

Sisters - Genesis 29:31 - 30:24

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[0 : 0 0] Turn to chapter 29. We came as far as verse 29, verse 30 it was, where it said that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Not a good thing to have in your marriage if you have two wives.

Easy to take care of that. Don't have two wives. You don't got to worry about it. Just worry about one. So the title for today, I don't know if you've ever seen White Christmas, but if you have, there is a song in it that's sisters. And there's a line in there that says, Lord help the mister who comes between me and my sister, and Lord help the sister who comes between me and my man. And it's very much Rachel and Leah. They could definitely fit in there. So the title for the message today is sisters. The outline, if you want to do a quick outline, I guess we would say that it kind of just we're going to look at the offspring of Jacob. So as we end chapter 9, Leah, it's round one for her. As she begins to have children, she's going to have three children, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. And then as we pick up in chapter 3, Leah, I mean Rachel, begins to kind of get jealous over this. And Rachel complains to Jacob. And her brainstorm is to give Jacob, her servant, Bilhah, and to kind of take two wives, and let's add a third to this. And then she has children. Leah sees that. And so she gives Zilpah to Jacob to have children. And that's 9 through 13. And then there's a small section in there, 14 through 16, where Reuben will go out into the field and he'll find mandrakes. Look at what those are. But that gives us a picture, I think, very much of the relationship of how Leah and Rachel and Jacob interacted. And then Leah goes for round two, has more children. And then finally, Rachel, she obtains what she's been looking for.

Not Joseph. We'll see what that is. But yes, she has Joseph, but she's looking for something much more satisfying, fulfilling than that. So if you remember Jacob, he is our man of the covenant, isn't he? As we go into this. Out of all the peoples of the world, covering the entire earth, you have one family. You have one man that the covenant, that the promise from Abraham is coming through. And right now he has no children. He's going to have a bunch of children. A lot of kids he's going to have through these one, two, three, four women. We need to remember something as we look at the text, though, that the Bible, in the Bible, there's that which is prescriptive and there's that which is descriptive. A lot of things described in the scripture does not mean it's prescribed.

We've been going through the book of Acts and we see where Paul, he's going to tell us in Acts 20, and we've just gotten to this point, he's going to talk to the elders in Ephesus. He's going to say, hey, you know how I've taught you publicly and from house to house the truth and the word of God.

He's describing how he's taught. So we can't go to the book of Acts and say, well, it says that in the early church in Acts 2, that they continue daily in prayer in the temple with one accord, and they were from house to house breaking bread. Therefore, the Bible is prescribing to us, we should all meet in house churches. No, it's just describing what they did. It's not prescriptive.

[3 : 2 0] There are things that are prescriptive, but that's not one of them. Jacob having multiple wives is not a prescription for us to become Mormons and get a bunch of wives. That's not a prescription here.

This is just describing this. Remember in Genesis 2, before the law, before Jacob, before Abraham, before sin, we see in Genesis 2, after woman was created, it said, Adam said, this is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, and she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.

Therefore shall a man, singular, leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, singular, and they shall be one flesh. This is God's order. This is prescriptive. This is not descriptive. This is what God is prescribing for man and woman.

As we go through the section here, Jacob's not very involved in his family. He's going to speak once, and it's not a great conversation he has with Rachel. And then it's just going to be, he's there, but he's not very involved. He's not going to speak. In Genesis, when Isaac is born, Genesis 21, it says, Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare unto him.

Isaac. Abraham's very involved in his naming of his kids. This is Isaac. This is the promised son. Even as we saw in Genesis 25, when Jacob and Harry are born, it says, the first came out red all over like a hairy garment, and they called his name Esau. Remember, Isaac was very involved in that.

[4 : 44] He was praying that Rebekah's womb would be opened. He was very involved. And after that came his brother, Jacob, and they called him Jacob. Jacob will not be involved in naming any of his children until we get to Benjamin. Years later, 20 years later, or well, 13 years afterwards, they'll leave Haran. Then he'll go to Shechem. All that happens in Shechem. God tells them, go home to Bethel. He goes to Bethel. And then it says, Rachel gives birth to Benjamin years later, and she'll name him Benoni, the son of my sorrow. He'll say, no, we shall call him Benjamin, the son of my right hand, or the son of my right. That's the only time he names them. Here, he's not involved. The women are naming all the children. And you just see where he's stepped back. And we see that men who are weak, men who are weak, irresponsible, and carnal, they allow the enemy a free pass at their families.

