

GENESIS

23:1-24:21

Genesis 23:1-24:21

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 21st January 2024 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Introduction

Well, what an incredible chapter we were able to study last week! What on the surface seems a bizarre, even troubling account of Abraham being asked and willing to offer up his son as a burnt offering, turns out to not only demonstrate his incredible faith and trust in God, but also point perfectly to God the Father offering up His Son on the very same mountain for *our* sin, that we might be forgiven and set free.

The ways in which the details recorded of Abraham and Isaac's actions point toward Christ are numerous, but one that particularly catches my attention is how after the events on Mount Moriah, we see no mention of Isaac until chapter 24. But who we *do* see mentioned is his future bride, Rebekah. And in that there is picture of how between Jesus sacrifice (and returning home) and the next time *He* is seen, is the birth and betrothal of the church to Him, ahead of the marriage supper of the Lamb that awaits the church (as *Jesus'* bride). The absence of Isaac in chapter 23 is even more remarkable when we see what *is* included, which we'll look at this morning.

Now, as we study chapter 23 and some of 24 this morning, we'll see even more details that I believe are carefully chosen by God to point not only to Jesus, but to reveal something of the Holy Spirit to us also. So what do these chapters record?

Overview of chapter twenty three

Overview of chapter twenty three

- **v1-2** — Sarah's death
- **v3-20** — Sarah's burial

Well, likely taking place within a few years at most after the events of chapter 22, chapter 23 is one of sadness for Abraham, as we see his wife, Sarah, die. And we get just a glimpse of his sadness in the opening couple of verses. Then, for the remaining 18 verses of this chapter, Moses records some detail surrounding Sarah's burial — the first burial recorded in the Bible.

Overview of chapter twenty four

Overview of chapter twenty four

- **v1-9** — Abraham's command to his servant
- **v10-21** — Abraham's servant goes to find a bride for Isaac
- **v22-53** — Rebekah confirmed as the one for Isaac
- **v54-67** — Rebekah leaves home and meets her groom

Then, as we begin chapter 24 (which takes place around 3 years later still) we see Abraham give thought to his son, Isaac, and whom he should marry. And this chapter — the longest in the book of Genesis — begins with Abraham giving specific instruction to his servant, who (as recorded in verses 10-21) carries out this task faithfully and successfully, finding Rebekah — and that's as far as we'll get this morning. What follows, in verses 22-53, is confirmation that Rebekah is to be Isaac's bride, and then in the remaining 13 verses we see her travels to meet her bridegroom.

And on one hand it's a wonderful story, as well as a factual account. But these things aren't written so we can simply enjoy a good read, but so that we can learn from them. So let us dig into these things and consider how these events (that took place almost 4000 years ago) can or even should impact us today.

Chapter twenty three

As chapter 22 ended we saw Abraham had returned from Moriah to Beersheba, where he had previously made a covenant with Abimelech, and now, as we begin chapter 23 we find Sarah, his wife, dies in nearby Kirjath Arba, better known to us as Hebron — as verse 2 tells us. But, starting in verse 1, we read:

Genesis 23:1

Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.

So, Sarah dies at the old age of 137 — still young compared many that had gone before her in Genesis, but old compared to today's standards, of course (and positively ancient compared to those in the mid-1700s who may have only lived until 40 years old). And of note, she is the only woman in the Bible whose age at death is given.

And this places Abraham at the age of Abraham at 137, and their son, Isaac, at 37 years old — and so this chapter's events are perhaps 3-4 years after those of chapter 22. And we read:

Genesis 23:2

So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

Whether Abraham wasn't at home at the time she died, or whether this refers to him more formally mourning for her, we don't know — but here we read that he wept (the first time grief or indeed tears are mentioned in the Bible). And oh how we can imagine that. Sarah had been a faithful and supportive wife to him, despite his error of trying to pass her off as his sister on two occasions, and she had submitted to him as he in turn submitted to God and left his family and comforts in Ur (no doubt leaving her friends too), to live in tents in a land they didn't know.

She had been there as he went off to rescue their nephew, Lot, and there as he returned from battle. They had walked the heartbreaking road of infertility together, and they had seen God miraculously answer their prayers by giving them Isaac. And as we read that Abraham wept, I'm reminded of CS Lewis's famous comment, after the death of his wife, writing "The pain I feel now is the happiness I had before. That's the deal." Perhaps grief is indeed the price we pay for love.

