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March 7, 2021

## GENESIS 24

Series: Understanding Your Roots

[PRAYER] Lord, I thank you for the friendships that we enjoy. They are more than just casual relationships. They are friendships that rely on you as our Holy Spirit to bring us together that we share deeply together because we know you. We're partners together here on this earth. Not only sharing the gospel with those in the community, but also we are growing in our own faith. Lord, I know that now as we open your word there is some special things there for each one of us, jewels, as it were, that we're hunting for and finding because your word is such a special opportunity for us to grow. So Lord, I'm asking now that you would teach us, that you'd open our hearts and make us sensitive to the lessons that you provide for us. Lord, use your word to grow us this week and help us to be more effective in our relationships now and in the future. In Jesus' name, amen.

You've heard that it's been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Of course that's true. We can read a picture book to a child and they can get all into that even not having any words to look at. It's been said that in the New Testament for every New Testament truth there's an Old Testament picture in a story. I find that fascinating. You think about the New Testament teachings and you think about the stories involved in the Old Testament. There are a lot of teachings about marriage in the New Testament. But today we're going to look at a story about marriage in the Old Testament. About two people coming together, finding each other. It's actually a love story in the book of Genesis 24 today. We're going to learn five principles actually from this passage.

Now the first thing I want to say is if you're single today and maybe God has called you to be single, I'm glad you're here and this sermon is for you too. But you're going to apply it differently probably. Apply it to the major decisions that you make in life – whether you're buying a car, a house, or changing to another job, or moving to a different location. You can take these same principles and apply them to decision making. We're going to talk about that in marriage, but you can take them and apply them to any kind of decision you're making. There are maybe other people here who look at this and they feel bad for regrets that they've had because of mistakes they've made and they didn't follow these principles. You've just got to know that God can take you from wherever you are and He moves us forward. So be thinking about where you're going and what God wants to do in your life.

But no matter who you are, whether you're young or old, married or not married, you can value marriage. So we lift marriage high and we value it because of its importance. It is not easy to be married.

One pastor brought a couple up who had been married for fifty years. He brought them up to kind of interview them and talk to them. They come up there and he says to the guy, “You are sure a fit guy for your age,” and so the pastor says, “What is your secret to staying so fit?” He says, “Well on our wedding night we had an agreement that if we had a fight and argument, whoever was proved wrong in the argument would run around the block. And I’ve been around the block a few times.”

So the pastor continued and he said, “Hey look, well fifty years is a long time to be married. Have you ever thought about divorce?”

The guy says, “Divorce? No. Murder a couple of times, but never divorce!”

Marriage is harder than you think. It’s a difficult experience to be involved in. Today we’re going to look at it in some very particular ways to try to understand what it means for us and how we can apply it to our own lives.

So let’s do this. As we go into this passage I want you to look with me at the very first verses of Genesis 24. The first verse doesn’t have to do with marriage, but there’s a great application right there. Especially for all you young people, and old people too. But notice what it says. *Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.*

When I think about Abraham’s life and I say well Abraham experienced all kinds of trouble. He got to Palestine and there was a famine. And then he goes to Egypt and lies about his wife being a sister and he does that again in his life. I mean he had arguments with the shepherds, with Lot and they had to split company there. And then he had to rescue Lot and all those people and fight that battle. I’m thinking all these things he had the challenges he had in his life. Twenty-five years he had to wait from the time the promise was given till he held that little baby Isaac in his arms. Twenty-five years. That’s a lot of time. But he gets to the end of his life and he says the Lord has blessed me in all things. He doesn’t say that. Moses is writing this. But that’s the commentary here.

I go, “Wow. That’s great. I need to remember that.” Have perspective. But right now in the challenges that we’re experiencing we may feel them as pressures, as Abraham certainly experienced a lot of pressure in his life. But God blessed him in all things. He looks back on his life and he says, “Wow. I see the hand of God in my life.”

Verse 2 – *And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household (his name is Eliezer, that’s the guy here that he’s working with), who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh, that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will...”*

Before we go on and see what he’s going to say, we better talk about this because it seems a little weird. Because we do not have this custom in our households. We don’t have this custom in our society. I don’t even read about this anywhere else in the Bible. But what he says is come over here, I’m going to sit on your hand kind of thing, and I want to say something really important.

