

08.02.26

Genesis

Chapter 24 - God's Comfort in Death

The Comfort of Divine Sovereignty (vs. 50-60)

Genesis 24:50-60: Then Laban and Bethuel replied, “The matter comes from the LORD; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. Here is Rebekah before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has spoken.” When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before the LORD. The servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother. Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When they arose in the morning, he said, “Send me away to my master.” But her brother and her mother said, “Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go.” He said to them, “Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master.” And they said, “We will call

the girl and consult her wishes.” Then they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will go.” Thus they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse with Abraham’s servant and his men. They blessed Rebekah and said to her,
“May you, our sister,
Become thousands of ten thousands,
And may your descendants possess
The gate of those who hate them.”

Well, we come into a passage where we see a servant just simply doing what his master asked him to do. And yet, as he begins to do that, he begins to walk in faith as his master has, trusting in the Lord, believing that only God can do this.

Romans 15:4 says that whatever was written in earlier times was written for our example, or, more specifically, written for our encouragement; that we would persevere and not give up hope. It's an interesting passage, which is making reference to the fact that when you read the Old

Testament, God has given us these examples of what it means to continue on believing and trusting in God and how God begins to reward; how God demonstrates that He is with you.

We come to a passage in which individuals don't seem to be necessarily on board with his mission. Nevertheless, his mission seems to go forward in spite of all that. If you look at the beginning of Genesis 24, it gives us really the foundation of this setting. The foundation of the setting is, of course, you looked at Chapter 23, Sarah's passing, she has died, the mother has died, and now Isaac needs comfort as the passage will ultimately end, "Isaac was comforted."

What we realize is that this setting is demonstrating what death does. It makes you rethink where you are. It makes you rethink the things that you're going through and why you're even here. We see Abraham then calling in his servant, and he goes, "We need to move forward." But we understand that although death is a permanent thing

in the sense of from this world, we are heading towards a destination that is far greater.

If you were to read Hebrews 11, it reminds us that Abraham was looking for a greater city, a city not of this earth. He was searching for that which was eternal. And so, you begin to move on, move forward, generations to follow. And so, he calls his servant in, and he says, "We've got to move forward. We've got to find Isaac a wife."

The passage reads this way,

(Genesis 24:1) "Now Abraham was old, advanced in age..."

That in and of itself reminds you that time is passing.

"... and the LORD had blessed Abraham in every way.

(Genesis 24:2) Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned,
"Please place your hand under my thigh,

(Genesis 24:3) and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live,

(Genesis 24:4) but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

The servant naturally replies, "Suppose she's not willing to come?" Well, this has kind of been about the journey of the servant, hasn't it? "Suppose this won't happen..." But the servant will come to an understanding that, "No, God is sovereign; it will happen," as Abraham so clearly conveys to him.

What's also interesting, if you were to back up to Chapter 15 of Genesis, we have a sort of introduction to this servant.

And it reads this way,

(Genesis 15:1) "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

(Genesis 15:2) Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

(Genesis 15:3) And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

The word that he uses within the passage is "*ben meheshek*". "*Ben*" making reference to son; "*meheshek*" making reference to possessions. "Since Eleazar is the son of my possessions."

At the very beginning, Abraham was perceiving that God was going to use this servant to be the source of the blessings. He would be the heir. He would be the one that would inherit all things. It is now this very servant that he is calling to go get a wife for his son. And all blessings will go to his son, not Eleazar. Nevertheless, Eleazar is not concerned about that. He's only concerned with serving his master. It kind of reminds me in some way of Jonathan, who was willing to forego the kingdom which was clearly due him as his father was the king of Israel. And nevertheless, he knew David was the anointed, and he gave that kingdom to him gladly.

We have an interesting picture of this servant. This is a servant that desires only to serve his master. And quite frankly, is going on a mission that doesn't make a whole lot of sense to him. I mean, here they are in the land of Canaan. There are a lot of women in this particular region,

and he wants him to go to Mesopotamia; he wants him to find from his own family that wife that would be suitable, that would have the same kind of belief in the LORD, *Yahweh*, that he believes in. So, he goes. And it is quite a journey. We don't hear much about the journey. As we talked about, probably 400 to 500 miles as the crow flies, but 700 miles as you journey. And so, he takes this journey with the camels and who knows who he's going to meet; who knows how it's going to turn out. It's anybody's guess, but his master sent him. So, he goes. He goes.

