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[00:00:05] So, Genesis, Chapter 24. This is a long chapter. We're going to be beginning in verse 62. We're going to pick up the story here at the end. And I know I'm going to read some of this. You guys are going to be like, what in the world were parachuting right into the end of a story? And I will catch you up. Don't worry about that, but we're going to focus today really on verse 63. But let me start in verse 62. The Bible says no. Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi for he dwelt in the south, and Isaac went out to meditate. What's that word? Yup. Say it again. Say it one more time. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening, and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there the camels were coming. That's a good thing back then. Then Rebecca lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from her camel before she said to the servant, Who is this man walking in the field to meet us? The servant said, it is my master, so she took a veil and she covered herself and father. Thank you so much for your word. God, thank you for this. Moment in Isaac's life. And while God, it seems so small and it's easy, almost seemingly insignificant God like a speed bump that we can just go right over. God, there's so much here for us, so much here and so much God that could transform and change our lives if our hearts are willing to receive it. God, if our ears are willing to hear it, if God were willing to step out of the superficial, shallow Christianity that we're so accustomed to dwelling in and to dive deeper God to dive deeper into our relationship with you.

[00:01:56] That's that's the type of church we want to be. And that's the type of believer that we want to be. And so please God, may the seed of your word find fertile soil this morning in Jesus name. Amen. You can. You can sit down now. Hey, you know, we a number of years ago, I think I mentioned this to you before, but we had the privilege of going to Israel. We did kind of a combine trip. We did a Israel slash seven churches of revelation trip. Some of you might have been on that with us, by the way. Side note, I am talking with our people in Israel and God willing, will be able to have a trip there in 2023. So just keep that keep that in prayer. Yeah, but this particular trip that we were on, you know, we we wanted to be able to spend some time in Turkey to study the churches, the seven churches of Revelation. So we spent a week in Israel. It was great. And then we flew over to Istanbul. You guys know, if you've been to Turkey, if you've been to Istanbul culturally, it's just absolutely extraordinary. And then we visited the seven cities where those seven churches were. Of course, when those letters were written to those churches, there was there was no church edifice, there was no building. And so while we were able to look at old archeological artifacts, you know, really it was about being in the place of seven churches were out and doing the Bible study. When you're there in Turkey, one of the things that is required is that you go to a place where they make Turkish rugs. I don't know if you guys have ever like, watched a video on this, or maybe you've been to Iran or or to Turkey and you've seen this.

[00:03:38] But you know, we rolled into this place. It was a beautiful place where they manufacture Turkish Turkish rugs and they took us through the whole process. And it is an amazing, amazing process. Like the rug I'm standing on right here would have taken literally months to make and we don't we don't process that ourselves because we go into the store. We look at different rugs, we pick one, we buy it. We're a consumer oriented culture and a lot of times we don't know, like the whole background of what it took to make something like this, beginning with the silkworms in their cocoons and how they would take this big vat of water. And they would place these cocoons in the water. And then they would connect a thread of the silk to like a loom or a wheel, and they would begin to turn the wheel and it would unravel the silk from the cocoons to the to the place where you have, you know, I mean, literally hundreds of feet of of silk thread. And then we would move into then we moved into the room where there were these huge looms and these women sitting at these looms is faithfully thread by thread. Building these rugs just absolutely extraordinary. And then into the display room where there were all of these guys who are just throwing these rugs out extraordinary rugs, you know, worth tens of thousands of dollars. But really, the thing that stood out the most on this trip was the owner of this place who was straight mafia. I'm telling you he was like, he comes out, he's wearing this casual white suit with leather loafers, and I'm telling you, this guy was the boss, right? I mean, he comes out into the showroom and he is snapping his fingers and rugs are flying, you know, while we're drinking Turkish coffee and eating cookies and the dudes are like bowing down to him.

[00:05:32] It was just an extraordinary thing to really watch women in the back, in the rooms, working tires, tirelessly weaving these rugs together. And I felt like I felt like I was in the middle of a Scorsese movie, The Godfather, right? I'm like, I'm looking at this guy and he's like, kind of a little dictator. And he snaps his fingers and everything happens. He's kind of like a little God, a little mafia god that all these people bow down to. And, you know, sometimes I think that that's our picture of God. So sometimes, you know, if we're not careful, sometimes we have this view of God, like as if he's a dictator, as if you know, he is just ruthless and unconcerned and uncaring and unloving. And you know, that's a really dangerous view to have of God. God is not the godfather. He is our God and father. Those two totally different things. God is not the godfather. And some of you look, the truth is this some of you have had an experience with an earthly father that you projected over onto your heavenly father. And you know, there's God needs to deconstruct that. He needs to disassemble that because because your heavenly father is not who your earthly father was. And if we're not careful, we can have this view of God like he's the godfather. When in fact he's not, he is our God and father. No. Now listen, God knows what he is doing, even when it doesn't make sense to us. Do you believe that today? Do you know that even when we don't understand what God is doing, even when it doesn't make sense, even when we can't connect the dots, the truth is God always knows what he is up to in our life.