Here we can see that with Jacob. This is not the most pleasant section of Scripture. I send to Allison, I'll send her every week some questions that we print out, you know, for the kids to go through. And then I'll try and come up with a quote that we'll put on Instagram. And there are some in the back, some sheets if you want some. It's been hard to come up with a quote lately that's any good. I think the other week I sent her a scripture. And it's cool. Scripture's cool. But I try and kind of quote that goes along with the message. But I've been so negative because it's just the section of Scripture we're in. It is hard to find a lot of good that's happening in here. But it is because, as we're going to see, God is so faithful to his people of promise. But for Jacob, we can see that a man who's weak and irresponsible and carnal, he allows the enemy a free pass. And that's weak as in things of the Spirit.

Weak as in character. Isaiah 3.12 says, As for my people, children are their oppressors. Women rule over them. Oh, my people, they which lead you cause you to err and destroy the way of your paths. It's not a knock against women. It's saying, well, women shouldn't have any role of leadership anywhere in the world. What does it say there? They which lead you cause you to err. Why? Because those who should have been leading had stepped out of the way. And now those who were not to be in the position of leadership are doing the best they can. And it's a mess because of the men. When men are in sin, they are weak. They become weak. We saw that in the garden. Look at Adam, right? He sins. The Lord comes to him and says, Adam, where are you? He's like, oh, I was hiding because I was afraid. And we were naked. He's like, well, who told you that? He's like, oh, have you eaten? He said, who told you that? Did you eat of the tree that I told you not to eat of? He's like, the woman you gave me, right? Straight up question to Adam. Yes or no? Did you do this? It was her fault. And right away, we see that sin makes him weak. And he doesn't want to take ownership of that. Women, when they're in sin, they rebel. They rebel against God's order. And that goes right back to the fall, where the curse pronounced on Eve was, hey, you shall be a subject to your husband, not because you're lesser, but for your protection, but your desire is going to be to take ownership of that and try to rule over him. And so when a man is not worthy of leadership or worthy of being followed, and he's weak, and he's irresponsible, and he's carnal, then you see this mess. Whenever we step outside of God's order, we step into confusion. That's just what it is. Psalm 119, you know, Psalm 119, the long psalm that talks to every verse, except for like two of them, talk about some form of God's word. Well, in verses 104 and 105, 105, you'll recognize, but 104 says, through your precepts, I get understanding. Therefore, I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Through your precepts, by staying in God's word, in God's order, hey, I get understanding. I'm not in confusion, and I'm not following every false way. Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Two different lights, right? A lamp unto my feet lets me see, hey, what's going on directly around me? And a light unto my path. I can see what's coming. So yes, this family is a hot mess. It's going to get a little confusing of whose children are who and what's going on. So I found this graphic, which I thought was very helpful. I don't know why Rachel is like red-haired and such pale skin in the Middle East, but that's what this picture made her.

But it shows, you know, Leah obviously has the bulk of the children. She'll have six sons and one daughter for Jacob. And then her servant Zilpah, she'll have Issachar and Zebulun. She'll have two sons. Rachel, obviously, will have Joseph. And then years later, like we said, right before her death, she'll have Benjamin. She'll give, I'm sorry, Zilpah will have Gad and Asher, not Issachar and Zebulun.

[9 : 39] And then Bilhah, who is Rachel's servant, she's going to have Dan and Naphtali. So you have all these sons of Jacob. Despite all of their problems, Jacob's home was still a home under God's promise and blessing. Like this is the family that is blessed. If they came into your church, you'd be like, oh my word, children, look, that is Jacob. That's Jacob is a man. He is a godly man. He has God's blessing. God appeared to him. And here, oh, here comes his wife, Rachel and Leah. And oh my goodness, he's got two other ones. Kids, come on, let's go. We're not going to be, you know, you think, oh, this is, this is Jacob. And then it's like, whoa, you wouldn't want him in your homeschool group.

