

³⁴ So he said, 'I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ The LORD has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶ My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. ³⁷ And my master made me swear an oath, and said, "You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, ³⁸ but go to my father's family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son."

³⁹ 'Then I asked my master, "What if the woman will not come back with me?"

⁴⁰ 'He replied, "The LORD, before whom I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father's family. ⁴¹ You will be released from my oath if, when you go to my clan, they refuse to give her to you – then you will be released from my oath.'

⁴² 'When I came to the spring today, I said, "LORD, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. ⁴³ See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, 'Please let me drink a little water from your jar,' ⁴⁴ and if she says to me, 'Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels too,' let her be the one the LORD has chosen for my master's son."

⁴⁵ 'Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, "Please give me a drink."

⁴⁶ 'She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, "Drink, and I'll water your camels too." So I drank, and she watered the camels also.

⁴⁷ 'I asked her, "Whose daughter are you?"

'She said, "The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him."

'Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, ⁴⁸ and I bowed down and worshipped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. ⁴⁹ Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn.'

⁵⁰ Laban and Bethuel answered, 'This is from the LORD; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. ⁵¹ Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed.

⁶⁶ Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. ⁶⁷ Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So, she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Notes

Quite a strange and unusual love story, an example of faith and answered prayer, but we must be careful not to reduce this story to a formula to get our prayers answered. When we do this, we can miss the subtle undertones of this successful quest. So, what can we learn from this story?

Abraham declares to his servant in verses 39-40, 'The LORD, before who I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success.'

Abraham had no doubt in the ability of his God, and due to his faithfulness, God would grant success to finding a wife for Isaac. Faith and commitment are evident here and go hand in hand as a prerequisite. And this simple act of faithfulness and faith inspired the prayers of his servant in making such a specific prescribed outcome to discover the right girl for Isaac.

Jesus said to his disciples that 'Truly I tell you if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done.'

So, if we must all the faith we can and refuse to doubt, our prayers will be answered... Yes, but also no, for this kind of undoubting faith is beyond us; faith like this has to be given. It can't be worked up; it must come from another source, will, and purpose.

1 Corinthians 12 Now to each one, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit [...] ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines (wills).

Faith is both given and experienced according to His will and purpose; again, it's not a formula, something we are in control of, or to bend to our will. However, the more we experience God's faithfulness, the more our spiritual muscle grows, and faith grows. An example of this faith is Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who said, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. ¹⁸But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

Like Abraham, these young men had experiences with God that grew their faith; even if God saved or didn't save them, their faith in God was unshakable. How is our faith?

Heart prayers, a prayer inside the mind, and simple cries of the heart remind me of Nehemiah before the king requested, 'what is it you want? Then he prayed to the God of heaven and said to the king.'

There is something entirely innocent and straight to the point of heart prayers. Maybe we have become too formal or religious in our prayers. Internal prayers are like conversations; they flow and merge like a chat. (Give an example, headache and Mike touching my head). I think I miss this simplicity, almost childlike faith. How often do we stop, pray and listen? The Spirit may drop a word, a picture, a thought, a tingle on the skin, or an emotion stirs in the heart?

Again, I am not trying to give a formula, but I do think we are too quick to pray with spoken words, to move on to the next thing without dwelling first, to ponder, to converse in the heart, muse and dream with a God who delights in us.

Walking in obedience to God, faithfulness and faith inspired through the will and purpose of the Spirit are foundational to a life of prayer. Let the internal blessings flow; let us not formalise and be so quick to speak, slow down, make it simple, and allow the Spirit to answer through words, impressions, pictures, emotions, and feelings and build our relationship with Him.

God answered the servant's prayer and gave him success on his journey to find a wife for Isaac. May we also be granted success on our journey through this life, to know God better through the power of prayer, and may we see and experience miracles through faith and faithfulness.

Ephesians 3: ²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

Questions

- 1) Spoken prayers aren't the only way we can pray. Heart prayers can be just as powerful, have you experienced this way of praying? How has it helped you in your faith? How many other ways can we pray?
- 2) The story here in this chapter is a strange love story, not something we are used to in our films and series. What can we learn from this? How does it shape the way we see God at work?
- 3) Abrahams's servant seems to not have a personal relationship with God for he addresses him as the God of Abraham. Do you think this is a formal address of a servant in respect to his master? Or unbelief of the servant as he may have served another God?