

Genesis 28-30:24 • Jacob gets a taste of his own medicine

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We're in Genesis chapter 28 open your Bible there, please. Genesis chapter 28.

As we continue our study here on Wednesday night through the Book of Genesis, while you're turning there, I want to remind you that we will not be meeting in here next Wednesday night. There will be no adult part of our Wednesday night meeting because this auditorium is going to be kind of a torn apart. Yeah, not really, we're redoing all the lighting and kind of getting a remodel, but AWANA will be going on in the other building. So if you've got kids in AWANA, you'll be bringing them as typical but no study in here. So, you're ready?

Father God, open our hearts to the ministry of your grace. Thank you, Lord, so much for the worship that Jesus led us in here this evening and we just thank you, Father, that we had some time to spend just singing your praises and worshipping you and declaring your goodness.

And now, Father, we want to just step up to the table, as it were and dine on the delicacies of your Word as you nourish us and fill us and encourage us through the Word. So be with us, we pray, Father, and guide us through this time, we ask in Jesus name, amen.

Chapter 28 begins like this. *“Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, “You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. ² Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.*

³ God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. ⁴ May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!”” (ESV)

I'm going to have you pause there for just a moment because just reminding you that the reason, frankly, that Isaac is sending Jacob away to find a wife is because we ended the last study with Rebekah telling Isaac, listen, if Jacob

takes one of the women from the Canaanites as a wife like Esau has already done, she said, my life isn't going to be worth living. And so she encouraged him at that time to send Jacob away.

Now, this had a dual purpose. I don't doubt that Rebekah, well, I know that Rebekah was bothered by the Canaanite women that Esau took, I know that. But there was another element going on here and that is Rebekah wanted to protect Jacob from Esau's plan to kill him as soon as Isaac passed away, their father.

And so, she wants him to, marry in the family, but she also wants to protect him and get him out of there and give Esau time to cool down. But you'll notice as Isaac is speaking to Jacob here, that there's a change of tone in his voice. Did you catch that?

When we dealt with the last chapter, we saw that Isaac was ready to give the blessing to Esau even though God had told he and his wife, it's going to go to Jacob instead, it's going to go to the younger of the two boys. And yet, because Isaac favored his firstborn son, Esau, he was planning on giving the blessing to Esau. But God used the family drama that went on that we saw in the last chapter to bring about the proper blessing to the proper person.

And you'll notice as Isaac now speaks to Jacob and blesses him, and he's already given him the blessing, but as he speaks that blessing again in kind of a reiterating way, you'll notice that he uses the covenant promises that God gave originally to Abraham, that were spoken to him personally, and now is being passed along to Jacob.

For example, in verse 3, he says, *“God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.”* In other words, that you may spread out and become a multitude. He also said in verse 4, *“May he give the blessing of Abraham”* and there it is right there.

So you can see here that Isaac has come to terms with this whole issue at this time. He knows now that Jacob is the one that God intended to bless or maybe he just remembered, I don't know. But now he's all in on this thing and he says, may God give you possession of the land, the land of your sojourning. Meaning the land of your wanderings and so forth as God promised to Abraham.

And so it says in verse 5 that, *“Thus Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.”* And we're going to get into some of his

adventures along the way here in just a moment. But there's this notation here about Esau, that Esau came to the place of recognizing.

It says, *“⁶ Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he directed him, “You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women,” ⁷ and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan-aram. ⁸ So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please Isaac his father, ⁹ Esau went to Ishmael (remember who Ishmael is) and took as his wife, besides the wives he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth.”*

So this would've been a cousin of Esau that he is taking as a wife. But he's doing it because he realizes that the Canaanite women that he has married, these Hittite women, are causing grief to his mother and father and so he's trying to kind of catch up. But the point is, the fact that he married these Canaanite women in the first place, shows that Esau had no comprehension of what it meant to be the one that would carry on the covenant. He wanted the blessing, he cried when he realized he couldn't get the blessing.

