

I will go

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[0 : 00] With a view to God's blessing, we can turn back to the portion of scripture we read in Genesis chapter 24. And we continue text tonight from verse 58.

Genesis chapter 24, verse 58, where we read, And they called Rebekah and said to her, Will you go with this man?

And she said, I will go. As the authorised version, he puts it, Will you go with this man? And she said, I will go.

I want to ask you tonight, what is a Christian? Because there's plenty of countries today, perhaps even in Ireland, who think that a Christian is somebody who adheres to traditional Christian morals or ethics.

And there's others who think that a Christian is somebody who attends a Christian church. Or that a Christian is somebody who prays. Or even that a Christian is somebody who seeks to live his life according to the Bible.

[1 : 10] And yet, although all of these things are true about Christians, yet none of these things can make you a Christian. In fact, there's many people who do all of these things and yet they're not Christians.

What then is a Christian? Well, according to the word of God, a Christian is somebody who accepts Jesus Christ as he's offered to us in the Gospel.

Who puts their faith in Jesus Christ. And this faith includes knowledge of who he is, belief in who he is, and trusting in him with all of your life and all that you have.

And all of these things worked in you by the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit. And so we can say that a believer, a Christian is a believer in Jesus Christ and in his word, what his word says.

The emphasis here for our salvation is not necessarily on what we do, but on what we believe. It's what you believe that saves you.

[2 : 14] And yet, James tells us that faith without works, stead. So that you can't say that you're a Christian and you act like you're not a Christian, it just doesn't work.

You can't, with one hand, profess Christ to be your saviour, and yet with the other hand, love the world. That's a contradiction. See, the Bible says that the true Christian is not only a hearer of the word, but he's a doer of the word also.

So that we can understand from that that the true Christian will look like the biblical description of a Christian. A true Christian will act like the biblical description of a Christian.

And yet, and yes, I confess that all that glitters is not gold. And yet we can say that all gold glitters. So that not everybody who looks like a Christian is a Christian, and yet everybody who is a Christian will look and act like a Christian.

And yes, I confess as well that there are some people, true Christians, who backslide for a time, who fall away. But in general, we can say that a Christian, or somebody who has been born again, will be known by his good fruit and by his Christ-likeness.

[3 : 37] And so to sum up, we can say that what characterises a Christian is his belief in Jesus Christ. His belief and his acceptance of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

That the true Christian seeks to live his life according to the pattern which has been set out for us in Scripture, in the Word of God, in the Bible. And so let me ask you tonight, before we go any further. Have you believed in this Jesus Christ, of whom you've heard so much about, from this pulpit and from the pulpit of your church, and perhaps from other people? Because, you know, you can be very regular in church.

You can even look like a Christian from the outside, and yet not be a Christian. Because the command of Scripture is that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved.

And in believing that you give your whole life to him, as his, and not your own. And it's the one who does this according to the Word of God, who is a true Christian, who will be saved, who will go to heaven at the end.

[4 : 52] In our chapter tonight, we have the story of a young woman who gave her life in marriage to a man who she had never met.

And when Myrtle Campbell, who many of you will have heard of, he was a minister in the free church in the mid-20th century, a man from Ness. And when he wrote about this chapter, he said that this was the loveliest story that was ever told.

And you know, when we read it, and when we really look into it, we realize that it truly is a lovely story. It's a love story of the highest degree. It's a story of a successful and aged marriage.

And what makes this story even lovelier is its spiritual significance. Because Isaac is what we call a type of Christ.

That is, his life was typical, or his life was symbolic of Jesus Christ, who was going to live around 2,000 years later. So that there were times in the life of Isaac, when he occupied a position which foreshadowed, which showed forth the work that Jesus Christ would do on earth.

[6 : 10] And here, Isaac foreshadows Christ as the husband of the brides. And Rebecca is symbolic of the believer in Jesus Christ, who agrees to marry Isaac.

The believer in Christ, who believes to marry Christ, speaking in biblical and spiritual language. And before we go any further, we can note that the relationship between God and his people, between Christ and his people, is described in many different ways.

We have it described as the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep. Between the potter and the clay. Between the father and the child. Between the captain and the soldier.

And here we have another one. The bridegroom and the bride. The husband and the bride. And we have this illustrated for us all throughout scripture.

And I'll pick out just a few of them, although there are many more. You see, when you read the book of Hosea, the prophet Hosea in the Old Testament, what's it about? Well, God told Hosea to marry a woman who he knew would be unfaithful to him.

[7 : 24] And this was foreshadowing to us the Lord's love for rebellious Israel. And you'll find again that in the gospel according to Matthew, when Jesus is telling his parables, he tells the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins.

