

GENESIS 29:1-35

REVIEW...

- **CHAPTERS 27 – NOT CONTENT WITH WHAT WE HAVE...**
 - The blessing – Isaac – about 100 years old – wanted to pass the blessing on to Esau...
 - Rebekah – who favored Jacob – came up with a plan to steal the blessing for Jacob...
 - She disguised him as Esau – lying 5 times to his father – the deception worked!
 - But when Esau found out – he comforted himself with the thought of killing Jacob!
- **CHAPTERS 28 – JACOBS LADDER...**
 - Jacob was running for his life – cold – hungry – exhausted – lonely...
 - He settled down for the night in Bethel – with a rock for a pillow...
 - He dreamt of a ladder reaching to heaven – the Lord at the top blessed him!
 - Jesus is the ladder that connects us to God – **John 1:51**
 - Jacob had been so busy trying to find the blessing – he forgot about God...
 - Here at Bethel – in the midst of hardship – God met with Jacob and blessed him!

REAPING WHAT YOU SOW...

- **1ST – FINDING A WIFE... VS. 1-14**
 - 1ST - Jacob left Bethel – traveled about 700km north to the city of Haran... vs. 1
 - The modern city of Urfa – located in south eastern Turkey - near Syrian border...
 - The journey would have taken him several months!
 - Haran was the city where Abraham lived till his father Terra died – **Acts 7:4**
 - It is also the home of the brother of Abraham – Nahor – the father of Laban and Rebekah...
 - The city where Abraham had commanded his servant to find a wife for Isaac – **Genesis 24:10**
 - 2ND - The well in the field... vs. 2-5
 - Possibly the SAME WELL where Eliezer had first met Rebekah – **Genesis 24:11**
 - That is not to say if you want to get married – go to a WELL – it worked for Isaac and Jacob!
 - The WELL simply represented a place where people regularly gathered...
 - There is truth that if we desire to get married – we need to be around people!
 - Then – like Jacob – we can be in a place where we meet our future spouse!
 - When Jacob arrived – three flocks of sheep were gathered...
 - They were waiting for the fourth flock – Laban – to arrive...
 - There was a stone on top of the well – presumably to protect it...
 - The assumption is it took all of the shepherds to uncap the large stone...
 - Jacob asked if the shepherds knew Laban – they knew him well...
 - Just like Eliezer – because Jacob was walking – God led him to just the right place!
 - There are no accidents or coincidences when it comes to our walk in Christ...
 - Just because we do not see how God is working – does not mean He is not there...
 - God never sleeps / never rests – and is always working for our good!
 - Often the only thing we have to do – is step out in faith and be amazed by what God does!
 - **Psalm 46:10** – “Be still, and know that I am God.”
 - 3RD – Rachel arrived to water the flocks... vs. 6-14
 - When Rachel – daughter of Laban – arrived with the flock of her father...
 - Jacob went and single handedly rolled away the stone – and watered the flock!
 - The same stone it presumably took several men to lift – Jacob did alone...
 - Apparently - Jacob wanted to impress Rachel - like a giddy schoolboy showing off!

