



# **THE BEGINNINGS!**

**The Book of Genesis**

**Faith and Family!!**

**Genesis 29:1-35**

**Message #31 of 50 – S931**

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**Sunday Morning Service**

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# Faith and Family!!

## Genesis 29:1-35

### Opening Comments

- Good morning – we will be in **Genesis 29**
- Today we continue our journey through **Genesis: THE BEGINNINGS!**
- What limits God? What can stop God from accomplishing His will?
- We are in the part of Genesis where Jacob is fleeing from the wrath of his brother Esau
- Jacob had deceived his father into giving him the blessing that Isaac had intended to give to Esau
- As Jacob is fleeing, he has a radical encounter with the living God and God tells Jacob that God will be with him there and back again
- Nothing can stand in the way of God's will, not even our faithlessness or sin, or the faithlessness or sin of others
- Often when we think of God working in the world, we think of miracles
- A miracle is when God interrupts or overrides the natural order and does something supernaturally
- Miracles get people's attention, but God chooses not to do them often
- They still happen, but they are not common

**God's power is so great that He can accomplish His will and keep His promises while rarely interrupting the natural order of things.**

- We refer to that as the providence of God - Our God is so amazing!
- God is always working providentially in the world
- It is always true, but it might not always be obvious
- The vision of the ladder with angels ascending and descending was a picture of that
- In today's message we will see the obvious providence of God as well as the not so obvious
- My hope is that we would be more aware of God working around us in our own lives
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to open our spiritual eyes to see
- **Pray**

## Teaching

- **Faith and Family!!**

- We left off last week with Jacob on his way to Padan Aram

- **Genesis 29:1-6a**

- One of the things you should watch for in this chapter is the similarities between it and chapter 24

- Abraham didn't want Isaac to marry a woman from Canaan

- So, he sent a servant to the city where his brother Nahor lived

- When he got into the area Abraham's servant stopped by a well

- God providentially brought Nahor's granddaughter Rebekah to the well

- Now, here is Rebekah's son at a well near the home of Nahor's family

- Then the obvious providence of God is seen

- **Genesis 29:6b-10**

- In chapter 24 Rebekah watered Abraham's camels

- Here Jacob waters his uncle's sheep

- **Genesis 29:11-12**

- Jacob was sent to find a wife from Nahor's family

- He seems to see the spiritual connection between his mother's story and this event and is overwhelmed by God's providence

- I might imagine that Rachel is a little freaked out by Jacob

- She runs to get her dad, Laban

- **Genesis 29:13-14**

- Laban knows that Jacob comes from a wealthy family

- Was probably disappointed that Jacob didn't bring any gifts

- Jacob is there for a month, but he is not just laying around checking his Facebook feed

- **Genesis 29:15-17**

- Laban had two daughters: Leah and Rachel

- It is unusual for one to be named as the elder – important for the story

- Leah's eyes were delicate – not clear exactly what that means

- Another translation is 'weak'

- The sense is that there was something about her appearance that was not beautiful

- In contrast, Rachel is described as beautiful in form and appearance

- It is interesting that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all had wives who are described as beautiful – not sure what that means
- Jacob sees that a deal can be made
- **Genesis 29:18-20**
- This is a beautiful part of this account
- In that culture, love wasn't required for a marriage
- Jacob's love for Rachel was the fuel of his life
- The seven years flew by as he waited for his bride
- **Genesis 29:21-22**
- Laban appears to be a man of his word – until
- **Genesis 29:23-25**
- It is not clear how he didn't realize that it was Leah rather than Rachel
- It was probably dark, she was probably veiled, maybe there was alcohol at the feast – he is deceived
- Jacob is reaping what he has sown. He stood as a substitute to deceive his father.
- Here his father-in-law substitutes Leah for Rachel.
- Laban reveals his character
- **Genesis 29:26**
- Unbelievers feel justified doing anything that furthers their interest
- Leah was the older of his daughters
- We don't know if she was a willing participant in this deception, but my guess is yes
- As the older daughter, she should have already been married
- It could be that her 'delicate eyes' were preventing that
- Possible that both her and Laban thought this would be the only way to get her a husband
- Probably not the best strategy for planning a wedding
- Jacob objects and Laban offers a solution
- **Genesis 29:27-30**
- Laban's plan works and both of his daughters are now married
- Marriage can be hard. Imagine what it might be like married to sisters.
- We don't know what Leah expected from Jacob in the way of affection, but he didn't love Leah – he loved Rachel
- God noticed

