

Series: Beginnings, Betrayal, Blessings
Title: Beyond the status quo
Text: Genesis 24

Beginnings, Betrayal, Blessings

Genesis gives us three main stories with key figures and their families

- Adam and Eve, their story and their children's stories
- 500 years later
 - Noah and the Flood, and his three sons and where people migrated to
- 500 years later
 - Abraham, His son, Isaac, grandson, Jacob, and great grandson Joseph

Isaac

- Promised
- Birthed and circumcised – 8 days
- Weaned up to 3
- Almost sacrificed as a boy (under 18 likely under 13)
- Married at 40 – 25:20
- Stupid like his father
- Had kids at 60 -25:26
- Digger of wells –
- Goes blind
- Fooled by son and wife – Blessings
 - Jacob leaves
- Esau makes life bitter for dad – 100 – Gen. 24:34-35
- Died – 185 gen. 35:27-29

We know more about Ishmael than we do of Isaac

You are the promised one but in truth, yet your story is only that your child will be called Israel

What is role?

- Live well
 - Obedient to his father and to his father's God
- Marry Well
 - In the clan
 - In love

- Bless your children well

Today I want to look at two not so known people

- One is a servant who is faithful in his work
- The other a young lady who is faithful in her work

Sometimes in order to obtain things that are truly worth having, we have to go beyond the status quo.

- We're often touched when someone does something extra special for us or simply go out of their way on our behalf when there's nothing in it for them.

Sometimes we miss out on great blessings that could have been ours...

- ...simply because we didn't take that extra moment to go beyond what was called for at the time.

Illustration –

- Surrounded by people who do this behind the scenes
- Dan, Earl, Doctor Dan, Cheryl, Lewis, Wanda -

Lessons from a man and a woman: two people who serve well

Today we find a man and a woman in the Scriptures who were willing to go beyond what was required, and in doing so, found the greatest of blessings for their lives.

- The man is the chief servant of Abraham: likely Eliezer.
 - He was the chief servant of Abraham and likely the one sent.
- The woman is the grandniece of Abraham: Rebekah
 - She is the daughter of Bethuel, the nephew of Abraham
 - the youngest son of Nahor and Milcah, the nephew of Abraham, and the father of Laban and Rebecca.
 - Laban would become the father of Leah and Rachel, who would marry Rebecca's son Jacob

The story is found in Genesis 24. This chapter is the longest chapter in the book of Genesis, having 67 verses.

Genesis 24 – The story

- We see that Abraham wanted to get a wife for his son.

Genesis 24:2-4

² And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had... 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, ⁴ but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

- Abraham was the first Jew called out by God, and God had promised to make him a great nation.
- Abraham waited a long time to have a son.
- Back then, the parents were responsible for choosing a mate for their children.
- So he sends his chief servant to find a wife in his homeland.
 - Likely is Eliezer
 - In Genesis 15 we see that Abraham is discussing with God that he had no heir and so all that he had would go to his servant, Eliezer.
 - Years earlier he was in line to inherit all of Abraham's riches.
 - Now he is assigned to bring home the blessing for the one who would inherit it all instead of him.
 - We see the heart of an individual who loves and serves his master.
 - We see a man who has an urgency to see God's blessing.
- Took ten camels to the land of Aram.
 - Ten camels – is like a caravan of ten limousines pulling up.
 - The town's people would notice if this entourage arrived.
 - So he did not go into town... he waited outside the town
 - He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.
 - He prayed...
 - For success.
 - Show kindness to Abraham.
 - I am here by the spring where water is drawn.

Genesis 24: 14

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." Before he had finished praying, ...

- *Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder.*
- *The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her.*
- *She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.*

- *The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar." "Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. After she had given him a drink, she said,*
- *V. 19 -"I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking."*
- *So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.*
- He gave a gold ring and bracelets to her.
 - And she runs to tell her family.
- He worshipped the Lord.

Genesis 24: 26-27

²⁶ The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord ²⁷and 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."

- She brings her brother Laban out to see the man and invite him to stay with them.
 - They offer him housing for him, his servants, and the camels.
 - They offered dinner but Eliezer said he would not eat until he had said what he was supposed to say.
- He tells the story of the master's desire, the oath he had made to complete his masters desire and related the story of what had happened between he and Rebekah.
 - Her father and brother recognize that this was from the Lord and Rebekah agrees to marry.
- They spend the night and then Eliezer is asked to wait ten days for Rebekah to prepare herself.
 - The servant says he must go.

Genesis 24:56

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."

- Rebekah agrees to go with him immediately and they went back to Abraham
 - When they see each other there seems to be an immediate love for one another.
 - She sees him and lighted off her camel (KJV) (first appearance of smoking in the Bible).
- And they are married.