And there Jesus describes himself as the bridegroom. In Ephesians 5, which we hear read so often at weddings, we have the instructions for how the bride and how the husband are to live once they are married.

We're told that that all symbolises the relationship between Christ and the church. And yet perhaps one of the clearest examples we have is in Revelation, where we read of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Where Christ is, as the bridegroom, preparing the marriage table for his bride. He's preparing, as it were, the reception for his bride.

And when she comes in, he will clothe her in fine linen, clean and white, that she might be suitable for the wedding feast. And these examples in scripture just come to show us that this picture of Christ as a bride and the believer of the church, sorry, Christ as a bridegroom and the believer of the church as a bride is a very real picture in scripture.

[8 : 53] And this is the picture that I want to bring out tonight in this chapter. That Isaac is symbolising Christ as the bridegroom.

And that Rebecca is symbolising the believer. And that's what I want to focus on, Rebecca. Rebecca's decision, as it were, to marry Isaac.

Before we come to the verse itself, it's important for us to get some context. Maybe just to go over what we've read in this long chapter. So at the start of this chapter we read that Abraham, a very famous character in the Old Testament, a very important man, who was called by God in Genesis chapter 12.

We read that he sends his servant, after his own wife has died, he sends his servant, his oldest servant, into Mesopotamia where he had come, where his own people lived.

He sent his servant there in order to find a bride for his unmarried son, Isaac. And he gave one condition for the bride that he was to find.

[10:05] She was to be somebody from his own family. And that's where his own family lived in Mesopotamia. He wasn't to take any woman from the people of the Canaanites. The Canaanites who were so well known for their hatred of all that was godly.

Their hatred of the religion of Jehovah. And this might sound strange for us today in our culture, speaking about an arranged marriage so normally.

Usually when we hear about them in the UK today, it's usually Muslims or some other type of religion that organise marriages. And yet, in Abraham's culture, this was very normal.

This wasn't a strange thing. This wasn't out of place. And in fact, most of these arranged marriages were successful marriages. And they were marriages which the husband and the wife agreed to. And in most cases, as far as we are aware, they worked out well. And so we read that the servant went out with his camels. Ten camels and lots of servants.

[11:11] And he took with him also gifts, precious gifts, for the woman who he would find if he was to find one. And also for the family of that woman.

And when he reached Nahor in Mesopotamia, he came to the well at the time of evening when a woman would come to collect the water.

This was the work of the woman. And they would come when the day was cooler in the evening, so that it was easier for them to carry the water home. And so when the servant reached the well, he prayed.

And he prayed to God, saying this. He asked that the suitable woman for Isaac would be the woman who, when he asked for a drink of water from her, that she would give him a drink of water, but also that she would offer to give drink to his camels also.

Now ten camels could drink a lot of water. And some people say that a camel at its first years can drink 25 gallons of water.

[12:16] And a pitcher, or the water jug that she was carrying, in most cases would only carry around three gallons. So this shows you not only the kindness that this woman would have to have, but also her diligence as a person.

And so we read that before Abraham's servant had finished praying, that Rebecca arrived on the scene. And that he asked her for a drink of water, and she did exactly as he had prayed.

She gave him the drink, and then she offered to give drink to his camels as well. And so the servant took this as a sign that she was probably the right woman.

But before he went any further, he asked her two questions. He asked her, who are you? And she said that she was the daughter of Bethuel, that is, Abraham's grandniece, and technically Isaac's first cousin once removed.

And second, he asked, was there room for himself and his camels and his servants to stay the night with her father in her father's house? And when both answers were favourable, he gave her precious gifts, because he knew that she was the one.

[13:31] He put bracelets on her wrists, and he gave her a nose ring, which would have been a popular form of jewellery at the time. And so the servant came with all of his own servants and with his camels to Bethuel's house, that is, Rebecca's father.

And there, the family of Rebecca looked after his camels and looked after his servants and made a big meal for them all to eat.

But Abraham's servant refused to eat anything until he had told them why he was there, until he had made his big proposal. That was, that their daughter, Rebecca, marry the son of his master, Isaac. And he based his marriage proposal, you'll notice, on two things. Firstly, in verse 35, he based the proposal on the riches of Abraham.

Abraham. He said it was this, that God had blessed Abraham in a remarkable way since he'd left his family. He blessed him with silver and with gold.

[14:41] He blessed him with flocks and with herds, with man-servants and maid-servants. He blessed him greatly. He was a rich man, perhaps even one of the richest men in the world at this time.

