

Dear Friend,

My dearest wife, Teresa, and I have just returned from our summer vacation. It was awesome! It's great to spend some time sitting by the water with the deepest decision of the day being, "What do we eat tonight?"

I can understand the longing in every heart for a place of peace and sanity in this ever-darkening world. Just as you, the natural side of me would like to spend the rest of my life in a beautiful place by the water. However, just as this newsletter says, the voice of God is calling me to go forward to a place of promise that He has determined for my days.

Upon arriving back in New York City, I walked down toward the efficiency unit where we stay when in the city. The street smelled like vomit, people were exhibiting behaviors that they should be ashamed of, and I was told that naked people were offering their bodies to be painted in Times Square. The contrast from where I had just been seemed like the difference between the waiting rooms of heaven and hell (if such things existed).

Yet it is here in New York that the Lord has determined to make my life a blessing for the sake of others. I thought for a moment, "There's no other place I would rather be. It's good to be home!"

Yours (and theirs), in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

SEARCHING THE HOUSE FOR A BRIDE

by Carter Conlon

"Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. 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 among 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'" (Genesis 24:1-4).

Abraham was the man to whom God had made the incredible promise: "I am going to bless you and multiply you, and through you the whole world is going to be blessed" (see Genesis 22:17-18). You and I know that the fulfillment of this promise was ultimately made through Jesus Christ and His Church, of which we are a part. As the Scripture says, we are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Although he had been given this promise, by the time Abraham was nearing the end of his life, all he had was one son born of faith—Isaac. He had another son born of human effort, Ishmael, but God said that son would not be an inheritor of the promise. Remember, the promises of God are supernatural and they cannot be achieved by human effort. And so in this passage, we see

that Abraham was searching for a wife for Isaac.

In order to accomplish this, Abraham turned to the oldest servant of his house—the one who ruled over all he had. Similarly, God the Father has sent His Holy Spirit to search out and prepare an end-time bride for His Son, Jesus Christ—starting in the house of God. Remember that this bride was to be part of the family of Abraham, for it says, "You will not take a wife for my son from among 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" (Genesis 24:3-4).

The supernatural strength found in Christ is available to all who want to partake of it.

As Abraham was living a supernatural life, so too would this bride be drawn from a place of the natural into the supernatural. That is exactly what God is looking for once again—a people willing to undertake a journey that will bring them out of struggling in the flesh to live a Christian life into the place of the supernatural where God says, "I will multiply you; I will bless you and make you a blessing. It will not

be by might nor by power but by My Spirit. I will do a work within you and cause you to become everything I have destined you to be.”

We made a grave error when we brought Jesus into our society and made Him like us—essentially making Him into a natural Savior.

This supernatural strength found in Christ is available to all who want to partake of it. However, they must be willing to follow the Lord rather than attempting to bring Him back to where they are. After all, the passage goes on to tell us, *“The servant said to [Abraham], ‘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?’ But Abraham said to him, ‘Beware that you do not take my son back there’”* (Genesis 24:5–6). In other words, do not bring Jesus back to a place of the natural and make Him like every other idea in the land. He is a supernatural God. We made a grave error when we brought Jesus into our society and made Him like us—essentially making Him into a natural Savior.

Abraham went on to say, *“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’”* (Genesis 24:7–8). In other words, “God will send a messenger before

you to prepare the hearts of those whom you will encounter. He will make a way for this bride to come to where my son Isaac is. However, the choice will ultimately be hers.”

So Abraham’s servant took ten camels and journeyed to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. As he stood by a well, he prayed a specific prayer: *“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. 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”* (Genesis 24:13–15).

Before he was even finished speaking, the answer came! There was Rebekah—the very bride who was appointed for Isaac. As we continue on in this passage, we see four characteristics about this bride that made her the perfect choice for Abraham’s son—which also apply to the Bride that the Father is now searching out for His own Son.

If we are not willing to walk morally clean, we will never know the power of God.

■ ONE WHO IS MORALLY PURE

“Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her” (Genesis 24:16). In other words, she was morally

pure. Sadly, many people in the Body of Christ today are not morally clean. They are looking at pornography; they are involved in premarital sex and all kinds of immorality. They still want the power of God in their life; however, if we are not willing to walk morally clean, we will never know the power of God.

As the apostle Paul said, *“Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God has both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power”* (1 Corinthians 6:13–14). The good news is that God is willing to give us the power to be clean. No matter how we lived in the past, all our sins have been covered by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. If we have received Christ as Lord and Savior, that means when God looks at us, He sees us as clean and pure; lovely and undefiled. However, we must not continue to live an immoral lifestyle when God is giving us the power to walk in purity.

■ ONE WHO IS UNSELFISH

“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, and ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels” (Genesis 24:19–20). The second characteristic of this bride was that when she saw a need, she was willing to give of herself in order to meet it. In other words, she was unselfish. This man had come on a long journey, and he had ten camels with him. Now a thirsty camel can drink thirty gallons of water in thirteen minutes. Since there were ten camels, that was three hundred gallons of water. Assuming Rebekah could carry about a five-gallon pitcher on her shoulder, that means she had to make sixty trips to the well! The

wells in those days generally had steps which led down to the pool of water. So Rebekah had to go down the steps, fill up the jug, come back up, pour the water in the trough, and then go back down the steps to fill up again. Repeating that sixty times was certainly no light undertaking! Yet, she did it not because of bribing or plotting but simply out of the kindness of her heart.

