

**JACOB:  
A LIFE WITH HEAVENLY PROVISIONS**

**By Titus Chu**

**MESSAGE TWO:  
THE HEAVENLY PROVISIONS**

Verses: Gen. 24:1-67; 25:20-24

**CHRIST**

God has given several provisions for us to live a romantic life. In this message we will cover four of them: Christ, the church, the Spirit, and our spirit. To live a life with heavenly provisions, to generate a romantic Christian living, we must firstly follow the Lord. Then our experience will become extremely romantic. We will be able to tell the Lord, “Lord, I am so different from everyone else on this earth. Their lives are so dull and common. My life is so meaningful.” What does the president of a company have to look forward to after he leaves office? He may live a long time after retiring, but nothing on this earth can compare with what he once had. But as Christians we always have something to look forward to, because the One we are in love with is so wonderful. He is full of purpose, wisdom, power, personality, divine attributes, and human virtues, so that our life can become a life of enjoyment. We must realize that the One we love is inexhaustibly rich. Thus, our Christian life is so romantic.

When I was young I wondered what we would do in eternity. I thought there would be nothing to do. To live forever with nothing to do would be an intolerable life. But eventually I realized that Christ is inexhaustible. Because of who Christ is, eternity will be very romantic. In eternity we will be enjoying His riches. Christ will keep on unveiling His inexhaustibleness to us, for us to see how rich and how marvelous He is. Today our life is romantic. In the millennial kingdom our life will be romantic. In eternity our life will still be romantic. We will never cease to enjoy our inexhaustible Christ.

In our experience today Christ allows Himself to be easily “defeated.” In this way He is like water. When you fall into water, the water is easily displaced. But water can also be extremely strong. It can overwhelm you. Christ is like water. You can beat Him up. You can ill-treat Him. You can get mad at Him. You can forget about Him. You can offend Him. You can take Him wherever you want to go, even to sinful places. And Christ forbears. But once you look at Him, you find out that He is the living stream. He is a well of living waters. He gives you a rich life supply to meet all your needs. With this provision your life can become so romantic.

### **THE CHURCH**

Now we come to the second provision, the church. Ephesians 5:32 says, “This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.” If Isaac represents Christ, then Rebekah represents the church. If the husband is Christ, then the wife is the church. What is it about the church life that makes our life so romantic? Let us consider Genesis 24. I will read you a number of verses that will show you how marvelous the church is. Why is the church, and the church life, a provision for a romantic life? Consider this: if you only have Christ, you can never enjoy the romance in full. You must have Christ and live the church life. Isaac by himself was not enough; but Isaac and Rebekah together lived a very romantic marriage life.

### **THE SPIRIT’S SEEKING**

Firstly, the wife (the church) was prepared for the son by the father. You may consider this an ancient custom that you would never allow for yourself. Most children would not be interested if their parents told them they were going to arrange a marriage for them. But the church (Rebekah) was prepared by the Father (Abraham) for the Son (Isaac). As the church we are Rebekah, the one prepared as Isaac’s wife.

Abraham had many servants. But in Genesis 24:2 Abraham called the oldest servant in his house. This servant was probably as old or older than Abraham. For some reason, Isaac could not find a wife by himself. Do you realize that for four thousand years Christ could not find a wife? He married Adam but that didn't work. He married the Israelites but that didn't work. They could not really be His wife. So God called His "oldest servant", the Holy Spirit. God the Father told God the Spirit to find a wife for God the Son. Isn't this romantic? The way that the church came into being is not at all doctrinal. If you consider this matter from a romantic point of view, the Lord Jesus desired a wife. You and I are His wife. But how did we become His wife? God the Spirit came to seek after us, to find us, so that we could become the wife of Christ.

