

A CHANCE FOR LOVE

From the beginning of time, he knew he loved you. Before you ever existed, he longed for you and knew he was incomplete without you. It was a dream come true when you were born. He has spent your entire lifetime waiting for you to come to him. All of the sacrifices, all of the planning will soon be over. It was a marriage made in heaven. He is waiting for his bride.

I wish though, that I could describe my master's son to you. I could tell you of his wealth and the blessings he has to give, but that would not describe the joy that would be yours if you would but come to him. I could tell of the great promise that rests upon him, the only begotten son of his father, but I would rather explain his deep and abiding loneliness as he waits for his promised bride. I could express how his obedience to his father led him to willingly lie down upon an altar of sacrifice, but that would only touch upon his devotion to those whom he loves. If the gifts that await you would sway you, or the chance to walk with him into a promised land would move you, I would go into detail. But you just want to know what he looks like. I am asking you to leave behind all that you hold dear and familiar. To leave behind family and loved ones forever. To follow me to a place you don't know, to a land you've not seen, to a bridegroom you can barely imagine. No, I can't describe him. All I can say is that he is altogether lovely.

This is a conversation that could well have occurred between the servant of Abraham and Rebekah. She was called by the testimony of the servant and by faith to be the bride of Isaac. The servant was given great wealth and a great responsibility to bring back a bride worthy of the only son. Our responsibility to you as parents puts us in a very similar position to that of the servant. Loving our master and bearing the gifts of the Spirit, we try to persuade you to leave everything you hold dear to yourself. Leave behind your friends who will not fit into His world. Leave behind your manner of speech, the things you desire to eat and drink, the clothes you might want to wear, even the way you might prefer to wear your hair. Then follow us to a new land to be the bride of the Son of God. But you want Him described first. Until you meet Him face to face, how can we?

Coming face to face with God when He gave us the Holy Ghost was a life changing experience. Meeting God personally has the power to transform our life and yours. Adam did and the world was his to rule. Enoch did and was no more. Abraham became the father of a mighty nation. Moses found strength before the burning bush to confront one of the mightiest men on earth and stay alive. In a face to face encounter on the mountain, he was given grace to shepherd an ungrateful multitude for decades, all the while knowing he would not share in their promise. The list goes on until we come to the disciples of Jesus Christ. Then and now. It is only knowing who He really is that makes possible the total commitment He demands.

Knowing Him changes the way we live and look. You see, when we have been touched by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, we bear the marks for life. When He claims us as part of His bride, we are to be identifiable as His. We are to be a separate people, unmistakably His. It is a life long commitment we make, just as when we marry. We leave behind father, mother, family, and possessions. It is an act of separation from all that is familiar, the pain of which is understandable to any would be bride. And there is no place for regrets once we have begun. Luke 9:62 says, "No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom." Jesus instructed us in Luke 17:32 to remember Lot's wife, who died for the regret of leaving behind the things of this world. So we write to you about separation. About keeping yourself pure and holy for the coming of the bridegroom. We write about choices you will have to make out of love.

And we pray. We pray that you will allow the Spirit He has put within you to lead you as you face crossroads and decisions in your lives. We hope that whether one path or another will lead you

closer to God will be your test for the will of God in your life. That from love, you will put His desires before your own. We pray that God will find us blameless in our fulfillment of our responsibility to lead you into a personal relationship with Christ. That our example will not cause you to stumble. We pray that our own dedication to God will not waver, or our love for Him dim. So that on the day when we meet Him face to face, clothed in new bodies just like His, that our children will be beside us. On that day, we can smile, turn, and say, "This is the bridegroom we promised would be waiting for you. Isn't He lovely?"

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How anxious do you think Christ is as He waits for you, His bride? How anxiously are you awaiting Him coming for you?
2. In your own words, describe what you think He will look like. How do you think the bride will appear to Him?
3. Describe a land or country for which you would be willing to leave everything and everyone dear to you?
4. Do you think you could find happiness in an arranged marriage? Why or why not? Is our betrothal to Christ an arranged marriage?
5. Have you any real idea what Christ looks like? Does anyone in His bride?
6. If you were in Rebekah's shoes, what kind of assurances would you need to have in order to leave? What promises would you insist on before going to marry someone sight unseen? Would your concerns be purely related to the physical?
7. Write down the ideal characteristics, physical, mental, and spiritual of someone you might be willing to marry sight unseen. These can be shared with others or not as you choose. Do you choose your friendships with others based on any of these characteristics?
8. If God came down and met you, person to person and face to face, how might your life change? Would it change how well you think you know Him?
9. What does being "separate" from the world require?
10. Is it possible to leave behind friends, habits, pleasures, sometimes even family to walk with God and not look back with regret? Is there anything that helps ease the sense of loss? What is there to gain? What did Rebekah gain?
11. If you were assured that if you would only wait till they come, God would join you to the one perfect companion He has prepared for you to join in marriage, how long would you be willing to faithfully wait? How many years? How much of your lifetime?
12. Is the question of whether one decision or the other will lead you closer to God a good test of His will for you when facing choices?
13. If your parents, or your best friend, or your pastor, or anyone else that you feel is a true child of God should stumble and fall from grace terribly, how would that affect your relationship with God?
14. When you finally get to see the face of your bridegroom, how long do you suppose you will stare? How long will He? Do you think you will look back at that point with any regrets?