Do you truly know the heart of your heavenly Father?

In the same way, as the Bride of Christ, we cannot simply walk away from human need—no matter how inconvenient or what the personal cost. Nor can we just go to church or open the Bible and ask, “What’s in it for me today?” Our hearts must be full of the compassion of God that causes us to say, “What can I do to help people around me who are in need?”

■ ONE WHO KNOWS THE HEART OF HER FATHER

“Whose daughter are you? Tell me, please, is there room in your father’s house for us to lodge?” So she said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah’s son, whom she bore to Nahor.” Moreover she said to him, “We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge.” Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the Lord” (Genesis 24:23–26). Here we see a third characteristic of this bride: She knew the heart of her father. She was unashamed to be declared as his child, and she even boasted of his generosity.

And so my question for you today is: Do you truly know the heart of your heavenly Father? Do you fully understand how much God wants to give His Holy Spirit to those who

ask? Do you know how generous He is? Or when you are out sharing with people, do you feel as if you are constantly trying to eke out whatever little bits of kindness you can from God, thus making Him appear to be a stingy, begrudging old grandfather who does not actually want to give any inheritance to His children?

Oh, how Rebekah boasted of her father! “I am his daughter, and we have straw, food and room for all of you!” Imagine your child coming home with ten camels and probably at least twenty men, saying, “Hey, Dad, look what I found!” She really had to know the heart of her father.

I am reminded of a time years ago when I was driving my middle son back from a hockey game. My son had a couple of very hungry hockey players with him, so we all stopped at McDonald’s. Everybody proceeded to take out the little bit of money they had. I was standing in line behind them, and suddenly my son turned to his two friends and said, “Put your money away, guys. My dad will pay!”

You and I must be willing to boast of our Father’s generosity. But in order to boast of it, we have to know and experience it personally.

Now in those days, I was a pastor in a small country town and hardly made enough to pay the electricity bill of our house. I watched as the boys placed their orders—it was all “double-double, super-size me!” Yet I did not care if I had to dig into my gasoline fund for the next week—there was no way in my heart that I would embarrass my son.

The Scripture tells us, “If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him?” (see Luke 11:13). You and I must be willing to boast of our Father’s generosity. But in order to boast of it, we have to know and experience it personally. We must not only open our hearts to Him, but we must also be willing to walk with Him. The Father’s generosity is not given to those who choose to sit on the couch watching television all day. Yet, when you get up and walk with Him, the floodgate of heaven opens, and all the resources that Christ won for us suddenly become available.

This is exactly what happened when the servant saw the quality of Rebekah’s character. The Bible tells us that he *“brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother”* (Genesis 24:53).

■ ONE WHO CHOOSES TO FOLLOW

“We will call the young woman and ask her personally.” Then they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” (Genesis 24:57–58). Here we see that there was a final test and one more characteristic of this bride that we should take note of: She was willing to make the personal decision to follow where the servant was leading. In other words, she was willing to walk away from the familiar in order to obtain the promise.

When Rebekah said, “I will go!” they blessed her and said, “Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands.” This blessing was fulfilled—she was grafted into the lineage of Jesus Christ, and we are descendants of her through Jesus Christ. *“And may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them”*

(Genesis 24:60). In other words, we will have spiritual authority over all the plans of darkness that will come to try to steal, kill and destroy. God will fight for us; He will be our strength and our defense.

There is no power of hell, no lack, no past experience, no words that have been spoken over your life that can stop you from being all that God has called you to be in Christ!

Of course, just as Rebekah did, each of us must make the personal decision to follow Christ fully. It is a personal choice to walk in purity, to be available for the needs of others, to know the Father's generosity, and to be able to tell others about it. And so the messenger who stands before you, the Holy Spirit, is asking you today, "Will you be a bride that is fit for my Master's Son?"

The good news is that when you choose to go with God, everything that once had the power to hold you back must let you go. *"Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, 'The thing comes from the Lord; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the Lord has spoken'"* (Genesis 24:50-51). Laban and Bethuel represented the former authorities in Rebekah's life

that once held her back. Yet, now all they could say was, "We cannot say one thing or the other because this comes from the Lord." In other words, there is no power of hell, no lack, no past experience, no words that have been spoken over your life that can stop you from being all that God has called you to be in Christ! Every prison door must open; all old bondages have to let you go. All you have to do is get up and listen to the voice of God.

I will promise you one thing: You will have an incredible life when you choose to live for God. Yes, when you are determined to follow Him fully, there will still be difficult days. Yet, when you get to the end of your journey, you will realize that you would not trade a day of it, for you will have brought glory to the name of Christ. So do not be sold short of what God has for you. Let's all be part of the end-time Bride who glorifies Christ on the earth!

Carter Conlon
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CARTER CONLON

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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Prayer Service	
Friday	7:00PM	The Gate*	

*Youth and Young Adult Service

Live Webcast:

All our Sunday and Tuesday services can be watched live and replayed for seven days on our website.

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