[00:07:18] And I say that to say this, our perception of God will determine how we perceive his handling of our lives. Our perception of God will determine how we perceive his handling of our lives. I'm just saying to you today, like theologically, we can acknowledge that God, in his omniscience, knows exactly what he's doing, but how we live that. Experientially is really going to be fundamentally connected to how we perceive the Lord, what our perception of him actually is. Do we see him as a dictator? Do we see him as an unconcerned father, someone who doesn't really love someone who doesn't have our best interest in mind vs. seeing him as the lover of our soul, seeing him as our heavenly father, seeing him as the one who doesn't just care about the multitudes but cares about us individually and has decreed a plan for our lives that he will faithfully bring to pass to the extent that nothing that happens in our life isn't first filtered through his loving hands. Look, I'm saying to you today that the contrast of those perceptions is going to dictate whether you live your life in fear or faith. Do you know what I'm talking about today? The contrast between those perceptions is going to dictate whether you walk around the mountain of why, whether your life is in orbit around the question. The unanswered question why? And like in an accusative way, God, why this and why that and how come and why not? As opposed to why not God? Why not look, you're in control? This may not feel good, but I know that you have a plan that you have a purpose. All of that is tied to your perception of God. You know, in addition to that, you, we can have this question.

[00:09:07] God, what is it that you're doing? And if our perception of God is that his dictatorial, that he is a tyrannical leader, that he is unconcerned, that he is unloving, that he doesn't have our best interest in mind, then you know that sense of God, what are you doing? Follows a sense of dread as opposed to a confidence, a steadfast confidence, even in those moments when what you're going through doesn't feel good, you know that God is good. Right. Even when what you're going through doesn't feel good, but you know that God is good. Some of us get stuck on that feeling part, right? We get stuck there and and we don't we don't move. We don't. I'm not going to say move past that because because even when you know God is good, what you're going through doesn't necessarily feel good. But you park yourself. You park yourself. You park your emotions. You park your hopes. You park your dreams and aspirations. You park everything on the character of God. Knowing that God in all ways is always good. This and this is the longest chapter in the Book of Genesis. And you know, frankly, I will say to you that it's an absolutely intriguing story. But when you think about the volume of information that's contained here, it would be easy to say, Well, why wasn't this kind of why wasn't this volume, you know, spent focusing on the creation story? Or why wasn't this volume more this volume spent on the life of Abraham or something like that? But there's there's real purpose in the story that's laid out before us, and I want to encourage you later on today to read this for the first time or maybe reread this story for the one hundredth time.

[00:10:59] But it it is just good and I want to I know we we kind of parachuted into the end of the story. Let me tell you what's happening here, Abraham, at this point, the Bible says, was all well advanced in age. He was fifty five plus ish. OK, that's what that's what Pastor John Weaver said today. And I do just want to say that there were a lot of you who are in the 55 plus ish bracket and I can tell just from the back to your heads. And you didn't even raise your hand when he when he asked for a show of hands, so. So Abraham was was in this category like times three. He was older, he was over one hundred and forty years old. And so as an aging man, he's looking at the son of promise Isaac, who was well over 30 years old at this time, and he's recognizing that his son needs a wife. If the promise is in fact going to be fulfilled, if Isaac was Isaac, Isaac's name mean if Isaac is in fact going to fulfill the promise, well, he can't do it on his own. Because remember, the promise included two things there was the material aspect multiplication of the nation to the extent where the descendants would be more in number than the stars in the heaven. And then, in addition to that, the spiritual blessing. We're going to talk about the difference between those two things birthright and blessing. The spiritual aspect was that Messiah was going to come through the lineage. Well, Isaac couldn't do that on his own. So Abraham is an old man. Recognize that that need needed to be met in Isaac's life. But he also knew that God said to him, God said to him, This land I'm giving to you and your descendants.