We see how Eliezer handled the situation as a faithful servant

- He was sent on a mission and made an oath to complete it

- It was to bless the person who is receiving the blessing you thought you would get
- He sought God all along the way
- He praised God all along the way
 - “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.”
- He had his face set like a flint toward the oath that he spoke
- He fulfilled his mission.

I also want to look SPECIFICALLY at verse 19 for this message.

Genesis 24:19

19 When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.”

The first thing I want you to notice about Rebekah is:

She was willing to go beyond the status quo.

She went beyond what was expected.

- You may say, big deal, I would have given the man a drink and gave his camels some water.
 - But you see for you, it would be a matter of simply turning on a faucet.
 - She had to get her water out of a well.
- Understand that a camel will drink between 20 and 30 gallons of water each. Eliezer had started out with 10 camels.
 - If she was going to fill up his camels, we’re talking anywhere from an hour and a half to 2 hours to fill up these animals.
 - This lady has committed herself for almost two hours to a perfect stranger who did far more than he had asked of her.

The minimum:

Now at best, some of us might have said hello to the man.

- A few of us might have offered him a drink of water.
- Even fewer of us would have told him he could borrow our bucket to get some water for his camels if he wanted to, but I’m afraid to say how many of us would have committed ourselves in this fashion.
- It is usually not our goal to do the most of what we can, and get nothing for it.

- We have been trained to do the least that's expected of us, and get the maximum benefit possible.

Less than the minimum:

- We will even get upset when others are going above what we think is the minimum.
 - "Well, who does she think she is coming in here, working so hard trying to make us look bad."
 - "Why does he think he's all that by doing that extra stuff."
 - "She's just trying to kiss up to the boss."
 - "They think they own the church and try to do everything."

The kingdom of God and life always has place for a person who is willing to go beyond what's asked.

- Too many people want as much of heaven as possible while giving as little to the work of God and the connection to His bride as they can.
 - In other words they want a maximum return for a minimum effort.
 - It is like believing you can make a great withdrawal without ever making a deposit or investing into a greater future.

If somebody had seen Rebekah doing all that she was doing, I guarantee you that she would have been criticized.

When you go beyond the status quo, people are going to criticize you, but do it anyways, because that's where the Spirit of God is calling you to be.

- Everywhere you go, you're showing somebody Jesus Christ.
- Is the Jesus you show, sloppy, lazy, just doing enough to get by?
- Or is the Jesus you're showing to the world, one who is willing to give His best to those He encounters.

Jesus put it like this:

Luke 16:10

"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much."

- You may not think your behavior on the job or at school has anything to do with your walk in Christ.

- The reality is, God has you where he has you because that's where He needs you to be to reach somebody that's lost.
- Somebody is watching you and what they see in you is going to determine not only their future, but it may influence your own.

A lesson from the Pharisees

We think of the Pharisees as the bad people in the New Testament, but that's not an accurate picture.

- Most Pharisees were very good people.
- How many of us can say as the Pharisee did, in

Luke 18:11-12

¹¹ God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get."

The problem with the Pharisees was they thought their good deeds alone would get them into heaven and **they had plenty of righteous deeds.**

- Now today we may say, I know I'm not living up to what I should be doing but as long as the Lord knows my heart, I'll be okay.

Jesus didn't say anything about just having a heart that wanted to do something right.

- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught that our righteousness should go above and beyond that of the Pharisees.
- The Pharisees were the all-time score keepers.
 - They would just do exactly what was required, nothing more and nothing less.
 - If the law said forgive 7 times, buddy you were okay with the Pharisees until you did them on the 8th time.

Jesus said,

Matthew 5:20

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Do you remember some of the tough sayings of Jesus in which we think Jesus was kidding?

The Cheek, the Coat, the Second Mile

He gave the illustrations that if somebody struck one cheek, turn the other; if someone asked

you for your coat, give the inner coat as well if needed; and if someone asked you to go one mile, go with him two.

When Jesus talked about going the second mile, the people knew exactly what he meant.

- At the time he said walk the second mile, the Jews were under Roman authority.
- Sometimes the Roman soldiers' gear would get heavy.
 - They could come by anybody's house, take his spear and tap a guy on the shoulder.
 - That tap would tell the person that he's going to ask something of him and that he has no option but to give.
 - He might ask him for his coat. He'd have to take it off and give it to him. He might look at him and say, "I've got a lot to carry. Walk a mile with me and carry some of my baggage."
 - The man would have no choice.
- Under Roman authority, the Jewish person had to walk the first mile.
 - There was no arguing and fussing or whining about it. That's just the way life was.
 - You were under their authority and they owned you for a mile.
 - So imagine, there you are carrying this load for this person you are simply thanking God for the opportunity to serve.
 - Now you know that once you get to the end of the mile, the person could not make you go a second mile. You would lay down his bags and say, "My mile is up and I'll be leaving now."
 - As a joke he might say, "Aw, come on, don't you want to go another mile?" Jesus was teaching, "Shock the daylights out of him and offer to go the second mile and mean it!"

