**worshipping together while we are apart**

**Morning Prayer for Wednesday 8 July 2020**

**Readings**: Psalm 145.8-15, Genesis 24.34-67

**Introduction**

Last week we read from Genesis 21 about a feast to celebrate Isaac being weaned and heard about Abraham sending Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness. In our passage from chapter 24 today time has moved on and Isaac is now 40 years old. Sarah, Isaac’s mother, has died and Abraham is an old man.

Abraham has sent his trusted servant back to his homeland in Mesopotamia to find a bride for Isaac. We are told earlier in the chapter that the servant took 10 camels loaded with all kinds of good things. The town of Nahor is approximately 435 miles away, camels can travel an average of 25 miles a day so that makes it at least a 17-day one-way journey – quite an undertaking. In our reading the servant is relating the events that led to him meeting Rebekah and believing that she is the one God has chosen to be Isaac’s wife. He is talking to Rebekah’s father and brother after Rebekah has taken him and his entourage to her house. Let’s focus on that series of events.

**Genesis 24.34-51**

The servant explains that his master Abraham has been richly blessed by God. He emphasises Abraham’s faith when he mentions Abraham’s response to his question about a woman being willing to return with him.

He tells of how he prayed when he arrived at the well, asking God to make his journey a success, asking for specific events to happen so that he could know who was the right woman for Isaac and how Rebekah arrived before he had even finished praying. He explains that he asked her for a drink, and she offered to water the camels as well, in line with his recent prayer. It was customary for women at the well to draw water for travellers, but it would have been unusual for a woman to offer to water the camels as well. A thirsty camel can drink between 20-30 gallons of water, and there were 10 of them! That is a huge amount of water to draw from a well, it probably took several hours.

He then relates how he discovered that Rebekah was Bethuel’s daughter and was even more convinced that she was God’s chosen wife for Isaac. He adorned her in jewellery and then immediately worships God for answering his prayers. Bethuel and Laban are so moved by his story that they too are convinced that the Lord wants Rebekah to be Isaac’s wife.

**Reflection**

Abraham was a man of huge faith. He was confident that God would provide a wife for Isaac and told his servant that the Lord would send an angel with him on his mission to ensure his success. What can we do to increase our knowledge of and faith in God? How can we demonstrate our confidence that God will do what he has said he will?

Abraham’s faith seems to have rubbed off on his servant. He prays to his master’s God when he arrives at the well. His prayer is not long and drawn out, it is specific and, as we saw earlier, a little unlikely to be fulfilled. He also immediately and obviously worships God as soon as he realises God has answered his prayer. He doesn’t wait until he is alone, he just breaks spontaneously into praise. Can we find ways to pray throughout the day? Can we learn something about short, specific prayers from this narrative? How often do we burst into spontaneous praise? Are there times when we have supressed praise or put it off until later because of what others may think?

Rebekah is willing to help Abraham’s servant, even though he is a stranger. She gives him what he asks for and then gives way more than he asked for. Are there times when we could offer something a stranger might need. Are there ways we could be as generous as Rebekah?

Because of the way Abraham’s servant has relayed the details to Bethuel and Laban they respond with the only response they could really give: ‘This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other’. How can we share our journeys and our stories in a way that helps others to see Jesus?

**The Collect**

Gracious Father,

by the obedience of Jesus

you brought salvation to our wayward world:

draw us into harmony with your will,

that we may find all things restored in him,

our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayers**

Including:

* Those who are seriously ill with coronavirus and those who are caring for them.
* Those known to us who are unwell or recovering from illness including Rebecca, Julian and Grace.
* The bereaved, including Elaine Butcher and family.
* NHS workers, care workers and other key workers.
* People who are lonely, frightened or at risk due to the current isolation measures.
* People who are fearful or feeling vulnerable or uncertain as we begin to come out of lockdown.
* Those working towards a vaccine for Covid-19.
* Leaders of the nations of the world, for wisdom in their decision making.
* Leaders of the national Church, including Archbishop Justin, Bishop Alan and Bishop Michael.
* Rebecca and all those in leadership at Sunnyside and Bourne End.