- When Laban heard the story from Jacob – the son of his sister - whom he had never met...
 - He said - surely you are bone of my bone / and flesh of my flesh – true family!
 - One has to wonder just what story Jacob told – lying to steal the blessing...
 - As we see the character of Laban – perhaps Jacob did tell him the whole story...
 - That is how Laban recognized his nephew – he was a SCHEMER like his uncle!
- Where did all this SCHEMING come from...
 - Rebekah had SCHEMED to take away the blessing from Esau...
 - We will soon see Laban SCHEME to keep Jacob from leaving...
 - No doubt Rebekah and Laban both learned to SCHEME from their father...
 - Jacob now seemed to have the same tendencies – did it run in the family!
 - My father was NOT raised in a Christian home – he was raised in the world...
 - But when Jesus got a hold of his life – he DID NOT pass on the pattern he had been given...
 - He realized he was not bound to that ungodly example – he now had the Word!
 - We can choose what example we pass onto our children – whether good or bad...
 - We can choose to give them lessons we learned from the world – or from the Word!
- 2ND – THE PROBLEM WITH THE WEDDING... vs. 15-35
 - 1ST – Seeing true beauty... vs. 15-17
 - Laban had two daughters – Leah (*the older*) and Rachel (*the younger*) ...
 - The eyes of Leah (*weary*) were delicate – or she literally HURT your eyes to look at her...
 - Apparently - Leah was just not a very attractive woman...
 - For that reason Jacob did not have much interest in her!
 - Rachel (*sheep*) was beautiful – both in her FORM (*body*) and APPEARANCE (*looks*) ...
 - Apparently - Rachel was REALLY beautiful – all around knock out!
 - For that reason Jacob was really interested in her!
 - Beauty is a funny thing – what really is beautiful...
 - We think to be dark is bad – but in the US and Europe – being white is bad...
 - Where we have whitening soap – then having tanning lotion!
 - Who decides what beauty really is – in the eye of the beholder!
 - A 70 year old man looks at his bride and sees the most beautiful woman...
 - We do not see what he sees – because he sees through the eyes of LOVE...
 - The most beautiful woman – is the one who has the heart of her husband!
 - Jesus looks at us – whom He loves – and He sees incredible beauty!
 - 2ND - Working for a wife... vs. 18-20
 - Jacob had not just been sitting around enjoying the hospitality of Laban...
 - He had been hard at work helping out his uncle...
 - God said he would bless Jacob – **Genesis 28:15** – but that did not mean he did nothing...
 - Laban saw the work ethic on the part of Jacob – he was a hard worker!
 - Being blessed by God does not mean we do not work – just the opposite...
 - We work harder – but recognize it not about our efforts – but by the Grace of God!
 - **I Corinthians 15:10** – “Whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than all the other apostles, yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace.”
 - Just because Jacob was family (*brother*) – was no reason for him NOT to be paid...
 - Laban told (*imperative*) Jacob to name his wage – compensation for his hard work...
 - Laban did not want to take advantage of Jacob (*yet*) ...
 - Jacob offered to work for seven years – in return for marrying Rachel...
 - So he served seven years – and they seemed like just a few days – because of his LOVE!
 - Many people hate their work – dread the start of a new day...