[00:12:38] And so Isaac could not take a wife from the people of Canaan couldn't be a cane. And I'd kind of like Christians don't marry non-Christians. Isaac could not marry a canaanite he had to have a wife from the family of Abraham. And remember Abraham left, Ehr left Mesopotamia, and he left his family back in the area of Mesopotamia. So what Abraham does is he commissions his oldest servant. We don't know who this servant necessarily was, but if Eliezer was still alive, it would be Eliezer. And in fact, most commentators believe that that's the case. He commissions Eliezer to go back to Mesopotamia and to find a wife for his son, Isaac. And I want I want to read this you verse 10 starting in verse 10. Check this out. You can swipe there or turn their. But if in fact, it is Eliezer. Eliezer like, man, OK, you know, whatever you say, because you're my master, I'm going to do it, but the guy really has no idea how this is going to work out. So this is his story. Check this out first. And then the servant took 10 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. Nahor is the brother of Abraham, 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 the servants not an idiot. He wants to make sure he's present when all of the women are present as well. And that happened when the ladies came out to draw the water. And then he lays this fleece before God.

[00:14:25] He says, Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, please let down your picture that I may drink. And she says drink and I will also give your camels to drink. Let her be the one you've appointed for your servant, Isaac, so he's a wise man. He prays to God. He has no clue what is going to happen here. And he lays out a very specific fleece for the Lord to fulfill, being wise enough to know that he wants a wife for his master. Isaac, who is courteous, has hospitality and has a servant's heart. And he goes on to say, and by this, I will know that you have shown kindness to my master and it happened right and it happened before you'd finished speaking. Like, You got to love the Lord in this. Next time you're in a difficult spot, I want to encourage you. The most important thing you can do is pray in that moment. Pray in the moment like the guy is not even done with the request. He's not even done with laying out the fleece, and God is already answering that. Behold, Rebecca, who was born to Beth. You will son of Milk, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her picture on her shoulder and the rest literally is history. So Rebecca, as God answers, this prayer is evident to the to the servant that Rebecca is the wife that God has chosen for Isaac. Now, listen, Isaac was for sure under a lot of pressure. We don't really think about this from Isaac's perspective, right? His birth had been improbable. It was a supernatural miracle. Think about what he's gone through. He was bound as a burnt offering and placed on the altar before the Lord and the Angel of the Lord stepped in and provided an offering in his place.

[00:16:13] Isaac knew that he was the fulfillment of the promise of God. He was the next link in the chain of that promise being fulfilled. And yet he was single. He was single. Maybe today you're single and there's a lot of pressure on your life will be encouraged today, probably less pressure than Isaac was dealing with as the fulfillment of the promise of God. But what was it that Isaac was doing? You think? Well, man, there's a lot of pressure here. Isaac Isaac had better be uploading his profile to eharmony dot com because because something's got to happen or it's like, You know what? What, what else can you do while he could be in the gym bulking up? And, you know, getting all cut so so that he at least looks appealing. But, you know, Isaac is not uploading his profile to eharmony dot com. He is not in the gym bulking himself up. He is keeping himself in the right place. He's chosen this one thing. He's chosen this one thing I would say to you, this one thing has to come before any other thing. It has to come before any other thing. What I'm going to say to you today is not an argument for inaction. It's an argument for the right action first. It's not an argument for inaction. It's an argument for the right action first. I'm saying to you today that what we're going to see from Isaac's life is so important that if you get it right, I'm telling you this is this is I'm guaranteeing you this. If you get this right, everything else will be right. Everything else will be right. What was it that Isaac was prioritizing? What was it that this one thing? What was the one thing that he was focused on? He was seeking the Lord.

[00:17:56] He was a man who sought the Lord. Look, clearly there was a promise that was given that Isaac was aware of that. He was to get a wife and start multiplying like the stars in heaven. That's a lot of work, right? I'm just saying. And that's going to take a lot of time. But what was he doing? He was trusting his father. He was trusting his father. He knew that his father had a plan. He knew that plan was being carried out. He couldn't see the details of how that plan was being worked out, but his trust in his father was demonstrated by what he was doing. What was he doing? He was meditating. Where do we find this man? You know, when all of this pressure is on, when all these things need to happen, when there's a promise to be fulfilled and things need to fall in place, what do we find Isaac doing? We find him meditating now. Now let me tell you something. Meditation is not a word that we hear a lot in Christian circles anymore. Is it? No, it's not. Let me answer the question for you. No, it's not. Why? Because in some sense, this is going to be a gross over generalization. But in some sense we're satisfied with the superficiality of rolling into church once a week and in some sense, feeling like that is satisfied the heart of God. And that's as deep as God wants us to go in our lives. And you know, nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing could be further from the truth. God, for sure, doesn't want shallow, superficial religiosity. Right. And the Cross of Christ, the Cross of Christ does not does not express that right. If God gave everything for you and for me, then then you would think our natural response would be God.

