

My favorite love story in the Bible is the story of Isaac meeting Rebekah. It is the last story in our Abrahamic series before Abraham dies. It gives me a fuller understanding of God's love towards me and all that God has created.

The story begins, with Isaac deeply grieved over his mother Sarah's death— The beloved matriarch of God's sacred community of Israel. In the absence of her maternal love, Isaac is longing for comfort and companionship through the intimate love of a wife.

There are many different kinds of love that we share with one another. The love of a mother, the love of a friend, or a spouse. The ancient Greek language has multiple words for "love" since it so multifaceted and can't be articulated in just one word.

We can see these different types of love in the dynamic interplay of relationships within the Trinity, a love that flows through, and out of, and between each type of love, reinforcing the other.

God the Creator, the source of our being, has the love of Storge which we experience in the nurturing love of a parent towards their children.

Jesus, the Incarnate Word that put on flesh to befriend and serve humanity, has the love of Philia, which we experience in friendship, compassion, and service.

The Holy Spirit has the love of Eros, which we experience in romantic love, in the desire to intimately share our lives with others.

And then there is the unconditional love God has towards us—Agape— this love is made known to us through God the Creator, Jesus the Friend, and the Spirit's intimacy, both in how love is shared between them, and in how it comes to life in our relationships with one another.

We can see all of these expressions of love in Isaac and Rebekah's story.

So let us continue.

Abraham's servant is sent on a quest to find Isaac's wife among his own family line. The servant—no doubt under immense pressure—asks God for a miracle. And before the servant has even finished speaking these things in his heart Rebekah appears! And confirms his prayer!

The desire of Isaac's heart has been revealed. Rebekah has been divinely chosen. She agrees to marry him (fortunately she was asked & clearly gives her consent), and she undergoes her own long journey, riding on a camel, to meet her betrothed. When she finally arrives to the Negeb it is evening, and Isaac is walking in a field. And in the climax of our love story they recognize one another. Rebekah becomes Isaac's wife. Our story concludes with: "And Isaac loved her."

And so he was comforted after his mother's death. In this ending, we encounter the same eros—or longing—that God has towards us, just as Isaac and Rebekah are drawn towards one another in the field to join their lives together.

Today's Song of Solomon reading can be read as an expression of God's deep desire to be in relationship with us. In this song, God is rising to meet us, drawing us towards divine love, saying our suffering is over and making way for something joyful and new. I invite you to listen to these words again, as God speaking to you:

"Arise, my love, my fair one,
And come away
For now the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing has come...
Arise, my love, my fair one,
And come away."

God longs for, and deeply desires, to be in relationship with you, and God longs to draw you into the Trinity's dynamic flow of love and to make you a channel of that love in your own life in its manifold expressions.

While Isaac and Rebekah's love story gives us a beautiful depiction of eros, we also encounter God the loving parent who comforts and nurtures us in our human needs. We encounter God the loving friend who enters into our struggle and companions with us. We encounter God the loving spirit who creatively brings us into relationship with others to ignite new life. We are each a participant in this love that is expansive and limitless, a love that flows through, and out of, and between each of us, a love that draws us out of our individual, separate selves into a dynamic relationship with God, and all that God has created.

So, may you know that this expansive and limitless love is inside of you, and rising to meet you in all of creation, in manifold ways; drawing you into a deeper, more dynamic relationship with God the Creator, Jesus the Friend, and the Spirit's Intimacy.

May you be a channel of this love, an integral part of the Trinity flowing through, and out of, and between each of us:

For the winter is past and
The rain is over and gone,
The flowers appear on the earth
And your time of singing has come.