

Genesis Chapter 24

Being Second

Good evening/morning church family! It's great to be back and great to have the honor of sharing another message that God has given me from his Word! Its always an honor to read the word of God! Especially with my church family!

The last time I was here speaking to you all, I was about to be Grand mom or a Swag- mom (Mom-mom Swag). My daughter Mary was about to have our first grandbaby any day! He was born on April 2 the day after Easter and He has been a beautiful addition to our family and we are so in love with him!

(Slide 1) (Picture of Christopher)

Here we are with our newest addition on one of our family beach vacations!

(Slide 2 Photo of family in OC)

This photo was taken on Fathers day this year with our 4 daughters, Lizzie, Daana, Ashley and Mary. Lizzie and Mary are married to Matt 1 and Matt 2 and John is Happy on this Fathers day because the gap is closing in with more men in the family!

(Slide 3 photo of Christopher)

And look at this baby... baby Christopher! The cutest baby ever! He has his daddy's eyes and His mama's dimples! I just had to get you updated on our family situation! And yes we are those grand parents!

Ok so you are all caught up on the Kulikowski family photos! Now to the message...

We are continuing in the book of Genesis and we are on Chapter 24 And the title of my message is "Being Second."

(Slide 4 Title "Being Second")

Pastor Bruce had preached on this chapter some years back and he left the notes in my mail box with the title "Being Second" at the top. And I have to tell you when I read His notes. I totally had a panic attack, I said to John, look at his notes, why is he doing this to me? They are not in English John. What language is this? How does he expect me to understand His notes? They are way over my head. My brain does not think like his does. I am not as smart as him! I can't understand them. I can't do this John!

So my husband being the Godly man he is, said first of all... STOP FREAKING OUT and the notes are in English, and he's not asking you to copy his sermon, he's just giving you his notes if you need to understand anything. So I being the Godly wife that I am said well I don't understand them, and I can't do this!

And then I went into my prayer room prayed and read the chapter and suddenly the message that God wanted me to share became clear to me. Even the title PB gave the message made sense and went with the message the Lord had given me!

So how many of you are like me sometimes, First We panic, then we stress, then we rant and rave, then we go to God and pray and get the right answer or perspective?

(slide 5 Panic! Stress! Rant and Rave! Go to God in prayer!)

If only we would subtract the first 3! We need prayer!

Would you pray with me before we start.

PRAY

So we are continuing in the book of Genesis and we are on chapter 24...
The title of the message is Being Second...

So what does it mean to Be second?

Simple it means you are not first.... You know, we are taught to be the best to be first, we want to be winners! We want our children to be first in their class, we want our teams to win first place and we ourselves don't really want to be second to anyone. Right? Look out for number 1!

But that's the Kingdom of Earth. The Kingdom of Heaven is quite different! We know because Jesus is always saying crazy things Like "the last shall be first."

Look at your neighbor and say "Jesus says Crazy things!"

Let's stand and read these crazy things together.

(slide 6) Mark 9:35

Jesus called the twelve and said "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."

(Slide 7) Matthew 5:40-41

And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat, too. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.”

(Thank you You may sit down)

So the word of God is really messing with our heads don't you think?

Actually the Kingdom of God is perfect! The kingdom of this world, our earth is fallen and imperfect. So its not Gods kingdom that's wrong. It's our kingdom that is messed up!

Look at your neighbor and say “Jesus isn't crazy... you are!”

Now look at your neighbor and say “Just kidding.”

So being second is a good thing, its actually a GREAT thing in Gods Kingdom. We are going to see some great examples as we look at Genesis chapter 24 together. There are 3 characters that I want you to pay close attention too. Abraham, the head servant, and Rebecca! Each of these people have something important to teach us today.

Before we go to the screen I'm going to catch you up on the story. So the story goes like this; Abraham was very old and he asked his head servant to find a wife for his son Isaac. The he asked the servant to swear by the Lord God that he would not take a wife for his son Isaac from the daughters of the Canaanites, but from his home town and from his relatives because they worshiped God and the Canaanites did not. So The head servant swears and Abraham says to him, the Angel of the Lord will go ahead of you and lead you to where you will go. We will pick up here.

(Slide8 Genesis 24:10-14)

Then the servant left taking with him ten of his master's camels loaded with all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor. He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.

Then he prayed, "Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water.

