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Sermon Notes

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## **How God Provides Spouses for His People**

### **Genesis 24**

Introduction: A Parable about a Garden

by Douglas Wilson *Her Hand in Marriage*

As my horse trotted wearily up the road, I could see the walls of a beautiful garden ahead. Outside the gate was an equally beautiful woman. At the sound of my greeting, she turned and dropped a curtsy. "Good sir. . . good morning."

I looked at her, and then at the garden walls extending out to the right and left. Behind her was the garden gate.

I said, "I am very thirsty. . . for something clean."

She smiled, and her smile made me thirstier still. But she said nothing.

"Is there water here?" I asked.

"There is a stream within my garden." Her statement was simply a statement of fact; there was no invitation at all in it.

I asked, "May I come in and drink?"

"No," she said. "The lord of my mother's garden does not permit that."

"Why is this? Other women have let me drink from the gardens that they tend." I glanced at the fruit-laden branches which were visible over the top of the garden wall. "You have a lovely garden, but those who let me drink had gardens just as beautiful"

She laughed at this, and her laugh was merry indeed.

"I have no doubt that you have been in some lovely gardens. But was the water clean?"

"No," I said, and in spite of myself, turned my head and looked down. She continued with a question. "Is that why you are no longer in the gardens tended by these women?"

I was ashamed so I did not answer her. Instead I looked past her into the garden. The path through the gate disappeared after a few feet, leaving the view of anyone on the road.

"It seems like a shame for such a garden to go to waste."

She seemed both puzzled and amused. "How does it go to waste?"

"Does any man drink from your stream?"

"No, but no man fouls it either."

"But is that not a waste? Was not your stream made to quench the thirst of travelers?"

"I'm afraid you are seriously mistaken. It was made to quench the thirst, not of travelers, but of the lord of the garden."

"Oh," I said, "This garden has a lord?"

"No," she said.

"Then I don't understand. Are you speaking in riddles?" She smiled. "No, I do not. The garden will one day have a lord, although it does not yet. The stream is for him alone."

"And who will your lord be?"

"When my mother's lord gives a-blessing, the one whom I appoint."

"How can the lesser appoint the greater?"

"How can it not be so? When my lord comes, I will grant to him my garden. But until I do, he is just another traveler."

"And what do you look for? I am sure there are many who knock at your gate."

At this she blushed slightly but looked straight at me. "I will not have a lord who does not have a lord himself – my lord must have taken an oath of fealty to the Landlord."

"The Landlord? Who is he?"

"He is the owner of all the gardens along this road. In order to come into my garden, my lord must take an oath before the Landlord to tend the garden well. He must also swear that he will enter no other garden."

I had never heard such words as these before. "How long must he stay out of other gardens?"

"Forever."

"But what if he is born to travel?"

"Then he is not born for my garden."

"I see," I said, becoming a little angry. "Then why have I never heard of such an oath? I have been in many gardens."

"Yes, you said that before. But was the water clean? Were the gardens tended? That is what happens when there is no oath."

"So that is all? If someone takes an oath before this Landlord, you will make them your lord?"

"No."

"Well, what else then?"

"There are many men who think they can tend my garden well, and who would be willing to swear an oath before the Landlord saying so. But that does not mean that my mother's lord, or I, share their

confidence."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I know the extent of the garden. I have a knowledge of it that cannot be gained from the road. But no man can share that knowledge until after I have made him my lord and husband. So I must have the measure of the man before. "

"So what must a man do? It seems like much work."

She smiled once again. "There is much work. There is also much fruit."

"So what must a man do?"

"The first thing is to-"

"Yes, I know; He must swear to the Landlord. But after?"

"He must return to me, and ask to see my mother's lord."

"And what would he say?"

"That depends on the man." At this parting comment, she turned and walked slowly back into the garden, pulling the gate closed behind her. I spurred my horse, which began to trot down the road. I did not know what to think, but I needed to find this Landlord.

