

(Through the Bible) Genesis 29-31

by Chuck Smith

This sermon explores Jacob's journey, his relationships with Rachel and Leah, and the complexities of polygamous family dynamics in biblical times.

Duration: 53:14

Scripture: Genesis 28:19-22, Genesis 30:35-43, Genesis 31:10-13, Mark 8:36, Romans 3:23, Galatians 3:28

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the equality and value of all individuals in the eyes of God. He highlights the universal need for a Savior and the unity found in Jesus Christ, where distinctions such as race, social status, and gender hold no significance. The speaker then shifts to the story of Jacob and his encounter with Laban and his daughters. Jacob meets Rachel, Laban's daughter, at a well where they wait for others to gather and move a large rock to access the water. Laban welcomes Jacob into his home and offers him the opportunity to set his own wages for his service.

Transcript

Then Jacob went on his journey, and he came to the land of the people of the east. And he looked, and behold there was a well in the field, and there were three flocks of sheep lying by it. For out of the well they watered the flocks, and a great stone was upon the well's mouth.

And all of the flocks were gathered together here, and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again on the well's mouth in this place. And Jacob said unto the young people that were there, my brothers, where do you come from? And they said, we're from Haran. And he said unto them, do you know Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, sure we know him.

And he said unto them, is he well? And they said, sure. And look, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep. So God had his hand upon Jacob, had guided him to the place of Haran.

And actually at that very moment, Rachel his cousin was coming with her father's sheep. Now this well had this big rock over it, and they would gather at the well to water the sheep. Well here it was in the early afternoon, and these people were already there.

But the rock was so big, evidently it took a lot of them to move the rock. And so they have to wait till the whole group came. But yet they had sort of a process where first come first serve.

And so they'd come early, and just sort of lie around, and let their sheep lie there while they were waiting to get enough people to move the rock, so that they could water it. And then they would wait until all the flocks that were gathered in turn, and each one being watered. And then they would roll the rock back over the well.

So Jacob is talking to them, perhaps cannot understand why they'd just be there so early, or being sort of lazy really in their job of watching their sheep. And is talking to them, where are you from? We're from Haran. Do you know Laban? Yeah we know him.

In fact there comes his daughter right now. And he said, hey it's, it's high, it's still early afternoon really, about noontime. It's yet high day.

Neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together. Water the sheep, and then go out and feed them. Hey you shouldn't be just sitting around here at this time of the day.

Go ahead and water your sheep, and then take them out to the pasture, you know. It's too early to have them just standing around here. And they said, we cannot until all the flocks are gathered together.

And they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and then we watered the sheep. And while he was yet talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she kept them. And it came to pass when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother.

Probably just showing off a little bit of strength. You know it took a whole group of them to roll that stone back. But when you've got incentive, it's amazing what you can do.

And so Jacob went up by himself, and rolled the stone back. And so then Jacob, overcome with emotion, kissed Rachel, and lifted up her voice and wept. She probably thought, who in the world is this, you know? He is doing these marvelous feats of strength, now kissing me and crying.

And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother. He was Rebecca's son. And she ran and told her father.

And it came to pass when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, surely thou art my bone and my flesh.

And he abode with him for the space of a month. And Laban said to Jacob, because you are my brother, should you serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be? Notice Laban is allowing Jacob to set his own wages. And Laban had two daughters.

The name of the elder was Leah. The name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah was tender-eyed.

Some believe that that means she was blue-eyed. Her eyes were not the real deep dark brown, which were considered the stronger eyes. But Rachel was beautiful and well-favored.

And Jacob loved Rachel, sort of a love at first sight. And he said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter. Now it was a custom in those days for a man to pay a dowry for a wife.

And in those cultures today, it is still a cultural thing to pay a dowry. Now what a dowry actually amounts to is alimony in advance. In case you're not treating your wife right and she has to leave you, rather than being destitute, the dowry is to be saved for the wife.

It's actually for her and for her future. In case you put her away, in case you divorce her, she has enough to get along on. The dowry was then used for that.

It was actually alimony in advance. And it was the responsibility of the father to keep that for the wife for the future. In case something didn't work out in the marriage, it was then to take care of her and to provide for her.

Now Jacob came off from home with nothing. All he had was his walking stick. So he had no dowry.