But something that further strikes me is that *this* is the very next event that takes place after Abraham demonstrates incredible faith in God in offering Isaac, and Isaac submits to what the Lord had commanded Abraham — that is, they had both been remarkably obedient to the Lord, yet the very next thing that happens is someone that they *love* dies. And this is stark reminder that serving and obeying God doesn't spare us from the trials and consequences of living in fallen, broken world. Indeed, this world is not how it should be, and right now difficulties remain. Yes, one day there will be a new heavens and new earth, and there will be no more death, pain, tears or suffering. But we're not there yet.

And this is really important for us to take note of, for being a Christian and knowing Jesus is a wonderful thing — there is so much joy, so much comfort, so much peace that comes from having and knowing our Saviour. There is so much blessing in being obedient to Him, and obeying Him. But that is not the reason we need a Saviour — nor is it the reason others do.

You see, we can't go around telling others that they should be a Christian so that they have a better life, or physical healing, a stronger marriage, or a better financial situation (though those *may* be blessings God sends their way) — for if we do that, we'll run the very real risk of creating false converts who *call* Jesus their Saviour, but are really just giving this Jesus thing a go to see if it improves their life... and when they are met with the promised troubles, trials and even persecutions of the Christian life, they fall away, stumbling, as Jesus described them in the parable of the sower:

Matthew 13:20-21

But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

We can of course talk about what hope, joy, and peace Jesus has brought us — how He has changed our lives. But we must not fail to share the gospel, that while we had sinned horribly against God, worthy of His judgement, God loved us so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to die in our place to take the punishment for our sin, so that we could be forgiven and set free, if we indeed come to Christ in repentance and faith.

Telling people that the gospel is about enhancing their life is selling them a lie. One that ultimately may cause them to turn away from Christ, rather than to Him.

Now, back here in Genesis 23, after these opening 2 verses, we see that Abraham sets about finding a place to bury Sarah — because, remember, He is living in tents, and has no land of his own as yet. However, God has promised that ALL this land will be his, and therefore Abraham wants to bury Sarah here, with the intent that one day he and his descendants will also be buried here. And indeed we'll later find that both he, Isaac (and his wife, Rebekah), and Jacob (and his wife, Leah) will all be buried here.

We read:

Genesis 23:3-4

Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, "I am a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

So again Abraham, having no land of his own, now speaks to those who do own land, that he might bury his wife. Not out of memory, but out of sight — that her bones may not be a shrine, but that what remains of her may be laid to rest in the land that he will one day inherit. And I think there is a parallel in that, that likewise we are not to make a shrine out of those who have passed into eternity, but, God willing, if they know the Lord, we may lay them to rest with our thoughts on our land of inheritance; that is not our physical, but spiritual inheritance with the Lord in Heaven, where one day we'll dwell.

Here, the sons of Heth take it literally when Abraham says "give me property", for we read:

Genesis 23:5-6

And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, "Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead."

So we see they have incredible respect for who Abraham was — whether that was because of his accomplishment in battle as he rescued Lot (where God gave the victory), or his great possessions (that the Lord had blessed him with), or his godly character (which God had developed in him through the years). Whatever aspect of Abraham's life they were impressed with, it all came from the Lord. And they say "we'll give you whatever you want!"

In other words, out of their respect and admiration for who Abraham was, they offered their best for free. And, oh, there is something to take note of there, that as we look at the *One* whom had given all this to Abraham, and given all we have to us, that we would, in respect, reverence and admiration for *Him*, that we would give the Lord our *very best* — not the lame, or sick, or second-hand (as Malachi rebuked Israel for). That we would give not merely according to our ability, but even beyond it — as the Corinthian church were praised for.

But also, let us take note of Abraham's response, for we read:

Genesis 23:7-9

Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you."