This is weird. You know, they must be Mormon or something, right? But despite all of their problems, their home was still under God's promise and blessing. And that's what we need to remember as we go into this interesting description of their family. And then we're going to see how God is working marvelously, even despite this. So let's pick up in 31 and see how much we can get through here.

Hopefully we'll make it through verse 24. We'll look at all the children being born and then wrap up with some interesting application. And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her room, her womb, but wait, Rachel was barren. So Rachel is barren. If you remember back in verse, we talked about how beautiful it was. Verse 17 of chapter 29 says, Leah was tender eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well favored. It's always that way. The comparison's always been, Leah's this, but Rachel's this. Now we've just flipped the script, haven't we? It says here that he opened her womb. Leah's having children, but Rachel is the one now who's deficient. She's barren. And it says in Exodus chapter three, when the people of Israel, they're crying out to the Lord for deliverance. It says that the Lord heard them. And the Lord said, I've surely seen the affliction of my people, which are in Egypt. And I've heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows and I've come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

And so the Lord saw this, whatever role Leah had in Laban's deception, we don't know. Was she forced to? Was she like, yeah, let's go along with this. God does not allow that to be an excuse for Jacob's treatment of her. He sees this. He sees that she's hated. It says specifically when the Lord saw she was hated and Leah then conceives in verse 32 and she bear a son and she called his name Reuben.

For she said, surely the Lord has looked upon my affliction. Now, therefore, my husband will love me. Reuben means behold or behold a son or literally a son is born to us. Look at Jacob.

[12 : 33] It's a son. Now my husband will love me. Of course he's going to love me now. Leah's upbringing had led her to believe that love could be bought, didn't it? Think of Laban and his interaction with his children. And so she thought, hey, this is something that can be bought. There's a deal we can make here.

That's what relationships are about, right? And she conceived again and bear a son and said, because the Lord has heard that I was hated, he's therefore given me this son also. And she called his name Simeon. Simeon means hearing, right? That the Lord has heard. Oops, I lost my spot. Or literally, one who hears that God has heard me. Leah assumed that her relationship with God would endear her to her husband now. She says, oh, because the Lord has heard that I was hated, he therefore gave me a son.

Well, the Lord heard me. The Lord's listening to me. I had this relationship with the Lord. He's responding to me. Well, surely this, this will endear my husband to me. Leah was, if you look at what happened from the Lord's perspective, what do we see there with, with Leah? It says first that when he saw she was hated. And then we have here, it says that Leah says, because the Lord has heard that I was hated. The Lord saw and the Lord heard. She was right in that, but she was wrong in her assumption of what that meant. And she was assuming here that her relationship with her husband, I mean, with her God would endear her to her husband. Love can't be bought. It can't. Love has to be freely given or it's not love. And that's kind of how it works. So as we respond to the Lord in faith, we respond to his love for us. We love him because he first loved us. It can't be bought.

It's not about, well, you know, Jacob tried to make that deal with God. He said, I'll give you a 10. And we can't make deals with God. He makes the deal. And it's by grace we are saved through faith.

Galatians 5.13 says, for brethren, you've been called to liberty. Only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh. Don't use your freedom from sin to go right back into the flesh. But by love, serve one another. What does love do? Love serves. Love freely serves. We know what John 3.16 says, right? For God so loved the world that he gave. Love must be freely given. And so here's Leah having these children. We're going to find out this isn't a very pretty picture in the relationship either of how she's having these children. It's not just like, oh, hey, it's her and her husband.

[15 : 12] Her relationship with Jacob and her interaction with Rachel, it's pretty unpleasant, an unpleasant picture that she's having to bargain, essentially, for her time with Jacob here. And she conceived again, so this third time, and she bare a son and said, now this time will my husband be joined unto me.

Because I've borne him three sons, therefore was his name called Levi. Literally means to be joined or attached. And so these three times she's had sons. And each time it's kind of sad. She's naming these children in response to her relationship with her husband, in response to the fulfillment she's hoping to find in her marriage, which she's not. Reuben, behold, a son is born to us.