- The problem is not the work – the problem is the heart!
 - If we are striving to work so we can get lots of money – we will be miserable...
 - We will be miserable because we are working hard – with no results!
 - If we work hard – because we LOVE the Lord - and want to be a good example...
 - We will find that our work is not an effort – but a blessing that we enjoy!
- o 3rd - The wedding veil... vs. 21-29
- The day of the wedding arrived – a traditional wedding – the bride wore a veil...
 - Jacob could NOT see whom he was marrying – he thought it was Rachel...
 - But Laban made (*hiphil*) Leah marry Jacob instead of Rachel...
 - In the morning – no veil / sunlight – Jacob realized the deception!
 - That is why Jews to this day - always remove the veil before they say - I do!
 - Jacob was furious – why have you intensively deceived (*piel*) me!
 - The excuse of Laban – it cannot (*niphal*) be done in our country...
 - The younger cannot be married before the older!
 - It was an excuse – he could have been mentioned that before the wedding!
 - The real reason was to keep Jacob around for another seven years...
 - He would give Rachel (*after one week with Leah*) – but for another 7 years!
 - Laban saw he was blessed because of Jacob – greedy – he wanted more of the blessing!
 - Reaping what we sow...
 - Jacob bought the birthright from Esau (*for a bowl of soup*) ...
 - But that was not enough – greedy he wanted more - he wanted the blessing...
 - So he SCHEMED – and he stole what was not his – much like what Laban did to him!
 - We REAP what we SOW - this is a truth when it comes to farming – but it is also in life!
 - If we cheat / steal / mistreat others – it should come as no surprise when get the same...
 - We should treat others the same way we desire to be treated by them!
 - **Matthew 7:12** – “Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...”
- 3RD – IT IS NOT ABOUT MARRIAGE... VS. 31-35
- o 1st – Leah was unloved... vs. 31
- Jacob had two wives - but he loved Rachel more than Leah...
 - Hebrew - HATED (*participle*) – the suggestion is HATED by Rachel...
 - The Lord saw - Leah was NOT loved by Jacob – and HATED by her sister Rachel!
 - As a result (*sequential imperfect*) – He caused Leah to have kids / but Rachel was barren!
- o 2nd – Four boys... vs. 32-35
- 1 – Leah had a son (*sequential imperfect*) - she called him Reuben – *See I have a son...*
 - Because she said – the Lord has seen my affliction...
 - Not surely now my husband will LOVE me – because I have given him a son!
 - 2 - Leah had a second son (*sequential imperfect*) - she called him Simeon – *Heard...*
 - Because the Lord HEARD that I was HATED!
 - 3 – Leah had a third son (*sequential imperfect*) - she called him Levi – *Joined...*
 - Because I have given my husband three sons – he will be attached (*niphal*) to me!
 - 4 - Leah had a fourth son (*sequential imperfect*) - she called him Judah – *Praise....*
 - Now I will praise (*hiphil – causative*) the Lord – in SPITE of the lack of LOVE from Jacob!
- o 3rd - Leah looked for the LOVE – approval – the companionship of Jacob...
- But even though she gave him four sons – she did not find it...
 - She finally came to the place where she was willing to just – Praise the Lord!
 - When she realized that – she stopped having children (*sequential imperfect*)!
- If we are looking for our spouse to LOVE us – we may or may not find it...

- Even if we find it today – there is no guarantee there will not be problems tomorrow...
- Marriage is not about finding LOVE – it is about learning to CLING to Jesus...
- Dying to self – depending DAILY on Him – in spite of our circumstances!
- **Luke 9:12** – “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”
- In the end Leah would become the one Jacob loved - **Genesis 49:29-31**
 - Not because she gave him sons – but because she PRAISED the Lord!
 - It is only when we are focused on the Lord – we will LEARN be content...
 - When we can just say like Leah – in ALL things – PRAISE the Lord...
 - And as we look to Jesus – we will find we have a GREAT marriage!
- **4TH – ENVY... vs. 1-24**
 - 1st – The DANGER of ENVY... vs. 1-2
 - When Rachel saw she was barren – she ENVIED her sister...
 - ENVY – (*piel – intensive*) – to become red faced – jealous!
 - Ironically - Leah ENVIED Rachel for the love of Jacob – Rachel ENVIED Leah for kids...
 - Neither was happy – because they looked at what they did NOT have!
 - Funny how we are never happy with what we have – only with what we do not...
 - We might be richer 50% of the world - but we look to the 50% who have more...
 - We want nicer clothes – rather than being thankful for clothes...
 - We want a better job – rather than being thankful for a job...
 - ENVY is about wanting – not being content with whatever we have!
 - If we focus on what we do NOT have – we will have an empty miserable life...
 - It is when we give thanks for what the Lord has given us – we are blessed!
 - Give (*imperative*) me children - or else I die!
 - Rachel being barren was not the fault of Jacob – Leah had four kids already...
 - Yet Rachel wanted someone to blame – so she took it out on her husband!
 - Who responded in anger – I am in the place of God – who withheld the fruit of your womb!
 - When we do not get what we want – we want someone to blame...
 - We cannot blame God – or at least we cannot see Him to blame Him in person...
 - So we look for someone else to blame – often someone who is close to us...
 - Because we are not content with what we have – we end up hurting those we love!
 - 2nd - The RESULTS of ENVY... vs. 3-8
 - Looking to the world...
 - Rachel could have waited on the Lord for Him to provide a child...
 - But ENVY of Leah caused Rachel to look to the world for faster answers...
 - Her solution was to give her servant Bilhah to Jacob as a wife...
 - The children of Bilhah would be counted as hers – I will have children by her...
 - This was not an uncommon practice in those days (*even today - surrogate mother*) ...
 - But as with Abraham and Hagar – looking to the world – is never a wise choice!
 - God promises to provide for all of our needs - not necessarily our wants...
 - Therefore if we do not have it – we must not need it!
 - When we ENVY - we are saying God has not given us what we need...
 - So we go to the world – doing things the worlds way – to get it...
 - ENVY will take our eyes off the Lord – and put them on the world!
 - **James 3:16** – “Where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”
 - Bilhah bore a son (*fifth son of Jacob*) – Rachel named him Dan – *God is my Judge*
 - She said – God has judged my case – and heard my voice...