But he was so in love with Rachel, he was willing to become a slave for seven years in order that his seven years of service might become a dowry. Now in reality, in those seven years that he served Laban for Rachel, because God so blessed Jacob and Jacob's service, that Laban was increased with wealth and goods, that which came to Laban by Jacob's service should have been set aside as the dowry for the daughter. But Jacob didn't do that.

I mean Laban didn't do that. He just, you know, used it for himself and did not really set up a true dowry for his daughters. And so Jacob made the deal, I'll serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.

And Laban said, it is better that I give her to you than I should give her to another man. Go ahead and abide with me. And Jacob served for seven years for Rachel.

And they seemed unto him just like a few days, because he had such great love for her. And Jacob said to Laban, give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. I had served the seven years, but Laban still just didn't turn her over.

I mean Jacob had to ask for her. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and he made a great feast. Because actually they would celebrate for about seven days.

The wedding feast would last that long. They'd gather together and have big feasting and big parties and all. And so it came to pass in the evening.

It was dark. He took Leah, his daughter. And of course they were heavily veiled.

And he brought her to him, and he went unto her. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah, his maid, for a handmaid. And it came to pass in the morning, when Jacob saw his new bride, that it was Leah.

And he said to Laban, what have you done to me? I served you for Rachel. Why have you beguiled me? And Laban said, it's the custom of the country that we are not to give the younger before the firstborn. So fulfill her week.

In other words, the week wedding thing. Go ahead and serve, you know, fulfill her week. Serve her the honeymoon.

And then I'll give you the other daughter, and you will serve me yet another seven years. Now, I am certain that in this, Jacob could not help but remember the deception that he had pulled upon his dad, disguising

as his brother. As a man soweth, so shall he also reap.

And this is a classic example. He had disguised himself as his brother, had deceived his father, had gone in and received the blessing. And now the old switcheroo has pulled on him.

And his father-in-law does much the same for him. He serves for seven years, create a dowry. And the old man switches daughters.

A lot of questions are unanswered. Where was Rachel? You know, I wonder if they had to whisk her away by force. And what was Leah's mental attitude in this whole thing? I mean, surely she knew that in the morning when he wakes up and sees that it's me, you know, it must have been tough on her.

As he made love to her that night, realizing that he was thinking that he was making love to her younger sister and all. And it wasn't easy, I wouldn't suppose, for this whole situation. And no doubt created a lot of tensions for the time.

But Jacob was a good sport through it all. I mean, that you have to confess, you know. What would you have done? You know, had a switcheroo been pulled on you like that.

And it could be that it was because of his own past that he was such a good sport and so understanding about the whole thing. But the old man just. Now, if that were the custom, then Laban should have told him the custom back at the beginning of the seven years.

He should have said, well, that's fine son, but we've got a custom here. But he's figuring to, you know, to squeeze out from Jacob everything he can. Now, Jacob is a good sport in that he goes on to serve another seven years for Rachel.

So, that Leah would not feel less in his eyes. In other words, had he been making the deal for Leah in the beginning, he probably wouldn't have said seven years. Because he really wasn't interested in her.

But Jacob consenting to go on for another seven years. And there isn't really too much about Jacob's explosion or anger or anything else. But he's pretty even and cool through the whole thing.

Much more than I think I would be under the similar circumstances. So, Jacob went along with it. Spent the honeymoon with her.

And then he gave him Rachel, his daughter, as a wife also. In other words, he didn't have to wait a full seven years to get Rachel. He received Rachel the next week.

But still, he then was obligated to serve another seven years to form her dowry. And Rachel gave his daughter Bilhah, his handmaid, to be her maid. And he went in also to Rachel.

And he loved Rachel more than Leah. And served yet another seven years. Now, here we find the case of polygamy.

But even as we read of it, we see the difficulties that exist in a polygamous relationship as there begin to develop jealousies and rivalries and so forth among the wives. Several years ago, in a sociology class at Orange Coast College, the professor of the class asked if we could see any advantage to polygamy. And of course, I was an older student in the class.

Most of them were young and unmarried. And they couldn't see any advantages in polygamy. But I raised my hand and said, well, I can see some advantages in polygamy.

I mean, I actually can foresee. There could be some advantages in polygamy. You marry a wife that's a real sharp secretary.

You send her out to make the living. And, you know, you get enough of them working, you can just kick back and just enjoy it. But though I can see some advantages or possible advantages to polygamy, I can also see enough disadvantages that I would be discouraged from ever trying to have such a relationship.