And so, the servant wasn't proposing to Bethuel, Rebecca's father, that he send his beloved daughter, Rebecca, into a faraway land in order that he might live a life of poverty.

On the very contrary, Rebecca would live the life of a princess if she were to go. And the second thing he based his proposal on was the remarkable providence which made him choose Rebecca.

Which made him so sure that Rebecca was God's choice of her life. And so, in the light of these two things, Bethuel and his family couldn't deny that God's hand was in the thing.

And so, they agreed that she should go. And after that, they had a big celebratory dinner. Where they ate and where they drank all night. Where they sat around the table, probably discussing the family issues.

[15:54] Discussing what Isaac was like. Discussing what Rebecca was like. And so on. And they also exchanged expensive gifts, as was customary.

Well, how are we to apply this to ourselves? Well, just as Isaac is a type of Christ, so here, Abraham, a type of God the Father.

He foreshadows the work of God the Father. In sending his servant to find a bride for his son. And so it is today that God sends his own servants, those who share the gospel and those who preach the gospel, to find a bride for his son, Jesus Christ.

And so I stand here tonight as a servant of God, as every Christian is. But as a minister is especially. I stand as a servant of God.

I ask you to accept this offer of Jesus Christ. I ask you to accept him as a husband of your soul.

[17:02] Because you see, although Isaac was the heir of great riches, we are told that he was the heir of all that Abraham had, that he would inherit all of it. Although that is true.

Yet Jesus Christ is an heir of far greater riches. We are told in the word of God that to him the land and the sea belong, for he has created them.

We are told that the sun, the moon and the stars, even to the furthest galaxies of the universe, are his. Because in Psalm 8 we read that he has made them with his finger.

This saviour, all of all the riches of the world belong to him. He is the king of kings and he is the lord of lords.

Heaven is his throne and the earth is his foodstool. He is a rich saviour. And so when I invite you to believe in him, I'm not inviting you to believe in a poor husband, a poor saviour who can't look after you, who can't provide for you.

[18:07] But I'm asking you, on the very contrary, to come to one who is richer than you can ever imagine. One who offers to make you a joint heir of all of his riches.

But notice also God's providence. It was the remarkable way in which God worked his providence that made Abraham's servant so sure that Rebecca was the right wife for Isaac.

And how is God working your own providence tonight? I don't know your situation. I don't know your heart. And I don't know your conscience. I don't know the way that the Lord has been giving you in past days, in past months, in past years.

You may have been coming to church for a long time, or you may not have been coming to church for long at all. And yet, whatever your situation, you are here tonight under the beautiful sound of the gospel preached.

Sinners invited to Christ. Because God, in his providence, has determined that you have another opportunity to accept or reject this offer of a saviour.

[19:26] And you know, there's a solemnity in God's providence that we would all do well to heed to. As we read on, we read in verse 55 that although the family agreed to let Rebecca go initially, yet in verse 55, her brother and her mother came to Abraham Selma and said to him, let her stay with us for another wee while, a few days, at least ten days, and then after that, she can go with you.

We see here how overnight the willingness of Rebecca's family had changed into hesitation. And you know, in many ways, this is understandable because the chances were that they would never see her again.

However, the servant reminded them of the urgency of his task. He reminded them of his intent to travel home that very day. And what he was saying was this, that he needed a decision, that he wasn't willing to wait.

One day, he wasn't willing to wait ten days that he had to go, that he had to be about his master's business. And it's at this point that Rebecca is reintroduced into the story.

Notice that she had no say in the marriage earlier on. But now, when the decision of whether she would go that day, which was probably the decision of whether she would go at all, when that decision was to be made, it was left all up to her.

[21 : 02] Young Rebecca was brought out to make the decision. And Rebecca was asked a simple question. She was asked, will you go with this man?

And yet, although the question was simple, the implications of the question wasn't simple at all. because what she was really being asked was this, Rebecca, will you go with this servant who you hardly know to a place to which you've never been, to marry a man who you've never even met or seen?

And in doing so, Rebecca, will you leave behind you all that you know? Will you leave behind you your friends and your family, your loved ones, your comforts, your religion, your habits?

Will you leave it all, Rebecca? Rebecca, in order that you might marry this man. And you know, in some ways, this seems to us to be a no-brainer. Why was she to leave her comfortable life all that she knew that she might marry a man who she'd never even met, to step into the unknown?

Well, in many ways, Rebecca's situation is like your own today as you sit under the gospel unconverted. you have a marriage offer set before you.

[22 : 29] And in this marriage offer, there is a husband who will love you and who will care for you. There is one here who will provide for you and in doing so, who will never leave you nor forsake you.