### **SEEKING US IN OUR ORIGINAL POSITION**

Even the seeking process is very romantic. Abraham's first requirement was that the servant go back to where Abraham came from, to his relatives, to Haran. He was to go back to Abraham's native country to find a wife for Isaac. Abraham charged his servant not to let Isaac marry one of the Canaanites, who were Gentiles. In other words, the church was found according to God's original creation. As human beings we all have two positions: before man fell, we were with God; after man fell we became flesh, that is, we became Canaanites. God sought the church not according to what we are today after the fall, but according to what we were before the fall.

Many times we see ourselves as Canaanites, as terrible sinners, evil, corrupted and in darkness. But God would say, "When I look at you, you are so beautiful, because when I made you in the beginning you were not ugly at all." God the Son does not need a fallen wife. God needs the original, a wife as she was before the fall. This is why the Spirit came. We are both man, and fallen man. We are "man" because God created us so; this is why we are qualified to be the church. We are also fallen man, so therefore Christ had to go through a process to save us so that we could become the church. Isn't this romantic?

Married women have two names, their maiden name and their married name. This makes a woman's life so romantic. Before the Lord, we all have two names. We all have two places. One place is in God's creation, and the other place is according to our experience. In God's creation we are prepared to be His bride. In our experience we have a lot of failures. When He considers the church, God does not focus on our failures.

According to Genesis, the oldest servant went back to the place that Abraham came from. In God's creation, the Spirit came to our place of origin to look for us. When the Spirit looked for us, the Spirit did not look for us as a sinner but as a counterpart of Christ. The servant took ten camels loaded with riches, and with many servants. Then when he came to his destination he prayed. In other words, the Spirit had a counsel with God, saying, "God, I don't know whom you have predestinated. I am looking for those You have predestinated. So God, how about making them manifest to Me?" He prayed this prayer by the well. He asked God to show him who Isaac's wife should be by a sign. "If a young girl comes along, I will ask her for a drink. If she gives me a drink, and offers to water my camels also, then I will know this is the one You have prepared for my master's son." In other words, God the Spirit was praying to God the Father, asking Him to manifest who should be the bride for God the Son. This prayer seemed impossible, yet it became possible because of Rebekah's willingness.

This portion of the Bible is impressive. It shows us that no one is forced to be saved. No one is forced to become the church. Everyone who is saved and becomes the church does so out of their own willingness. No matter how strong a person is or how much a person resists God, at the moment of salvation everyone is tender. Everyone at that moment has the feeling that they would like to be saved. It is out of their own choosing. Even before the servant's prayer was finished Rebekah came with her jar, and he asked her for a drink. She was very willing to give him water and even offered to water his camels also. Salvation comes to us in this way. Everyone's salvation is a romance. It is beyond our imagination. Some people were

convinced that there was nothing else to do but believe. Consider all the testimonies we have heard. When they got saved, everyone in their conscience knew that they just wanted to be saved. There didn't have to be a reason. Salvation was something romantic.

My experience was that I preached the gospel to myself. I met a relative of mine, a good friend, who told me he had gotten saved. I couldn't believe that a modern, educated young man would believe in that kind of religion. So I began to rebuke him. He tried to tell me that there is a God and that I must believe in Him. But I kept saying there is no God. Eventually I won the argument. He told me, "I cannot win in an argument with you. But I believe in God and I will not change." As I rode home on my bike, I asked myself this question, "Is it true that there is no God?" Then my conscience said, "No. There is a God." That is why I got saved. I didn't get saved in that moment. But that is the reason I began to look for a gospel meeting. When I found one and walked in, I got saved.

Many people say that they were saved because of someone's preaching. I don't believe that is possible, because people are too complicated. They were saved only because there was a willingness within them. They may not know what happened to them, but they just had a desire to believe in the Lord. This is because our God is romantic.