He wanted the blessing, but he had no concept of what the blessing was all about. He had no concept of what it meant to carry on the line of his family and no concept of the people that they would become down the road. And his actions really showed here that Esau is still very much living in the flesh. He's still very much a man of passions, he's a man of the outdoors, he's a man who is governed by his passions. We saw that in several passages before, even to the point where his temporary hunger would cause him to despise his birthright and so no consideration of real spiritual matters at all from the man.

Now we come back to Jacob, it says that, *“¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head (that could not have been comfortable) and lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!*

¹³ And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, “I am the (YAHWEH) LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. ¹⁴ Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all

the families of the earth be blessed.” And that is a reference to Messiah, who comes from the Jews, right?

He says in verse 15, *“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”* Well, these are, pause here for a moment. These are wonderful, wonderful promises, wonderful reassurance from the Lord and so forth. And God is reiterating to Jacob that all of the covenant promises that were made to Abraham and his father, Isaac are now upon him.

God says, I'm going to be with you, I'm going to guide you, I'm going to see to this covenant that is going to happen just as I have said. But I want you to notice Jacob's response and we're going to talk about this a little bit. It says, *“¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, (in other words, Bethel or Beth-el) and this (he says) is the (very) gate of heaven.””* All right, what's going on here?

Well, you can kind of tell by Jacob's response here to this dream and this message from the Lord that he has a very simple, very rudimentary understanding of the Lord by saying, surely the Lord is in this place and I wasn't aware of it. It's a crazy sort of a statement, but it shows that he lacks an understanding of the omnipresence of God.

God, we know from the scripture is in all places at all times, at the same time. God is everywhere present, or if you will, omnipresent. That's the word we use to describe the fact that God is not limited by space or time and He is in all places at all times. Well, Jacob didn't have that understanding and simply because he had a dream at this particular place, he assumed that God was there in a special sort of a way and that this was in fact the gate to heaven. Because he saw these angels ascending and descending on this ladder that he saw stretching up into heaven.

So here's the point of what I'm saying here. We're going to be noticing over the next several chapters that Jacob is going to grow up in his faith, Jacob is going to mature. He's not very mature right now, he has a rudimentary understanding of God. He's not hitting on all cylinders, let's put it that way and you're going to see him coming to a greater understanding of God's work among him. But you're also going to see the Lord shaking out of him, a lot of pagan thought.

Frankly, Jacob's idea that this area right here is some kind of a special place is more pagan than it is biblical from the standpoint of being part of God's truth. Pagans believed very much in locale; localities being special. You'll remember when the nation of Israel was coming into the land and the king of Moab, right?

Wasn't it the king of Moab that wanted to curse the Israelites and hired Balaam to do that? Remember he took him to the top of a mountain to curse him and what came out of Balaam's mouth but a blessing for the people of Israel. So he said, oh, we got to try another hill, we got to try another mountain. So he took him to another mountain to overlook this whole scene of the people. Why did he take him to another mountain and then to another mountain after that? Because that's what pagans think, they think that God is in a special place and sometimes born again Christians can even fall to that same stupidity.

And we start thinking that we've got to go over there to meet with God or we hear about a revival. Remember this was going in the 90s, there was the Toronto Blessing. You guys, some of you might be old enough to remember that and Christians were running to Toronto to experience the Toronto Blessing. It was the dumbest thing you've ever heard in your life. Because to believe that God was in a special locale is pagan thinking, not Christian thinking.

God is everywhere present, and He can deal with people anywhere and there's no special locality to His dealings with mankind. But see, that's something that Jacob is still learning, he's going to learn. You're going to actually hear, and I'm going to hopefully remember to bring those out to you as we come up to them in the scripture. You're going to see those kind of epochs of growth that Jacob has and he will make statements like, I now know that and he'll talk about things like the blessing of the Lord. And he will talk about it as if it's something that's out of his control, that's something we learn. But there's going to be stages of that growth where he's going to still do really dumb things to try to manipulate the blessing of the Lord and we'll see that as we get into the following chapters.

So anyway, we're still kind of thinking a little bit like a pagan here. So in verse 18, it says, *“So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head (because now, even the stone’s special) and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.”* He, in other words, he anointed it. And *“¹⁹ He called the name of that place Bethel, (and that means house of God) but (it says) the name of the city was Luz at the first.”* And the name did stick.

