

Sermon Outlines

An Attempt to Listen to God on Praying and Receiving

Introduction

One of the notable features concerning the patriarchs is they prayed, clearly indicating they had a consciousness of the living and true God. While the words for prayer are not always used, it is recorded they called on the Lord. For instance:

- a) Men began to call on the Lord (Gen. 4:26).
- b) Enoch prayed, for that is strongly suggested (Heb. 11:6).
- c) Abraham called on the name of the Lord (Gen. 12:8; 15:2-3).
- d) Lot and Abram both prayed (Gen. 18:28-33; 19:19).
- e) The unnamed servant prayed (Gen. 24:12).

Lesson No. 01 - The Impossible Dream

- 1) Isaac and Rebekah, like almost all young married couples, hoped to have a baby, but there was a problem. While this may not seem as absolute as Sarah for, while Rebecca was barren, Sarah was both barren and the Lord restrained her from bearing (Gen. 17:2).
- 2) Issac loved his wife and feeling her pain intreated the Lord for his barren wife (Gen. 25:21). This was not a casual once for all prayer. Observe:
 - a) Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah (Gen. 25:20) and 60 when the twins were born (Gen. 25:26). This was a test of faith. For twenty years he had been praying, waiting, and testing.
 - b) Why did he not give up or declare it must be the will of God for them not to have children? He kept praying for God had promised Abraham his enlarged family which had to come from Isaac. He laid hold on a promise God had made to another concerning his seed.
 - c) Prayer is the awareness that God can do anything in any situation, no matter how impossible it appears (Matt. 19:26). When it involves the fulfilling of His purposes or promises, God will work and nothing is impossible. That which God has promised He will perform. Every prophecy is a pledge from God (Deut. 6:3; 1 Kgs. 8:56; Lk. 1:72; Rom. 4:21; Titus 1:2).
 - d) There is a peace that quietens the heart when an individual pleases God by believing Him. God loves to be trusted.

Lesson No. 02 - The Perplexing Problem

- 1) There is a natural excitement when a mom-to-be feels the first kicks of the baby. However, Rebekah had a problem, there was a struggle within her. This was a natural question for any mom to be?
- 2) What is going wrong, it is not supposed to be like this: this? It was a question that we would all ask, given the situation.
 - a) God has answered prayers, but things aren't going smoothly.
 - b) If we're in the will of God, why is everything falling apart?
 - c) Why isn't life smooth sailing when we're obeying Him? Such is not always the case.
 - i) Think of Mary having to travel, possibly on a donkey, and about to give birth. (Lk. 2:1-5)
 - ii) The children of Israel, why did God bring them to the Jordan when it was in flood, could He not have brought them earlier or even later? (Josh. 23:15)
 - iii) The Psalmist asked the same question. He sees the wicked prospering and the godly suffering. (Psa. 73:12)
 - iv) Habakkuk asked the same question. "Why is God letting a wicked nation afflict His people?" Paraphrased (Hab. 1:3)
 - v) Possibly, at times, we have also asked when serving God, "Why am I so afflicted?" or "Have I done something wrong?" For Rebekah, things were not what they were expected to be.

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- 3) Adversity isn't always proof that something's wrong. God's plan for us will often bring us through some hardship.
- a) Christ was always in the will of God yet consider His hardships:
 - i) A man of sorrows and grief was His acquaintance (Isa. 53:3).
 - ii) Hated, despised, crucified (Matt. 27:26).
 - iii) Why was it so with the Lord?
 - 1. It was necessary for Him to be made perfectly qualified to be our High Priest and Saviour (Heb. 2:10).

Lesson No. 03 - Rebekah prayed

What could Rebekah do?

- a) There was no value in repeatedly questioning Issac about what to do, or what decisions they could make. The only one who could comfort the distress was God, so Issac prayed (Gen. 25:21).
- b) When difficulties arise, or apparent blockages, we shouldn't just automatically turn around and run in the opposite direction. Assuming we've gotten off course, the first thing we need to do is what Rebekah did. She went to inquire of the LORD.
- c) Rebekah may have been born into a Syrian family with idolatrous roots, but she was a true believer, and she looked to the all knowing sovereign Ruler of the Universe.
- d) Where do we turn in our troubles, sickness, and despair? No matter what the situation, be it medical, financial, or emotional, whether physical or spiritual, our first resort should be turning to the Lord.
 - i) This was done by so many when the Lord was here. Whether it was a sick brother (Jn. 11:3); a demonic son (Matt. 17:15); a persistent ailment (Matt. 9:20); or a man blind from birth (Jn. 9:1), The Lord alone could help.

How blessed to be able to sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus"

. . . . P. Pucci

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**