May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink, and she says, Drink and I'll water your camels too- let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac.

By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master".

Wow this takes a lot of faith don't you think? If you remember Abraham said The Angel of the Lord will go ahead of you. So we know Abraham is a man of great faith, He was blessed by God through out his whole life! Now the head servant is requesting a sign from God to show him who the young woman is to be Isaacs bride.

Crazy right, to base everything on a sign? Can we really believe that God will give us signs like this? Abrahams head servant Eliezer believed it.

And so did I, when I was 16 years old, the age when young girls start dreaming about their wedding one day right? I prayed that Jesus would NOT let me marry the wrong person someday. I prayed that he would give me a sign, that the man I was supposed to marry would give me white roses. I prayed that Jesus wouldn't let anyone else give me white roses except the man HE wanted me to marry. I never told anyone else ever about this prayer. The only ones who knew were me and Jesus!

Sounds crazy right? Even I started to believe it was crazy! As the years went on I started doubting that God even did things like that. And I actually forgot about it. (White Roses Story)

I was engaged twice before I met John. And both times I planned a wedding and both times I felt great anxiety and canceled the wedding and broke off the engagement. I was the original run away bride! Neither of those potential grooms ever gave me white roses. I received many different color roses in my dating years. Pink red peach even yellow. But never white. So when I was engaged a 3rd time, to John now, I wasn't waiting for the white roses because I actually forgot about the sign I had asked God for. Then one day while I was engaged to John, and this time I was feeling complete peace about our wedding. John came over with, you guessed it, White Roses! God did not want me to back out of this one!

John said he was going to get me red roses because red means "I love you" but he got white roses because it reminded him that we are "washed by the blood of Jesus and now we are white as snow!" God reminded me of my sign and confirmed that this time I made the right decision to marry John! And I have never regretted one single day!

So does God answer requests for signs wonders and miracles? He did in my life!

Let's see if He does the same for Abrahams Head servant?

(Slide 9 Genesis 24:15-28)

Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Beth-uel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abrahams brother Nahor. The woman was very beautiful, a virgin, no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

The servant hurried to meet her and said, “please give me a little water from your jar.”

“Drink my lord,” she said and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

After she had given him a drink she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink”

So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water and drew enough for all his camels. Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful.

She answered him, “ I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milkah born to Nahor.” And she added, “we have plenty of straw and fodder as well as room for you to spend the night”

Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord saying, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.”

We see Abraham taught us about faith. He was a man of great faith. Abraham put God first and God wasn’t about to let him down now.

The head servant, well he was Abrahams servant for many years and I’m sure Abrahams faith had rubbed off on him, because that’s what faith does its contagious!

Look at your neighbor and say “Faith is contagious!”

He asked God for a sign before He made any decisions. Are you making decisions on your own without fasting, without praying, without spending time in Gods word?

Let's look at Rebekah, you see God didn't put those words in Rebekah's mouth so she would say the right thing at the right time. Gave that prayer to the servant to pray. God knew the heart of Rebekah before the servant ever searched her out! If you remember before the servant even said amen. She came out to serve him. Because that's who Rebekah was.

She was a servant, someone who put herself second. That's what being second looks like. She immediately saw an opportunity to serve someone she didn't even know, a traveling stranger. She could of just given him a drink, that would of made her a nice girl, but she had compassion on people, she got water for all his camels, and it wasn't like water from the kitchen sink. Or the back yard water hose.

It was hard work to fill those jugs for 10 camels! She went the extra mile. She lived out Jesus words before there was a new testament. She had the heart of God, God blessed her! And she became Isaac's bride!

So we have a compassionate beautiful bride who is about to be given over to a wonderful groom. This story reminds me of another bride waiting for her groom. That bride is us. The bride of Christ!

Are we like Rebekah? Are we willing to go the extra mile? To be second in a world that tells us to put ourselves first?

Is your heart fully committed to God?

We want to be happy, to be free from anxiety and depression. But we focus so much on ourselves and it only gets worst!

Maybe just maybe being second will make us happy. What if our focus was on helping others? What if we put God first, and others before ourselves? What would our lives look like? Like Rebekah's? Chosen for a special purpose that only God can do! Ask yourself this question, I did.

(Slide 10) Do you love God because He serves you or do you serve God because He loves you?