[00:19:43] The last thing I want to do is to minimize the beauty of your love by pursuing you in some superficial, shallow way. God, I want to go as deep as I possibly can, right? I want to go as deep as I possibly can, you know? C.S. Lewis in one of the books in the series of The Chronicles of Narnia. Illustrative Lee. He framed it like this that we are to go higher up and deeper in. We are to go higher up and deeper. And you say, Well, how do we do that? Let's just consider a couple of things. Do you guys want to do that? Do you want to hear the voice of God speak right? If you want to hear the voice of God, speak number one, that means you need to meditate on his word. You need to meditate on his word. Now, when I say that, you need to meditate on his word. I want you to think of a cow. All right. I want you to think of a cow. This might seem a little bizarre to you, but some of you just got hungry. OK, because I know it's lunchtime. I don't know if you know this, but a cow has four stomachs. And when a cow eats, what happens is this heat. I know you really came to church to learn all this this morning. But I will guarantee you you won't forget this, OK? So when the when the cow east grass, the cow chews the grass. And then at a certain point, swallows that grass and it goes into the first two stomachs. Just in case you want to know what they're called is the rumin and the reticulum. And that grass is digested there for a period of time.

[00:21:16] OK. And you know, what's happening is the grass is being broken down. The body is assimilating the nutrients. But but the cow is not done with that grass because as it sits in those first two stomachs after a while, the cow coughs the grass back up, like vomits it back up into its mouth. And that's thanks for coming to Calvary today. Like, you know, you're going to say I learned some of the craziest stuff at church on Sunday, but that's called the cud. So, you know, you've heard the saying like a cow is chewing its cud. The card is grass that's partially digested that's been vomited back up into the cows mouth. And so the cow chews on that grass for a little while longer and then and then swallows it, and it goes into the third and the fourth stomach, the Amaysim and the abomaysin. And so everything that can be distracted out of that food is being extracted by this elongated process. And I just want you to think about it like this when you're in the word of God. God is not God. If you want God to speak to you, it's not just going to come because you've glanced at a verse in the Bible. It's not going to come just because you've opened the book for a moment and you've checked the box and you've read something because it was on a schedule for you to read. God will still bless you. Don't get me wrong, and it is true that that is better than nothing. But God wants you to learn to meditate. God wants you to get everything that you can out of his word. God wants you to be in a place where you're able to say, You know, God really spoke to me, and I understand what the scriptures say because I've gone through this process.

[00:23:06] You know, it's not that you're dependent on a pastor every Sunday to tell you what it is that the Bible means you should not be. We should not have this codependent relationship right now. You can open the Bible yourself. And these are the four things that you should be doing kind of back to the four stomachs. There are four things that you should be doing when it comes to the scriptures. Number one you need to read and you need to reread, and then you need to read again. So you're not just reading superficially, you're reading the portion of scripture over and over again until it is partially memorized. You know, like David said, I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sinned against you. Well, how did David do that? He did it through scripture, meditation and memorization. So number one, you need to read and you need to reread. Number two you need to pray, the second piece of this is you saying, God, please reveal to me in light my eyes, I'm understanding. Show me, I'm trusting your Holy Spirit because your son said that your Holy Spirit is my teacher and your Holy Spirit dwells within me. And so I know that he is going to lead me and guide me in understanding what this portion of scripture not only means, but how I can apply it to my life. The third piece is You need to think so you need to read. You need to pray and you need to think you need to consider. You need to chew on the word somebody after a service that I've never really done that. Pastor, what does that even mean? Well, it doesn't mean I said this to him. It doesn't mean transcendental meditation.