Romans 15 is telling us that these things were written, that we would have perseverance and hope, and that we would understand that this is the same thing that God is doing for us. He's calling us. He's calling us to be a servant of sorts. Now, the wonderful thing is that in Christ, we are actually children of God, sons of God. But as I oftentimes read in the epistles, how did the epistles start off?

Whether it be James or whether it be Peter, "James, a bondservant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, the willingness of calling themselves bondservants

is really establishing the fact that all to Him they owe. And they would willingly do everything and anything for Him. God is calling us on a mission. The mission is clear. Get a bride for Christ. That's our mission, isn't it? Get her ready. And we don't know who that is. We don't know who's going to come. In this particular setting, he goes into the land, finds himself by this well, and then turns to God and he goes, "You're going to have to make this clear." This beautiful woman comes out. She offers him water. He turns to God and he says, "That's exactly what I asked for. If she offers me water, then maybe this is the girl." But not just that, she needs to water the camels too. And she does. How could anything like this just fall into place so perfectly? Now, the test, "Are you related?" "Yes, I am." Who could have orchestrated such a thing? How could it be that at this particular time it happened and this particular woman shows up and how could it be? But it has. And the confidence that is given to this individual is building not only a faith in Abraham, but a faith in Abraham's God. As he's on the mission, it's clear. He knows where he's going. And quite frankly, the mission that God has given us, we know where we're going. The

destiny has been made clear. This is not our home. But Christ says, "I've gone to prepare a place for you. And if I do that, I'm going to come again. I'm going to receive you to Myself that where I am, you're going to be there too." We know that this is not our home. We have a greater city.

In fact, the way it's put in 2 Peter 3, we're looking for that place in which righteousness dwells. It sure doesn't dwell here, but we're looking for that wonderful place. So, we know where we're going. We know the destiny. And quite frankly, we are cognizant of the fact that we cannot control anything on this journey. We don't know if bandits are going to hold us up on the way. We don't know if we're going to fall off the cliffs as we go through the mountains. We don't know what's going to happen, but we go. We go in life's journey, where God has called us on a mission and He says, "Go."

It's interesting as we were reading there in 2 Timothy 4, Paul turns to Timothy, he says, "Fulfill your ministry." And then he turns and he says, "I have finished my course." We know that God has placed us on a ministry; He's

placed us on a journey. We're cognizant of the fact that we can't do anything without the favor of God, but we will do what He says, we will go where He sends, and ultimately we will do it His way. Because we believe that's the only way to do it. We feel and experience the presence of God by His affirmation. Haven't there been times as you've been going on this journey that you sense, "God is with me"? I mean, if this were not true, these things wouldn't be happening the way that they are. And God begins to reveal great things for us in the midst of this. He orchestrates things just perfectly. And we grow more and more confident. And I have found this to be true. The more I trust and obey, the more confident I am that God is sovereign over everything. I mean, is anything too hard for God? As Abraham will say, "Will not the God of all the earth do right?" I know that I can trust the Sovereign One. And when we talk about sovereignty, what we're talking about is One that literally controls absolutely everything. He is in control of everything. There's nothing that He doesn't control. And so, He will make sure that you are able to fulfill your ministry. Now, here's the caveat. You have to stay on course. God will

cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him and walk on the course. And it is by walking on the course that we begin to sense the affirmation. We see the orchestration of God in every single thing that He does as we begin to walk in that journey. And so, ultimately, we realize that nothing is too hard for Him.

2 Corinthians 6:1, Paul starts off this way,

"... And working together with Him..."

That's what you want to do, right? You're on a mission, but you need the favor of God. You're not going to fulfill this mission without Him. You need to work together with Him. And as he says in 1 Corinthians 4:2, that we're stewards of what God has given us. Therefore, we have to be faithful to do what He tells us to do. It's required of stewards that you be found faithful; faithful to the calling; faithful to the cause; faithful to obey what God tells you to do. And as you and I do this, then we grow confident and assured. We watch Him make grace abound, as 2 Corinthians 9 says, and all sufficiency for every good work begins to happen.