Now, in the next verses, we see this attitude of him even more. Look at verse 20 through 22, it says, *“Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and*

clothing to wear, ²¹ *so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then (okay then) the Lord shall be my God,* ²² *and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me (tell you what, God, I know you're going to be impressed with this) I will give a (whole) full tenth to you.*” Boom! Are you happy with me now? Do you see what's going on? This is a common thing that we see even among Christians, it's called bargaining with God and that's what he's doing.

He's at this place in his life where his relationship with God is a bargain. Tell you what, God, tell you what, you just said some really nice things to me. Now, if you end up being true to your Word on this, well, then I'll just, I'll respond in kind, I'll let you be my God, how about that? Won't that be special? Because you know God needs us, right? I mean, what would He be without us? What would happen if we all stopped worshipping God? He wouldn't be God anymore, would He? You see how weird kind of this thinking is?

It's like, I'm going to bargain with God, I'm going to make a deal with God and I've heard Christians do that too, make a deal with God. Well, you got to be careful bargaining with God. First of all, what you say, He might just take you up on but, but second of all, He might also hold you to it. But anyway, the point of what I'm trying to get across to you in this first chapter that we're looking at tonight is Jacob is a growing spiritual animal and he's just like you and me. You know, we come to the Lord and we don't know anything.

We come to faith in Jesus Christ and we had just barely read the Bible, we know just enough to be dangerous and we start saying things that are dumb and we make bargains with God and we become very circumstantial in our Christianity. What I mean by that is, we allow our circumstances to reflect on who God is rather than believing what the Bible says about who God is. We're going to see Jacob's wives here in the next chapter do that very thing. They're going to be very circumstantial in their understanding of God. They too will have a long way to go in their growth of really walking with God in relationship.

But, I got to tell you, I've gotten so many notes over the years from people who have shared with me the beginning of their walk with the Lord and the troubles that came with it. And how they responded to those troubles by believing that it somehow was a reflection on the person of God. If God is going to let this happen to me, then... sort of thing, finish the sentence and you may have been there at one time as well. We learn to grow out of that, we learn to mature out of that at some point.

We learn to recognize and understand eventually, hopefully, that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. But that's not something we embrace right away, we don't see that at that way at all. In fact, we look at the things that are going on in our lives and we get angry, we get frustrated, we get hurt, in fact, because we don't see the big picture, and we don't have faith enough in God to trust Him yet that what we're going through is going to be okay.

Even though we don't understand it, even though we don't get it, even though right today it's painful. But there comes a maturity in the life of believers where eventually they can go through a protracted, painful period of time in their life, and they can come away praising the Lord for His goodness and mercy and blessing. And they will even sometimes when they're mature enough, be able to say, I wouldn't trade that painful time for anything because I grew by leaps and bounds.

My faith in Him, my trust in Him, my hope in Him has been strengthened like you wouldn't believe. But see, that's maturity speaking. Immaturity bargains with God and gets upset circumstantially when things don't go your way. And it even says, well, God, if this is the way you're going to treat me, then I don't think I'm going to let you be my God and it's all very childish and this is what we see Jacob doing at this point. It's really kind of childish, but it's childlike as well.

So anyway, chapter 29, *“Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east.”* And that is essentially northern Syria, all right? *“² As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, ³ and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.”*

Now when you think of a well, frankly, I think our modern images need some adjustment because wells in the ancient Middle East were often nothing more than a hole in the ground. Let me show you a picture, this is an actual picture of a well in the land of Israel and this one's actually built up rather nicely.



It's got this kind of stone brick type circle around it, but sometimes it didn't have that. It was just a hole in the ground with a rock over the top and then they would push the stone or rock away exposing the water so that they could water their flocks and so forth. But, it's kind of a far cry from that, that, you know, romantic wishing well thing that kind of often goes in our hearts and minds about that.