God has heard me. And now Levi, surely Jacob will now see the advantage that I am. You thought Rachel was the advantage? Oh, look at the advantage I am. Leah thought that surely Jacob would now see what an advantage she was to him. I'm the wife you want, Jacob. But again, she's not going to buy his love, no matter what she does for him. She's not going to be able to convince him to give what must be given freely. And she conceived again in verse 35. And she said, now will I praise the Lord.

Therefore, she called his name Judah and left bearing. We know Judah means praise or praise the Lord, right? This one's interesting. That the Lord's goodness to Leah had led her to now praise the Lord for his own sake and not for what he could give her. The other ones were, well, because the Lord heard, because he did, maybe my husband. And now she just says, I will praise the Lord. I'll praise the Lord.

And she called his name Judah. And we know from Judah will come the lion of the tribe of Judah, which is the very reason we are here today to praise the Lord, is because of who will come through Judah, Jesus, the son of promise. They don't know it at this time, but Judah is the one that the seed will be passed. The covenant will go from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Judah. But here she, you see that what she thought was fulfillment. I want children. I want my relationship with my husband.

[17 : 30] God's heard my prayer. This is what I want. What she really wanted was a relationship with her God. And as God walks her through this, what she thinks is going to bring fulfillment didn't work. It didn't work. She doesn't have fulfillment in the relationship she thought she should have. Her husband hasn't responded to her how she hoped he would. And yet God has brought her to a deeper fulfillment, hasn't he? Where she can say, I'll praise the Lord. I will praise him. Romans 2.4 says, or despises thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering. God, you're taking so long to take care of this issue in my life, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance. Leah's going, Lord, what's going on? You're giving me children. My husband is still estranged from me. What are you doing? Like my goodness, my long suffering is so that I have more opportunity to show you goodness. God, why haven't you restored this relationship? Because I got some more goodness. I need to pump into it first to lead to repentance. So Leah's had these four children.

She's praising the Lord in this. And yet she's still estranged from her husband, isn't she? And now Rachel in chapter 30, verse one, Rachel's watching this. And so the timeframe of this is, if you remember, Jacob has served seven years for what he thought was Rachel. He got Leah. And then Laban says, hey, fulfill Leah's week and I'll give you Rachel. Personally, I think he should have said no. He should not have taken Rachel. He should have just stuck with Leah. It's like, you know what? This is a bad situation, but this is where I'm at. I've heard people many times, believers or, and even others, well, no believers, because they use this phrase. They say, well, it wasn't God's will that we were ever married. It wasn't God's will that we ever got married, which may be true. That may be 100% valid, but I can guarantee you now that you're married, it is God's will that you stay married.

It is not for you to tear asunder what God has joined together. So you may be right. And usually it's someone who, you know, they want out of the marriage or they've got someone else already got an eye on. And it's like, well, I never loved them. And it wasn't God's will that we'd be married.

That may be true. It may be true that it's not God's will you got married, but it is you stay married. And so Joseph, he, I mean, Jacob, he takes Leah. All right. So now bad situation. I mean, he takes Rachel, gets worse. So that's seven years. And he's going to serve seven more years for getting Rachel as his bride also. And then we're going to see at the end of that, we're not going to get to that part, but here in chapter 30, that once Joseph's born, he's going to go to Laban and say, Hey, my time is up. I've served seven years. So he's been there 14 years. And then Joseph is the last round of the babies to be born until, like we said, they're out of Haran and then they have Benjamin. So what does that mean? Well, he's going to tell us, Jacob's going to tell us when he talks to Laban in chapter 31, verse 41, and we referenced this before, he says, I've been with you 20 years. I served 14 years for your two daughters and six years for your cattle. You say, you've changed my wages 10 times. So we have a span of 20 years, seven years before he's married, starts having kids. And then after seven years, that's over because he's going to serve six years for the cattle. And we know from the scripture, it's going to tell us that's after Jacob's born, um, Joseph is born. You have this window of about seven years. All these babies are being born. Leah's going to have six kids within seven kids, a kid a year. And I've read commentators that are like, well, it's not actually that the timing's different, whatever. I don't know if it is or isn't for sure. Uh, as we look at this, we're going to see that Rachel is going to envy her sister and she's going to give her then Bilhah. It doesn't say, um, that it was because she saw, oh, all of these four kids. It just says she's envies her because she's having children. Um, it tells us later on that Leah is going to see that she stopped having children. So she gives Jacob Zilpah. Very likely the two maids were having children at the same time.