And so, we find that here there is really no strong biblical injunction against it. It was something that was accepted in that culture at that time. And of course, it came to its maximum under Solomon.

But by the time we come to the New Testament and the purposes of God are more clearly defined, when the church is developed, polygamy is definitely prohibited. And those who were to be the overseers of the church were to be husbands of one wife and keeping their homes. And this was still in a time in which mistresses and courtesans and so forth were widely accepted in the Grecian culture and in the Roman culture.

So, problems did develop, jealousies and all. Rachel, whom he loved more than Leah. And even in that, you have a difficult situation that's going to create hurt feelings, that's going to create difficult living.

But Rachel was barren. But Leah conceived and she bore a son. And she called his name, Look, a son.

For she said, the Lord has looked upon my affliction. He sees that he doesn't love me so much as he loves my sister. So, look, a son.

Now, therefore, my husband will love me. Isn't that rather pathetic? She senses a lack of love from Jacob and she's hoping now that I've borne him a son, now will he love me? And reaching out for love, as I say, is just the tragic byproduct of this polygamous relationship. And she conceived again and bore another son.

And she said, because the Lord has heard that I was hated. And that word hated should not be taken literally. I was loved less.

He didn't really hate her, but he didn't love her as much as he loved Rachel. He hath therefore given me this son. And so she called his name, Hearing, which the Lord has heard me.

So she called his name, I've been heard or hearing. She conceived again, bore another son and said, now this time will my husband be joined to me because I have had three sons for him. And so she called his name, Joined.

And she conceived again. And bear a son. And she said, now will I praise the Lord? Therefore she called his name, Praise.

And she left off bearing. So the names of the boys were actually indicative of her desires to be accepted, to be loved. And they probably were born within a year of each other.

Now, when Rachel saw that she could not bear Jacob's children, Rachel envied her sister. And she said to Jacob, give me children or else I'm going to die. And Jacob was angry with her.

And he said, am I in God's place who has withheld thee from the fruit of the womb? So here's some hard feelings and harsh words between husband and wife. Because Rachel feels the disgrace of not being able to bear children. And so she said, behold my maid Bilhah, go into her and she shall bear upon my knees that I may have children by her.

And so she gave him Bilhah, her handmaid as a wife. And Jacob went into her and Bilhah conceived. And bear Jacob a son.

And Rachel said, God hath judged me. And so she called his name, Judge, Dan. Daniel means God is judge.

But she called him Dan because she said, God has judged me. And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again. Now these could have been coinciding.

These boys could be being born at the same time that Leah was having her sons. She conceived again, bear Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, with great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister.

And now I have prevailed. And so she called his name, Wrestler. And Leah saw that she had finished bearing or left off bearing.

And so she took Zilpah, her maid, and gave her to Jacob as his wife. It's competition. You have to admit that he was a very very old man.

And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bear Jacob a son. And Leah said, a troop cometh. And she called his name Gad.

Now that may be an unfortunate translation. There are those who believe that it should not be translated a troop. But I forget what it's supposed to be translated.

So you can look that up. Leah's, and Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore Jacob a second son. And Leah said, happy am I. For all the daughters will call me blessed.

And so she called his name Happy. And Reuben went in the days of the wheat harvest. Now Reuben was probably only about seven years old at this time.

But he was the oldest son. And in the days of the wheat harvest, he went out and he found mandrakes in the field. Now a mandrake was a little orange colored fruit that grew on bushes.

And the mandrakes were thought to have had aphrodisiac type of powers. And also fertility powers. And they were thought, they were called love apples.

And they were thought to have fertility powers. And so Reuben brought them into his mother Leah. And then Rachel said to Leah, give me I pray thee of your son's mandrakes.

Probably hoping that they would make her fertile. And Leah said, endurer, is it a small matter that you have taken my husband? And would you take also my son's mandrakes? And Rachel said, I'll give you permission to spend the night with him if you'll give me your son's mandrakes. And so Jacob came out of the field and Leah came out to meet him and said, you're mine tonight.

For surely I have hired you with my son's mandrakes. Now again, you can see the problems with polygamy. I don't read of Jacob complaining.

I imagine it was sort of healthy for his ego to have them fighting over him this way. And so he went into her that night and God hearkened unto Leah and she conceived and bore a fifth son. And Leah said, God has given me my hire.