The first mile, he owned you. The second mile, you own yourself.

You see, for the first mile, he owned you and you had no other choice but to do what was asked.

But in the second mile, you own yourself and you're in control of how you're going to let Jesus shine in you.

Jesus is saying the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian is that the Christian goes beyond the status quo in walking the second mile.

- That little extra that causes the person that is over them to say, "Wait a minute. They don't have to do this. They don't need to do this. Why are they doing this?"

Now if as Christians we operated under the “Beyond” principle, each time somebody needed to hire someone, they’d be asking the question, “Are you a Christian?”

- They would look for Christians because they know they can count on Christians to go the extra mile to make up the difference.
- You talk about being a witness for Christ. You want to know what a silent witness is.

If we as Christians were willing to go the second mile on our jobs or at school, or at home, our bosses, our teachers, and our family members would be wanting to come to church to find out what is making you behave in such a manner.

- They wouldn’t come to hear me or any preacher, but because they would see people so different from the lazy, just-get-by attitude that is everywhere in the world today.

Unfortunately Christians have made employers not want to hire Christians.

- Instead of going above and beyond, we’re sneaking out early with others believing God that we won’t get caught.
- We’re taking extra-long lunch breaks so that we can witness to our friends.
- Remember, for that first eight hours, we belong to our employer.
 - If we want to be witnesses on our jobs for Christ, let’s give a maximum effort.
 - If we’re not going to give maximum effort on our job or at school, do everybody a favor and don’t let them know you’re a Christian.
 - They are going to assume that all Christians are just like you. The next Christian coming behind you may not even get a shot at the job, because they don’t want any more of them.

The second mile comes from living the Spirit-filled life and it does not mean it will be easy.

- The Spirit-filled life gives ordinary people power to do extraordinary things. It provides ordinary people with power to do ordinary things in an extraordinary way.
- Eliezer received power to accomplish his master’s desires with God going before him and he is seeking the Lord all along the way.
 - He says, “Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master.”
- Rebekah received power to do some extraordinary hard work.
 - She said, “I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking.”
 - God’s spirit will help you to do things just a little bit better and a little bit longer.
 - Did you know that about 80 percent of being successful is just showing up faithfully every time you’re supposed to show up.

How should the Beyond the Status Quo Principle work in our lives?

The first thing is that...

1. We are not to live our lives by the world's measuring rod. Not Quid Pro Quo

- a. If we are living a life that is always measuring, we're missing what God told us to do.
 - i. Let me see he gave me a gift, I'll give him one.
 - ii. They forgot my birthday, I'll forget theirs.
 - iii. She didn't help me when I was down and out, I'm not going to help her.
 - iv. He loaned me five dollars, I'll loan him five dollars.
 - v. 50/50, you do your half and I'll do mine.
- b. If you do exactly what you're supposed to do and nothing more, you have not demonstrated that Jesus is in you.
- c. If Jesus had of only done what He should have done, he would have never made it to the cross.
- d. A Christian is called to do more that is expected of him or her.

The second thing is,

2. We cannot walk the second mile, until we've walked the first.

- a. So many people want to do great things for God, without ever getting around to doing little things for God.
 - i. We have to do a thorough job with what we have before we can do an excellent job or an extra job with that which we will be given.
- b. If we haven't done a great job where we are, we can't do a great job where we think we may be going.
 - i. People deceive themselves when they say if I was in that class, or if I had that job, or if I was in that position, I would really do my very best.
 1. No you wouldn't. The problem isn't in the job or the place, it's in us.
 2. We haven't handled the first mile well.
 3. We can't go beyond the status quo, because we've never reached even the minimum level.

Thirdly,

3. Realize that extra blessings come from extra effort.

- a. When you and I put in the extra effort, we receive extra blessings.
- b. Marriage
 - i. In a marriage relationship, if every husband and every wife were willing to walk the second mile or do beyond what is expected for their spouse, and not just what's required of expected of them, just because we want to and we love them, divorce lawyers would see a huge decrease in their business.

- ii. Marriages fall apart not when we want to do something extra for our spouse;
 - 1. They fall apart when we sit around waiting for our spouse to do something extra for us.
 - 2. When we start listing our rights and responsibilities, and say, "Well that's your job and it's not required of me.
 - 3. I don't have to do this", then the relationship is in trouble. Having our rights is killing us.
- iii. A good marriage is one when the spouse does what he or she is supposed to and then some.
- c. Other Examples
 - i. A good student is a person who does what the requirements are in the class and then some. That extra effort and extra credit speaks volumes to a teacher.
 - ii. A good member is one who does what he or she is supposed to and then some.
 - iii. A good parent or child is one who does what he or she is supposed to and then some.