But anyway, so this is a well he comes to here, he sees these flocks of sheep, three of them, who are just lying there down around the well and in verse 4 it says. *“Jacob said to them, “My brothers, where do you come from?” (and) They said, “We are from Haran.”*⁵ *He said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?” They said, “We know him.”*

*⁶ He said to them, “Is it well with him?” (and they all sang together, it is well with his soul. It's a dumb joke, no) They said, “It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!”*⁷ *He said, “Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them.”*⁸ *But they said, “We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep.”*⁹ *While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.”*

So she's probably bringing the rest of the sheep that are going to be watered at that time. And, ¹⁰ *Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.*” And it's, I don't know, you got to almost picture this in your mind or watch this, I don't know if you do that when you're reading the Bible.

I have this film strip going on in my brain and I see Jacob kind of getting this rush of adrenaline. Because first of all, we're going to find out here that Rachel is an absolute bombshell, she's gorgeous, which is really interesting, isn't it? Because Abraham married a gorgeous woman, Isaac married a gorgeous woman and the first girl that Jacob picked out, guess what? She's gorgeous.

Now the women might not understand this in the room, but let me just tell you, when a guy sees a pretty girl, he'll do some really interesting and sometimes dumb things. But he single handedly goes over and grabs a hold of this stone and moves it off the well. It's almost kind of like this Superman moment and he just jumps in. Nobody asked him, he just jumps in to the fray and starts to water the flock that Rachel brought.

And not only that, but in verse 11 it says, *“Then Jacob kissed Rachel and (he started crying) wept aloud.”* It's not the introduction I would have wanted with the girl that I kind of thought was hot. It's like, he walks up to her and kisses her and starts crying, I can't imagine what she's thinking. First of all, who are you? Why did you water my flock? And why are you crying? And why did you kiss me?

¹² *And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.* ¹³ *As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house.*” Now, you guys remember back when Abraham sent his servant to go get a bride for his son Isaac? We met Laban at that time, for the very first time and we found out some things about Laban.

We found out Laban was a guy who liked nice stuff and the servant of Abraham brought a lot of really nice gifts to give to the family, Rebekah's family. And we're going to find as we go through the next few chapters that Laban is all about money. He's all about earning wealth, he's all about having nice things and he's also a pagan. So anyway, we're going to, we're going to learn that about him and more.

But we're in the middle of verse 13, it says, "*Jacob told Laban all these things, (other words, he related to him the story of his trip and so forth)* ¹⁴ *and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month.* ¹⁵ *Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"* ¹⁶ *Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel."*

And then we're told what the difference was between the girls in the next verse, "¹⁷ *Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was (and here's the description) beautiful in form and appearance.*" So, she was a dish, okay? That's all you need to know, she was a very, very pretty girl, but they were very different in their physical appearance. You'll notice that it says, Leah's eyes were weak and if you try to look that up in commentaries or dictionaries and Hebrew dictionaries, you will find that we don't know what it means.

Now, it's my belief that this was a euphemism, that this was used... and a euphemism is a nice way of saying something that is hard or harsh to say. And I think it was a euphemism for a girl with homely, who was homely. I mean, that's my belief, that Leah was just, she was the homely one of the two and Rachel was gorgeous. And it doesn't seem fair at all that one of them gets all the looks and the other one doesn't, but that's just the way it turned out.

And of course you know which one Jacob's going to be attracted to. And that's what it says in verse 18. "*Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."*" And it could be that he was giving a seven year time period because who knows, maybe Rachel wasn't fully at marrying age, although they did marry girls awfully young back then, but it could be that's what the reason was.

And "¹⁹ *Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; (so) stay with me."* In other words, all right, let's do that. Verse 20 says, "*So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.*" Isn't that kind of a neat statement? When you're with somebody that you love, it's just like, it's so cool, it's just wonderful being with someone like that.

And so seven years went by just like that for Jacob because he just had eyes for Rachel the entire time, but it's also a long time to wait. Verse 21 says, and this is a little embarrassing. "*Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed."*" I wouldn't say that to a perspective

father in law, I just wouldn't say those things, you're likely to get punched. But Jacob is like, hey, I've waited seven years, let's get this thing moving here.