That's a question I've had to ask myself recently.
(Frisbee story)

A few months ago I had a little mishap that brought this question to light in my own life. I teach the middle school Sunday school class at 11:15; we have 5th grade to 8th grade and we have the best class in the world. I love them!

Well it was the day before labor day and I got up extra joyful that day. It was the beginning of summer I put on my white sneakers a fresh outfit and I headed off to the Word Café and then my Sunday school class. Well it was raining and after our lesson we like to play outside but we decided to stay in and I made up a make shift can jam game with two Frisbees and two trash cans.

So we were playing the game with about 5 minutes left of class and I walked by the trash can and I saw paper on the floor, and as I picked it up, my head was level with the trash can and the Frisbee came flying and hit me straight in the mouth and really busted up my bottom lip. It was a complete accident and it was my dumb self that walked right into the Frisbee! Not to be gross but I want you to get the picture.

So I spent the day in the emergency room resulting in 7 stitches in my bottom lip.

(Slide 11 lip picture)

I thought it was no big deal until the next day my lip looked worst then the first day and I couldn't pronounce any words or even speak. I look like I was in a fight with Rocky!

I started to feel fear and I was somewhat depressed over this lip whenever I looked in the mirror. But I know how to fight fear and depression. I know how to win the war! I go to my prayer room and I worship and God heals and restores what ever I need. Only this time was different. I put on worship music and I couldn't sing. I couldn't speak and claim Gods word over my fear when I opened my mouth I was in great pain!

I cried out to God in my spirit and I said "God I can't even worship you. Why did you let this happen? I was so happy teaching this class now I'm deformed and in pain for who knows how long? Look at my lip God! I need to worship you God that's how I win God, that's how I win these battles."

And as I was sitting there I heard the Holy Spirit say to me, "Gina I don't need your lips and I don't need your voice, but I do need your heart!"

And God showed me that day, I go into my prayer room to win a battle, and it works. Worshiping God makes the devil flee that is true, but am I worshiping God to get something from Him? Even if it is something good? Even when I win spiritual battles in my life it's still to get something from God.

He doesn't need my voice or my lips, He wants my heart. I want to worship God because God is good. God is awesome. God sent His Son Jesus to die on a cross for my sins, God will never leave me or forsake me. I want to worship God because He loves me and I love Him. All he wants is my heart!

He wants your heart too. Does he have it? Is there something you want so much that its all you can think about it? Is there a person in your life that shouldn't be there? Is there a sin you hold onto and you love that sin more then you love God? Hard questions to ask ourselves!

Later that day my daughter Lizzie sent me this song. It really spoke to my heart. I believe God will use it to speak to you too.

(Play video of song) Jimmy Needham "Clear the stage" Official Lyric Video youtube.

"Shine the light until all the lies and lust are in the open!" Can we? Make some space for the one who deserves it? Anything I put before my God is an Idol.

Bride of Christ. Our groom is coming back soon, what is he going to find? Is he going to come back and find Bridezilla? Selfish and self centered? Or beautiful Rebekah with a beautiful servant's heart?

God wants to make us more like Jesus. Jesus didn't love the Father to get something from Him. Jesus loved the Father to give something to Him. His life.

WE must crush the idol. The idol of ourselves! Jesus wants to be Lord over everything in your life. We must be second.

If God never answered another prayer in our life, He already gave us the greatest gift of eternal life with Him forever! It's a free gift and for you to receive it today its as easy as A B C!

A. Admit you are a sinner and you need a Savior. Jesus; He died on a cross to take your place because you were born a sinner and sin cannot enter heaven.

B. Believe God gave you Jesus so he could stand in your place and take the punishment you deserved. He died on the cross for our sins so we could be forgiven and made right with God.

C. Commit your life to him. it's a real commitment to live for Jesus and take up your cross and follow him. Are you ready to do that?

Please say this prayer with me today...

Dear God, thank you for your amazing love for me, for sending your only Son Jesus to die on a cross for my sins past present and future sin, please forgive me for all of my sin.

Dear Jesus please come into my heart and be my Lord and personal Savior. I commit my life to you today.

Holy Spirit please fill me and baptize me with yourself so I can live for Jesus today. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

You are now born again, spend time in Gods word everyday, go to church, join a small group so you can be connected and live for Jesus and you will live out the purpose and peace that God has for you!