***Song of Solomon 4:12 A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a spring locked, a fountain sealed.***

After marriage, she invites her husband to enter her garden and enjoy all of its delights... they are not just in terms of sexual pleasure, but all of the privileges and benefits she has been preparing to lavish on her husband:

***Song of Solomon 4:16 - 5:1 Awake, north wind, and come, south wind! Blow on my garden, that its fragrance may spread abroad. Let my lover come into his garden and taste its choice fruits. <sup>NIV</sup> Song of I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk.***

This parable reminds us it seems of a day gone by... a day in which daughters were protected by their fathers and held in special purity until they were given in marriage

A day when the father stood up and answered the question: "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?" with the sweet culmination of all his efforts for years and years: "I do. Her mother and I have shaped and prepared this precious gift for this man. We have protected her chastity and can vouch for her purity. Furthermore, we have thoroughly investigated him. We have found him mature and godly, fully ready to support her and the children they will bear together. We deem that he will lead her and be a godly, Christ-like head to her. Therefore, trusting in the Lord, I give her to this man to be his wife. Henceforth, she will submit to his godly headship. She will be his."

Those days of courtship and purity and protection seem to be gone forever... but I believe they are not!

## I. God's Gift to Isaac: Rebekah

Three weeks ago: We described this account in some detail

- A. Abraham Charges and Commissions His Servant (vs. 1-9)
- B. Abraham's Servant: Journey and Model Prayer (vs. 10-14)
- C. God's Providential Answer: Rebekah Waters the Camels (vs. 15-27)
- D. Rebekah's Family Learns of God's Providence (vs. 28-49)
- E. Rebekah and Her Family Submit to God's Providence (vs. 50-60)
- F. Isaac Marries Rebekah (vs. 61-67)

## II. A Critique of the Modern Scene

### A. Recreational Dating Assumed

Dating is just assumed in today's culture...

It seems as normal as apple pie and baseball and learning how to drive

Some families consider themselves especially moral if they won't let their kids go on dates until they're sixteen or seventeen

What is recreational dating? The practice of members of the opposite sex who are unprepared and/or unwilling to be married spending intentional time alone for the sole purpose of recreation. Part of this system assumes certain privileges accruing as time goes on: usually of a physical nature: hand-holding, kissing, hugging, long times alone with no accountability... more and more privileges that used to be given only to a spouse

Christian parents are left totally out of the picture... wringing their hands as they send off their daughter in the car of a young man; hoping they trained her well enough to resist the young man's inevitable advances

### B. Recreational Dating Described

Jonathan Lindvall: The essence of *dating* is **flirting**. *Dating* is **recreational romance** in which each party intentionally endeavors to cultivate the other's desire, while recognizing the relationship is most likely temporary.

Douglas Wilson, *Her Hand in Marriage*: "Consider how our system works. A young man notices a girl who attracts him. He asks her out and she agrees. They start going together, and one of two things happens. Either

they like each other or they don't, and both possibilities bring problems in their train. If neither one likes the other, then they have both had a bad experience. If they both hit it off, then the eventual temptation to immorality is strong, especially if they happened to pair off young—fourteen, say. 'Glad you kids like each other! Now don't touch anything for eight more years!' 'Okay, Mom!' And of course if one is interested and the other isn't, the possibilities for emotional snarls and interesting complications is almost endless."

Ultimate goal: find your "soul-mate"... the love of your life!