**OUR APPEARANCE:  
FAIR TO LOOK UPON AND UNDEFILED**

Genesis 24:16 describes Rebekah as very beautiful in appearance. She also was a virgin who had not been known by any man. These were the facts. She was beautiful, and she was a virgin. But this is actually a portrait of everyone who believes in the Lord. The way the Lord looks at us and the way we look at ourselves are two very different things. We see ourselves as sinners. The Lord sees us as beautiful. We see ourselves as contaminated and corrupted. The Lord sees us as a virgin. This is the church. We can say that the church is a constitution of

sinners. If we weren't sinners we wouldn't need salvation. But while we condemn ourselves for being sinners, the Lord would say that we are very fair to look upon.

“To look upon” means “to study.” The more we study a person who is genuinely fair to look upon, the more we realize how beautiful they are. This is how God sees us as the church. We consider ourselves as sinners, but the Lord sees us as ones beautiful to look upon. The Lord likes to look at us. The more the Lord looks at us, the more He is satisfied. We don't like to look at ourselves because the more we look, the more we get frustrated and condemned. We may not want the Lord to look at us because we consider ourselves dark (S.S. 1:5) and don't want to be exposed. We know that something is wrong with us. But the Lord looks at the church in such a romantic way, seeing us as so beautiful to look upon.

Consider how the Bible talks about Rebekah. She was beautiful in appearance, and she had never been defiled. She was a pure person. In the sight of God the church is pure, beautiful and fair to look upon. The Lord is satisfied when He looks upon us. Even after my salvation, I must have told the Lord thousands of times, “Lord, I'm sorry. I'm sorry that I have so many shortcomings and weaknesses.” At different stages in my Christian life I have had different kinds of weaknesses. Many times I have told the Lord that I am sorry about all my decisions. It seems that everything I handle gets messed up. But when I tell the Lord these things, I can sense the Lord just looking upon me and saying, “How beautiful you are today.” You may tell the Lord that you just made a mistake. But the Lord sees you as one who has never been defiled or contaminated. This is the church. The church has been found by God the Spirit, in the original place where God created us. And the church is treated as one who is very fair to look upon, and has never been defiled.

After finding her, the servant asked Rebekah her name and her family. When he found out who she was, he gave her a golden nose-ring and two golden bracelets. Then Rebekah brought the servant to her home to eat with her family. Before the meal he

told them his business. He said, “I am Abraham’s servant. And Jehovah has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great. And He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and male servants and female servants, and camels and donkeys. And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master after she had become old. And he has given all that he has to him” (Gen. 24:34-37). In other words, all the wealth of the father belongs to the son and is ready to be inherited by his wife. As the church, not only are we beautiful, but God has been preparing for us to enjoy and inherit all the unsearchable riches of His Son.

### **OUR WILLINGNESS TO FOLLOW**

The servant then asked that he be allowed to take Rebekah back with him to marry Isaac. Rebekah’s father and brother gave their consent. The very next morning the servant decided it was time to go. If we consider how old the servant was, we would think that he would want some time to rest. And humanly, Rebekah would need some time to say goodbye to her family. But the servant would not be delayed when the family urged him to stay longer. So eventually the family said, “Let’s ask Rebekah whether or not she is ready to go.” This part is very touching because she was willing to go. The night before she had been fetching water for the servant and the next morning she was ready to leave.

Sometimes I tell the young sisters not to worry so much about finding a husband. You may not know where he is now. But when he shows up it will only take a day. There is biblical truth in this. You don’t need to worry about who your counterpart is because it only takes a day. It takes one evening to see the other party, and the next morning you can get ready to go. This is a picture of the church. The church, portrayed by Rebekah, departed from all the old relationships. Why is the church life so attractive? Because the church is an entity unto herself. Everything old just disappears. “My parents, my siblings, my home, my possessions, everything can be dropped just like that, because I am willing to go where God has called me.” This is how we should follow the Lord.

### **BECOMING A COMFORT TO CHRIST**

The servant and Rebekah then went to Beer-lahai-roi, where Isaac was in his mother's tent. Isaac went out in the evening and saw the camels coming. When Rebekah saw Isaac, she got down off her camel and covered herself. Then the Bible says, "And Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother. And he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted after the death of his mother" (Gen. 24:67). In other words, Christ without the church can never be satisfied. Christ can only be satisfied when the church is with Him.

