

Intro:

I was in Kansas City, Missouri in 1983 when I heard a woman missionary share her story that confirmed my decision that I would be a missionary.

My name is Charles Seelen. I was born and raised in Oklahoma, USA. I became a Christian while I was in elementary school. My younger sister and I grew up during the time that church buses would go through the neighborhoods picking up kids for Sunday School. So, most of my childhood revolved around church. My allegiance to God as Lord went through a growing phase during my Junior High and High School years. It was during my first year in college that I started to understand that God pursued a loving relationship with me that is real and personal.

The winter of 1983, Bill Bright, founder and president of Campus Crusade for Christ, selected Kansas City to host one of the largest Campus Crusade meetings. KC '83 hosted well known speakers like Josh McDowell, Howard Hendricks, and Billy Graham. There was also a missionary lady who spoke about her husband and their experience of reaching an Indian tribe in South America. It was at the end of Elizabeth Elliot's story about Jim Elliot that I knew that God was also inviting me to become involved with Him in His work.

I met Teresa during our senior year in college. By the time we graduated with our bachelor degrees in education we knew we wanted to be partners in teaching the gospel to `pockets of people` who do not have the chance to hear about Jesus Christ.

We married in Dec. of 1988, after my first semester of seminary.

After I graduated from seminary in 1992, Teresa and I accepted an assignment in Hokkaido, Japan. In the city of Hakodate. Although, the adjustment was difficult at first, we ended up finishing well.

We were able to see a core group started that eventually grew into a church. Teresa and I also had a first child during this time. Our son, Collin.

We completed our two-year assignment in Hakodate preparing to become `real career missionaries` to a country like Africa, India, or somewhere physically demanding. My time in Japan was okay, but I had my heart set on anywhere else, but Japan!

"God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action."

My crisis of belief came when I realized God was calling us back to Japan. Teresa and I spent a couple of days at the main office of the International Mission Board, pouring over ministry opportunities from around the world. There were requests to teach, to build, to coach, to serve in places like South America, Africa, Europe, Asia, and on tropical islands! Each request sounded more exciting than the last, *but* none seemed to resonate with us. It did not make sense that Teresa and I could not find a ministry opportunity that just jumped at us! Actually, it was getting frustrating that we could not find an assignment and it was out of this frustration that I said, "We should just go back to Japan!" "Would you believe that it was at that moment of frustration that God was calling us back to Japan.

I was faced with a crisis of belief that was going to require me to have faith in Him by returning to a land I had no interest in returning to.

It's been 34 years since the first time I heard Elizabeth Elliot and God confirmed in my heart that I was to be relocated to take the gospel to those who have limited opportunities to hear.

It's been 25 years in Japan of seeing God mature me and my family in our faith so that we might minister to others out of an overflow of loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, and soul!

Jim Elliot said it like this,

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. "

If you have your Bibles I would like for you to turn to **Genesis 24 verse 1-9**.

This morning I would like to share a story from the scriptures that will form a picture of a relationship that God sets up with us and guarantees by His word.

Let's read Genesis 24 verse 1-9

Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. ² So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, ³ and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; ⁴ but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac." ⁵ And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?" ⁶ But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there. ⁷ The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. ⁸ And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." ⁹ So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

Theologians have highlighted Genesis 24 as being a *type*.

Webster's dictionary, defines *type* as a figure that is represented, by a model or symbol, something beforehand. A simple way of viewing a type is to see it as a picture. A picture that symbolizes something coming, a foreshadow.

The Bible is filled with *types*. Throughout the OT you have pictures of Jesus Christ, grace unveiled. Many of us know the *type* found in Genesis 22:1-14 where Abraham offered his son Isaac on the altar.

In this type we see the impression of God the Father, us as His children, and Jesus the Son becoming the sacrifice at Mount Calvary. This is a major type found in scripture that shows that God the Father has given God the Son so that our sins might be forgiven.

Today in our text we see that the Father is obtaining for the Son a bride. This is another type. One that is not as major. It's not discussed very often, but I believe it is a beautiful picture of grace. A wonderful portrait of how He came looking to "relocate" you and make you His bride.