[00:24:48] We talk about chewing on the word. When we talk about meditating on the word, we're not talking about transcendental meditation. We're not talking about nothingness to nirvana. We're not talking about becoming one with ourself or chanting a mantra. Or, you know, some people would say, well, meditation is manifesting your reality by speaking it into existence. None of those things are biblical meditation. None of those things are biblical meditation. I want to encourage you today not to combined worldly ways of meditating with what the Bible says about biblical meditation. In fact, meditation is an emptying your mind of everything. It's filling your mind and heart with God. And that's that's what we do when we when we read, when we pray and when we think, right, like I was telling this guy, I said, there's a lot of things that you think about and you give your your time and attention to start doing that with the word of God. Start thinking through particular verses. And then the final piece of this is application. You know, you can't walk away from your time in the world without applying it to your life. So you've read it the spirit of spoken to you. You've thought it through carefully. And now there's an area of obedience. There is a step of faith that God is calling you to take. There is something that God has shown you to do and and closing the circle means that you take that step or you walk in obedience. Let me give you an example. Remember, I'd encouraged you a couple of weeks ago to be praying. Ephesians Chapter five, verse 14. Do you guys remember this? Have you guys been doing it? OK, listen, make sure you do it. All right, and this is what that verse says.

[00:26:36] Therefore, he says, awake, you who sleep, a rise from the dead and Christ will give you light. That's what that verse says. Therefore, he says, awake, you sleep. A rise from the dead and Christ will give you light. So this is what you do. You read that. You reread it over and over again. Then you say, Lord, help you to understand this. Help me to understand this. Lead me and guide me in an understanding by the power of your Holy Spirit. And then you start thinking it through and it's like, Wait a minute, this isn't man's injunction. This is God's. It starts by saying. Therefore, he says, this is not. This is not as you're thinking about it and God's giving you enlightenment. Your understanding that this is something that God commands is an injunction from God, not from from man. As you read that verse, you're recognizing that there are those who are spiritually asleep. Otherwise, he wouldn't say awake. Those of you who sleep, there are those who are spiritually dead. Otherwise, he wouldn't say a rise from the dead. There are those who need to be spiritually resurrected. There are those who are living in a condition where they're separated from God because of their sin and they need to be born again, right? This is the process you're working through and then you get to the end in the end of that verse says. And Christ will give you light. You understand there's only one way to be spiritually resurrected. There's only one way to be wakened out of our spiritual slumber or that spiritual shallowness that we've been living in. There's only one way to get to get beyond the spiritual darkness that has clouded our life, and that is with the light of Christ.

[00:28:16] The Bible says in Psalm, one one blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law, he what? He meditates day and night. So number one, if you want that deeper walk with God, if you want to be in a place like we've just started this final section of star here. If you want to be in a place where you're really experiencing the Lord where you can say God has spoken to me. Number one, meditate on his word. The second thing is this You need to seek times of stillness. You need to. Peak times of stillness, I guarantee you, the vast majority of you today are thinking, Man, you know what? My life is crammed with too much stuff. I'm just too busy, I'm too busy. And what you see Isaac doing is you see Isaac getting time apart from the busyness of life and seeking stillness before the Lord. So stillness before God means to seize from your busyness for a time and release control of your life to him, right? It means that you're separating yourself from the business of your calendar and everything that you have going on and the noise, the noise that comes with the busyness of the culture that you live in and you are seeking times to be still before God. And in that stillness, you're laying your life in the hands of God and acknowledging that while you may not be in motion, God is God is moving. God is acting. God is faithful. You know, Americans are the busiest people on the face of the Earth, and we've connected busyness with value.

[00:30:08] There was a recent study by Harvard Business Law, and this was basically the conclusion they came to. They said that the vast majority of our culture believes that a person of high status is a person who is busy. Someone who is able to ascend the ladder of social mobility gets there because of the activity in their life. And so what we've done as a culture is we've associated success with busyness. We've associated success with busyness. And I just want to tell you today, I'm not making an argument for being lazy. For sure. You know that that's not the case. But I am saying to you today, there's not a direct connect between those things. And I'm saying to you today, there's not a direct connect between being busy and being spiritual because the Pharisees were busy, right? The Pharisees were busy, they were active. They had a lot going on. In fact, they were so busy about religious stuff that everybody attributed to them the highest spiritual value. And yet they were the ones who were the furthest from God. Like, you can't connect those dots. This is why God says in Psalm 46, verse 10 Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the Earth. So meditate on the word and have times. Have times where you push, pause, church, where you push, pause, look even in the morning when you're having your devotional time with God, which I pray to God, all of us have consistently every single day. You know, sometimes even in that place, as you're looking around at the house, all you see are different things that need to be done. Like, the busyness of the world is always clawing for your attention.