“²² So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. (like a wedding feast) ²³ But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her.” Now, obviously, girls were presented to their husband in such a way at that time that it was possible for Laban to substitute Leah for Rachel.

And so, she probably had a veil, a heavy veil and other, and it was dark, it was at night. And so they go through this ceremony, festivities, whatever, and they bring her out, and she's probably all veiled. And they bring..., and so they're going to go off into their little wedding night, honeymoon type thing and he's kind of unaware of it. And they don't turn on any lights or anything like that and it was Leah that was given to him

And it says here in verse 24 and this is a parenthetical comment, but that, *“(Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.)”* So that was kind of like a wedding gift, he gave her this servant girl to be specifically her servant.

Now, 25, *“And in the morning, behold, (Jacob wakes up, he turns over) it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?””* And what is going on here? Well, I'll tell you what's going on, Jacob's getting a little taste of his own medicine, that's what's going on. Jacob has met his match.

Remember Jacob's name means, heel catcher, which figuratively means deceiver. But God brought him to stay with his mother's brother, who is a bigger deceiver. I mean, this guy has Jacob beat and so this is a very difficult thing when you are made to kind of drink your own medicine. And notice Laban's response to Jacob's question.

“²⁶ Laban said, (well, you know) “It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.”” In other words, our custom is not to give the younger before the older is married. Now, of course, he made no effort to explain that to Jacob ahead of time, would have been kind of nice. But then again, the deception would have been lost and it was a terrible thing.

But think about how the girls felt thrust into this situation, think about the girls. They are the real kind of victims of this and not Jacob. Like I said, he's kind of getting a dose of his own medicine, but the girls, I mean, think about it. Rachel

knew that she was the one Jacob was expecting, but she didn't get to go and Leah knew that she's the one who had been passed over and she did get to go, but she got to see the look on Jacob's face in the morning when he saw her there and the disappointment that went along with it, it was terrible.

This was absolutely terrible for these girls and for Laban to manipulate his daughters that way. Sure he manipulated Jacob, but Jacob kind of had it coming. But the girls, they didn't ask for this. So what does he do? He kind of redesigns the deal.

Verse 27, he says, "*Complete the week of this one, ...*" Meaning the wedding week. In other words, give her week with you, "²⁹*...and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.*" So he basically ups the ante, he doesn't have to wait another seven years, he only has to wait seven days, but still. This is not the deal that they made, this is not the deal. So what we see here is Laban manipulating the situation.

He gets another seven years of labor out of Jacob and he gets his way and Jacob's really, he wants Rachel so bad, what is he going to do? Turn it down? Take Leah and leave? No, I don't think so. "²⁸*Jacob did so, and completed her week.* (meaning Leah's wedding week, that must have been lovely) *Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.* (and)²⁹ *(Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.)* ³⁰ *So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, ...*"

And we've already seen in our study of Genesis, how destructive favoritism can be, but in this case, honestly, it's not Jacob's fault, really? He was deceived, he never desired Leah, he never asked for Leah, but he got her anyway and so, it's a tough situation. The verse ends, verse 30, by saying, "*...and served Laban for another seven years.*"

Now, verse 31 says, "*When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, ...*" The New American Standard Bible (NASB) softens that a bit and says, "*when the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.*" Isn't this interesting? I'm talking about Rachel.

We've already made the note here that Rachel has something in common with all the other women that were attracted to this family. Abraham was attracted to Sarah and she was gorgeous, Isaac was attracted to Rebekah, she was gorgeous, Jacob was attracted to Rachel, she was gorgeous and they were all three barren. All three of them and they all three ended up bearing children eventually.

But, what follows in these final verses of this chapter, and we're going to read kind of rather quickly here and go through the first few, the first 24 verses of the following chapter, we're going to see a recounting of this rivalry between Leah and Rachel in childbearing. And it's a rivalry that is not only sad, but it foreshadows not only the tension between the boys that were born to this man through these women, but it also foreshadows some of the tension and difficulty that would come between the tribes of Israel later on because of just the way this whole thing came about.

So verse 32 says, *“And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, “Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.””* And Reuben's name means, behold a son or see a son.