We are married to the Lord Jesus. In our following sessions I will show you how you came to be wed to Jesus.

Our narrative has five people. Not all five characters are mentioned in the first 9 verses. We will read of the next three in the sessions to come, but let me give you all five; Abraham (God the Father), Isaac (Christ the Son), Rebekah (the redeemed, church, you), Eliezer (the servant of God, one who is already in the house), the angel (the Holy Spirit, who proceeds the servant in obtaining the bride).

Let me show you three quick things in the next few minutes, by way of introduction for what we will look at in the next sessions.

In this picture of a bride obtained for the son there is;

1. A command to go and obtain a Bride. "thou shalt go" (v.4).

Notice that it is found in verse 4 of our text. The father says to the servant, "thou shalt go"!

It shouldn't be a surprise to us that when Jesus Christ spoke to his disciple before His ascension, He gave to them a command and it is the same language of our text. "Go ye into all the world" "Go ye"! It is not an invitation to come and isolate yourself from the world. It is a command to go into the world.

Listen carefully, this manner of evangelism, sharing Christ with people in need of a Savior, is a command to open your mouth and share.

How many of you feel qualified to *preach*? It's unfortunate that the word preach today comes with qualification measures. The New Testament word `kerysso` was used to describe what a roster would do every morning, proclaim the beginning of a new day! The word *preach/proclaim* comes from the work `kerysso` it was a statement that said, "that if a simple bird can kerysso/preach than anyone can do it!"

So, with some help I have thought of a 21st century word for `kerysso and preach`. How many of you can gossip? :o)

So why don't we go "gossip about the gospel" We can share how shameful and lonely we were and how amazing and gracious is our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Those who come are already wed. You come to see the groom and His beauty. His love and grace. After being refreshed from His encouraging words, He then commissions you to go! Go to your family and tell them of a Savior, go to your friends and share the forgiveness story, go to work, to the schools, to the people.

We see in our text that the way to get a bride is to go!

2. There is a cost to consider when going to obtain a Bride . . .

When the servant is commanded to go by the Father in verse 5 he says, ""What if . . .?" What if she won't come? What if..?

What if this happens? What if that happens?

When your challenged to share Christ with some one do these "what if" questions come to your mind?

What if people are offended?

What if I get embarrassed?

What if they think I'm a religious nut?

What if? What if?

There is a cost to sharing your faith. And you need to count it.

By the way, the servant asked," What if she does not come back?" Notice what the Father says. "Do not take my son back to the land from which I came."

Abraham knows he has been "relocated" and once you have experienced a true "relocation" there no going back.

Abraham is setting an example to trust in God.

I close by showing you this

3. There is great comfort when we go and obtain a bride for Christ

The father says in verse 7 "He shall send his angel before you."

I would purpose to you the number one excuse that people have for not telling others about Jesus is simple, "I don't know what to say."

To help people overcome this fear there have been all kinds of programs designed to tell people what to say.

Now hear me carefully, I think some of these programs are good, but if we are not careful we will lose sight of just sharing over the overflow of who we are and what Christ has done for us and we will be so programmed that our testimony will sound "canned".

DON'T WORRY about what you say, THE SPIRIT will go before you. As Jesus said to his disciples some of you when you go will experience persecution but know this that even in those most pressured moments I will give you the words to say.

"For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:12).

This is a great verse because it testifies that the Holy Spirit tells us what to say exactly when we need to be taught.

One of the reasons you have never seen effective evangelism in your going, is because you have not tested the spirit to give you the words in the same hour.

My final word is simply this. You are not part of a relationship where the Father gets upset because you don't lead some one to Christ. You are not part of a relationship where golden stars are put by your name every time some one is saved by your testimony (or the opposite, a star is taken away when some one doesn't believe).

Not at all! Notice that the servant is released from his obligation once he **goes and tells**. And if there is no response the Father said to Eliezer, "you are free from this oath of mine".

May God give us the kind of grace we need to be a people who have been "relocated" so that we can go obtain a bride for Christ.

Our next session I will show you how the Holy Spirit and Eliezer found you and convinced you of your need of a Savior.

And you will see your self in Rebekah, as she came to her groom.