Because I have given my maiden to my husband and she called his name hired. And Leah conceived again and bare Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry.

Now will my husband dwell with me. I have born him six sons and she called his name dwelling. And afterwards she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.

Now how many other daughters were born, we don't know. If there were daughters born in between here, we don't know. We do know that Jacob did have daughters.

They are mentioned later, but none of them by name. Dinah is the only daughter that is named and she is only named here because she becomes an important part of the story later. The girls weren't named.

Girls weren't considered valuable. Only the fellows were considered valuable. In fact, when a woman went into labor, they would gather together with, you know, they come together, gather all the things for a feast and prepare to have a great big feast.

They bring in the wine and the meat and everything else. And when the baby was born, if it were a boy, they would just have a huge party at a big feast. If it was a girl, they'd just fold up everything and go home.

So you've come a long way, baby. And in reality, it is through Jesus Christ that the cultural patterns have been so changed where he has brought us to the place where there is no superior sex. But Christ is all and in all.

And it's so neat that through Jesus Christ, we have been able to recognize a total equality, not only of the sexes, but of people themselves. And the thing that God hates is the exalting or lifting up of one person above another, thinking that you're more important or you're more, you know, you're greater or whatever, is an attitude that God detests. He wants us to all recognize that the equality, there is no difference, Paul said.

There are similarities in all of us. We've all sinned. We've all come short of the glory of God.

We all need the Savior, Jesus Christ. And in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, male or female. It's just an equality all in Jesus and we're one together in him.

So it's a very beautiful thing that Christ has done for us in bringing to us that recognition of the value of all persons. And he places tremendous value on each of you. So much so he said, what should a prophet of man be would gain the whole world and lose his own soul.

He's talking about you and your soul. It's more important to God than the whole world. And thus he has placed a high value upon each of us and he has prized you dearly.

So problems arose because of this relationship. But God, verse 22, remembered Rachel and God hearkened to her and opened her womb and she conceived and bear a son. And she said, God has taken away my reproach.

And so she called his name Joseph, which means adding, which she was hoping that God would add now more sons. And so it was, it was, his name was sort of expressing the hope of her heart that now I will be able to give my husband more sons. And so it came to pass when Rachel had born Joseph that Jacob said to Laban, send me away that I may go into my own place and to my country.

Now at this point, Reuben, the oldest could not have been more than 12 years old because Jacob only served six years after the seven years for the second dowry. He'd served a total of 20 years. So having married in the seventh year and of course, figuring the nine month pregnancy and so forth.

And now the 20 years are almost over. It means that the oldest of his sons was still quite young. Reuben was at this point at the time that Joseph was born, just about 12 and a half years old, perhaps, or 12 years old, somewhere in there.

And so that's a lot of little kids running around 12 and under. You've got, you've got 12 kids at least. We don't know how many other girls, but there are at least 12 that are running around at this point.

And well, of course, Joseph isn't running around yet, but I mean, you got a bunch of them around at least. And so Joseph, I mean, Jacob is coming and he's saying, give me my own place, my own country, beg your pardon. At this point, he doesn't leave.

He stays on and serves. So that means that Reuben at this point is probably only seven years old. So you've got all of them born within a seven year span, all of these that you've just read about.

So it's even more crowded with little ones. Because at this point, he's just saying, send me away. And then he contracts for six more years and Joseph is already born.

So all of them are born in this short space of time. Send me away to my own place, to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served thee and let me go for you know my service that I have done to thee.

And they've been sending to him. I pray thee if I have found favor in thine eyes, Terry, for I have learned by experience. The word experience there is teraphim.

I have learned by my little gods or not teraphim, but it's enchantments. I've learned by enchantments that the Lord has blessed me for thy sake. So he was serving pagan gods.

He would have these little enchantments and so forth and seeking counsel and all from them. And he had learned by his enchantments that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake. And he said, appoint me thy wages and I will give it.

Just tell me what do you want? I'll pay your wages. And so he said unto him, you know how I have served you and how your cattle were with me. For it was little which you had before I came.

And now it is increased unto a multitude and the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming. And now when shall I provide for my own household also? In other words, Jacob is saying, hey, you remember when I came, you really didn't have much. You had just a small flock.

And now through my diligence, my service, you know, you really have a lot of wealth, a great multitude of herds and all. And he said, well, what shall I give you? And Jacob said, you will not give me anything. For if you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flock.

