century: "In his autobiography he tells of reading about some of the Roman Catholic saints of the past. In particular, he read of Simeon Stylites who lived on top of a pillar at Antioch for forty years and thereby gained a great reputation. Emulating his hero he got a tall stool, set it in the kitchen, and announced to his mother and the cook that he would live there for forty years. His mother did not take kindly to the idea and an hour later he recorded in his diary, 'Thus I discovered that it is exceedingly difficult to be a saint while living in your own family'" (*Family Fundamentals*, p. 25).

Application: It is true that it is exceedingly difficult to be a saint while living in your own family. But Pierre's difficulty begins with his definition of *saint*. It turns out that none of us are able to be the godly men and women we need to be without God's grace. As believers, we come to experience God's daily grace as we prioritize fostering our relationship with the Lord through meditation on His Word and through prayer.

As important as financial provision is in the role of fatherhood, spiritual example and leadership is far more important. Our text indicates that Isaac understood this. He meditated on God's truth (24:63), and he was a man who prayed for his family (25:21). This is something that fathers need to focus on especially for two reasons:

1. The power of money. Jesus explains the power of money to become a master in our lives (Matt. 6:24, 33). That admonition and command is especially important for the

member of the household who is responsible for paying the bills every month. In spite of that responsibility, we still have to seek first the kingdom of God every day, and His righteousness, and then trust that God will supply all our needs. This means worship is a top priority, both personal worship and corporate worship. We must not let our financial pursuits become our master.

2. The power of the flesh (Eph. 5:29). No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it. Wouldn't it be great if that could be said about our relationship with the Lord? It is true of our relationship to our flesh, and this truth about our nature is no help when it comes to being the father our homes need. That is why Paul says in this passage that we need to love our wives like we love our own flesh. That will involve nourishing and cherishing them and their needs rather than our own.

We do not need to be walking with the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit to come home, plop ourselves in the easy chair, flip on the TV, and demand dinner. That all comes quite naturally; we love to love our flesh. But we do need the help of the Spirit of God and a faithful walk with Christ to love something more than our flesh. Meditation and prayer are essential to receiving this help.

III. Isaac was ready to love his wife (v. 67).

Illustration: One of my favorite illustrations of the typical willingness of husbands to love their wives describes a man who tells his wife, "Honey, I love you so much I would be willing to take a bullet for you. You just let me know when it is coming."

Application: That obviously does not work. Love is far more than an act of heroics in a time of crisis. It is an

ongoing relationship that needs to be selflessly and sacrificially served (“he loved her” is stative, something ongoing and continuous).

The world talks about love like it is a puddle that we fall into. The Bible teaches that marital love is a command we are called to obey, a skill that we need to develop and improve on over time, and a covenantal promise we keep. I think the passage gives us two indications that Isaac was ready to selflessly love the wife God had given to him.

1. Isaac had a strong relationship with his mother, Sarah (v. 67, “and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death”). The text is clear that Rebekah filled a void in Isaac’s life that Sarah had left behind when she passed away. What that indicates, I believe, is that there is a relationship between the way a young man relates to his mother and the way he will relate to his wife. Learning how to treat a mother right is important preparation for learning how to treat a wife correctly someday. Moms are not perfect, but neither are wives. So that is part of the task – loving selflessly and sacrificially and respectfully in spite of those imperfections. Isaac loved Sarah, so he was ready to love Rebekah.

2. Isaac had a strong commitment to pre-marital sexual purity (v. 67, “Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent”). Before taking her as wife, Isaac lodged her in Sarah’s tent. He did not bring her down to Beerlaharoi so that they could live together for a time and try things out before they got married. Studies abound that show that pre-marital sex is strongly related to marriages that eventually break apart.

Illustration: I was always thankful for the marriage my mom and dad enjoyed, and the one my pastor and his wife

enjoyed as well. Pastor Ashbrook had twelve suggestions for husbands to love their wives:

- (1) let your wife know that she is loved, needed, and appreciated;
- (2) don't tell her faults to others;
- (3) listen to her;
- (4) respect her opinion and discuss things;
- (5) respect her concern for the home;
- (6) consider her emotional nature;
- (7) take the lead in spiritual things;
- (8) pray with your wife;
- (9) give her help with the children;
- (10) take the lead in family discipline;
- (11) be thankful for what she does and is;
- (12) be a happy husband.

That is good advice from a man who had the wisdom of Solomon, and the godly example to back it up, which Solomon ultimately lacked.

Conclusion: Genesis 24 is one of the happiest chapters in the Bible because so much here is going according to God's plan, not man's. God has a plan for the happiness of our homes, and that plan involves fathers who are ready to be the men God wants them to be.

Are you and I that man? Are we faithful providers? Are we spiritual leaders and examples at home, faithful in daily meditation and prayer? Do we love our wives with the selflessness and sacrifice they need from us?

May the Lord help us to answer honestly before His Word, and may we find His grace sufficient to correct and change our lives as we may need to.

Perhaps you are unable to rejoice in God's gift of a good dad the way I can this morning. If that is your situation on Father's Day, I would encourage you to remember that there is a Father who is greater than any human father, including Isaac (Isa. 63:16, "Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.")

God the Father is the perfect Father. God the Son is the Everlasting Father of the covenant of salvation (Isa. 9:6). God the Holy Spirit wants us to be able to say of our God this morning, "Doubtless, Thou art our Father", trusting Him to save us from all our sin that we might be what He wants us to be.

"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*