Now I know some parents might adopt this because they see their kids, you know, start to give them instructions, their kids run off before you can give them anything... “Come over here. I’m going to sit on your hand while I tell you this.”

But the point of this, whatever is going on here, the point is this is very important. Abraham’s saying, “What I’m about to say to you, you need to listen to. Do not start running away. Don’t pay attention to anything else. Don’t lose your focus. This is important.” So get that out of that idea.

Now let’s see what he’s saying because we want to know what he’s saying. In fact we’re going to identify five principles today about making decisions, especially as it comes to a mate. This is the first one. What is Abraham saying? *“Put your hand under my thigh, that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”*

See what Abraham is starting to say as he’s developing this whole experience in this first scene of the story, he’s saying to the servant, there’s a pool of people in the world. It’s a huge pool. There’s all kinds of people here in the world. But I don’t want you to look at the whole pool of people for a wife for my son. The first principle is you need to narrow the pool. The idea here is you want to shop at the place where you can actually buy. Because God in the New Testament talks about how you need to marry someone who’s a Christian. You want to be equally yoked. Someone who loves the Lord like you do. So we’re going to narrow the whole pool of people, Abraham says.

For us it means narrow the pool to Christians. But I would say it’s more than that. You don’t want to just narrow the pool to Christians. You want to narrow the pool to people who are Christ-followers, who are committed to the Lord, who are honoring the Lord in their lives. That they’re living the Christian life. They’re allowing Christ to run their life. That’s going to narrow the pool even more. Narrowing that space is really important because what it does is it helps us to marry someone that has like values, the same as we do. If you have Christ as number one in your life and you marry someone who has Christ as number twenty-seven in their life, you’re going to have problems. So one principle about having a successful marriage is to narrow the pool. Choose from the people that God would have you to marry. Very important that you’re marrying a Christian and finding someone who is like-minded in that regard for you.

Let’s go on. *The servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?” Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there.”* Don’t go back there. I don’t want him back there. Why? Because a lot of temptation is out there. It’s not just the people. It’s the temptations around. Be careful where you are. If you’re going to make a decision, you want to position yourself well. “You see God has made a promise,” Abraham says, “to me that this is the promised land and this is where I want to live. This is where God has the blessing here. I don’t want my son going somewhere else.”

It's very important how we make decisions and what we do. Because we want to try to follow what God is saying for us. In this case the first solution for finding a mate is to find that person within the sphere of people that God is working in. That's what you want. Very important.

Well let's go on. We're still in scene number one as we go to verse 7. He says – *“The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son.”* So Abraham's saying God's going to provide. God's going to go before you. Certainly you've made decisions in your life where you've gone forward and you go God has just opened the doors for this. This is exactly what I need. And you're just praising the Lord because of what God has done. So I would suggest we want to pray about these decisions. We're going to see that Eliezer prays here in the passage. But right at the beginning Abraham's setting the scene and he's saying the angel of the Lord is going ahead of you.

I really appreciate that. If you're going to find a mate, you want to be praying. You want to be praying that the Lord will go before you. I was praying with my granddaughter, Sahlor is her name. She's six years old. I was praying for her and I said, “I'm going to pray for your husband.” She looks at me like this. I said, “I don't know where your husband is right now, but there's probably some guy out there. You're likely going to get married someday and I'm going to pray for him. We don't even know where he is right now, or what's going on in his life, but I'm going to pray for him.” So I did. I want her thinking that right now the Lord is going before you in her life. The angel of the Lord is going before you.

There is a Russian proverb that says this: If you're going to war, pray once. If you're going to sea, pray twice. If you're getting married, pray three times. Well at least. I would suggest that prayer is such an important part of our decision-making process. As you're going into this decision of marriage, you want to be praying and asking God to provide the right person just for you.

He says, *“But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.”* So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this.

So that's scene one. There are several scenes here. That's the scene where Abraham and Eliezer are developing the plan and this mission is going out. Let's go to scene two where we're going to see now how Eliezer is on his way and he gets to this place where he is and he's preparing to meet or look for this woman.

*Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water.*

Time to pause here because here's our third principle. It says he went out to the water, to the well. I just want to suggest if you want to get married, you've got to get out to the well. You've

got to find out where the Christian girls are going to be. You've got to find out where the special person... So he knows this is the place. So he goes out to the well where they're going to be there. He's expecting that God is going to work in his life and so he's going out to this well and be there right where he needs to be.

I want to talk to you young people for a moment about your opportunity to go to college. When you go to college it's very important how you decide what college you're going to go to. You might go to a Christian college or you might go to a secular university. But if you go to secular university, you want to get into the well. That is into that group of people that love the Lord. In every university there is a group of people who love the Lord. The campus ministry group. What's the one called that you guys go to? Manna Christian Fellowship at Princeton University. What did you say? Campus Crusade for Christ. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Those are the campus groups. That's where the well is. If you're going to find a Christian gal, you're going to go to the well.

But I would suggest you make some very important decisions about how you choose the school you're going to go to. You don't want to choose it just based on your major. You don't want to choose it based on sports. You want to choose it based on the culture you're going to be a part of. You're going to be part of a culture for several years of your life. And during those four years, at least, that you're there, four decisions will be made probably in your life. One is who you're going to marry (likely). Secondly, where you're going to live (probably). Third, what occupation you're going to choose. And fourthly, how you're going to integrate Jesus Christ into your life. It happens during those formative years while you're in college. If you're not going to college, you still want to have that opportunity to integrate. Because those are so important years where you're making major decisions. You need to be by the well. Find the well.

I would suggest the well is church. Come to church. That's where you're going to find Christian people that you're going to interact with. And if there aren't the single people in the church that you want to marry, go to Christian groups or go to a mission event or go on a mission where you're with other people that are serving the Lord so you're finding the people that are likeminded. So you are making decisions and you're asking, "Lord, provide someone for me." You're praying, but you're going to the well.

So that's what he does. He goes to the well where they draw water, *the time when women go out to draw water. And he said, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today (he's praying notice) and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. (Watch how he prays.) Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master."*

See what Eliezer is doing is he's making the pool even smaller. We're not going after all the people in the world. You cannot just marry anyone you want in the world. You're going to have a pool of people and that's the Christians. But not just among the Christians. You want someone who's committed to Christ. But even among that, you want someone who's a person of

character. So that's your fourth principle is to consider character. Think about character. What kind of character are we going to need here? We're going to need a lot of character because she's going to be someone who takes initiative, she's going to be hospitable, she's going to be kind, she's going to be hardworking (because providing water for ten camels is not an easy task). She's going to demonstrate this perseverance, this character that's needed. You want to find a mate that has character. The best way to test that is to watch for a while and see what happens, as we're going to see in the passage.

Let's go on here because this is a long chapter and we're going to go through the whole story a second time. So let's keep going. It says – *Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah...* Now certainly you've had this experience. You're praying for something and even before you're done praying, the Lord provides. You go, "Whoa! God, this is great. I see your hand working." That's what's going on.

It says – *Behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known.* Notice that this woman hadn't had sex with anybody and that is a value in this passage here. I would encourage you to save that special intimacy for the person you're going to marry. It's a treasure. Not held very high as a value in our world today, but very valuable when you're having a marriage that's going to be successful.

*She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar." She said, "Drink, my lord." And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." Wow. I'm sure you could see Eliezer's eyes widen. So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels.*

Now I was curious as to these camels drinking water. There's a lot of kind of thoughts we have about such things. First of all I discovered that the hump on the back of the camel is not where the water is stored. That's just a bunch of meat and cartilage and bones and so on. But the camel is known for its ability to go for a long time without water. But when it does drink water it can drink up to twenty gallons of water at a time. That is a lot of water. I don't know if all of these camels needed twenty gallons. But you can imagine her water pot probably was about three gallons of water and she's going to the well and bringing it back and forth. This is a lot of character-building stuff. This is going to take her a long time to fill this trough full of water.

Notice what the guy is doing in verse 21. *The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not.* He gazed. He waited. He watched. What's going to happen here? Is she going to have the character necessary? If you want to know if the person you're interested in has the character necessary, watch and see how he treats his mother. See how he handles stress. See how she manages the pressures of life. You know when you're under pressure then your real character comes out. So he's just watching to see what's going to happen, whether this is going to be the one or not. So waiting is a good idea.