In other words, I won't take anything from you, but this is the deal I'll make with you. I will pass through all thy flock today, removing from them all of the speckled and spotted cattle and all the brown cattle among the sheep and the spotted and speckled among the goats. And of all such as and of such shall be my hire.

And so shall my righteousness answer for me in the time to come when it shall come for my hire before thy face, everyone that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and the brown among the sheep that shall be counted stolen with me. And Laban said, behold, I would that it might be according to thy word. And he removed that day the heat goats that were rain straked and spotted and the sheep goats that were speckled and spotted and everyone that had some white in it and all of the brown among the sheep.

And he gave them unto the hand of his sons. And he set three days journey between himself and Jacob and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks. Now Jacob said, look, all of those that are born that are rain straked, speckled and so forth, they will be my hire.

The solid colors will be yours. Laban says, all right, good deal. And then immediately he goes out, sends his sons out and pulls them all out of the flock and takes them three days journey so that they cannot intermingle with the solid colors.

So he leaves Jacob with nothing but solid colors. And he takes all of those that were rain straked or spotted completely out of the scene so that Jacob is just left with the solid colors. Now, Jacob is saying this is the way I want it so that my righteousness will speak for me.

In other words, God will be the one that blesses me. Now, he had the promise of God, go and I'm going to bless thee. And he had that promise of God of blessing.

So he was confident that God would take care of the issue, but he was also a little bit knowledgeable of breeding practices. He had spent his life around animals, breeding them and so forth. And he was conscious of some of the genetic issues of the dominant and recessive traits and so forth.

And he used some of his knowledge of these things in developing the flocks. So shall my righteousness answer for me in the time to come. In other words, he's committing it unto the Lord that God is going to prove that I have been righteous and all.

And Laban said, all right, let it be. And he took the flocks and separated them three days journey. So Jacob took rods of green poplar and of hazel in the chestnut tree and he piled white strakes in them and made the white appear, which was in the rods.

And he set the rods, which he had piled before the flocks and the gutters and the watering troughs. And when the flocks came to drink that they should conceive when they came to drink, the flocks conceived before the rods and they brought forth cattle, rain straked, speckled and spotted. Jacob did separate the lambs and he set the faces of the flocks toward the rain strake and all the brown of the flock of Laban.

And he put his own flocks by themselves and he put them not unto Laban's cattle. And it came to pass whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive that Jacob laid the rods before their eyes of the cattle in the gutters that they might conceive among the rods. But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in.

And so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger were Jacob's. And the man increased exceedingly and had much cattle and maidservants and menservants and camels and asses. Now, there are those who believe that he was actually trying to give sort of a prenatal thing, you know, by making the straight, the

striped bows and so forth.

And so there would be sort of a prenatal impression that would create. The Hebrew word conceived is actually to be made hot. And we do know that the animals are, by placing stripes in front of them, causes them to desire to conceive.

And so it was probably that which he was doing, rather than trying to prenatally mark them, that he would just, knowing the genetic structures and the recessive genes and so forth, that the recessives combined with the dominant, you know, can come forth and spotted and grizzly and so forth. And he was sharp. He knew what he was doing, no doubt.

And the stronger ones, he had set these things and caused them to conceive. The weaker ones went on to Laban. And anyhow, he was getting the better of the deal.

And he heard the words of Laban's son saying, Jacob has taken away all that was our father's. And all that which was our father's, hath he gotten all this glory. In other words, they're now saying, hey, that really belongs to our dad.

Jacob's stolen it from us. Not so. Jacob made the deal.

His dad made the deal. But now the brothers are jealous because Jacob has such a large flock. They're so strong and healthy.

And there's a great jealousy. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban. And behold, it was not toward him as before.

It wasn't, oh, hi there, you know, son. And it wasn't the old good buddy anymore. But his father-in-law was really changing in his attitude.

And the Lord said unto Jacob, return unto the land of thy fathers and to your family, and I will be with thee. And so Jacob now hears from the Lord. He sees that the attitude is changing.

And God speaks to his heart and tells him to go back. And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock. Now he, rather than talking about it in the tent where he might be overheard, he calls them out into the field so that he can talk to them privately.

And he said unto them, I see that your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as it was before, but the God of my father hath been with me. And you know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father has deceived me, and he's changed my wages ten times, but God would not allow him to hurt me.