- Rachel was ashamed because she could NOT have kids...
- Her voice was a bitter cry because Leah COULD have kids...
- But the best Rachel could do on her own – was claim someone else child!
- When we settle for answers from the world – we come up with second best...
- What we get never seems to be as quite nice as what we wanted...
- Whether clothes – job – friend – it is never as nice as what we ENVIED...
- Because we are not waiting for God – we took the answer the world offered...
- As a result we become BITTER – as if somehow - we have been ripped off in life!
- Bilhah bore a second son (*sixth son of Jacob*) – Rachel names him Naphtali – *Wrestling*
 - With GREAT [אֶלֶּהִים] wrestling – Rachel was first and foremost wrestling with GOD!
 - Because she was not CONTENT with what God gave her - the love of her husband...
 - Therefore she wrestled with her sister – she had no children – Leah had four...
 - In the bitterness that came from her ENVY – Rachel turned children into a competition!
 - If we are content - we really do not care much what others think...
 - But if we are not content – we compete with others to prove we are...
 - Showing our clothes / job / kids / etc. are as better than everyone else...
 - We are miserable because we are competing in a race - we CANNOT win...
 - No matter how much we have – we will always ENVY and want more!
- 3rd - The EXAMPLE of ENVY... vs. 9-13
 - Leah saw she no was no longer having children...
 - Her solution to being barren was to give her servant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife...
 - She saw a solution that seemed to work for her sister – so she copied it!
 - Zilpah bore a son (*seventh son of Jacob*) – Leah named him Gad – *Troop / fortunate*
 - The idea is that Leah had now given Jacob an army – compared to Rachel...
 - Because Leah had copied Rachel – she also copied the competition!
 - Zilpah bore a second son (*eighth son of Jacob*) – Leah named him Asher – *Happy*
 - Leah was happy having given Jacob six sons (*really just four*) ...
 - She thought others would call her (*piel*) blessed because of all her children...
 - But Leah was still not content – she still longed for the LOVE of Jacob!
 - Happiness is not the same thing as Joy - happiness depends on our circumstances...
 - Joy is far deeper - it is not based on your circumstances - it is based on Jesus...
 - Jesus never changes - the same Yesterday / Today / and Forever - **Hebrews 13:8**
 - So no matter what our circumstances - we can ALWAYS have Joy because of Jesus!
 - In fact the only way to have Joy in life is through knowing Jesus and knowing His Word...
 - So if we want a Joy filled life - get into the Word - get into the presence of Jesus!
 - **Psalm 16:11** - “In Your presence is fullness of joy...”
- 4th - The FOOLISNESS of ENVY... vs. 14-16
 - Rueben – found mandrake in the field (*during the wheat harvest*) ...
 - So what was is mandrake – the Hebrew word means – love apple...
 - We are not sure what kind of plant it was – but it apparently helped in procreation...
 - Rachel wanted the mandrake – she still had not children (*thought it could help*) ...
 - Leah scoffed – steal my husband – and the mandrake of MY son!
 - Rachel offered to pay for the mandrake – by giving Jacob to Leah for the night...
 - So when Jacob came home – Leah picked him up – you are mine tonight!
 - This has to be one of the more humorous – and awkward – stories in the Bible!
 - One has to ask why the Holy Spirit would choose to include it...
 - It is not necessary to the story – it does not give us any critical information...
 - What it does show is how petty or silly things become when we are NOT content!