[00:31:57] And so we have to be disciplined to have times of stillness and not just stillness, but also solitude. Solitude is connected to stillness. I mean, the easiest example of this is Jesus himself. Jesus would get up early in the morning before anybody else was awake, the Bible says a mark chapter one verse thirty five now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, he went out and departed to a solitary place, and there he prayed. He knew that once the Sun rose and everybody was up, all things would be in motion. And so he was intentional about finding time alone with God, where he could be in communion with God. And let me just say if that was something that the Lord Jesus needed in his life. I guarantee is something that you need in your life. You need to have times of solitude. You need to have those times where you shut the technology up, wait, off. I thought some of you, I'm thinking, are going to think that I just told you to shut up, which sometimes you need to tell people to shut up in your life so you can focus on God. No, I'm just kidding. Don't don't do that. But you need to turn your stuff off to turn on to God. You need to turn your stuff off. To turn on to God. You need to separate yourself from the noise. All of the technology that we have, the technological inventions have mitigated meditation. So turn the phone off, turn the notifications off, turn the social media off. Don't have your devotional time with God while the news is running, I'm just saying to you that is the easiest way to distract yourself. And then in addition to that, I love how he went out into the field and if ever there was a time for us to get out of the urban setting and to connect with God through his creation, now are those moments.

[00:33:53] You know, we love to go to the ocean. And it's a it's a drive, you don't have to go to the ocean, you can go to Red Rock, you can go up to Mount Charleston and just let God speak to you through his created works. And you know, in that place, it's like, Man, God, you're amazing. You're looking at the vastness of the sky or the imovability of the mountains or the beauty of the trees. And it's like God on a macro scale and a micro scale. You are. You are beautiful to behold. You're created works. Declare your omniscience in your wisdom and your power and your mind. And you know, when you're in the urban setting, it's like you're not walking down the strip thinking, Man, God, you're so amazing. No, you're burdened your burden for the lost in the urban setting. It's like, man, you know how deeply people need the Lord. And there's a place for that, but you need to have times of solitude. Listen, while he was meditating while he was seeking solitude, and while he was separating himself from the busyness of life, he knew God was working. Isaac knew God was working. Focusing on spiritual activity does not mean that God is inactive. What what it means is this that we understand, like Zachariah said, it's not by our mind, it's not by our power, but is by his spirit. It's not by our busyness, it's not by our activity. We don't bring to pass the promises of God just because we're so well networked or we have such a great capacity now in those times where we're praying we are acknowledging God. Even in this moment, I may not be out doing, but I'm doing the most important thing.

[00:35:37] And while I'm doing the most important thing, I'm expressing my trust in you that you are handling all things in my life, even if I can't see what it is that you're doing. You know, back to the Turkish rug illustration. If I were to take this Turkish rug and I were to flip it over, you know, the pattern really would be unrecognizable. It really be difficult to see what it what the pattern really is until you flip it over to the right side. And then when you flip it over to the side that's supposed to be up, you see, it's unmistakable. Right? One side is unrecognizable. The other side is unmistakable. Our perception of this life is hard for us to recognize what it is that God is doing. God's perspective is totally different. Our perspective for us sometimes is hard to connect the dots. We don't know how God is going to get us from point A to point B. We don't know how it is that God is going to supply the resources that we need. We don't know how God is going to take this particular moment and bring it to pass and fit it into his divine workings in the rest of our lives. And while we understand that it may be unrecognizable to us, we know it is unmistakable from the perspective of God that God, in other words, knows everything that he is doing, and it is all working out, according to his plan. I think about Jonah in the belly of the whale. He is repenting while God is driving the whale to Nineveh. He didn't even know it. I think about Paul when he was in prison and his heart was to go to Rome. While Paul was in prison, he didn't understand that God was working behind the scenes so that ultimately Paul would not only end up in Rome, but he would have the opportunity to witness to those who were of the household of Caesar.