### C. The Grave Dangers Exposed

Wilson says: the longer a couple goes together, the greater the possibility for serious damage

#### 1. Sexual immorality

There is the ever-escalating pressure for sexual immorality... and God's standards never change; our culture is surrounding Christian people with a constant barrage of images and poor examples and innuendos and INFLUENCE toward promiscuity

The problem with the church today is that we give young people enough Christianity to make them feel desperately guilty after the fact, but not enough to protect them from the sin in the first place

#### 2. Emotional damage

BUT even if there's no direct immorality involved, the recreational dating system results in tremendous amounts of emotional pain

***Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.***

This verse commands us to set a protective guard around our hearts, lest our springs be stolen or corrupted

Too many people involved in recreational dating find their hearts being stolen and hurt

So much agony has a hardening effect on the heart

*Jonathan Lindvall: So in breaking up these two hearts that have begun bonding are ripped apart. They each leave the relationship with at least some degree of heart-break. They might either display varying degrees of emotional devastation or simply toughen their feelings. Either way they leave the relationship emotionally wounded or scarred.*

*But soon the pain of breaking up is forgotten as they develop a new romance with a different partner. In time, however, this relationship results in another heart-break and more emotional wounds that leave scars. Over a period of several years a young person will experience a number of such emotional bonds being severed. Some of the romances are serious and others admittedly so casual that breaking up is hardly painful at all. Yet the cumulative effect is that the young people's hearts are becoming increasingly calloused.*

#### 3. Divorce training

Some have also called this aspect of recreational dating **divorce training**

People go from one committed relationship to the next, learning how to say goodbye to the boyfriend or girlfriend who was the center of their world

Some songs even make light of this whole thing:

Paul Simon's song "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover"

You just slip out the back, Jack  
 Make a new plan, Stan  
 You don't need to be coy, Roy  
 Just get yourself free  
 Hop on the bus, Gus  
 You don't need to discuss much  
 Just drop off the key, Lee  
 And get yourself free

After years of bouncing form one relationship to the next, the person has been thoroughly trained in how to leave the love of your life

#### 4. Overemphasis of passion, calling it "love"

Even when things go well and the couple falls in love, remains chaste through their engagement, and gets married, they may have built the whole foundation on the shifting sands of human passions... "feelings of love"

Love at first sight readily espoused and sought

Modern hope for dating: the romantic novel's climax or the enchanted evening of South Pacific

Rogers and Hammerstein, 1949 Musical South Pacific

**Some enchanted evening, you may see a stranger  
 you may see a stranger across a crowded room,  
 and somehow you know, you know even then,  
 that somewhere you'll see her again and again!**

**Some enchanted evening, someone may be laughing  
 you may hear her laughing across a crowded room,  
 and night after night as strange as it seems  
 the sound of her laughter will sing in your dreams!**

**Some enchanted evening, when you find your true love  
 when you hear her call you across a crowded room,  
 then fly to her side and make her your own  
 or all thru your life you may dream all alone!**

The core idea of dating is that we should marry the one we love.

*“First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes baby in the baby carriage.”*

The Biblical command reverses the order: love the one you marry

Amazingly:

***Genesis 24:67 Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her***

***Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her***

Jonathan Lindvall:

*I have occasionally dealt with men who assumed they should divorce their wives because they no longer loved them. What would you say to such a man? What does the Bible say? "Love your wife!" A man would argue, "But you don't understand, I don't love her anymore." The Biblical response is, "Shame on you! Love her anyway." But people in our culture have a hard time imagining how you can, from your will, command your emotions.*

*If a couple marries based on love, what happens when the passion of romance settles down and they get used to each other—less distracted by their emotions? Today the epidemic of divorce is affecting even Christian marriages because we are led by our feelings. This pattern is set early on during young people's dating experiences. What if our marriage decisions were based entirely on God's will confirmed by our authorities, with a confidence that God would bring romance to us as a blessing on our obedience?*

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#### D. Exceptions Prove the Rule

Some people actually are able to avoid really deep pain, able to avoid sexual immorality, able to find a godly spouse, settle down and live happily ever after

Douglas Wilson says this does not prove that the system is fine:

**“People survive plane crashes too, some of them without a scratch, and we should all be happy about it. But this acknowledgement does not disqualify us from opposing the general habit of crashing airplanes.”**

#### E. Good, But Inadequate: A Modern Christian Trend Against Dating

1. Joshua Harris: *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*
2. Other books advocating similar themes

3. Good... celebrating the gift of singleness, freedom to serve the Lord
4. Still some missing elements:
  - a. the father's role in protecting his daughter and choosing among her suitors
  - b. the covenant nature of marriage
  - c. the normative nature of marriage
5. Can foster independence of spirit... "I make up my mind myself"

### III. Advocating a Better Way: "Courtship" or "Biblical Dating"

#### A. The Problem with Terminology

1. "Recreational dating" may be bankrupt
2. But what do we call what takes its place
3. What should we call the biblical process whereby a young man and young woman meet, develop a relationship, and get married?