Two questions:

What's a good Christian?

- It's not the one with the big cross, or the nice button, or the one playing the Christian station.
- It's the one that does what he or she is supposed to do and then some.

What would happen if we became Beyond the Status Quo type people?

- I guarantee you that we will receive more from life, from others, and from God than we would ever think possible.
- Because Eliezer and Rebekah went above and beyond what was expected of them, they received more than they had expected.
 - He saw the hand of God as he pursued obedience. Miracles before him. That his name would be read thousands of years later as a faithful servant.
 - She had no idea, the simple statement, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking", would change her life forever.
 - She didn't know it would lead to a husband who was a man of faith and wealthy besides.
 - She didn't know she was going to be one of the great, great, great grandmothers of Jesus Christ.

I recall Jesus saying that at the judgment he would say to some of the saints?

- Thank you for clothing me, thank you for feeding me, and thank you for giving me food. But the saints will respond, when did we ever do such things for you. We never saw you.

Jesus will reply whenever you did it for the least of these, you did it for me.

When we do things beyond the basics, that's when we're doing things for Jesus Christ.

- We do what needs to be done with a right motive, not to get something back.
- When you stand before Jesus Christ, are you going to be glad knowing that you were a Beyond the Status Quo person in life.
- Don't despise the little jobs that you have you to do.
 - Every evening, Rebekah went down to the well and did the very same thing; drew the water out of the well and took it back to her family.
 - What a boring, menial task. But don't despise it.

Illustration:

The story is told of a contractor who was needed to hire a supervisor. He put out a help-wanted sign: Help wanted, good potential for the future. He agreed to pay a man a decent salary for moving bricks. He told the man, move these bricks over there. When the guy finished, he told him to move them back where they were. When he finished the guy told him to move them back again. The guy quit, saying he wasn't doing something so stupid with his time. 5 guys started and quitted the job. Finally Dave came and took the job. He moved those bricks back and forth time and time again. They asked him Dave why don't you quit. Dave said as long as I'm getting paid, I've got a job. It's not my fault he can't make up his mind where he wants those bricks. On the fourth day, Dave didn't even go to see the boss; on arriving, he simply got the wheelbarrow and headed for the bricks. The boss called "Dave, come in here, I want to offer you the job of supervisor. I've been looking for somebody that would be faithful with my orders." Too often we don't get the positions that God wants to give us, because we despise the little things God wants us to do.

Fourthly,

4. Don't wait for the big moments in live to decide you will go above and beyond.

Help people, and you'll always be a blessing. Pour your life into others, and pour your life into the work of the church, and you'll always be a blessing.

When the camels finished drinking, Eliezer the servant took out a gold nose ring and two gold bracelets of the highest quality to give to Rebekah.

- Later that day he gives her more gold, silver jewelry, and clothing. He gave expensive gifts to her mother and to her brother.
- Now most of us, if we had seen what she was going to get before hand, we would also have offered to pour the water for the camels.
- But we don't always see in advance what God has for us at the close of the day.

When God opens the door for you to make a difference, go ahead and make the difference.

- What a difference Rebekah's willingness to do beyond what was expected made in her life.
 - She wouldn't have thought of finding a husband at that old well in a thousand years, but she did.
 - Those of you who are praying for a mate, God knows how to answer your prayer.
 - Be faithful where you are so that you don't miss out when God sends a servant looking for you.
- Jesus, on the cross, gave above what was required of him in laying down his life for us, and he went beyond reasoning in loving us, because the bible says, while we were still sinners he died for us.
 - Jesus didn't wait for us to get our act together to start to love us.
 - No, he loved us so that He could put our act together in the way it was needed.

Are there camels to be watered?

- at your home?
- at your job?
- at your church?
- in your speech?
- in your neighborhood?
- All of these principles are pulled easily from the passage. Rebekah did not live her life by must what she had to do (the world's measuring rod).
 - She went over and above what was expected of her. Let's not live our life by doing only what is expected.
- Rebekah did what was expected and she did it well.
 - She was then able to go the second mile.
 - Let's do the routine things well. People are watching us and see how we do the everyday run of the mill stuff as much as they are watching anything else.

- Rebekah did more than she had to and then she received more than she expected to. That's a biblical principle that is easily traced throughout the Bible.

God is looking for people who are willing to go Beyond the Status Quo for Him.

If you're willing to become a Beyond the Basics person this morning I ask that you pray with me right now.

Prayer