There is one here who promises that he will cover the sins of his people with his own righteousness, that he will go to prepare a place for them in heaven, that they might never suffer the pains and the torments of hell.

And yet, this offer comes for a great cost. Because, you see, it was out of the question for Rebecca to consent to this marriage and yet to stay where she was.

And so it is with you. It's out of the question for you, it's impossible for you to consent to this marriage with Christ and yet not to change in your life. because if your life doesn't change when you believe in this Saviour, then it shows that you've never consented, that you've never really believed at all.

It shows that the Spirit of Christ isn't in you and that you're not a Christian. Because, you see, when you become a Christian, there's a sense in which, like Rebecca, you set off into the unknown.

[23 : 52] You take that step of faith and perhaps you're here tonight and you've heard a lot about the Christian life. You've heard a lot about the Bible and yet you've never really experienced it.

That's because this life involves faith in Christ. It involves trusting that when you set off into the unknown that he will do all things well in your situation and knowing that he will honour those who honour him no matter the circumstances.

And yet, as I said, there is here much sacrifice involved. Rebecca left much behind her and so you must leave behind you your sin.

Because we all have bosom sins, sins that we keep close to us and yet sins which drive a wedge between ourselves and God. With some people that is drink, with some people it's pride, with other people it's the freedom of doing what they want and not having to conform to God's word, doing their own thing on the Lord's day, going to the places that they want to go and not the places that God wants them to go to.

For some it's the evil company that they keep, it's a kind of lifestyle they're living and yet the Christian must leave all of these things behind him.

[25 : 27] And so when you come to Christ you'll find that there were things which you used to do which are no longer suitable for you to do. There were even places that you used to go to and you find today that you don't feel right being in these places.

You'll even find that you'll have friends who will desert you because of your profession of Christ. Friends who will leave you and who will want very little to do with you after this.

These things aren't easy. These things are sacrifices and I'm not saying for a minute that they're easy. And yet just as Rebecca saw this sacrifice is worth it so does it true Christian see that this is worth it.

We have a great example of this in the life of Moses. Moses was a man who when he was just a few months old as a boy was adopted into the family of the daughter of Pharaoh and he grew up as a child of Egypt with all the privileges of Pharaoh's house with everything that he could ever want. and yet when it came to the crux he chose rather to serve God and to serve the world and to enjoy the world. And we have this verse in Hebrews 11 which speaks about him where it says that by faith Moses when he was come to years refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter choosing

rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.
[27 : 09] Esteeming the reproach of Christ's greater riches than the treasures in Egypt for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

He had an eye to the reward. You see despite the affliction that God's people must suffer in some eras in some generations that will be great in others it will be smaller and despite the reproach of Christ which is evident in every generation Moses chose to serve God and there was much cost for Moses and there was much sacrifice for Moses in doing this and so it is with you if you take Christ to be your husband if you take Christ tonight to be your saviour there is much cost there is much sacrifice.

and yet the rewards are great. Well to a simple question Rebecca gave a simple answer. In verse 58 we read that she said I will go. In the Hebrew that's just one word that's all she said as far as we are aware.

And we have to ask what caused Rebecca at this point so confidently to assert that she would go with this man. That she would leave behind her all that she knew.

[28 : 38] Well I would suggest to you tonight the main motive that she had was love. Was love for the one who she was going to marry. Love for Isaac.

Because it was only love that could cause somebody to make so great a sacrifice. And yes Rebecca had never met Isaac.

She'd never even seen him. So it's strange that she would love him. How could she love somebody who she's never seen, who she's never met? I would remember that the night before she'd had dinner with his servant.

And if you were in that position I'm sure that you'd be asking all sorts of questions about Isaac and about his family. What kind of person was he?

What was he like when he was younger? What does he look like? What are his characteristics as a person? You'd be desperate to find out what he was like, just as I believe Rebecca was.

[29 : 38] And it seems to me that what Rebecca heard about Isaac endeared her so much to the man that she found that even before she had ever seen him, that she loved him.

She believed what she was told about him. And that belief fed her love. Because you see, it was only love that could act in this way.

And you know, today I'm asking you to do something very similar. I'm asking you to go with someone who you've never met. I'm asking you to accept of the marriage offer of Jesus Christ as he said before you in the gospel.

I'm asking you to have faith without sight, to love him without seeing him. Because you see, that's what the Christian does. The Christian walks by faith and not by sight.

And the day is coming near when the Christian will see God as he is. And yet today he is hidden from our physical eyes and yet he's revealed to us by faith.

[30 : 47] That's why Paul says that we look not at the things which are seen but of the things which are unseen. For the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are unseen are eternal.