[00:37:25] I think about while Paul was on his way to Rome and the ship that he was on was shipwrecked and he was bitten by a snake. And while the snake was biting, he did realize that God was opening a door so that the island of Malta could receive the gospel. I think about David while David was a shepherd, and you know, he was out in the field protecting the sheep, and at one point in time there was a bear that attacked. At another point in time, there was a lion that attacked, and David could have never understood that the victory that God gave him in conquering the bear and in conquering the lion was laying a foundation for him to conquer the giant called Goliath. In fact, he looked back, and it was with hindsight because hindsight is 2020. Now I know what God was doing. Now I know what God was doing. God was preparing me. I didn't know it at the time because from my perspective, it was unrecognizable. But from the perspective of God, it was unmistakable. And as I look back now and I can see in a sense, the way that God saw the whole time because God knows the end from the beginning. I know now that through this victory that God gave me with the bear and the lion. He is prepared me for the moment that I'm faced with now, and he will give me the victory today, just like he gave me the victory. Then I think about, Yeah. I think about John, while he was exiled on Patmos, you remember John was exiled on Patmos and and while he was exiled on Patmos and he was in enforced, enforced solitude while he was exiled from the rest of the body of Christ on this island, chained to a guard 24 hours a day.

[00:39:10] What was it that God was doing? God was giving him the book of revelation. God was giving him a revelation that would bless the church for two thousand years, and that in that apocalyptic book, we would understand what it would be that God would ultimately do in the end times while he was isolated. While he was in that position of not necessarily being able to recognize what it was that God was doing from his finite perspective, not being able to connect the dots. What was John doing with the Bible says these are John's words himself. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, I was in the spirit, on the Lord's Day. In other words, John had walked with God long enough to know that even if he didn't understand why, why he was exiled on Patmos. Not only did God understand, but God had a plan. And so what did he do? He meditated. He meditated. He had enforced solitude. He had a time of stillness before God. And in all of that, he was simply expressing, God, I trust you. My my life is in your hands, no matter what I go through. I know that you are in control. I don't have to explain it. Listen, listen to me. I don't have to explain it. And you don't have to explain it either. You don't have to explain it, either. You know, sometimes we put this condition on following God and it goes something like this God, why have you done this in my life? And until you give me a satisfactory explanation, I'm not going to follow you the way that you want me to. God doesn't tell you that God doesn't tell you that. And he proved that because he never gave that answer to Jobe.

[00:40:48] It may be that those questions go unanswered not only your whole life, but for all of eternity. But I will tell you this God knows what he's doing, and there's not a single thing in your life that God is not using for his divine purposes. Right. And so so he's in the spirit, on the Lord Day, on the Lord's Day. And what is it that God is doing? God is giving him the book of Revelation. I want to encourage you today. Maybe this has been the question you've been orbiting around God. What are you doing? Don't lift it up as an accusation. Lift it up as as with great anticipation. God, what are you doing? Because no matter what it is, I know it's going to be good because you God are good and I am parking my life on that fact. And listen, listen, just to wrap up today, there's still more meaning, there's still more meaning the typology in this chapter is extraordinary. You know, as we read this, what we discover is Abraham sends Eliezer out to get a bride for Isaac, his son. A promise, right? Can we agree on that? Abraham sends Eliezer to get a bride for Isaac, his son, a promise. And yet and yet all of this is a foreshadow. All of this is a type that is looking forward to the work of the father, the son, the Holy Spirit and the gathering of the church. Because God, the father sends the Holy Spirit to get a bride. The church for Jesus, his son a promise. Abraham typifies the father. Eliezer typifies the Holy Spirit. Rebecca typifies the church and Isaac typifies Jesus. And let me tell you something that is what God is doing today.

[00:42:31] That is what God is doing today. God is getting a bride for his son. God is getting a bride for his son. You say pastor, pandemic and politics and Ukraine and Russia and all of this stuff and mandates. What is God doing? I say this is what God is doing. God is getting a bride for his son. And you better get on board, right? You better get on board. You better get on board for a hundred reasons, for 100 reasons. But but one for sure is this if you don't get on board with the purpose of God, you will live in conflict with him. If you don't get on board with the purpose of God, you will get. You will be in conflict with him. And when he does what he does in your life, if you're not on board with his purpose, you will have wise that will never be able to be answered, right? Because until we acknowledge and yield ourselves to the divine purpose of God in fulfilling the great commission, we will never be able to see the puzzle pieces of our life fit into his divine plan. We will never be able to live self sacrificially. We will never be able to say, You know what, God, if I have to go through this so that you can do that, it's OK. God, it's OK because I want to live my life as a sacrifice and the salvation of others is worth more than my personal satisfaction. God, I want to come out of the superficial, shallow Christian way of living. I want to take up my cross. I want to deny myself. I want to follow my savior. I want to live for these days that you have ordained because just like Aster said, just like her uncle, said Mordechai, who knows if God has not ordained you for such a time as this, right? And so, John, when he wraps up the book of Revelation, he does so with this declaration and the spirit and the bride say, come and let him who here say come and let him, who thirst come whoever desires let him take the waters of life freely.

