

Sermon Notes 4/11/21

## “Jacob and Rachel”

How should we respond to Genesis chapter 29?

1. Watch for God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

Genesis 29:5-6

Romans 8:28

2. Serve with love and \_\_\_\_\_.

Genesis 29:20

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

3. Pray for God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

Genesis 29:25

Galatians 6:7-8

4. Focus on \_\_\_\_\_ God.

Genesis 29:35

1 Peter 2:9



Jacob Encountering Rachel with her Father's Herds  
by Joseph von Führich 1836

# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 29: April 11-18

## Genesis 29

Jacob had a life-changing dream in chapter 28. While that revelation from God was a powerful faith-building experience, Jacob was still a work in progress. In chapter 29, Jacob comes to Haran to find a wife. Unlike Abraham's servant who was on a similar mission in chapter 24, Jacob does not pray for God's guidance. He gets tricked into a marriage that he did not ask for, and he ends up working 20 years for his tricky uncle Laban. But God will use those difficult years to help Jacob develop patience, faithfulness, humility, and perseverance.

### Read Genesis 29:1-12

1. What did Jacob see in a field near the end of his journey? (29:1-2)
2. What did Jacob ask the shepherds at the well? (29:4-5)
3. Who was coming to the well in verse 6?
4. What did Jacob tell the shepherds to do in verse 7? Why?
5. What did Jacob do when he saw Rachel in verse 10?
6. What did Jacob do after he watered the sheep? (29:11-12)

Kent Hughes observes,

This is the only place in biblical narrative where we read of a man kissing a woman who is not his wife or mother. But to attribute the kiss to sexual attraction is to read into the text. Jacob was simply overwrought with emotion. He had met his flesh-and-blood family. He had performed an extraordinary feat. He kissed his cousin—as he would soon kiss her father. He wept. At last, he introduced himself. Jacob no doubt saw this as the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promises made to him at Bethel.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 367.

### **Read Genesis 29:13-20**

7. What did Laban do when he heard about Jacob? (29:13-14)
8. What did Laban ask Jacob in verse 15?
9. How does the text describe the two daughters of Laban? (29:16-17)
10. What did Jacob offer to do for Laban's permission to marry Rachel? (29:18)

Jacob was head over heels in love with Rachel. His offer to work for seven years was worth far more than the typical dowry of the time. Paul Kissling notes,

The Torah fixed the maximum bride price at 50 shekels (Deut 22:29). According to Old Babylonian law casual laborers received 1.5 shekels per month. At that rate Jacob was offering 126 shekels.<sup>2</sup>

11. How did Laban respond to Jacob's offer in verse 19?
12. Why did the first seven years of work seem like a few days? (29:20)

### **Read Genesis 29:21-30**

13. What did Jacob say to Laban in verse 21?
14. How did Laban trick Jacob in verse 23?

Bruce Waltke points out that Jacob may have been drunk.

The Hebrew word implies a drinking fest. Jacob probably was not in control of all his faculties on his wedding night. By befuddling Jacob with wine and using the blindness of the bridal veil and the darkness of night, Laban pulls off his deception, just as his sister had deceived Isaac with hairy skin, the smell of clothing, and tasty stew.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009), 308.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 405.

15. What did Jacob ask Laban in verse 25?
16. What excuse did Laban give for deceiving Jacob? (29:26)
17. What was the new deal for Jacob to marry Rachel? (29:27-28)
18. How did Jacob feel about his two wives? (29:30)

### **Read Genesis 29:31-35**

19. What did God do when He saw that Leah was unloved? (29:31)
20. Why did Leah want to have children? (29:32-34)
21. How was Leah's fourth pregnancy different from her first three? (29:35)

When Leah had her first son, her hope was that Jacob would love her. When she had her second son, she calls herself "unloved." And when she has her third son, she hopes for a closer connection with Jacob. But when she gives birth to her fourth son, her focus is on the LORD. Kissling writes,

Leah has a fourth son. This time there is no expression of hope that Jacob's attitude toward her will change. She chooses instead to praise God for the gift that her son was in and of himself. The wordplay this time is between the verb "I will praise" (hd6Wa odeh) and Judah's name (hd2Ohy%, yəhudah). Leah comes to realize that her sons were gifts even if they did not bring her the love she so desperately wanted from her husband. She finally understands that her four sons were gifts from the Lord and that should be enough. Perhaps it is no coincidence that it was at the birth of Judah that Leah came to this realization. The tribe which eventually assumed the place of leadership in the nation had a forefather whose birth brought forth trustful praise.<sup>4</sup>

22. How has our culture influenced many Christian families?
23. How can you serve someone with love and patience this week?
24. In what area of life do you need to pray for God's perspective?

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<sup>4</sup> Kissling, 314.