

## The LORD Leads ▪ Genesis 24:1–27

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Living in Columbia, SC was one of the “Will Nevers” on my list.

A “Will never” is something I said that I would not do, but the LORD obviously had another plan.

My “Will never” episode was during a trip from PA to FL. We made a pit stop in Columbia, and I distinctly remember saying to myself, “I would never want to live in this place”.

It was hot, humid, and where we stopped was in a run-down part of our city.

Guess what? A few years later I moved here for college.

And in 2018 I relocated my entire family to SC for one reason...

*The Lord led.*

- The Lord’s leading turns our “will never” to “home”.

You likely also have your list of “will nevers” where God has led you in a path you did not expect.

*The LORD’s leading...it’s such a central and vital part to God’s people.*

*The Lord’s leading...it’s a central part of our life.*

*His leading is central to this story.*

- Some read this story and think that the main point is a biblical romance (last verses) —but that misses the point.

\*The very penetrating words of the narrative are found in vs 27—“The LORD has led me”.

The focus of this is the LORD leading *in the right way*.

- *In this narrative, the right way is to the right woman who will be a wife for Isaac.*

- One commentator called this a “guidance narrative”. (Westermann)
- Another said, “Israelite story-tellers loved to provide their people with illustrations of divine Providence”. (quoted in Alan Ross)

Main Theme: *God’s Providence at Work*

- Providence: simply God’s leading so that all things work according to His sovereign plan.
- God’s Providence is such a rich theme. Both biblically and personally.

There are several ingredients of the LORD’s leading to unpack:

**God’s Leading:**

### **Start with a God-sized perspective (1-3; 7)**

- Now the story begins with Abraham as an old man; if he is getting old, so is his son.
- V1 sets the tone...The LORD had blessed Abraham in all things”.

Not just a few things or most things, but *all things*.

That statement is really key to the whole Abraham narrative. God blessed this man by sheer grace—everything good he has is from God!

- Abraham knows the clock is ticking; in the culture it was more the father’s responsibility to find a wife.
- So he dispatches his top servant and tasks him with this.
- (v2) The specifics are to find a wife back in the homeland of Mesopotamia; she can’t be a Canaanite woman.

But he goes beyond just tasking—he binds him by an oath.

- It was a cultural custom to place your hand on the thigh —really by the genitals of a person when taking an oath—I’m glad we’ve advanced to a handshake and signing your name.

- Look who stands behind this oath?

The LORD, the God of heaven and of earth.

This God-sized perspective is vital for the task.

God reigns as God in heaven, and everywhere!

- Abraham's God-sized vision also comes out in v7—his faith is strong: God will send his angel before you.
- This is not the servant by himself, it's the servant *led* by the LORD's angel.

(Calvin) refers to this as "simple reliance on the providence of God"

A God-sized perspective has confidence and calm. This is the outworking of Providence practically.

God's leading is followed by...

### **Scripture shaped convictions (5-9)**

- As Abraham sets things in motion to find a wife, notice his motivation.

—It's not because he is afraid that Isaac will be lonely, or needs a companion; he's not romantically driven.

- The motivation: *Gods' Word to Abraham*.
- We pick it up in v5 "What if I find the girl, but she loves home. She can't leave."

Abraham's answer is a *strong "no"* (v6).

- Abraham is adamant about two things: she must not be a Canaanite & must come to this land.

In other words, *everything about this task has to align with God's promises*: Back in the land.

- He has scripture shaped convictions about this (v7)

- This verse is just a plain reiteration of the covenant promises the LORD has already made to Abraham.

This statement is the last words of Abraham recorded in the Bible.

The last time we hear his voice, whose voice do we hear: “The LORD’s promise”.

- As we dwell on vs 7 for a moment, it should hit us: God is so real to Abraham.
  - Personally involved: he talks, speaks and promises.
  - This is not formal religion; it’s not artificial in any way.

› *This is a real, personal, encounter with the living, personal, transcendent God!*

So we learn another key competent in the LORD’s leading. It’s not about what’s in your gut. It’s not based on “advice”.