So Abraham acknowledges their gesture, but says "don't do me a favour" — I want to pay full price. *Why?* Surely it is out of respect to Sarah, that he doesn't want his last act towards her to be a bargain basement free burial site. And this reminds me of the attitude of King David, who, when wanting to acquire a site for the temple to be built, wouldn't accept it for free, but said "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." May we neither offer to the Lord, the One we love, that which costs us nothing — but rather, let our giving to the Lord be such as was recorded in Exodus 36, preceding the building of the tabernacle, where we read:

Exodus 36:6-7

So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary." And the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done—indeed too much.

Back here in Genesis, this man, Ephron the Hittite, is insistent that he wants to give this cave to Abraham:

Genesis 23:10-11

Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying, "No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!"

So first, Ephron offers the best they have for free. Abraham, then says he'll pay for it. Now, Ephron says three times in one sentence "I give it to you!". It's a little humorous to me, for we see this sort of thing at Christian events — rather than chaos being caused by people pushing their way into the venue, or out of the car park, a queue forms as people say "No, you first!", "No, *you* first". "No, really, you first"! Chaos through kindness (which is a nice problem!).

But here Abraham has already made up his mind that he will not make his last gesture for Sarah a free one:

Genesis 23:12-13

Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you will give it, please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury my dead there."

So he says, "Since you want to be kind, do this kindness to me and let me purchase it. All I want is permission to purchase, not a free gift of it."

Genesis 23:14-15

And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My lord, listen to me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead."

Ephron relents, neither refusing payment or inflating the price, saying "fair enough, this is only pocket change between us anyway — this is what the land is worth".

Genesis 23:16-18

And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants. So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

So agreement is made before witnesses, and Abraham purchases the field and cave — the first financial transaction recorded in the Bible. And it's all done there and then — so we can assume no solicitors were involved in this process!

Genesis 23:19-20

And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

Again, not only would this be the burial place for Sarah, but also for Abraham, Isaac & Rebekah, and Jacob & Leah. And this place is still there today in what we know as the West Bank, with it having been built over and fought over, with Jews only gaining access again after some 700 or so years, following the Six Day War in 1967 — as part of what is built there is one of the most important mosques in the world of Islam, for they also trace their lineage back to Abraham.

Chapter twenty four

Now, as we begin chapter 24, another 3 years have passed — but how do we know that? Well, we already know that Isaac was 37 when Sarah died, and when we get to chapter 25 we'll read that he was 40 years old when he took Rebekah as wife which is what is recorded in this chapter. However, this chapter is so much more than just that — for once again we'll see that through these events, God pointed to Christ, the church, and the Holy Spirit. So let's see how. We read in verse 1:

Genesis 24:1

Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

I like how that's phrased — that Abraham was well advanced in age. Wouldn't it be great if we treated ages with merit, as if ages were like levels — that we might be happy saying: *I've reached level 40!* or *Now I've reached level 50! Look how advanced I am!* In reality, that's really not far from how we ought to value experience. I like one of George Washington's statements in this regard, for he said *"When there is an elder man and a younger man in the same room, the elder man should never mention it, but the younger man should never forget it."*

And Abraham really *had* advanced — he wasn't the same man who left Ur, yet was happy to stall at Haran. He wasn't the same man who went to Egypt when famine struck. And he wasn't the same man that he was when he tried to pass off his wife as his sister to save his own neck. No, no. This old, advanced Abraham was the one who had learnt to trust God in all things, rather than take matters into his own hands — even being trusting and obedient enough to offer up his own son to the Lord, as we saw last week.

And now, having advanced, having grown in his walk with the Lord, we see that *the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things*. He didn't bless him in *all* things *before*, because God couldn't bless Abraham's mess. But with Abraham having cut off the works of his flesh, God was now able to bless him in all things. Just the same as it is with us, as we read Jesus words in Matthew 6 *"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."*

However, while God had blessed *Abraham* in all things, he looks around and sees that his son *Isaac* is not yet married, and therefore has no children. So, Abraham seeks to resolve that matter, sending his servant to find a wife for him. And if you're a parent with grown up unmarried children, you might think *"What a great idea!"*. A *Biblical precedent for matchmaking!* Indeed I've seen some parents with an almost overwhelming desire to see their children married — and that *can* come from a good place to see their child happy, to even have what they have, in terms of marriage, or even children.