Some have suggested the term "courtship"

Douglas Wilson, *Her Hand in Marriage*: "For some, courtship means that we must all become retro-prairie muffins. The one being courted wears a gingham dress and bonnet, and the one courting rides his horse over from the Taylor Ranch after church on Sunday. And there they sit on the front porch swing, 'just a-swangin'"

Others go even further back to fair maidens in distress in the time of Camelot

Wilson acknowledges that courtship as a term carries with it some baggage that actually runs contrary to the biblical patterns he would espouse... but we're stuck with terms like courtship or biblical dating until a Christian culture of right behavior develops with some new words

#### B. What Is Courtship?

Wilson's simple definition: "A date is when a young man and woman go out together on their own, and courtship is when a young man goes through the young woman's father."

We might go a little further: **Courtship is the process by which a young man initiates the formation of a relationship in submission to a young woman's father's authority, with the goal of assessing whether God is leading the two to get married.**

#### C. Key Changes: Parental Role and Covenant Understanding

1. Central problem with dating: it leaves the parents, especially the father, almost completely out of the equation... whereas the bible puts the parents role, especially that of the father, at the center of the entire process
2. Modern dating fails to see marriage as a covenant before God, essential to God's unfolding salvation plan

#### IV. Parental Role in their Children's Marriage

##### A. Modern Expectations for Christian Parents

1. Role Modeling
2. Some Instruction/Advice
3. Freedom and Trust to make your own decisions
4. Non-interference
5. Approval & Acceptance
6. Money: Pay for the wedding

Average cost of American wedding: \$27,000

"Father of the Bride", Steve Martin and his wife in the movie are sitting with their daughter who spent some months in Europe while in college... she's now returned and in the middle of the meal, she told her father "I'm getting married!" The prospective groom has never met her father, certainly did not ask permission... the decision was purely the daughter's to make... however, she has some very serious expectations of him:

- 1) To accept the fiancée without question... to like him and his family, and to be 100% supportive no matter what
- 2) To pay for the wedding, almost no matter how much it costs

Those expectations are so strong that at one point she explodes at his attitude about the bloated costs of the reception and the ever-swelling guest list... she chews him out, bursts into tears, runs up the stairs... the mother looks at the father with a glare and goes upstairs to comfort her angry daughter

##### B. Biblical Expectations for Christian Parents

1. Abraham's Good Example

***Genesis 24:1-4 Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. <sup>2</sup> He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. <sup>3</sup> I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth,***

***that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, <sup>4</sup> but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."***

## 2. Some Poor Examples

### a. Isaac and Rebekah with Esau

***Genesis 26:34-35 When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. <sup>35</sup> They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.***

***Genesis 27:46 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I'm disgusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living."***

### b. Laban with Leah

### c. Saul with Michal

## 3. Godly role modeling

Godly parents are expected to set an example to their children from birth until marriage of what a marriage is supposed to be like

*Douglas Wilson: "Children learn by imitation. At birth, all of our children enroll in an 18-20 year course entitled, "How to Treat a Husband or Wife." How father and mother speak to one another is constantly being soaked up by the children. Of course, this does not mean children are stuck with every bad lesson they were ever taught. We all know and acknowledge that all parents are sinners. No parent is a perfect example, but even when parents sin, they may still provide a good example of how to humbly confess and acknowledge the wrong."*

