

“The Call of Rebekah”

Genesis 24:58-67

Who does God call to service?

When we think about the people that God calls

We often might think of Abraham and Sarah:

“Go from your country & your kindred and your father’s house to the land I will show you and I will make of you a great nation’ Gen. 12:1,2

Or we might think of Moses talking to God through the burning bush:

“Moses...Moses...Here I am....Come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites out of Egypt.” Exodus 3:4, 10

Or we might think of the disciples Peter, Andrew, James and John

Who encounter Jesus on the shore of Galilee who calls them:

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19

These are giants in the faith and we often think of them

When we think of people God calls but the truth is

That God calls many ordinary people to do ordinary things

And part of God’s extraordinary plan for the world!

And the story of God’s call to Rebekah is one of those calls.

It starts with the call of an unnamed servant.

Abraham is about to die and he calls his servant and charges him with finding a wife for his son Isaac from the old country.

The servant hears this charge of Abraham as a call of God as he prays:

“O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and steadfast love to my master Abraham.” (Gen. 24:12)

The servant is never named in the story and yet he travels all the way

Back to Abraham’s home country in search of Isaac’s bride

And his prayer is evidence that he trusts in God and also

Evidence that his journey is part of God’s plan of grace

For Abraham and humanity.

The word *hesed* translated as “steadfast love”

is the Hebrew equivalent of the word “*grace*”.

This unnamed servant is called by God to be part

Of God’s unfolding plan of Grace- amazing.

And it happens in an ordinary way.

While the servant is by a well of water outside the city of Nahor

He again prays *“Let the girl to whom I say, ‘Please offer your jar that I may drink’ let her response ‘Drink’ ...that I shall know that you have shown you “steadfast love” (grace) to my master.”*

Of course Rebekah is that girl and responds with just that saying

“Drink my Lord. And lowers her jar ... and gives him a drink.”

Remember last week’s Gospel lesson from Matthew 10:42:

“And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple, none of these will lose their reward.”

It is eerie when the scriptures fall together in unexpected ways

But it is all part of God’s plan of Grace and we are all part

Of God’s call to participate in that Grace.

And so was Rebekah. She was part of God’s plan.

She was called by God to travel to a far away land

With a servant whose name we don’t even know,

To marry a man she has never met.

She still has to say “yes” and that’s where today’s

Scripture lesson starts:

“And they called Rebekah, and said to her,

‘Will you go with this man?’And she said, ‘I will.’

It’s a love story.

And I’m convinced that when we are called by God,

Really called by God, that it is just that- a love story.

I’m not just saying that because so many

of our Founder Day testimonies started with the words:

“I came to First Presbyterian Church because the girl I married or the boy I married was Presbyterian so I came and fell in love with the church and have been here ever since. And I love it.”

That's part of it but I think the true story is that when we are called
By God that it is not something that grows out of fear
of what might happen to us if we don't say 'yes'
but a joy of how full and fulfilled our lives will be
when we do say 'yes' TO God's call and plan
of grace/steadfast love in our lives.

Frederick Buechner defines the call of God as:

"Where our deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet,
we hear a further call."

When we are walking with God, in God's path,

according to God's plan, then it's easy to say yes. It feels right.

It feels like we feel when we are in love. Not that early

infatuation stage of love but the steadfast love

That is self giving and selfless- Agape.

Of course our love of God and our initial walk with God

May be like that infatuation love between a boy and a girl.

It's like my father's comment when Joan and I met when we were 13
and 14. After our families had eaten together and I got up to dry
dishes as Joan was washing the dishes my father commented. "I don't
remember Rob being quite so eager to do dishes at our house."

He was right but that turned out to be the beginning

of a life of service together in the love of God for the both us.

And it started with an ordinary task, 'washing dishes'

as Rebekah's call started by giving a cup of cold water to a stranger.

So it is in all of our lives.

God calls each one of us to share in his plan of grace.

And we know it when the yoke he gives us is not heavy

But is light and easy and provides rest for our souls.

So today I want you to take out your song "Jesus calls us"

On the bottom of the page is a half blank page.

On the top left I want you to write "My joys" and list all the things

That give you joy in life....

On the top right side I want you to write "world's needs" and write

down those things that cause your heart to ache...

Now I want you to start connecting places when your joy might

Connect with a great need in the world...

That is the place or places where your calling is.

Every one of us is called by God.

Every one of us is gifted by God.

We might think that our gifts are small or inconsequential

but there is no small gift in God's plan of grace for the world:

The offering of a cup of cold water to a thirsty person

May be part of God's plan of grace for the whole world.

It starts with prayer like the prayer of the unnamed servant

that God will use us.

It continues when we are willing to say 'yes' to God as Rebekah did

even before know the whole plan,

even when it means that we have to trust God,

especially when

And when we say "yes" to God's plan we have the opportunity to live

In God love and share God's grace and shouler a yoke that

Is neither burdensome nor heavy because it fits us-

It is the yoke of serving God which is light and easy

And provides rest for our very souls.

It is God's plan for us. Amen