But note that there is a fundamental difference here — for Abraham isn't merely *hoping* for grandchildren, but has actually been promised them by God, as we know that God had said to him that Isaac would have many descendants. And so we can't apply this to our own lives, or that of our children. Rather, we should take note of what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7 that, speaking of daughters; *"he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better."* So, there is a wonderful place for godly singleness, as the Lord calls. Just as there is a wonderful place for godly marriages. And therefore our focus should be on *godliness* in our children, not on their marital or relationship status.

Genesis 24:2-4

So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, 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; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

So first then, we see this request for Abraham's servant to put his hand under his thigh — a strange request to *us*, but this was a custom of the day when giving an important instruction, that the one giving the instruction might have the full attention of the one receiving it. We see Jacob later does the same with Joseph when making his final requests to him in Egypt. So evidently Abraham is really serious about what he is about to ask.

And, wanting his servant to find a wife for Isaac, he first instructs him not to take a wife from the Canaanites — the people amongst whom he lived. This wasn't some sort of racist instruction, but rather there were two important reasons for it. First, many of the Canaanite tribes were offspring of the giants that had been born after the flood, who were part of Satan's effort to wipe out the line through Jesus, that we might not have a Saviour. And second, they worshipped other gods — false gods — and Abraham, having walked closely with the one true God, didn't want Isaac to be pulled away from Him.

"Oh but they're nice people" Eliezer could have said. *"Just look at the Hittites that wanted to give you a field to bury Sarah in!"* and indeed, it was a kind gesture. But a kind gesture alone does not make someone a godly woman, or godly man. Abraham didn't simply want a nice wife for Isaac, but a godly one; one who trusted in God too. And such should be our desire and prayer for our children, and indeed we should pray that it would be their desire too.

Likewise, if you are unmarried here today, but want to marry, may it be your desire to only marry someone who is a Christian. Why? That you might not compromise and serve other gods. That you might not be pulled away from the one true God. *"Oh, but they're a nice person"*. That's not reason enough. You see, it's a question of obedience, for just as Malachi rebuked Israel for doing this, we ourselves read in 2 Corinthians that we must not be yoked unequally to an unbeliever — whether in business or in marriage. And God does this for our good. As one person put it, if you marry someone whose father is the god of this world, then you're always going to have trouble with your father-in-law, so to speak. And God doesn't want that for you. And He wants your obedience.

Here, Abraham's servant isn't only tasked with not taking a wife for Isaac from the Canaanites, but actively going to find one for him from Abraham's own relatives. And there's an interesting picture we'll see this creates, for we've come across this servant before in chapter 15 — he is Eliezer of Damascus, whose name means God of help. And so we have a helper going to find, to bring a bride to the son. In other words, this is a picture of the Holy Spirit preparing and bringing the bride of Christ to Him. We even see that this servant is unnamed here, just as the Holy Spirit never speaks of Himself.

We'll consider this picture or model more before we finish this morning. But first, there's a question:

Genesis 24:5

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?"

So there's a genuine concern Abraham's servant has that even if he finds a bride for Isaac, she won't be willing to move. And this is a concern I understand well! When I was looking for a wife, it troubled me that if I met someone who didn't live here in Deal, yet I felt God wanted me here, then that was a huge thing to ask.

But just as God had his hand on *this* situation with Issac and his soon-to-be wife, Rebekah, He had his hand on my relationship with Siân, for I remember very clearly sitting down with her one evening, before we were engaged, saying *"I need to be open with you, that I believe God has called me to pastor, because that would have big impact on our relationship, where we live, and our lives."* And I said to her that I would understand if that changed things between her and I. It was her chance to escape!

But you know, God was very gracious, because Siân then said to me "that's interesting, because just last week one of my friends said to me — Siân, you're going to have to figure out if you want to marry a pastor or not". And I'm very grateful that it didn't change her mind! Indeed, we got engaged within a month of that.

I share this to illustrate that when we place our relationships in God's hands, He engineers things that we could not engineer ourselves. I've seen it in my life. We're about to see it here with Isaac and Rebekah, and you'll see it in yours too if you trust Him.

Now, Abraham's servant had said — if I can't find a wife to come to Isaac, shall I take Isaac to find a wife?

Genesis 24:6

But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there.