There was a sign on the door of the place where you get your marriage licenses that said – “Out to lunch. Wait a while. If it’s true love it can wait.” I think that’s the same thing that’s happening here. He’s just watching. Is this going to be the one that’s going to be for him?

Well let’s go on and see what happens. *When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, and said, “Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?” She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.” She added, “We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night.” The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord and said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master.”*

Let me just draw this as the fifth principle. Decision making is a spiritual experience. You’ve got to know that. Especially when it comes to finding a mate. It is a spiritual experience. It’s not just oh I’m going to fall in love. You’re going to plan your loved life. Eliezer kind of made this list of what I’m looking for. You want to do the same thing. You don’t want to just fall in love. You fall overboard. You fall in ditches. You fall in a hole. You don’t fall in love. You plan your love life. You plan it. And when God works all those things out, you go, “Yes. God, thank you for what you’ve done in the midst of all this.”

*So the man bowed his head (just the spiritual experience, he just worshiped the Lord and said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. “As for me, the Lord has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen.” Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things. So now we have that scene that’s taking place.*

Let’s go to the next scene where the family meets Eliezer. It says there – *Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man, to the spring. As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, “Thus the man spoke to me,” he went to the man. And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. He said, “Come in, O blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.” So the man came to the house and unharnessed the camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and there was water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. Then food was set before him to eat. But he said, “I will not eat until I have said what I have to say.” And so they said, “Speak on.”*

Now what’s going to happen is we’re going to go through this whole story. This guy is going to tell the whole story. It’s all recorded again in the Bible, which is going to give us an opportunity to review the five principles. So if you missed any of them, watch. They’re coming up again. Here we go.

*So he said, “I am Abraham's servant. The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys. And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and to him he has given all that he has. My master made me swear, saying, ‘You shall*

*not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell. ”* In other words, let’s limit the pool here. We’re not just going to take anybody. That’s the first one. Limit the pool of people.

*‘But you shall go to my father’s house and to my clan and take a wife for my son.’ I said to my master, ‘Perhaps the woman will not follow me.’ But he said to me, ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way.’* So principle number two is you pray God will provide leadership in advance. That He’s preparing the way for whatever decision you’re making. That He’s leading ahead of you to open up the door, the right door for this to move forward.

*‘You shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father’s house. Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my clan. And if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.’ I came today to the spring and said, ‘O Lord, I go into the well.’* So here he’s going to the well again where the people are that are in this pool that he’s looking for.

*‘O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you are prospering the way that I go, behold, I am standing by the spring of water. Let the virgin who comes out to draw water, to whom I shall say, “Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,” and who will say to me, “Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,” let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master’s son.’*” What is he doing? He’s making this list. He’s looking for character. That’s what he’s looking for. That’s the principle we’re talking about here. Let’s go on.

*“Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder (here comes the bride), and she went down to the spring and drew water. I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’ She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.’ So I drank, and she gave the camels drink also. Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms. Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord. That’s the last and fifth principle repeated again here that decision making is a spiritual experience. I worshiped the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master’s kinsman for his son. Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.”*

*Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, “The thing has come from the Lord; we cannot speak to you bad or good.”* Isn’t that fascinating? If you’re living your life for other people and you’re saying, “Look, I’m praying for a car,” or you’re saying, “I’m praying that God is going to give me a new job,” and you’re making that known then when it happens you’re going praise the Lord and other people are watching and they’re saying, “What can I say? God’s working here.” That’s what’s happening.

*“Behold, Rebekah is 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 earth before the Lord. And the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah.* You can just picture the story as he’s unpacking the gifts. *He also gave to*

*her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. And he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there.*

*When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master." This is the next day. Okay, I want to leave. Let's go now. Her brother and her mother said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Wait a minute! Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." So you can imagine the story. He's saying, "I got what I need here. Let's go back. I want to go back to my master and show him how the Lord has answered the prayer." But 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."*

*They said, "Let us call the young woman and ask her." Well that's a good idea. Let's find out what she has to say about this thing. Imagine this from her perspective. Probably a woman who wants to get married, who's thought about it. And she's just being herself. She's just out there doing what she does, demonstrating her character just by the way she lives. She didn't know that there was a husband out there watching what she was doing. But she was being godly. She was demonstrating her character. What happens as she's doing that? All of this starts to unfold quickly and God is revealing that this is her husband. We're eager to hear. The proposal has been made. What is she going to say?*

