

Sermon Notes 4/18/21

“Sister Wives”

How should we respond to Genesis chapter 30?

1. Come to Jesus for _____ life.

Genesis 30:1

John 10:10

2. Remember who the real _____ is.

Genesis 30:8

Ephesians 6:11-12

3. Accept blessings with humility and _____.

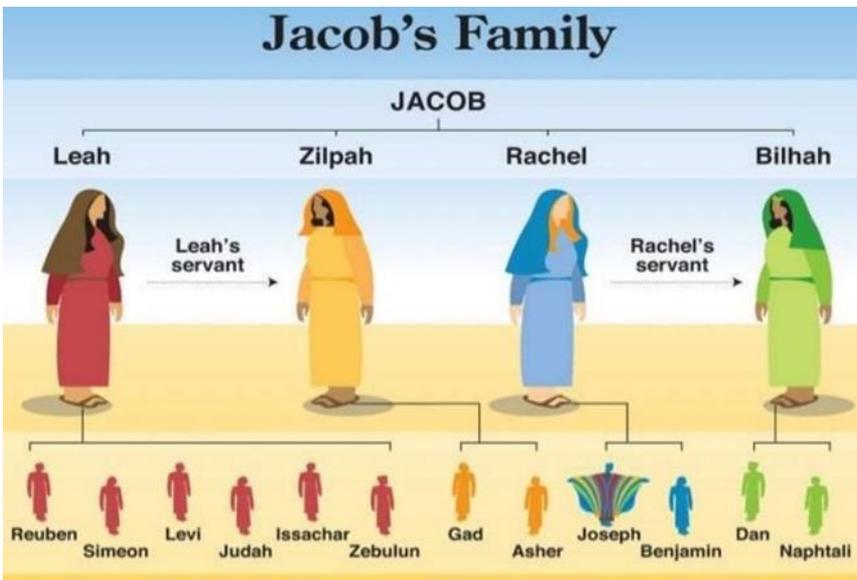
Genesis 30:18

Titus 2:11-12

4. Make prayer our _____ response.

Genesis 30:22

James 5:16



Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 30: April 18-25

Genesis 30

In Genesis 29, Jacob was tricked into a polygamous life where he was married to both Rachel and her sister Leah when he only wanted Rachel. This naturally developed into favoritism and jealousy. God saw that Leah was unloved, so He gave her four boys: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah (Gen. 29:31-35). In Chapter 30, the sisters use their children as a way to compete with each other. However, God continues to bless this dysfunctional family with His abundant grace as He fulfills the promises He made to Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15). At times, our relationships may seem to be dysfunctional. But if we continue to follow Christ and believe in His promises, we will see His abundant grace working through our messy relationships to bless our lives.

Read Genesis 30:1-13

1. Why was Rachel jealous of her sister Leah? (30:1)
2. What did Rachel say to Jacob in verse 1?

In her jealousy and desperation Rachel demands that Jacob give her children (plural), or she will die. Leah already has four boys, so Rachel must find some way to catch up with her sister. Ironically, it will be the birth of her second child that causes her to die (Gen. 35:16-20).

3. How did Jacob respond to Rachel in verse 2?

Rachel's demand was irrational and unfair to Jacob. And while Jacob's response may have been accurate, it failed to communicate any compassion or comfort to Rachel's broken heart. Dennis Prager writes,

Jacob recognized everything is ultimately in God's hands. Unfortunately, he chose words that were virtually guaranteed to intensify Rachel's pain, implying that God Himself didn't want her to have children. I suspect even years later, after Rachel's premature death, Jacob regretted speaking to her so harshly.¹

¹ Dennis Prager, *The Rational Bible: Genesis* (Washington, DC: Regnery Faith, 2019), 354.

4. What solution did Rachel have in mind for her fertility problem? (30:3-5)
5. What did Rachel name Bilhah's first son? Why? (30:6)
6. What did Rachel name Bilhah's second son? Why? (30:7-8)
7. What did Leah do when she stopped having children? (30:9)

Paul Kissling observes,

It might seem that with the birth of Judah Leah had stopped struggling and had begun to trust God. But if that was so then her attitude soon reverted. When she sees that Rachel is able to have two children which she claims as her own through her maidservant, the contest is continued once again. The tensions between the tribes which arise later in the nation of Israel's history are sown in the dysfunctional conflict between Leah and Rachel as they seek to win or retain Jacob's love. Israel is a nation of tribes which trace their roots to the conflict between Rachel and Leah.²

8. What did Leah name Zilpah's first son? Why? (30:10-11)
9. What did Leah name Zilpah's second son? Why? (30:12-13)

Read Genesis 30:14-24

10. What exchange did Rachel and Leah make? (30:14-16)
11. What did God do for Leah in verse 17?
12. What did Leah name her fifth son? Why? (30:17-18)
13. What did Leah name her sixth son? Why? (30:19-20)
14. What did Leah name her daughter in verse 21?
15. What did God do for Rachel? (30:22-23)

² Paul Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009), 319.

Apparently, after the immoral scheme of using her maidservant to have children, and after the failure of the mandrake superstition, Rachel prayed. Verse 22 says that “God remembered Rachel” and “He listened to her.” Kissling notes,

This is some years after Rachel had attempted to produce children through using mandrakes. Though Rachel rather superstitiously believed that the mandrakes contained the power of fertility, this verse makes clear that it was God, and not faith in old wives' tales about mandrakes, who brought about Rachel's fertility. She had been married to Jacob for at least ten years by this time, so the pregnancy was a welcome surprise. The human actors in this story consistently succumb to the temptation to take matters which belong in God's hands alone into their own hands. We face the same temptation as Christians.³

16. What did Rachel name her first son? Why? (30:24)

Read Genesis 30:25-43

17. What did Jacob say to Laban in verses 25-26?

18. Why did Laban want Jacob to stay and continue to work for him? (30:27-30)

19. What wages did Laban agree to give Jacob if he would continue to work for him? (30:31-34)

20. What did Laban do in verses 35-36?

21. How did Jacob increase the number of his flocks? (30:37-43)

Regardless of any effect the branches may have had, we know from Genesis 31:7-13 that God was fulfilling His promise to Jacob.

22. How can we guard against feelings of jealousy and envy?

23. How should we respond to unanswered prayer?

24. What can you do this week to encourage healthy relationships among brothers and sisters in Christ?

³ Kissling, 323.