*Wilson says by way of testimony: I was blessed to grow up in a home where I never heard my parents raise their voices to each other—eighteen years of calm graciousness. When children grow up in a home like this, what single lesson can we say is learned? This is not one lesson; it is an attitude, an atmosphere for the home... As fathers speak to their wives, they are training their sons to speak to their wives."*

## 4. Biblical instruction from infancy through marriage

***Proverbs 1:8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.***

### 5. Prayer: from infancy, praying for their future spouses

### 6. Specific advice and encouragement along the way

### 7. Financial assistance

***Proverbs 19:14 Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.***

These five (godly role modeling, Biblical instruction, prayer, specific advice, financial support) we expect and are not shocking to our modern ears

What comes next is more shocking... it has been under attack for generations, and may take generations for it to be rebuilt

### C. The Biblical Authority of Parents

Does the father have the right to say “No” to a suitor that his daughter may be interested in, and have that be the final word in the matter?

The Bible answers that question unequivocally “Yes!!”, but our culture says “Are you kidding? Absolutely not!”

#### 1. Fathers and Mothers both have a vital role in preparing their children

The “Proverbs 31 Woman” is actually advice given by Lemuel’s mother concerning what kind of woman he should marry

***Proverbs 31:2-12 "O my son, O son of my womb, O son of my vows, 3 do not spend your strength on women, your vigor on those who ruin kings. ... <sup>10</sup> A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. <sup>11</sup> Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. <sup>12</sup> She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.***

#### 2. The role of parents as authority figures is not complete until they leave the home in marriage

***Ephesians 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother"-- which is the first commandment with a promise-- <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."***

#### 3. Fathers especially have the authoritative role as head of the house

Basically, fathers were the key gatekeepers for the approach to their daughters.

### D. The Biblical Status of Daughters

#### A MESSAGE TO FATHERS OF DAUGHTERS:

The most precious gift you will ever give away will be your daughter in marriage. It is your responsibility to protect her sexual purity and prepare her for the day you will give her as a gift to her husband.

Significant difference between a son and daughter:

Sons leave their father and mother to begin their own homes with their wives

Daughters are GIVEN in marriage

***Deuteronomy 7:3 Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons***

***Joshua 15:16 And Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Acsah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher."***

***Matthew 22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.***

Therefore the daughter is a PRECIOUS GIFT, given by a father to a man for a wife

What is the nature of the biblical authority the father has over the daughter?

1. Father had final say over daughter's vows

***Numbers 30:3-8 "When a young woman still living in her father's house makes a vow to the LORD or obligates herself by a pledge <sup>4</sup> and her father hears about her vow or pledge but says nothing to her, then all her vows and every pledge by which she obligated herself will stand. <sup>5</sup> But if her father forbids her when he hears about it, none of her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand; the LORD will release her because her father has forbidden her.***

***Numbers 30:16 These are the regulations the LORD gave Moses concerning relationships between ... a father and his young daughter still living in his house.***

Key question: what about a daughter who no longer lives in her father's house, but who is unmarried? We have millions of women in America today in that category... but it was not the biblical norm. Normally, a woman was under the covering and protection of a man: first her father, then her husband. If the woman was widowed she could make her own decisions about who to marry, as long as he was a believer

***1 Corinthians 7:39 A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.***

However, the practice of a young woman leaving her father's home and setting up her own home as a young woman, waiting later for the man she would marry and then making her own decisions about that apart from her father's consent is unheard of in the Bible, but totally normal today.

Therein lies some of the problem.

2. Father also had responsibility to protect his daughter's chastity: Deuteronomy 22:13-21

***Deuteronomy 22:13-21 If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the girl's virginity can be found, <sup>21</sup> she shall be brought to the door of her father's house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father's house. You must purge the evil from among you.***

This responsibility a father has for the sexual purity of his daughter is immense and significant

A father must see to it that his daughter is never in a position where she can be violated, or taken advantage of

He is not merely to take this precious treasure and throw it to the first hormone-saturated young man that shows an interest in her

He is to train her to respect her virginity, just as Rebekah did her own

***Genesis 24:15-16 Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. <sup>16</sup> The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.***

Not even Isaac was permitted to look at her until they were married...