- **Genesis 29:31**
- One of the sad parts of my role as a pastor is ministering to people who are not loved by their spouse
- There was no reason why Jacob should love Leah, but she was his wife, even if it was through deception
- Let this verse be an encouragement to you if you are in a loveless marriage – God knows and is working
- In Leah’s case God opened her womb so that she could have children
- Sons were very important in that culture.
- A woman would find prestige in the community by bearing children, especially boys.
- God knew that this would help her through her loveless marriage
- And He knows what you need too
- It is interesting that the wife who is loved is barren
- Remember, Sarah and Rebekah were barren at first also
- **Genesis 29:32-35**
- God gives Jacob four sons through Leah
- By the end of the next chapter that number will be six
- The unloved wife will be the mother of six of the twelve tribes of Israel
- And when she dies, she, not Rachel, will be buried in the tomb of the Patriarchs
- Notice also the name of her fourth son – Judah
- It will be through Judah that the messianic line will flow through King David and to Joseph and Mary to Christ Jesus.
- Salvation came through the unloved for the unloving by God who loves with eternal love.
- God was working in Jacob’s life providentially to bring him to the place where Jacob could find his wife
- That was the obvious providence of God
- God was also working on something else that wasn’t so obvious
- All of the Old Testament is pointing to the miraculous conception, humble birth, perfect life, sacrificial death, resurrection, and ascension of the Savior of the world Jesus Christ

- Right after the Fall, when the hopelessness of sin entered humanity

God promised to send a Savior **Genesis 3:14-15**

**So the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.**

- Jesus Christ is the Seed
- With the birth of Judah, the promise of the Savior is continued
- There is no way that Jacob or anyone else understood that at the time
- In the same way God is working in and around our lives in ways that we may not see
- Jacob came to Padan Aram looking for a wife, now he has two – and they are sisters
- By the end of the next chapter, he will have four wives, eleven sons and a daughter
- God was working in and through Jacob’s life – Abrahamic Covenant
- God is always working providentially for His glory and our good
- Often God’s providence is not easily seen – can only be seen by faith
- Three quick things before we close
- To live a life that glorifies God, blesses others, and grows faith we must learn to trust in the unseen providences of God
- To do that there are some things we can’t trust
- **Trusting in the Unseen Providences of God**
- First – **Don’t trust your eyes!**
- That makes sense, right? If some of God’s providences are unseen, then we may not be able to trust our eyes
- Jacob could see God’s providence in Rachel coming to the well just as he got there, but he couldn’t see it in being deceived by Laban with Leah
- As you look around at your life or out into this world, don’t be discouraged because you can’t see God working
- He is – He is always working for His glory and your good – believe it!
- Believe it and by faith you might see what God is doing!
- Second – **Don’t trust your feelings!**

- As Jacob was on the way to Padan Aram, he stopped to sleep with his head on a rock
- He was fleeing for his life – afraid – alone – God met him there
- Your feelings will never lead you to the truth of God – will never show you what God is doing **Jeremiah 17:9**

**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?**

- You can't trust your heart to show you what God is doing
- Only by faith can we see the unseen providence of God
- Third – **Don't trust your knowledge!**
- God is sovereignly arranging the universe to accomplish His will through His providence
- Our human minds are incapable of grasping the complexity of what God is doing **Isaiah 55:8-9**

**For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."**

- When it comes to trusting God's providence, I can't trust what I know because I don't know everything that God knows
- As you look around your life and can't see where or how God is working
- By faith believe that God is always working for His glory and for your good **Romans 8:28**

**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**

- God is always working – even when we can't see it – trust in His providence and not in your eyes
- He is always working – even when it doesn't feel like it – trust in His providence not in your feelings
- God never stops working – even when we don't understand what He is doing – trust in His providence not in what you think or know
- God is always working for His glory and for your good – trust in His providence
- **Pray!**