The servant is actually witnessing these things. They're taking place before his very eyes. And at this particular juncture, the thought is, "Wow, it's done. It's done. It's good. We're over." It's not done. There's this guy called Laban. And Laban is what we call the “monkey wrench” that's thrown in the situation. And so, if you turn with me to Genesis 24:50, we have Laban. Now, Laban has been introduced a little earlier and quite frankly we will learn of him a little bit later as we see Jacob striving with this individual that is less than honest and we will see Jacob having to deal with somebody that lied to him, cheated him over 10 times as he makes reference and has to try to escape this one that is the father-in-law. But nevertheless, we're just simply introduced to him at this point. And something that's very clear is that he's what many would call a sycophant; that is to say, somebody or an individual that would cater to rich people or powerful people. And so, when he realizes how powerful or how wealthy this servant is, as he begins to show the treasures; he just looks at the rings, and he looks at the things, and he goes, "Okay, would you like to have dinner with us?" And he begins to roll out the red carpet.

It is towards the end as the servant just continues to focus on the mission. And this is a very important point of the text, that God has called us on a mission. We do not have the ability to go away from that. God has called us to strictly abide by the mission. The question that we always have to ask ourselves and should be asking ourselves every morning, "What is the mission? What is God calling us to do? What does He want me to do? And how does He want me to do it?" If you're not doing it how He wants you to do it, you're not doing the mission. And so, we come to this passage in verse 50, and we have Laban introduced and the wonderful tests of the resolve of this particular servant.

Verse 50 reads this way,

(Genesis 24:50) "Then Laban and Bethuel replied, "The matter comes from the LORD; so we cannot speak to you bad or good."

Now, quite frankly, they probably wanted to control things, but up to this point, the servant has said, "God has made our way clear. He's made our way straight. I've seen the hand of God. It's been miraculous." And they can't

deny the perfection of the orchestration. They just can't deny that. So, they go, "Well, there's nothing we can say about it." Now, what's interesting about the passage is Bethuel is the father, Laban is the brother. Now, what's interesting is that Laban is mentioned first. The reason for that is that the father has a concubine, another wife, and had children from that wife. The way this whole thing works in this Eastern culture is that when you have another wife, you relinquish your control over your children of the first wife.

I'll give you an example of this. A little bit further on, we'll read in Genesis where the sister Dinah actually is being wooed by another group of people and her brothers go in, and they massacre them. Simon and Levi massacre them. Why the brothers? Why didn't the dad do anything? Because he has another wife. The same thing is true with David. Absalom has a sister, Tamar. She's a beautiful girl. One of the boys rapes her. Guess who feels that he's beholden to take care of the matter? Absalom. It's his sister.

My point is that in some ways you relinquish your authority as you are unfaithful. And so, right or wrong, this was not a law of God. Right or wrong, this is the way that it was perceived in the culture. So, Laban, the brother, takes charge.

And it says in verse 51,

(Genesis 24:51) "Here is Rebekah before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken."

"We're on the same page. We're with you." And up to this point, we're going, "Okay, it's working out, right? It's good."

(Genesis 24:52) "When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before the LORD."

Let me tell you what it doesn't say. It doesn't say that he went up to Laban and he went up to Bethuel, and said, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. You're so wonderful. You're so nice." He knows they had nothing to do with this. It was God. The unfortunate thing is we try to thank man for the things that God is orchestrating. We should

fall on our face and go, "It was all God. And that's the testimony that we share with people. We believe that God is sovereign. We believe that God made this happen. God made you tell me it was okay in this setting.

So, then, it says in verse 53,

(Genesis 24:53) "The servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother."

Why give precious things to Laban? Well, I think the better part of wisdom is, you want to give something to Laban, so you don't owe this guy anything. Because he's going to come back and say, "What's in it for me?" and "You owe me." And he wants to walk away going, "We don't owe you anything. You came out ahead on this deal."

The passage ends with that and then in verse 54,

(Genesis 24:54) "Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master.""

"I'm on a mission. I'm ready to go. I took care of my business. I'm not going to hang around." But Laban's not done.

(Genesis 24:55) "But her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go."

A little bit of delay tactics, maybe confusing power play, begin to happen within the passage.

(Genesis 24:56) "He said to them, "Do not delay me..."

"I'm on a mission. I have to go now."

"... since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master."

"I'm resolved to go. Don't delay me."