Abraham is clear. Having grown close to the Lord, he wants nothing that will take Isaac away from the Lord, nor from the land to which the Lord had brought them. This was a non-negotiable. And he continues:

Genesis 24:7-8

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. 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."

Abraham is effectively saying *God is in control, He knows what He is doing, so let us trust Him with this. But even if the woman you ask to come and marry Isaac is not willing to come and do so, then I'll still trust Him, for I know God has promised Isaac will have descendants, and so I need not worry about the details of how that will work out, for I know God's promises are true.*

There is great faith being shown by Abraham in this. But also great obedience, for he once again makes clear that Isaac is not to go back there under any circumstances. How wonderful to see how Abraham is no longer willing to take matters into his own hands!

Genesis 24:9

So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

His concerns eased, Abraham's servant commits to carrying out this task faithfully.

Genesis 24:10

Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.

As he does this, we see another picture of the Holy Spirit — for we see this helper with the full power and autonomy of Abraham, the father, as he goes to invite the bride to marry the son.

And now back in the land Abraham had left many years before, we read:

Genesis 24:11

And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water.

So then, the custom of the day was for women to go out and draw water from the well, and knowing this, plus being a stranger there, Abraham's servant waits there, rather than helping himself. But he's not just waiting, he's trusting. Trusting that God will provide, for we read he prays:

Genesis 24:12-14

Then he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'—let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."

What a picture we see here as Eliezer prays in his heart — the helper interceding for the son's blessing, not his own, praying the son's bride may be found serving.

Genesis 24:15

And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder.

Already, we see God answering this prayer — for while he was in the land Abraham had come from, there was no guarantee the first woman he saw would have been from Abraham's relatives. But this girl is. And so he and we meet Rebekah for the first time, though of course she was mentioned in the genealogy at the end of chapter 22.

And where is it that the son's bride is found? At the well. At the place of refreshing. And we read on:

Genesis 24:16-21

Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher." So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

Eliezer had prayed, and is now watching God's answer to that prayer unfolding in front of him. And he sits there wondering and waiting, not interfering or trying to force the situation, but wondering whether indeed this girl will be willing to leave her family and all she knows, to go marry and live with her groom. And we'll study the details of how that pans out next week.

But I don't want us to rush past these verses, for we just read something significant. That this woman was very beautiful to behold — indeed Rebekah's name means captivating. And we read that she was a virgin. And so a picture is painted of a stunning and pure bride that Eliezer will present to Isaac. So let's apply that, for we know that Isaac is symbolic of Christ. So who is Rebekah symbolic of? It's the church, of course. And this is the type of bride that the Holy Spirit wants to present to Jesus. One that is radiant and undefiled.

Of course, we wouldn't think much of a bride who had made no effort to walk down the aisle. Or one that walked down the aisle hand in hand with her other boyfriends. There is a rightful expectation that a bride would want to be found pleasing to her husband. And therefore, there's a rightful expectation that the church wants to be found presentable to her groom. That means there is a rightful expectation that we will ourselves want to be found pure and undefiled at Christ's coming.

This is why the apostle John writes:

1 John 3:2-3

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

If you or I are giving no thought to how pleasing we are to Christ, something is wrong. So therefore, we are to purify, to ready ourselves. And that will only happen through the washing of His Word — that as we read the Bible, and obey it, we'll be made pleasing to Him, such as we read in Philippians:

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

And not only are we to keep ourselves in these good things, but we are to keep ourselves from sin and false teaching that suggests anything other than what we read in the Bible – just look at Paul's heart in writing to the Corinthians (and to us):

2 Corinthians 11:1-4

Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

Are we then, a radiant and pure bride? Are we preparing ourselves? Are we going to be found pleasing to Jesus in all things? I pray that we will be.

Application questions

As always, let us ask ourselves important questions as we think on these things in the hours, days and week ahead:

- Are you sharing the gospel accurately? (or promising people a life improvement program?)
- To those unmarried and desiring to marry, will you refuse to date a non-Christian?
- How are you preparing yourself to be pleasing to Jesus? (are you pure in all things?)

For the audio recording of this Bible study, and for additional studies, please see the DCF web site:



Deal Christian Fellowship
Simply teaching the Bible, simply

 <https://dcf.church>