And so you had multiple women pregnant, having children competing in this, this situation. So it's a very short window of time. A whole lot of kids are coming. But anyway, all that to say, when Rachel saw that she bared Jacob, no children, Rachel envied her sister and said to Jacob, give me children or else I die. And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel. And that's the only time we're going to see Jacob speak during this section of the women having children. He said, am I in God's stead who have withheld from you the fruit of the womb? Ouch, Jacob. Really? Hey, am I God? He's the one who kept you back from having children. Jacob. Rachel's envy of Leah was a very new experience for her. When had Rachel ever, ever, um, envied Leah? Never. It was always Leah envying Rachel. Rachel right now, she could not handle seeing one who was once beneath her elevated above her. So she envies her. Romans 12 verse 15 and 16. Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep. That is not what Rachel is doing. Rachel is not condescending to those of low estate.

[22 : 56] To her, this is, this is a cause for fight, for a fight. This is war. And here, what do we see Rachel doing? She puts these expectations on Jacob. She's expecting Jacob to do what only God could do.

And that put a massive strain on their relationship. She's turning to Jacob and saying, you need to fulfill this in my life, something that only God could do. And she puts this strain on the relationship. And so while Jacob's anger, it's understandable. It was not helpful. It was not helpful. But when we begin to look at relationships as somehow to be fulfilling in our life in a way that only God can be, we put upon that relationship an unrealistic expectation. And unrealistic expectations can only be lived up to for so long. If you try and live up to them, if someone puts that on you, that they have an unrealistic expectation of you, and you attempt to live up to that, you might be able to for a little while. But eventually, you'll burn out because you can't keep that. And then it turns to bitterness. The bitterness turns to anger. And the relationship will start to suffer for it.

And so Rachel has put upon Jacob something that he can't bear. And then he retaliates in anger, right? And anger in a relationship, it will never lead to wholeness. Never. Why? Because we don't have the capacity to deal with it. Ephesians tells us, let us not be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil. So the anger gives opportunity for the devil.

If we don't deal with that quickly, then we give him a place. We give him access. And where it says, do not let the sun go down upon your wrath, deal with that. You can't bear it. You can't handle that.

You can't carry that anger. We're not meant to. Proverbs tells us in Proverbs 22, make no friendship with an angry man. And with a furious man, you shall not go. Why? Lest you learn his ways and get a snare to your soul. Anger will never result in wholeness in a relationship. It will tear that relationship down. Anger works in the short term, right? Kind of like those expectations. I can pressure you through anger. I can snap at you. I can yell at my kids and motivate them quickly. But in the long term, I've just harmed the relationship. I've just put a weight on that relationship that was never meant to bear. A healthy marriage. A healthy marriage will have fruitfulness, satisfaction, and fulfillment.

[25 : 18] It will. However, a healthy marriage will also never rely on the marriage for those things. I can't put that expectation in my marriage. I can't put that on my wife. She shouldn't put it on me.

She shouldn't look to me for fulfillment, for fruitfulness, or satisfaction. She probably learned already not to do that. Right? Those should be in our marriage because we're looking to the Lord to do that.

A healthy marriage is full of those things, right? Rachel's fruitlessness, which she blamed on Jacob, where she's all part of God's plan. Because just like Leah, God's drawing Rachel. She needs to see that there's something more to being fulfilled than what she's looking to get in this relationship.

Now, children, we're told in Psalm 127.3 that they are a heritage of the Lord and they are the fruit of the womb of his reward. And the fruit of the womb, I'm sorry, is his reward. It is God's reward.