The "I may go" is in the cohortative in the Hebrew, which makes reference to the fact that "I have to go. You cannot delay me." It's not a sense of "please don't". It's like "I have to go." "I'm going."

As Laban will answer back within the passage, he'll say, "No, the girl has to tell us that she wants to go." So, he'll come back with a cohortative in the sense of a command.

We understand that what we have within the passage is a power play. There's no doubt about it. And the influence of others can become extremely strong, especially if it's family. They hold the trump card in the sense that they've known this girl a lot longer than he has. He's a stranger that has come into their lives. And in some way, that'll be made known within the passage.

I couldn't help but think in this setting, in which the servant did not want to be delayed, of another passage, and the passage is found in 1 Kings 13. If you take a moment and turn there with me, we'll read it, at least parts of it, in hopes that it will give us some sort of bearing in all of this. This particular setting was during the time in which the King Jeroboam, the Israelites had actually broken away and was actually causing the people to go away from God. He was building altars unto false gods and by virtue of doing that, he was rebelling and his whole nation was rebelling against God. In his rebellion, prophets are telling him, "Don't do this." He does it anyway. He sticks his hand in. It becomes shriveled. Then he begins to cry out, "Pray for me that I might be saved."

And the prophet does pray. He says, "I'll pray that you're healed," and he is healed. So, at that juncture, the king goes, "I am so grateful. Why don't you stay and eat with me?"

And this is the answer of the prophet,

(1 Kings 13:7) "Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."

(1 Kings 13:8) But the man of God said to the king, "If you were to give me half your house I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water in this place."

(1 Kings 13:9) For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way which you came.'"

The passage is telling us that the prophet was resolved to do exactly what God had told him to do. But you have to remember that it's in the setting of somebody that he doesn't like. You know how we as believers don't mind taking stands with people we don't like, but then you put us in the room with family and friends and you have to

make a decision, it gets a little harder. No problem with this guy. He doesn't like the king. "I'm not going to do anything that you want me to do. I'm not going to hang around. I've got to go. I'm out of here."

So, on his journey, as he begins to go,

(1 Kings 13:11) "Now an old prophet was living in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the deeds which the man of God had done that day in Bethel; the words which he had spoken to the king, these also they related to their father.

(1 Kings 13:12) Their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" Now his sons had seen the way which the man of God who came from Judah had gone.

(1 Kings 13:13) Then he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him and he rode away on it.

(1 Kings 13:14) So he went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak; and he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" And he said, "I am."

(1 Kings 13:15) Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.”

(1 Kings 13:16) He said, “I cannot return with you, nor go with you, nor will I eat bread or drink water with you in this place.

(1 Kings 13:17) For a command came to me by the word of the LORD, ‘You shall eat no bread, nor drink water there; do not return by going the way which you came.’”

(1 Kings 13:18) He said to him, “I also am a prophet like you, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, ‘Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.’” But he lied to him.

You mean God didn't change His mind? See, we begin to think that maybe God changes His mind. He doesn't.

(1 Kings 13:20) "Now it came about, as they were sitting down at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back;

(1 Kings 13:21) and he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Because you have disobeyed the command of the LORD, and have not

observed the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you,

(1 Kings 13:22) but have returned and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water"; your body shall not come to the grave of your fathers.'"

(1 Kings 13:23) It came about after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

(1 Kings 13:24) Now when he had gone, a lion met him on the way and killed him, and his body was thrown on the road..."

What just happened? You know, there are some people that we have a hard time saying no to. But if God has called you to a mission, stay on the mission. The thought is, "Well, I'm on a mission from God, but maybe God has sent this person to do this." What is God telling you to do? Stay true to the mission. Don't go to the right; don't go to the left. Stay true to the mission. Once you start going off the course, you're no longer under the protection of God. The protection of God rests on those

that are abiding according to the mission. And let me just say this. This is why you want to obey what He tells you to do. You not only want to go where He tells you to go, but you want to say what He tells you to say, and you want to do it in the way that He would do it. I've seen people go into harm's way, thinking that they were going to change things. It clearly wasn't necessarily something that God was wanting them to do. Nevertheless, they may have even affirmed in their own mind, "God wants me to do this." But we know it didn't match up biblically. We know it didn't match up according to the word of God. You know how people say all the time, "The Lord told me to do something." And you're just watching, and you're going, "The Lord didn't tell you to do that. It's not something God would tell you to do." It goes against what He had established in His word. But they go anyway. The thought is, "I'll be safe because I'm God's child." And God says, "I've sent you on a mission. Stay on the course. You have a mission."