*Let's read on in the passage. They called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" So now the spotlight comes on the couple. You imagine like a guy on his knee saying, "Will you marry me?" That's in our culture. In this culture she said, "I will go." Yea! So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!" Then Rebekah and her young women arose and rode on the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way.*

So here they go. This whole scene of the story is ending and we're going to go to one more scene of the story and that's the scene of when they get back to Israel. They get back to the land and this is where Isaac is actually going to meet his bride. I know you're excited, especially those of you who love romance novels or romantic movies and so on. Because that's where we are right here. They're coming. This is the final scene of the story.

*Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. What an interesting statement. Here's a guy who goes out in the field in the evening and he's just meditating. He's thinking about the Lord, he's thinking about the world, he's thinking about whatever he's thinking about. He's having his devotions. In the midst of his devotions, this is what happens.*

*And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel and said to the servant, "Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." You feel the energy rising here. This is getting exciting. So she took her veil and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.*

Now verse 66 is the abbreviated version. You see that, right? We could tell the whole story again in verse 66 and repeat it for the third time. We're not going to do that, but I will show you the five principles in case you want to take a screen shot (those of you who are virtually watching this). These are the five principles we're seeing. Only shop at the places where you can buy. Limit the pool. Number two, pray for God's leadership to go before you. Number three, go to the well where the godly options are. Four, value character in your decision making. And number five, recognize that decision making is a spiritual experience. All of that is tied into that verse 66 so we don't have to read the whole story again. But it's there.

*Verse 67 – Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.*

Look at verse 67. I want you to see the order of how this takes place. *She became his wife, and he loved her.* Isn't that interesting. I want you to see that's how it really happens in life. Even today. Once you get married to the person, you learn how to love them. If you think that love is all that feeling that you have before you get married, you don't know anything about love. Love really takes place after you get married. And that's what happens here. She became his wife and then he loved her. I mean he learned how to love her. There's a lot of ideas we have about love before we get married. Good ideas. And those feelings are great. Many of those feelings continue after marriage and we're grateful for them. But there's a depth of love that's so powerful and it has this commitment written all over it. It's just an amazing thing that's going on.

Well that's the story, his love story.

Now I've told you many times that as I'm doing a study of some kind for a sermon preparation that God does something in my life. He brings some illustration or story into my life that illustrates whatever I'm working on. That happened this week. A couple came to me this week and asked if I would marry them. I'm thinking I'm just studying this passage. Here this couple comes and they said, "Would you marry me?" I'm going this is so cool. I'm thinking about marriage and all these things and I go that's really fun to be thinking about that. I didn't want to share their names until I asked them, but they happened to be here today. So Rich and Annette, congratulations. They've announced that they're going to get married and I'm going to marry them. So you'll be hearing more about that. Thank you for being a part of my life this week and what God is doing in my own heart.

I trust that God will use this sermon in your heart, especially those of you who are young people. Consider this very carefully. Very important as you're making this decision. For the rest of us, we could use these passages to think about the value of marriage, we can talk about decision making in general, we can learn how to follow the Lord. Everything we want to do makes God number one in our lives. Everything that we do. We want to make Him number one. We want to serve Him with all of our hearts. We don't want any doubt to be that God is the first place in our lives in everything that we do.

Let's stand and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I ask that you would make this truth real to us, that we would follow you with all of our hearts, we would trust you. That we would certainly in marriage, but also in every area of our lives, that as we make decisions about all kinds of things we would see them as spiritual activities where you're leading us and guiding us. That spiritual activity isn't just coming to church on Sunday, but it's the daily decisions that we make where you're integrating faith into our hearts and our lives, helping us get to know you better. We're very grateful for that. Lord, I thank you for this church and our commitment to marriages. I pray that you would strengthen the marriages in this church, Lord. Bless the marriages that are present here today online and here at the Barn. I pray that you would strengthen them with a special blessing that you provide. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

This next song talks about our dedication to the Lord. Use it as an opportunity to allow God to speak to you. Just to pause and allow Him to do something in your own life. Time for you to consider what God wants you to take with you when you leave here today. Allow Him to speak to you as you worship. Let's sing together.