We must realize that we are Christ's satisfaction. We can say, "Lord, I have many limitations, but You see me as very fair to look upon. And Lord, I'm full of shortcomings, but You see me as a person who is undefiled. You want me to be with You, even as a comfort to You. You even testify that only when I am with You are You satisfied." This was Isaac's experience. When Rebekah came, he was comforted. The tent of Isaac's mother Sarah represents grace. When Isaac took Rebekah into Sarah's tent, that means they were covered by grace. It is in the realm of grace that the church comforts and satisfies Christ's heart.

Consider the church in the light of this story. First, God the Spirit sought us. Second, He sought us in our original position, before the fall. He sought us not as we are now, but as God's created man. Third, He considers us very fair to look upon, and undefiled. Fourth, He works in us so that we are willing to follow Him so that we can be the church, His wife. Finally, when we see Christ, He brings us to His mother's tent, which represents grace. Then this grace covers both Christ and us. Christ enjoys us, and we enjoy Christ in His grace. In this way Christ's heart is comforted and He is satisfied. This shows how wonderful the church really is to Christ.

### **CHRIST'S WORK TO PRODUCE THE EXPERIENCES OF THE CHURCH WITHIN AND WITHOUT**

After gaining us to be His bride, Christ begins to work with us to produce the experiences of the church. This takes place both within the church life and outside of the church life. Within the church life this work is very interesting. After Isaac and Rebekah were married they did not beget children for twenty years. Eventually Isaac entreated Jehovah because Rebekah was barren; then Rebekah conceived. After she conceived, she began to feel the two babies struggling within her womb. So she asked Jehovah what was happening. What God revealed to her is a picture of the church life.

In the church life there are two kinds of experiences going on all the time. One is in the principle of Esau; the other is in the principle of Jacob. One is in the principle of natural strength; the other is in the principle of a desire for God and His blessings. Consider how beautiful the picture in the previous chapter was. The Spirit came and sought us out and we were willing to follow. God saw us as so fair to look upon, without any defilement. And eventually Christ took us into grace, into His mother's tent, so that we and Christ could be mutually satisfied. We became the comfort of Christ's heart. The church in this picture is truly marvelous. But the church life in our experience is also marvelous. Our experience of the church life is romantic. Our thought is that after such a wonderful salvation we should all be angels from now on. As we shall see, that is not the case.

### **THE CHURCH LIFE AS TYPIFIED BY REBEKAH'S WOMB**

In this picture, the church life is typified by Rebekah's womb. That very womb produces all kinds of Christians, and these different kinds of Christians struggle with one another. Genesis 24 shows us the positional church. But the struggling between the twins shows us the practical church life. Without this struggling our life would not be romantic, but dull. If everything is perfect after we are saved, that is a boring life. God knows that we don't want a boring life. He is a romantic God.

In the church life there are always fights and arguments. Some may not be able to believe that even elders and leading ones can fight with one another. But as long as there are Christians there will be fighting. If you consider Jacob and Esau, it is difficult to say who was right. Esau didn't do anything wrong. From the beginning he was stronger, so he pushed Jacob aside and came out first. His hobby was hunting; there was nothing wrong with that. When he was dying, he sold his birthright for stew. If he were truly dying, the sonship would be of no value to him. He may have thought that if he lived, he could just fight to get it back. Eventually he was cheated by his brother out of his father's blessing. Yet many years later Esau was still nice to Jacob when he returned. Esau seems to be a very sympathetic character. But the Bible says that God hates him.

Hopefully we are beginning to realize that the church life is very romantic, because the church life is filled with frustrations. In the beginning of our church life there is struggling. Even after we become more mature there is still fighting going on. If you go to visit an older couple in the church and overhear them arguing, don't be bothered. This is the romantic church life. Rarely do we consider the church life as God's provision. Instead we expect it to be a paradise. God did not give us a paradise. God gave us a romantic provision for our growth, for our living, and for our enjoyment. We should enjoy the church life because all kinds of romantic things happen.