In this particular passage that we're looking at, the servant knew that he was on a mission. He was going to

stay according to the mission. It didn't matter that he had some individual that was obsequious in the sense that he was continually just giving him stuff and trying to help him out in any way that he could. It didn't matter. What mattered was that he was on a mission. He had to go. "Don't delay me. I'm going. It's time to leave."

Now, at this juncture, another thing is thrown in, and we were talking about the whole “monkey wrench” thing, in which we have literally Laban using human trump cards. That is to say, "I'm the brother. This is my sister. She likes me. I've been taking care of her all these times. She'll do what I want her to do."

So, if you look at the passage, it reads this way in which it seems as if Laban was pretty confident and he's there with his mother, which makes him probably more confident.

(Genesis 24:57) "And they said, “We will call the girl and consult her wishes.”"

Wow, I thought they would have done this before, but now they're throwing that one in. Maybe the girl will say no. Once again, you have to think all these things have

been in perfect order, but now he just tells us, "Let's ask the girl if she wants to go." I guess because he already got the money, he already has the stuff, but he feels pretty emboldened to deal a little bit further, "And quite frankly, if we keep this guy around a little bit longer, maybe we'll get some more money out of him. I mean, he's got 10 camels. How much stuff does he have there?"

"... "We will call the girl and consult her wishes."

(Genesis 24:58) Then they called Rebekah..."

And I would say that probably the mother and Laban are pretty confident, "She's going to side with us."

They call her and they just simply ask her,

"... "Will you go with this man?" ..."

"This stranger." It's an interesting play of words, isn't it?

"... And she said, "I will go.""

We've got to do a double take. I mean, it's amazing how God calls out of such dissonance, out of a contradictory atmosphere. I mean, you have Laban, and we will know more about Laban as time goes on, but you have this setting in which she comes out of, and she is so affirming

with simplicity. I mean, I would think that if she was anything like Laban, she would say to herself, "This is a good time to bargain." But she just simply goes, "I will go." "Will you go?" "I will go." What could cause somebody to do that?

We oftentimes have in the debate, and I remember in the early days of going to cemetery, I mean seminary, and I remember when you'd have young people debate about God's sovereignty and grace, free will, sovereignty, free will. Listen, you think it's a new debate? It's been going on for a long time. And the reason why people have such a hard time with it is because they think that they have to be able to understand it with their little pea brain. And so, if they can understand something, then that's good theology. That's not true. If you can understand it, it's bad theology. Because there's nothing about God that you can comprehend. Now, what Scripture says very clearly is that God completely controls everything. There's nothing that He doesn't control. And then, it also says this, and you have a free will. Now, man's head explodes because he says, "You can't have a free will if God controls

everything." And that's the debate in Romans 9. But the bottom line is that God can be sovereign in your free will. And we go, "That's a paradox." And He goes, "Yes, that's right." Every major doctrine of Scripture is a paradox. It doesn't match. Is God three, or is He one? Yes. Everything about God is fundamentally a paradox. You can't understand. If you could understand Him, He wouldn't be God. So, what we're dealing with is God working in the midst of even free will and it's the confidence that we have. I mean, we have a mission to find the bride of Christ. We have a mission. I am convinced that God is sovereign in that mission. And though I will turn to the person and say, "Do you want to make a decision?" I am convinced that God is sovereign in their free will. It's incomprehensible, I know, that somebody could have a free will with no strings attached, and yet, God be sovereign in it. But God is. He's in control. And I can imagine that at this particular juncture, I mean, the servant's out of the picture. He's not trying to coerce the girl to come back, which quite frankly, I'd be thinking, "Maybe show them some more jewelry or something." But he's not trying to coerce her in any way to come back

with him. He's totally silent in the text. It's just Laban and his mother, and I can just see the mother going, "You don't want to go, do you, honey?" And the girl goes, "No, I'm going." I've seen that in people's lives. I'm going, "How does God pick this one person in this household and just pull them out when everybody else is telling them not to?" People that they've grown up with, they've been surrounded with, how magnificent it is. And with their free will, God sovereignly before the foundation of the world has chosen that person, and pulls them out. What a marvelous picture it shows.

