

LESSON #6 - A WATERY SIGN - GENESIS 24: 10-27

COMING TO THE WATERS - A WATERY SIGN tells us that God wishes to bless the Christian house established in prayer. Husbands and wives need to hear His invitation, "Come all you who are thirsty."

THE PRAYER - Dear Lord, those of us who have been blessed with a faithful spouse give thanks. Those who look forward to a reunion in heaven with loved ones who have gone on before, praise Your Name. But we especially remember before you those who search for a mate. We ask, on their behalf, that they make a wise choice, blessed by You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

PARCHED HEARTS - Every couple that contemplates marriage expects to have problems; even as they don't believe it's possible to live happily ever after. Of course, we don't expect our marriages will be as nasty as that of Monique Mullen's. In 1994, she told a court of how, for three years, she had put up with her husband who had beaten, choked, raped, stalked, and threatened to shoot her. These abuses she endured. Monique's patience snapped when her husband threatened to kill the family dachshund. She corrected his error by stabbing him to death with a butcher knife. The reality is many marriages end up sad, because they begin sad - and without God or prayer. That's why The People's Insurance Company of China recently began offering marriage guarantee policies. If a couple divorces, they forfeit their premiums -- if they stay together for 25, 40, or 50 years, they gain substantial dividends. They expect to make a profit.

THOUGHT: When the Lord invites us to "come to the waters", He is talking about heaven, but He is also referring to life on earth. He wishes us to have a peaceful home where Jesus is a constant companion. "Coming to the waters" means that our Christian household restores us so we may deal with daily life. Those who know the advantages of a home where Jesus lives have a great desire to help the young find a good spouse and establish a Christian home of their own. Surprisingly, there is a story in Scripture which gives us some direction as how to make this happen. The questions which follow come from Genesis 24:

SCRIPTURE SEARCH - HUMANKIND'S THIRST

- v. 3 - What is Abraham concerned about?.....Finding a wife for his son
- v. 3 - What does Abraham's servant promise To avoid finding an unbelieving wife for Isaac.
- v. 4 - Where should he find a wife for Isaac? Among Abraham's people.
- v. 12 - What does the servant do in the search He begins with a prayer.
- v. 14 - What does he ask in the prayer?..... Success in finding the right girl.
- v. 14 - What will her willingness to draw water prove?.....She's had a proper upbringing.
- v. 16 - What does this verse say about her?.....She had a sense of morality.

THIRST FOR AN ANSWER: Obviously, there are many things in the above story which we could not do today. We don't send out "matchmakers" and most of our children won't allow one of our servants to pick out their spouses, sight unseen. Nevertheless, there are some good principles which can help the young and not so young, as they start their homes and marriages. Please answer the questions and feel free to discuss each point:

1. Do YOU think a parent should be concerned about a child's spouse?..... YES NO
Do you think a student wants a parent's concern? YES NO
How might we go about bridging the gap?.....Start at a young age talking about Christian values
..... Speak encouraging words about marriages that are working
..... Be supportive of YOUR spouse.
2. Abraham's servant began with prayer. What are some of the criterion that people use when they start to pick out a spouse? LOOKS INTERESTS LONELINESS TURN ONS
CARS FUTURE SMOOTH LINES HUMOR
3. Why do you think that most people wouldn't start their search with prayer?.....ANSWERS WILL VARY
4. What would be the advantages?Not separating God from that part of your life

**ISAIAH 55:1 "COME, ALL YOU WHO ARE THIRSTY, COME TO THE WATERS
GROUP BIBLE STUDIES - TEACHER'S PACKET - LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

-Trusting that He would be with you.
5. Might prayer make a difference in the kind of person you're looking for?..... YES NO
Why?You would be realizing there is a spiritual element in such a search.
6. Do you think God would bless the prayers of such an individual? YES NO
7. Do you think manners and upbringing make a difference in picking a mate? YES NO
How so? ANSWERS WILL VARY

Take a look at these people from Scripture and see what caused them problems:

2. SCRIPTURE SEARCH - DEEP DRINKING

TEXT	NAME	PROBLEM
Judges 14: 3	Samson	Wouldn't listen to parents/wanted a girl not of the people
1 Kings 11: 2-4	Solomon.....	Married adulterous wives
Acts 5: 1-11	Ananias and Saphira	Husband and wife who lied to the Lord

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION: -

Having looked at these Biblical individuals, we realize there is a common denominator here. Although being married to a person who shares your faith doesn't guarantee happiness, marrying somebody outside the family of faith almost certainly troubles the waters. We need to teach our young people that finding a Christian mate DOES make a difference. I'm sure the former girlfriend of Jim Harnsberger would agree with that statement. She thought Jim was OK. He was politically active, had helped found a local chapter of the Center for Family Values. In short, Jim looked good. Unfortunately, Jim had been married five times and had run up a great deal of debt (almost \$20,000) in child support. Further, his treatment of his girlfriend was hardly Christian. She quoted him as threatening: "He said he would cut me up into little pieces and throw me into the ocean and no one would ever know."

1. What do you think SHOULD be some of the advantages of marrying a Christian?
 - a. Faithfulness b. consideration c. care d. sacrificing love e. common spirituality.
2. List five special times in your marriage when you and your spouse shared Christian prayer:

1. Example: Sickness of a child	2. Birth of a child.
2. Before surgery	4. In thanksgiving.
5. Before job/retirement/change	
3. List four special times WHEN YOU SHOULD HAVE BEGUN SOMETHING IN PRAYER and didn't:

1. List could be the same as above.	2. _____
3. _____	4. _____

SHARING THE SAV(I)OR (If you have time in your lesson or wish to work at home)

This lesson suggests a very simple sharing: Pray together. When a husband and wife pray together, their children will be uplifted. Their problems will be put into perspective. Remember, when God says, "Come to the Waters", He doesn't want us to come alone. Bring somebody you care about...and who better than your spouse.

A FINAL STORY: There is a very successful business in Tokyo, which has an unusual specialty. In Japan, a bride and groom can 'lose face' if people don't show up for their wedding. To prevent that possibility, this company "rents" guests, who are paid to go to the wedding. Don't you think, that if we're going to invite somebody to our marriage, we'd do better praying for THE SPECIAL GUEST, Jesus, to join us?

THANKS FOR THE WATERS; Dear Lord, life is never easy. You have given us a way to escape some of those burdens by allowing us to come to You in prayer. Our prayer, this day, is to ask Your blessing upon our marriages and families. May they begin, continue and end in prayer. In Jesus' Amen.