“³³ She conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Because the LORD has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also.” And she called his name Simeon.” In this case, Simeon simply sounds like the Hebrew word for heard.

“³⁴ Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, “Now this time my husband will be attached to me, (you can see that it hasn't been helping) because I have borne him three sons.” Therefore his name was called Levi.” And Levi sounds like the Hebrew word for attached.

³⁵ And she conceived again and bore a son, (she is just a baby factory) and said, “This time I will praise the LORD.” Therefore she called his name Judah. (and again, Judah sounds like the Hebrew word for praise) Then she ceased bearing.” At least for a while.

Chapter 30 says, *“When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die!”² Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?””* What a nice guy.

She's hurting, we've already made note of the fact, through the other barren relationships of Sarah and Rebekah, that when a woman back then was barren, she was considered cursed by God, and he's kind of reinforcing that. But when she comes to him out of her pain, and guys pay attention, a wife comes to you in pain, the worst thing you can do is get angry.

But ladies, can I just explain to you that's a guy's go to emotion? It's dumb, I'm not making excuses for us, but it is our go to emotion. Men are weird that way, but when we are frustrated, we get angry, when we're sad, we get angry, when

we're scared, we get angry and we throw things. Pretty much any emotion that guys feel, we get angry.

Women are more pure in their emotional responses. When they're sad they cry, when they're scared, they ahhh!, you know, you know what I mean? I was watching this video this afternoon, it was so funny. It was like, why not to scare your wife. And it was these repeated videos of women, just, you know, guys coming up on their wife, scaring them and she turns around and decks him, you know, or something like that is it was hilarious.

Anyway, women are more pure in their emotional responses, but men get angry. And again, that's not an excuse, but that's exactly what we see here. She says, I want a baby, give me a baby and he gets angry at her. He says, am I God? Who has obviously withheld this thing from you. Boy, compare that to what happened when his dad realized that his wife was barren. Let me put it on the screen just to remind you, it was back just a few chapters.

Genesis 25:21 (ESV)

*And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren.
And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. (and what happened?) And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

By the way, that was the very pregnancy that brought Jacob into the world. His conception was because his father prayed instead of getting angry. And that's the example, men, that's the example that we want to follow. Not Jacob, we want to follow Isaac's example. You're faced with a situation that you can't do anything about, you can pray about it, you can bring her to the throne of grace.

Verse 3, *“Then she said, “Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, (in other words, kind of a surrogate sort of a thing) that even I may have children through her.”⁴ So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her.⁵ And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son.*

⁶ *Then Rachel said, “God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son.” Therefore she called his name Dan.”* And Dan once again sounds like the Hebrew word for judged. Now stop there, please pause for a moment.

Remember I told you there's such a thing as circumstantial Christianity where I look at my circumstances and I come to a conclusion That's exactly what Rachel's doing here and it shows her immaturity. So what does she say here? Aha! God has judged on my behalf, He heard my voice and He's given me a son.

She is assuming that this is something that God did, actually, this is just nature. You give your servant girl to your husband to go in and have physical relations with her, guess what's going to happen? She's going to get pregnant. This is nature taking its course, but she is assuming that this is the Lord who has justified me now in this tug of war I'm having with my sister, and you're going to see that Leah is going to do the same thing. They're going to go back and forth and do this.

“⁷ Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸ Then Rachel said, “With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed.” (she hasn't even given birth to a baby herself yet and yet she says, I have prevailed) *So she called his name* (wrestling, which is, it's just kind of sounds like the Hebrew word, which is) *Naphtali.*”

Which by the way, I always thought Naphtali would be a good girl's name. I always did. In fact, I met a girl, years ago, about 25 years ago, who was named Naphtali, and I thought, that's a good name. Not really a masculine sounding name.

Anyway, *“⁹ When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.* (what do you suppose is going to happen?)

¹⁰ Then Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹ And Leah said, “Good fortune has come!” so she called his name (good fortune, which, well, not really, it was) *Gad.*” Just sounds like the Hebrew for good fortune.