And he said thus, the speckled shall be your wages, then all the cattle bore speckled. If he said thus, the rain straight will be your hire, then the cattle all rain straight. And thus God has taken away the cattle of your father and given them to me.

And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived that I lifted up my eyes and I saw in a dream. And behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were rain straight, speckled, and grizzled. In other words, God showed him the reedy in a dream, how and when and so forth to cause him to conceive.

And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream saying, Jacob. And I said, here am I. And he said, lift up now your eyes and see all the rams which leap upon the cattle are rain straight, speckled, and grizzled. For I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

And I am the God of Bethel where you anointed the pillar and where you vowed a vow unto me. Now arise and get thee out of this land and return to the land of thy family. So it is interesting that God announces to him, I am the God of Bethel.

Come back to the place of your family. I'm the God that met you there in Bethel. And so Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? In other words, our father has gone ahead and used up our dowry.

He has not given us anything. We've got nothing there. We are counted to him as strangers.

For he hath sold us and he's devoured our money. He spent the dowry. He sold them.

He spent the dowry. We're just like a stranger to him. For all the riches which God has taken from our father, it's really ours and our children's.

Now then, whatsoever God has said unto you, go ahead and do it. Then Jacob rose up and he set his sons and his wives upon camels. And he carried away all of his cattle and his goods, which he had gotten, and the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padinarum, to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.

And Laban went to shear his sheep. And Rachel had stolen the teraphims, the images that were her father's, the little idols that they used. And Jacob stole away unaware to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he was fleeing.

So he fled with all that he had. And he rose up and he passed over the river and has set his face toward Mount Gilead. Now Mount Gilead is about 300 miles away.

And Mount Gilead is the mountain range that goes on the west bank of the Sea of Galilee and into that area there, about 300 miles away. He fled with all of his head towards Mount Gilead. But of course traveling with that many animals in the family and everything was slow travel.

The best you could do would be about 15 to 20 miles a day. And he had a good start. Actually his father-in-law was out shearing the sheep.

And it was three days before Laban even found out that he was gone. He probably had worked his flocks down to the southern extremities anyhow and probably put about 90 miles distance between at the start of the time before he started driving them away. And then he put three days more journey between him and Laban.

And Laban couldn't just leave the shearing of the sheep immediately, probably finished up as fast as he could before he took off to catch Jacob. But because he was forced in a fast march to catch Jacob, he caught him down around the area of Mount Gilead just about 300 miles distance. So it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled and so he gathered his brothers with him and he pursued after him for seven days until he overtook him at Mount Gilead.

And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night and said to him, take heed that you speak not to Jacob either good or bad. Then Laban overtook Jacob and now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount and Laban with his brothers pitched in the mount of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, what have you done? You've stolen away unaware to me and carried away my daughters as captives taken with a sword.

Why did you flee away secretly and steal away from me and did not tell me that I might have sent thee away with parties and songs and the tablet in the heart. And you've not allowed me to even kiss my grandchildren, my daughters. You've done foolishly in doing this.

So Laban really had other ideas. He had really ideas of taking by force all that Jacob had. He had ideas of perhaps even killing Jacob, but God came to him the night before and said, Hey, don't you even talk to him good or bad? Well, that was a hard order.

And so Laban comes in and, and he, and he puts on this whole hypocritical thing, you know, why did you steal off? I wanted to kiss my grandkids. We could have had a big party and all, you know, in reality, he would have never let Jacob go. He would have just ripped him off and sent him away without anything.

Uh, but, uh, because God has now put the, uh, squeeze on him and won't let him do anything. Uh, he's, he's, he's just, you know, acting like he's been hurt and offended and all. And he said, it is in the power of my hand to do you hurt.

But the God of your father's speak to me last night saying, take heed that you don't speak to Jacob either good or bad. And now though you would needs be gone because you long after your father's house. Why have you stolen my gods? And Jacob answered and said to Laban, because I was afraid for I said, perverture, you would take by force your daughters from me.

And Jacob had a right to be afraid. The guy probably would have taken the daughters and all of the animals. With whomsoever you find your gods, let him not live.

Before our brothers discern thou what is thine with me, take it to thee. Whatever I have, search through everything. Whatever I have belongs to you, take it.

Let these guys be a witness. I don't want anything of yours. And, and so he's accusing him of stealing his gods, but he did not know that Rachel had ripped off these two little teraphims, these two little idols.

And Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the two maidservants tents, but he did not find them. And so he went out of Leah's tent and he entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the images and put them in the camel's furniture and she was sitting on them.

And Laban searched all the tent, but he did not find him. And she said to her father, let it now displease my Lord that I cannot rise up for the custom of woman is upon me. I'm weak, I'm in my menstrual period.

And so he searched, but he did not find the images. And Jacob at this time then had his little chance to spout off. He was angry and he chided with Laban.

And Jacob answered and said unto Laban, what is my trespass? What is my sin that you have so hotly pursued after me? Whereas you've searched all my stuff, what have you found of your household stuff? Set it here before the brothers that let them judge between us both. For twenty years I've been with you. The ewes and the she-goats have not cast their young and the rams of the flock have I not eaten.

In other words, he was careful. There were many times when the animals were pregnant, they would have miscarriages because they weren't taken care of properly. But he had so carefully watched over them, had been so diligent, there were no miscarriages of the animals while he was serving.

Not only that, it was the right of the shepherd to eat, you know, to kill a lamb and to eat it occasionally. But he never once killed any of the animals for his own eating. And so he's just telling, you know, how honestly and how diligently he was serving the old man for twenty years.

That which was torn by the beast, I brought it not to thee. Now, if a shepherd was watching over a flock and a beast would tear it, he would bring the carcass to the owner and give him the carcass. And thus he proved that he had driven off the wild beast and captured the animal.

But he didn't have to pay for it. Actually, the owner suffered the loss. But he said, I didn't bring any carcasses to you.

I bore the loss of it. Of my hand did you require it? Whether it was stolen by day or stolen by night. Laban, you know, charged him for everything.

And thus I was. And in the day of the drought consumed me and the frost by night. And then he was out there in the hot sun.

And he was out there in the cold nights. And for twenty years he had really gone through all of the miseries of the outdoors and all. And my sleep departed from my eyes.

Thus have I been for twenty years in your house and I've served you for fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your cattle. And you have changed my wages ten times. And except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac had been with me, surely you would have sent me away empty.

But God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands. And he rebuked you last night. And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters and these children are my children and these cattle are my cattle.

And all that you see is mine. And what can I do this day unto these my daughters and unto their children which they have borne? Now therefore come, let's make a covenant, you and I, and it'll be a witness between me and thee. So he says, Hey, I can't do anything.

I feel it's all mine. I don't know by what right, but yet. So they took a stone and they set it for a pillar.

And Jacob said to his brothers, Gather stones. And they took the stones and they made a heap of them. And Laban called it Jigar Shahadatha.

But Jacob called it Galid. He called it by the Hebrew name, whereas Laban called it by the Aramaic name. And it's a heap of, the heap of witness.

And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and you this day. So we call it Galid. And Misbah.

For he said, The Lord watch over you when we are absent one from the other. And if you will afflict my daughters, or if you will take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us. Let God watch over you and witness between me and thee.

And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap. This is the pillar that I have cast between me and you. This heap is a witness.

And this pillar is a witness that I will not pass over this heap to you. And you shall not pass over this heap and pillar unto me. In other words, you don't come my way.

I don't go yours. This is it. This is the separation.

The God of Abraham, the God of Nahar, the God of thy father, judged between us. And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. And then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount and called his brethren to eat bread.

And they did eat bread and tarried all night in the mount. And early in the morning Laban rose up, kissed his sons and daughters, and blessed them. And Laban departed and returned to his place.

Now, this mispah, verse 49, has been used sometimes as sort of a Christian greeting. That's tragic. It isn't a very pleasant thing.

It sounds beautiful to read that the Lord watched between me and thee while we are absent one from the other. Like, God watch over you, you know, my beloved friend, while we're absent. But that isn't the idea, the context at all.

The idea is, I think you're a crook. I don't know what to do about it. You're leaving me.

I can't watch you anymore. May God watch over you. And if you do anything wrong, may God smite you.

So, next time one of your Christian friends says, mispah, you might not be so willing to just smile. It isn't, it isn't. It's not a Christian greeting.

It isn't a pleasant departure, but it is one intention. The Lord watch you. I can't.

So, we'll start in chapter 32 next Sunday. And we did pretty well tonight. So, moving along.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6288.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-genesis-29-31/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net