***Genesis 24:64-65 Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel <sup>65</sup> and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?" "He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.***

Rebekah's chastity was precious to her; and it was biblically her father's role to protect it until marriage

- E. Preparation of Sons for Courtship: READ DOUGLAS WILSON'S BOOK *Her Hand in Marriage*
- F. Preparation of Daughters for Courtship: READ DOUGLAS WILSON'S BOOK *Her Hand in Marriage*
- G. Culmination of Courtship: READ DOUGLAS WILSON'S BOOK *Her Hand in Marriage*

## V. The Yawning Gap Between What Is and What Should Be

### A. Ever-Increasing Gap Between Christianity and Culture

**Leon R. Kass** Professor on Social Thought at the University of Chicago... non-Christian

“It would appear to require a revolution to restore the conditions most necessary for successful courtship: a desire in America's youth for mature adulthood (which means for marriage and parenthood), an appreciation of the unique character of the marital bond, understood as linked to generation, and a restoration of sexual self-restraint generally and of female modesty in particular. Frankly, I do not see how this last, most crucial, prerequisite can be recovered, nor do I see how one can do sensibly without it.”

<http://www.thepublicinterest.com/notable/article7.html>

A Non-Christian can see these things... how valuable they are, and how incredibly difficult they would be to restore

How much more can a Christian see how wide is the gap between biblical norms and surrounding culture

What would need to happen to change all this?

- A desire for an early maturity among American youth, including marriage
- A conviction that marriage is a sacred bond before God, a covenant essential to His salvation plan
- An understanding that having children is a tremendous blessing from God and a natural and expected part of marriage
- A restoration of sexual purity before marriage, with the father playing the key role as gatekeeper of his daughters chastity
- A restoration of modesty in dress reflecting that commitment to sexual purity before marriage
- A training of a community of young men and young women who understand and embrace these things gladly

Without these things happening, we will not see a restoration of biblical norms in the courtship process

B. “Great Patience and Careful Instruction” Needed

***2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction.***

1. Decades of intricate Satanic attack on bible will not melt away in one day
2. Many years of patient biblical instruction and a new generation of children growing p is needed for communities to change
3. It starts with good teaching, though... listen to guys like Douglas Philips of Vision Forum, Douglas Wilson, Reb Bradley,

C. Courage Needed: To be incredibly counter-cultural

D. A Message to Parents of Young Children

1. You have a special responsibility to shape the future
2. You must apply yourself with all diligence to find out if you are dealing properly as a father or mother of a future bride or groom
3. The future of a new culture of pure brides and bridegrooms rests with you

E. A Message to Older Singles

1. God's grace can help you find and follow a godly course even with the biblical standards broken down
2. Especially God's grace can help you be pure and chaste, and to find a godly spouse who meets biblical criteria, even if your parents are not involved

## A Word of Gentle Grace

We opened with Douglas Wilson's touching parable about a pure and chaste virgin, a young maiden talking with a traveler on the road. She spoke of the purity of the stream flowing within her untouched garden, saying it was only for the future lord of her garden.

That parable may have spoken to your hearts with soothing, orderly wisdom, a sense of hopefulness about the future of your children and the church. Or it may have been like the stabbing of a blinding light that made you want to crawl into a hole and hide. There are two ways to have such a clear, pure, fruitful garden:

One is to do it right from the beginning, to follow God's patterns and trust Him to provide in His time and way. Speaking specifically, for fathers to protect their daughters and shape and prepare them for the day they will give them away to their godly husbands. This keeps the garden closed, protected, pure and ready.

The second way must also be preached, lest some of you despair. It may be that your garden has been defiled... that your wall has been broken down through sin. You may wonder if God can ever restore you and give you a wonderful marriage. The answer is YES!!

***Hebrews 10:22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.***

***Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.***