Saints have come to me with all kinds of problems that I don't know how to handle. But this is the church life. It is so colorful. Remember this when you are young: if you want to love the church, to live in the church life, realize that you can be both Esau and Jacob. There are all kinds of people in the church life to make your living so romantic. In the church life you cannot get away from the brothers and sisters. Even when you take a vacation they can find your phone number and call you. This makes your life romantic. The church life is 25 hours a day, 8 days a week. For some reason the Lord is able to fit extra hours into the church life. So many things happen; so many different brothers and sisters, older and younger, are all crushed together

into one womb. Every move you make you are always in someone's way. The church life is so alive because it is constituted with all kinds of personalities. There is no life more romantic than this. All other lives are peaceful, but the church life is romantic. To be an engineer or a professor cannot compare with the church life. In the church life your labor may not be recognized today, but it will be valued in eternity.

You may ask why there are so many problems in the church if we are fair to look upon and undefiled in the sight of God. But after some time in the church life you will realize that you are both Esau and Jacob. You have both the natural strength and the healthy spiritual desire. The problem with Esau is that he thinks he is Jacob and that the other person is really Esau. This is why the church life is so romantic. In the church life everyone thinks that they are Jacob, but actually everyone is Esau. When you point your finger at Esau, you have to realize that the one accusing Esau is also Esau. For this reason everything is extremely complicated.

This is the church life, but this is also the Lord's provision to us. We can gain so much growth in the church life, even when all the saints seem to be Esau, or even when we realize that we are Esau.

If we try to escape and live a peaceful life, eventually we will become bored and want to return. Often in our experience we look forward to going on a vacation and getting away from the church life. But after only a few days we are ready to return home. We would rather go to meetings where every day the saints are different. One day a brother is like an angel. The next day he is a "devil junior." One day a brother comes to the church meeting singing and praising the Lord. But then the next day he comes to the church meeting upset and depressed. The church life is so precious because it is so colorful. This is what makes the church life so romantic. We would not give up the church life for all the world. Some of the tears we shed in the church life would never have been shed anywhere else. The value of those tears is so precious to Christ. Some of our joys in the church life

could never be found any place else. This joy is so genuine, so real and so lasting. The church life is a wonderful provision for us to live a romantic life.

### **THE CHURCH LIFE BEING FULL OF OUTWARD DIFFERENCES YET ONE IN CHRIST**

The church life contains all kinds of brothers and sisters. Our typical concept of what the church life is or should be does not exist. Some of the hymns that we have on the church life are only good for singing. If we expect the church life to be like those songs, we are in trouble. For example, we can sing about unity now but the real unity will not come until the New Jerusalem. The church life is filled with experiences of being pushed. The world does not push as hard as the church life. In the church life we are constantly pushed to search for Christ. Often brothers that dwell together rub against one another. It is rare for the brothers in a brothers' house to be in unity. Corporate living is an excellent place to be rubbed by the saints for our transformation. Sometimes the true oneness comes, but it doesn't last long. Even among older brothers it is rare to find those who are really one.

Quite often one brother will refuse to do what another brother tells him to. And other brothers who are involved just sit there, not knowing how to handle the situation. These brothers are like the two twins in Rebekah's womb. They are all together in a small womb, and every move they make will hurt someone else. Yet they have no choice except to move, because the life within them causes them to move. On one hand we do not see much genuine oneness among the saints in the church life. However, there is a different kind of oneness that we do possess, which is the oneness of remaining in the church life no matter how much we rub against one another.

In the past, there have even been very difficult meetings that contained accusations and bitterness. Yet even through those meetings the Lord was able to add some saints to the church life.