And then, *“¹² Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. ¹³ And Leah said, “Happy am I! For women have called me happy.” So she called his name Asher.*” And that sounds a little like the Hebrew word for happy. So maybe she called him Appy, I don't know.

Verse 14. *“In the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son's mandrakes.”*” Now there is, by the way, I'll

should just pause here to say. There's reason to believe that mandrakes were believed to be an aphrodisiac, okay. So keep that in mind.

“¹⁵ But she said to her, “Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?” Rachel said, (alright) “Then he may lie with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes.” Good grief, now the girls are bargaining among themselves for time with Jacob. I mean, this has just really devolved into a ridiculous sort of a situation.

“¹⁶ When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, “You must come in to me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes.” (so, oh, mercy)

So he lay with her that night. ¹⁷ And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸ Leah said, “God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband.” ... Notice what she's assuming, that God is blessing her because she gave Jacob another wife. That was never God's plan and yet, she says I did this, He rewarded me.

See, this is the problem, this is the mistake Christians make too. Something good happens in my life and I assumed that means what I did right before that good was something God wanted me to do. Well, that may have nothing to do with it, that could just be God's mercy and goodness. But Christians do this all the time. How do you think, you know, I was talking about the Toronto blessing earlier.

Why do you think Christians thought that was such a big deal? Well, it's because when they went there, good things happened, good things happened and I won't deny it. Good things happened up in Toronto when people gathered because they thought this is where God was. Why do you think good things happened?

Because God is good and when people come to him by faith, He responds in goodness to their faith and He's not going to say to them, well, you're an idiot, and you believed that I was here in Toronto, and I wasn't somewhere else. So I'm going to withhold my blessing from you, even though you're responding in faith.

He's not going to do that, He's going to bless people. He blesses people because He's a good God, and He's a good Father. But that doesn't mean Toronto was where God was, you see, that was the conclusion people drew. But they drew it

for the exact same reason Leah drew the conclusion that, oh, God's rewarding me because I gave Jacob another woman, that's ridiculous. See, that's an assumption on her part, just like it's an assumption with Christians on many fronts with the same sort of conclusions.

So anyway, I'm going to read verse 18 again. *“Leah said, “God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband.” (there you go) So she called his name Issachar.”* And that sounds like wages or higher.

“¹⁹ And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. ²⁰ Then Leah said, “God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons.” So she called his name Zebulun.” Which sounds a lot like the Hebrew word honor.

“²¹ Afterward she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.” And apparently Dinah means, oh poop, it's a girl or something like that, I don't know. I mean, you know, the girls weren't that important. I'm sorry, but that's just the way things went.

All right, *“²² Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. ²³ She conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” ²⁴ And she called his name Joseph, saying, “May the LORD add to me another son!””*

Now, you know, what Rachel is saying here is true. God did take away her reproach by allowing her to conceive because culturally they reproached a woman who could not conceive. So, what she's saying is right and so forth and that's why she named him Joseph because it sounds like the Hebrew for taken away.

And what you have after all of this family drama and all these assumptions and all of this stuff that's going on, these two sisters who are competing with one another for the affections of this man, you end up with 12 sons born to Jacob; the 12 tribes of Israel.

And that's where we're going to stop for tonight and then we're going to pick it up in chapter 30, verse 25, next time, because that kind of starts a new thought process. And so, we'll take that together with the rest. So, there you go. Fun, huh? And you thought your family was weird, yeah. So, let's pray.

Father, we thank you so much for your word and just the reminders of who you are and how we can just get so off base in our assumptions and our conclusions

when we take circumstantial evidence to be the deciding factor of who you are and

]we use it, Lord, to define you and that was never your intention.

Lord, you've given us your Word and you've revealed yourself in your Word and that is how you are defined. You give the definition, we don't. And you have defined yourself in the loveliest of terms, and I pray my Father God that we would hang on to that definition by faith, even when circumstances seem to say otherwise, for that, Lord, is maturity.

We thank you for these reminders tonight, thank you for this study in the Book of Genesis. We just pray for the continuing ministry of your grace as we go from this place, we ask all these things in Jesus name and all God's people said, amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your evening.