Getting counsel from friends is good; abundance of counselors is wisdom (so pick wisely!)

› *But nothing trumps having scripture-shaped convictions.*

Do you?

Do you have your convictions from the Bible?

*The better you know what’s in the pages of this book, the more you will be able to discern the LORD’S leading.*

### **Sought out boldly in prayer (10-27)**

- Now you may be curious about one detail: how long did this journey take? It would have been months to travel hundreds of miles.
- The focus of the text is not on that, but instead is *on this prayer*.
- There is a sense in which the remainder of this narrative is driven by this prayer (v12).
- This prayer is the very first prayer for specific guidance that we have in the Bible.

- Our English Bibles may soften this prayer a bit; in Hebrew its sounds a bit more blunt: “Make it happen”.

I was instructed by a few of my elders how to communicate to Southerners.

I need to “warm up the oven”. Don’t rush too quickly and tell people what you need.

Abraham’s servant does not warm up the oven in prayer.

“Make it happen”.

Does that sound a bit too irreverent? Actually, it sounds like how Jesus taught us to pray.

### **Matthew 7:7–8 ESV**

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

We should not be ashamed to bring prayer before the LORD and ask for “success” if it’s things that are asked according to his will.

When it comes to the LORD’s leading, how are you praying. Are you praying?

Prayer is that vital; it really is.

\*\*Even though the Providence of God plays a *major* role, it would be wrong to think that human responsibility plays the *minor* role. Both mysteriously work together.

- One way to look at human responsibility is *faith in action*.

So the servant’s bold prayer is “faith in action”.

Here is an example:

One of the men in our church came to Christ in college.

His answer—“I believe my mother-in-law prayed me into the kingdom”.

His mother-in-law prayed for her daughter to marry “in the faith”, and God gave the success—he saved a soul.

*More evidence how the LORD leads—faith in action.*

- The success element: find the girl: How will he know?

—She will be hospitable, caring, hard-working.

—*She would be a woman of virtue and character.*

Just to get an idea of the work involved in v20 —

A camel can drink 25 gallons of water. An ordinary bucket to carry is 3-5 gallons. So she would have made 50-80 trips.

Try to think of this prayer in 2024:

“Lead me to the girl/maiden who is not glued to her phone, who finds her whole world and identity wrapped up on a digital screen and that she can actually talk to a human being”.

› Character is what matters before the LORD; Rebekah is pure, and cares....she’s the girl.

- As the story moves towards a resolution, notice what happens:

—The prayer is answered. (v24)

—And it ends with *worship* and *doxology*. (26-27)

(Kinder) “Success, which inflates the natural man, humbles the man of God.”

Oh, let’s not forget this vital aspect of prayer.

What do you do when God gives “success” to a prayer? Forget it and move on?

No, give humble thanks and glory to the giver!

*If the main goal in life is to give God glory, that should be the main aim when what we pray for success.*

## Conclusion:

**\*\*This is not a romantic story, it's a redemption story!**

- It's another proof that God is making good on his promise in [Gen. 3:15](#)

And it's God's Providence that brings this all about!

- The place (a well) also reminds us of another story of God's Providence.
- A conversation that moved a woman from a "Will Never".

I'm talking about John ch. 4.

- When Jesus is led to a well to talk to a Samaritan woman...who probably could have said, "I'll never learn from a Jewish Rabbi".

### **John 4:9–10 ESV**

The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

—In God's providence, Jesus was led in the right way, to the right woman, to talk with her at the well that day.

—Yet there is a key difference though...this woman did not fit the "Rebecca standard"....she wasn't clean; she wasn't the pure attractive virgin. She was the used, immoral woman.

Yet Jesus was led to her to offer grace and salvation.

He was led to satisfy her soul.

Friends, let's never forget the power of God's leading.

Maybe the LORD is leading you in something now, or this season: salvation, major decision or away from something.

God's providence is always powerful and powerfully at work.

As he leads, there is one thing required of us:

Follow. Follow by faith.