One brother came to a meeting that was filled with arguments. He realized that if these people could argue in such a way and still not leave, then this must be the church. It was as if the Lord arranged the entire meeting to gain that one particular brother.

The church life is so romantic. You may be angry at a brother for some reason, so angry that you are determined to “let him have it” the next time you see him. But it just happens that when you see that brother you are in your spirit. You may wish that you were in your flesh so that you could blast him. You may have spent days working yourself up over what that brother did to you. But when you are in your spirit, you cannot be angry. You realize how lovely that brother is. You may not even understand why your anger has just disappeared. This is the romantic church life.

The church life is a very small place. It is just the size of Rebekah’s womb. We are all squeezed in there, kicking one another, fighting one another. We should thank the Lord for the church life, and for all the different kinds of brothers and sisters in the church life. We all are so different. Some of us are “square,” some of us are wild, some of us are strong, some of us are reserved. But the Lord is building us together. We may think the Lord is crazy to use such different “shapes” to build. A physical wall must be built from bricks all made from the same material and in the same shape. Yet in the church life our dispositions are different, our backgrounds are different, our character is different, our logic is different, and our education is different.

Everything about us is different, but we all have one thing in common, and that is the life of the Lord Jesus. The Lord is building us together. There is nothing more romantic than this. We must be in the church life to enjoy this universal romance. Whether we like it or not, whether we appreciate it or not, when we are in the church life our living becomes romantic. As we have seen from Genesis, God the Father sent God the Spirit to find a wife for God the Son. This means that God the Spirit went out to do the will of God the Father, while God the

Son waited in the realm of grace to share that grace with His counterpart. We are the sinners, typified by Rebekah, who were brought back to our original position, the position of God-created man before the fall. From the Spirit's point of view we were undefiled and fair to look upon. Eventually out of our willingness, through the work of the Spirit, we were married to the Lord Jesus and became the church, His counterpart. In the realm of grace we became His satisfaction and comfort. When we first loved the Lord we didn't know how romantic our life would become. Now that we are in the church life our existence has become so romantic!

### **PRAYER**

“Thank you, Lord, that You brought me into the church life, with all kinds of brothers, all kinds of sisters, all kinds of differences, all kinds of cultures, all kinds of ideas, and all kinds of personalities. Praise You that we are all still one Body in Christ. Together we can be a comfort and satisfaction to You. Together we can enjoy the grace that has been prepared for us. Thank You, Lord, for making our lives so romantic!”

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REBEKAH COVERING HERSELF BEFORE ISAAC**

Question: When Rebekah met Isaac, why did she cover herself?  
Answer: Rebekah did this as a picture of the church, which always stands in submission to Christ. That covering was the testimony of her submission. When Rebekah saw Isaac, she did not know who he was, so she asked Eliezer, “Who is that man?” When she found out it was her husband-to-be, she covered herself to show her submissiveness. She covered her hair so that she would not let her beauty overcome her husband's.

In modern weddings the focus is usually on the bride. It is that the bride that gets all of the glory. The bride wears a beautiful gown and is the center of attention. However, with Isaac and

Rebekah it was different. On their wedding day it was Isaac, the groom, who gained the glory, and not the bride Rebekah. According to Genesis 24:61-67, Isaac was so joyful, and brought Rebekah to his mother's tent. And Rebekah, in turn, was so submissive, following her husband's lead. She did not gain the glory; rather all the glory went to her husband.

We can apply this picture to our relationship with the Lord. Very often we compete with the Lord. We should ask ourselves, "Who gains the glory?" In the meetings, in our testimonies, and in our activities, we usually make ourselves the focus. We are the ones who gain the glory. Even if we get one person saved after years of barrenness, we must give a glorious testimony that impresses people. We quickly rob the glory from the Lord and give it to ourselves. This is not in the principle of Rebekah covering her face. We should be as Rebekah was to Isaac, submissive to the Lord and always desiring that He get the glory.

Message given during  
the 1998 college training

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