God has placed us on a mission. The mission is clear. The question is, will you go? And the one says, "I will go." But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become children of God, even to those who believe on His name. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life. Who are the "whosoever's"? One pastor says, "Who are the chosen? The whosoever's." And you realize that it's an incomprehensible thing, but it's a wonderful thing.

And as it comes to the passage, it ultimately ends this way,

(Genesis 24:59) "Thus they sent away their sister Rebekah..."

There's nothing else they could do.

"... and her nurse..."

We're going to read more about her nurse who will actually go on to live and have a ministry unto herself.

"... with Abraham's servant and his men.

(Genesis 24:60) They blessed Rebekah and said to her, "May you, our sister..."

I think they're just reminding her, "You know, you are our sister. So, if you're successful, I just want you to know that you are our sister."

"... "May you, our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands, And may your descendants possess The gate of those who hate them..."

It's an interesting thing as you consider the life of the Jews, which in many cases were almost totally wiped out. They came really close to it in the time of Esther, as they

would all be wiped out. At this time, they would not exist. Nations far greater than them surrounded them, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Phoenicians, the Philistines, great nations surrounded them that were far greater than they could have ever been. In fact, by the time they go into Egypt with Joseph, there are only 70. All these other great nations were surrounding them. Do you know of any Amorites? Do you know of any Hittites? Do you know of any Phoenicians? Do you know of any Philistines? But I know God's people, and they still know which tribe they're from. And God has preserved them in the midst of the Assyrians taking over, the Babylonians taking over, the Medes and Persians taking over, the Greeks taking over, the Romans taking over, and God has now called them back, even though they were dispersed, to their own nation again. The gates of death could not destroy them. The psalmist writes that. In Psalm 9:13, he speaks of the gates of death shall not possess, right? And of course, Jesus turns to Peter and He says, "And the gates of hell will not control us." You'll have victory over the gates of hell. Think about that. Because really, if you think about the greatest enemy that will be against us, the

greatest enemy that is trying to take our possession is the one who is the great adversary, Satan himself. He's not going to win this battle. God has called you. This is the mission that we have. The mission that we have is that we're looking for the bride. We're on a mission to prepare the bride.

The Scripture that will probably define the bride best is found in Revelation. And as you come to Revelation, the bride is actually described as the city. We know that all the way through the Old Testament, where cities are referred to, they're always referred to as the woman; whether it's Babylon, the great harlot was the woman, the city. Because the city is that place of nurturing, the city is that place of supply. And so, we are building that wonderful city of God, which as Isaiah 26 says, "We have a city. Open up the gates that they would come in." And of course, our city is the Lord and we are the city. We are dwelling with Him. And that's the great hope; that the great bride is going to come out of the heavens, and we're going to abide there. We know where we're going. We're getting people ready to go there. We're preparing

the way. We're doing everything we can to equip; to make sure. I mean, can you imagine as we stand before God and we haven't done what we could to prepare the people that we have called to come with us. We are as it were, like Christ saying, "Come, follow Me." "Where are you going, Jesus?" "I'm going to the city. I'm going to My Father." That's the way He put it, "I'm going to My Father." And so, we're simply just doing that. Don't get off the path. Don't do it your way. Don't think that you know who or how or why this is going to happen in the sense of your reasoning. Just say, "I'm just going to do what God says. I'm going to obey Him. I'm going to listen to Him. I'm going to do what He says. I'm going to stay on target." Keep the course. Don't let people delay you. And let me say this, it's going to be really easy to acquiesce to what other people want. I've had friends and family say to me, "Please don't talk about that anymore." And I just simply come back, "I have to. I'm on a mission. Don't delay me." Keep the focus.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we ask that You would work within our hearts, that we would walk according to Your will. We are truly, voluntarily Your servants. We are sons of Your possessions, and You have called us into this marvelous work. We have now become stewards, or as Paul would say, ambassadors for Christ. We are set on a course. Lord, help us to finish this course. Help us to not get sidetracked by what other people say, even though other people may be perceived as really, really nice people. Father, don't let them dissuade us from what You've called us to.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. Ask the Lord to keep you on track.