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 tying 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 out 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 be 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 [אֱלֹהִים] 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!

o 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..."

o 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 is does show is how petty or silly things become when we are NOT content!

- 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**
  - 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 (*prefect*)!
      - 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!
  - 2nd - Selective breeding... vs. 37-42
    - Jacob used pealed almond / chestnut trees – to control breeding…
      - If the strong animals came to breed – he would place the pealed branches in the water…
      - If the weak animals came to breed – he would NOT place the pealed 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**
  - 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!