



## JACOB - FROM BROKENNESS TO BLESSING PART 4: LESSONS FROM LEAH

March 31, 2019

Pastor Keith Jenkins

### BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

**TEXT:** *In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:4-6)*

#### Genesis 29

*Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples. 2 There he saw a well in the open country, with three flocks of sheep lying near it because the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large. 3 When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone away from the well's mouth and water the sheep. Then they would return the stone to its place over the mouth of the well.*

*4 Jacob asked the shepherds, "My brothers, where are you from?"*

*"We're from Harran," they replied.*

*5 He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?"*

*"Yes, we know him," they answered.*

*6 Then Jacob asked them, "Is he well?"*

*"Yes, he is," they said, "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."*

*7 "Look," he said, "the sun is still high; it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water the sheep and take them back to pasture."*

*8 "We can't," they replied, "until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep."*

*9 While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherd. 10 When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of his uncle Laban, and Laban's sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle's sheep. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud. 12 He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father.*

*13 As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things. 14 Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood."*

*After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, 15 Laban said to him, "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."*

*16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. 18 Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."*

*19 Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." 20 So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.*

*21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her."*

cont.

*"People can compliment you, but only God can affirm you!"*

*-Pastor Keith*

*22 So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. 23 But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. 24 And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant.*

*25 When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"*

*26 Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. 27 Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."*

*28 And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. 29 Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant. 30 Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.*

*31 When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless. 32 Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now."*

*33 She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Because the Lord heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon.*

*34 Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." So he was named Levi.*

*35 She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the Lord." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.*

## MESSAGE SUMMARY

Jacob retraces his grandfather Abraham's journey in reverse. Jacob arrives in Haran and at first sight falls in love with Laban's daughter Rachel. Jacob and Laban come to terms to allow Jacob to marry Rachel. Laban, however, deceives Jacob, and gives his eldest daughter Leah to be married.

Leah is rejected; she was a commodity to Jacob rather than a companion. Rejection is the refusal on the part of someone else to accept and appreciate you for who you are and sometimes ridiculing you for who you're not. Leah wants what all of us want; to be loved for who she is. Each time Leah gave birth, she thought that she would finally have the approval, attention, and affection of her husband. Our sense of worth is never meant to lie in our accomplishments or in the praise of men. You should be grateful for the approval of others, but your validation needs to come from God.

While she is not loved by Jacob, God sees Leah and loves her. Eventually, when Leah gives birth to Judah, she says, "This time I will praise the Lord," and is no longer dependent on the validation of Jacob. Though rejected, Leah gives birth to Judah, from whom Jesus descended. It's as though God said, "I'll birth a rejected king through a rejected woman."

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.*

### LEAN IN

***These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.***

1. Have you ever had someone show you grace when you were in the wrong?  
What happened?
2. Have you ever tried to help someone when you were really the one who needed help?  
What happened?
3. Have you ever been caught in an awkward situation? What happened?
4. What is one thing that you're looking forward to this week?  
What's one that you are dreading?

**DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS,  
CONT.**

**LOOK DOWN**

*These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.*

*Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max*

1. What similarities do you see between the stories of Jacob and Rachel, and Isaac and Rebekah?
2. What similarities and differences do you see between Laban's deception of Jacob and Jacob's deception of Isaac (Gen 27:5-29)?
3. Where do you see God's justice and discipline in Genesis 29?
4. How did the name of Leah's fourth son indicate her change of heart?
5. What were some of the effects of deception in this family?

**LOOK OUT**

*These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.*

*Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max*

1. Pastor Keith said that it would have been the custom in these times for all the shepherds to gather and together roll the stone away from the well (v10). When Rachel arrives, Jacob rolls away the stone, most likely trying to make a good impression with his strength. Describe a time where you felt the need to prove yourself or make a good impression.
2. In this time, bearing children was a great honor, and having sons meant that the family name would be passed on. Leah felt sure that by producing sons, she would win her husband's affection. What are some examples of ways in which people today try to earn favor from other people? (Keith gave the example of joining cub scouts, boy scouts, ROTC, and the Marines to earn the affirmation of his father.)
3. Although Leah's circumstances did not change, her response did. Why do you think this was?
4. When Jacob confronts Laban, his uncle tells him to spend the rest of the week with Leah, then gives Jacob Rachel as his wife also. How do you think Leah felt being tossed aside?
5. Jacob's name literally means "heel grabber" or "deceiver." Why do you think the theme of deception continued to resurface in Jacob's life?

**LOOK IN**

*These are questions that help you consider personal application.*

*Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max*

1. Have you experienced a time when you were deceived and felt like Jacob did when he realized "there was Leah?"
2. Describe a time where you ever felt like Leah, where you knew that you weren't wanted.
3. Why do you suppose Laban deceived Jacob? Was this deceit justified?
4. Whom have you tried to earn validation, attention or affection from?
5. How are you tempted to try to earn validation?

**LIVE IT OUT**

*These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.*

*Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What would it look like for you to find your validation in Jesus' love?
2. How do you notice the love and attention of the One who matters the most? What is the proper response to God's great love?