And you see, that's why faith is so important for the Christian. Because it's by faith that we see God. It's by faith that we come to love God.

To love the God, the Christ who we have never seen with our physical eyes. And that's why Peter could say when he wrote to our church who had never seen Christ with our physical eyes.

Who could say, whom having not seen, you love. In whom, though now you see and not yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

God will be to you. But today I go out looking for a bride for my master's son. And the one question that I have for you is the same question as Abraham's servant had.

[32 : 04] Will you go with this man? Rebecca's family tried to put this marriage off. They tried to delay it for a time and yet this is a marriage which cannot be delayed.

This is a marriage which must go ahead if it's going to go ahead at all. You see, if Rebecca had said no, then the marriage wouldn't have gone ahead.

It would have been put off most likely because the servant wouldn't have stayed. And just so, there is great urgency about this offer tonight because you've got no guarantee that you're ever going to hear this gospel offer again.

So many people don't realise that. You've got no guarantee that you'll ever have a chance again. But the day is coming when you will be taken from this world.

The day is coming when Christ will come again in judgment. And we don't know when that day is. This is a simple question and it requires a simple answer.

[33 : 10] Will you go with this man and all that's required from you is to say that you will or that you won't. And silence on your part will be understood as the latter by God that you won't go.

And so let me ask you again. Will you go with this man this Jesus Christ who promises to save his people from their sins. Who promises to be the lover of your soul.

The friend who sticks closer than any brother. Or will you rather not? Will you stay in silence rejecting this other preferring to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Very interesting choice of words. The pleasures of sin for a season. You see they won't last forever. The things which keep you going in this life won't last forever.

They are only for a season. When you consider that season in light of eternity it's just like that.

That's it. The pleasures of sin are for a season.

[34 : 22] They won't last. Rebecca was an example of faith to all of us. With faith and with love she looked to the one she couldn't see.

When she finally met Isaac as we see in verse 67 she found that he was everything that the servant had said that he was and even more.

With the queen of Sheba she could say that the half was not told me about this man. And we're told that Isaac in return loved her.

And you know my description of Jesus Christ to you is very inadequate. I can try and describe him to you as I see him in the Bible and you can't do him justice.

But if you come to him today I promise to you that you will find him to be far more than I could ever describe. You will find him to be far greater far lovelier than I could you and you would ever imagine.

[35 : 33] He will love you and he will care for you as a husband. He will not leave you to yourself not in time and not in eternity.

Murdoch Campbell when he spoke of this chapter said that this was the loveliest story that was ever told and yet it is but a picture of an even lovelier story.

An even lovelier marriage. The marriage between Christ and his church. Are you going to be part of that marriage? Are you going to be at that marriage supper of the lamb which we spoke about in Revelation?

Let me ask you what are you doing with your life? What are you living for in life? Are you prepared for eternity? eternity which is coming as the word tells us like a thief in the night?

Probably sooner than any of us could ever imagine. Are you prepared? Let me ask you again. Will you go with this man? Amen.

[36 : 44] Let us pray. Gracious and ever blessed God we are mindful this evening that we are a very privileged people to hear the free offer of the gospel and to know that whoever believes will have eternal life in Christ and yet we know that man can do nothing that it is the spirit that quickens and that the flesh profits nothing and so we ask Lord that thou would send thy spirit into our midst and that thou would throw men to thyself as thou would want to do O Lord that it would all be to thy glory that sinners would come to Christ and that they would profess his name that they would see him to be altogether lovely that they would desire him more than they desire anything in this world O Lord that is our desire tonight that many more would come to

Christ that thy church thy people would be strengthened and that thy name would be glorified all these things we ask with the forgiveness of our sin for Christ's sake Amen we can worship singing to God's praise again in Psalm 45 under the Scottish Psalter page 268 verse 13 again these words resembling what we have just been thinking about the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca but even more so the marriage of Christ and his church verse 13 behold the daughter of the king all glorious is within and with embroideries of gold and garments brought up in she shall be brought and to the king in rope with needle brought her fellow virgin's following shall unto thee be brought they shall be brought with gladness great and mirth on every side into the palace of the king and there they shall abide and so on verses 13 to the end of the psalm to

God's praise we can stand to sing armor in Minn Pop Rosie with him and with the righteousness of the garment brought a she shall be brought unto the king in the world for the world for the world for the world for the world be brought with gladness great and earth may shine by the world and the

world and they shine instead of those

I might dear I can the love and in the glory and the world the day I remember I will pray through it is
the my love and the love and the love and the love and the love and the heart from each other
depart from each other depart not from us but grant that thy grace and thy mercy and thy