[00:44:36] And father, we thank you God, that you have a beautiful plan that you are gathering a bride for your son. And we are so deeply privileged to be the bride of Christ. Father, we pray that you would help us to set this purpose as the purpose in our lives. God, we pray that you would lead us out of the spiritually shallow waters that we've been dwelling in. God, we pray that that that hunger and that thirsting to hear your voice. God, that desire to understand what it is that your words says God, for the moments in our life to have actual meaning and eternal impact, God use those desires within us to compel us farther when the flesh is fighting against the spirit that we would choose you. When the desires of this world and for the things of this world rise up within us, God that we instead would choose you. Today, as our eyes are closed and as our heads are bowed, no one is this have you put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ? The truth is that God loves you. God loves you and God invites you to come to him. You're not just another number. God is not like the godfather, some unconcerned dictator. God is the lover of your soul. He wants to be your heavenly father. He cares about you. And, you know, he has shaped you in a way that you will never be satisfied in this life until you find your satisfaction in him. Being satisfied. Having a relationship with God does not come through your religious efforts, it's not about you being busy in a religious way. It's not about your morality or kicking habits. It's about you humbling yourself and repenting of your sin and trusting in Jesus.

[00:46:53] And then when you do that, there's there's a miracle Christ will give you light, and Christ will give you life, and Christ will give you purpose. And Christ will give you hope. And Christ will bring order where there has been chaos. And Christ will lift the darkness that has been clouding your life and suffocating you. He will. Transform you. Today, do you need Jesus in your life? Have you been spiritually born again experiencing the resurrecting power of God? Today he offers this to you, and it is all contained in one single word, the spirit and the bride, they say Karma today you can come just as you are. And you can receive Christ and become a child of God, and so today, if this is you, this is the step of faith that you need to take. God is speaking to you right now. We've been meditating on the word the spirit of God has spoken to you. And now there's a moment for you to apply to say yes, to God, to be obedient, to receive Jesus Christ right now. If this is you, I want you to raise your hand today. Raise your hand. I want to pray for you this morning. You need to put your trust and faith in Christ. God bless you here in the front and in the back. On my right. Right here in the front. Thank you. Anybody else you come just as you are today? I see your hand in the center and over here on the right, in the back. Let God and I mean this. Let God do what he is desired to do. Let him touch your life. Anybody else raise your hand? I see your hand over here on my right. Thank you for raising your hand.

[00:48:46] Well, God loves you so much, see your hand over here on my left. I'll tell you right now, I just feel compelled to share this with you before I gave my life to Christ. I was locked into drugs and alcohol. I was in jail. God rescued me. God rescued me. And God can rescue you today. And I say that just because I know there's someone here and your life is so in your from your perspective, it's so messed up you feel so far gone so far away from God that you don't even think God can reach you. And that's not true. God can reach me. God can reach you. The Bible says that his arm is not too short that he cannot save. And so if there's anybody else raise your hand today, you need to trust in Christ. I see your hand. Thank you over here on my right, right here in the center. Thank you for raising your hand. You can put your hands down today, I want to ask as well, this is a strong challenge, but can we be honest today about this? Can we be honest? Some of us have been just dwelling in shallow waters. You are getting far less out of your relationship with God. Then he is intended. And it may be that in this place, you can pacify your conscience and check a box. But you know, you know that Christ did not die on the cross just so that you can experience as little as you are experiencing of of God. Today he has more for you. He has more for you. And this is a. This is a bold invitation today, because it means that you're going to have to be honest. And you're going to have to come to that place in your life where where a line in the sand is drawn, that you step over out of that shallow superficiality and into the deep relationship that God is intended for you.

[00:50:58] And so Christian, this this is for you. If you want that in your life as a believer, you want a deeper relationship, you want to go like C.S., Lewis said. Higher up and deeper in want you to raise your hand. Right now, I want to pray for you. God bless you. God bless you all. So grateful today for God's work in your life. It's good, it's good. Let's sees your hands in your heart so you can put your hands down and father, thank you so much. Well, God, we love you. Thank you for the moving of your spirit. We we prayed today in worship, inviting your spirit to move among us and to fill us. And truly, you've done that. And we pray now for these, that the steps of faith that will be taken today will be met. Will be met by the fulfillment of your promise as these today experience you in Jesus name, Amen.