- o 5th - The CONCLUSION of ENVY... vs. 17-24
 - Leah bore a fifth son (*ninth son of Jacob*) – she called him Issachar – *Reward / dowry*
 - She believed God had rewarded her for giving Zilpah to Jacob...
 - Leah bore a sixth son (*tenth son of Jacob*) – she called him Zebulun – *Dwelling*
 - She thought Jacob would live with her (*instead of Rachel*) having given him 6 sons...
 - Leah also gave Jacob a daughter named Dinah (*important later*) – **Genesis 34**
 - But in the end Leah was no better off than where she began...
 - She had eight sons - won the battle of numbers - yet she still did not have LOVE!
 - God remembered (*imperfect*) Rachel...
 - Not that He ever forgot her – he was ALWAYS thinking about her...
 - It was just finally her TIME to bear a son – so God opened her womb...
 - Rachel called him Joseph (*eleventh son of Jacob*) – *Yahweh has added*...
 - God had finally given Rachel a son – the youngest of the children of Jacob...
 - But in the end Rachel also lost – she still was jealous of the eight sons of Leah!
 - She had the LOVE of her husband – but she was NOT content!
 - **In the end – there was no change - ENVY left both EMPTY!**
- 5TH – BLESSED BY THE LORD... vs. 25-43
 - o 1st - Having four wives / eleven sons – Jacob was ready to go home... vs. 25-36
 - He had served his 14 years – he was no longer obligated to work for Laban...
 - But Laban had learned (*piel*) by EXPERIENCE – practice divination...
 - He was blessed (*piel – intensively*) for the sake of Jacob – he wanted him to stay (*perfect*)!
 - He was willing to pay any wage – if only Jacob would stay!
 - The deal – speckled and spotted...
 - Some of the animals of Laban were pure white – some were brown – some had both...
 - Jacob wages – all the speckled / spotted / brown animals from the flock of Laban...
 - That way there would never be a question as to who owned what animals!
 - Laban heartily agreed – we assume most of the animal were solid white...
 - He then removed the speckled / spotted / brown animals – guarded by his sons!
 - From the perspective of Laban – he was guaranteed to come out on top!
 - Jacob had a small flock – three days journey – from the large flock of Laban!
 - o 2nd - Selective breeding... vs. 37-42
 - Jacob used peeled almond / chestnut trees – to control breeding...
 - If the strong animals came to breed – he would place the peeled branches in the water...
 - If the weak animals came to breed – he would NOT place the peeled branches in the water...
 - In that way all the strong animals became the streaked / speckled / and spotted!
 - In other words – ALL the strong animals became Jacobs!
 - At this point you should be confused...
 - Does the color of sticks change the color of the children of sheep – obviously NOT...
 - The color of sheep is completely dependent on their genetics...
 - And since all speckled / spotted / brown animals were removed from the MAIN flock...
 - There was VERY little chance of any of the animals being born with those traits!
 - So what happened – GOD intervened – it was NOTHING Jacob did!
 - As we will see next week – whatever color / kind of animal Laban agreed to give Jacob...
 - That is the color / kind of animal that the WHOLE flock would produce – **Genesis 31:8**
 - o 3rd - Jacob became VERY - VERY wealthy... vs. 43
 - We will see next week this caused a lot of problems for Jacob...
 - His cousins became very envious of his prosperity and wealth...
 - Because when one person is blessed by God – others tend to be jealous!

- Rather than looking to the God who had blessed him!
- If we have been blessed by the Lord. - we will find others ENVY us...
- Even though they could be JUST AS blessed by looking to the Lord!