When God gives kids, they're from the Lord. That's wonderful. Verse 3. So she says to Jacob, Behold my maid Bilhah. Go in unto her. You mean the troubled girl? The one whose name means troubled?

[26 : 29] Yeah, go to her. Oh, great. Let's bring trouble into this relationship. And she shall bear upon my knees that I may also have children by her. So this was the role of a concubine, a loveless marriage, if there ever was one, where it's just essentially using Bilhah just to have children. This is Rachel saying, you know, essentially, if God will not give me what I want, I'll find another way. God didn't give me what I want. I can't find fulfillment in what I'm expecting him to do. I'm going to do it my own way. Proverbs 14, 12. There is a way which seems right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Rachel is using Bilhah in the exact same way that Laban used Rachel. She's using her to just gain something for herself, to gain fulfillment. She's not thinking of Bilhah at all. This poor maid girl or whatever has now been put into this impossible situation.

Rachel's desire was to regain her relevancy and status in comparison to her sister. Remember, it said that Rachel envied her sister. It's not about having kids. It's not about honoring the Lord.

This is about making sure that she's the top dog in this situation. She wants to regain her relevancy. She wants to make sure that she's in the rightful position. And so she gives Bilhah, Bilhah, her handmaid to Jacob, to wife. And he went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived. She bore Jacob a son. And Rachel said, God has judged me and has also heard my voice and has given me a son.

Therefore, she called his name Dan or judged or he judged being literally meaning God decided for me. God judged me as the one that he wanted to get behind. And this is very much what Sarah did with, I mean, what, yes, what Sarah did with Hagar, with Ishmael, right? This is not the Lord.

Galatians 5.26 says, Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. And here you have that, exactly what Rachel is doing with her sister.

[28 : 39] Rachel judged her relationship with God solely on the outcome, didn't she? Oh, God has blessed me because things worked my way. If things went her way, she said it was God. If they did not, she blamed someone else. If things go well, oh, God is blessing me. I was thinking of, I wouldn't even call it the church. A hyper-charismatic part of the world that calls themselves the church. But it's another Jesus and another gospel. And they claim to speak for God all the time, like, you know, I have a word for the Lord for you this month. This is the word from the Lord. Last night I was having a dream and God spoke to me and this is what he wanted me to tell you.

No, I have a word from the Lord as well. It's right here. This is where we get our word from the Lord. But they only ever prophesy positive things. They never prophesy, you know, God wants you to repent from your sin and to turn from your wickedness and to walk in the light and not in dark. They don't say that. It's always, oh, God has blessing for you and blessing for you and blessing for you.

And you see that kind of relationship that Rachel has with the Lord. Oh, God has blessed me. Surely God has blessed me in this, as long as everything goes her way. And Bilhah, Rachel's maid conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. So again, you have all these women having children and what's not very well described to us is Jacob's relationship with them in all of this. We're going to find out eventually, Leah's going to say to Rachel, is it not enough that you've taken my husband from me?

Um, Rachel is the one who is dwelling with Jacob. He's the only one. And so somewhere in there, there's this bargaining happening and there's this kind of like jockeying happening where, um, others are having access to Jacob to have children. But Rachel, her short-sighted idea would only increase family tensions. What appeared to be a success was only trouble disguised. It looked like a good thing, right? Every time we get our way, every time the flesh, uh, is successful, all it is, is trouble in disguise. Because why? We've quoted all the time. You sow to the flesh, you shall love the flesh, reap corruption. Yeah. And so Rachel says, with great wrestling, have I wrestled with my sister and I prevailed? What a, what a viewpoint in this relationship. This is like, I've been wrestling and striving with my sister. We're going to see eventually what it's going to say. And Jacob came from the field in the evening. Yeah, I bet he stayed out as long as he could. He wasn't coming home.

With great wrestlings, I've wrestled with my sister. And therefore she called his name Naphtali. Obviously then Naphtali is going to mean what? Wrestling. To wrestle, um, I lost my place again. There we go. Or my struggle. This is her struggle. The words there that Rachel uses where she says, with great wrestlings, I've wrestled with my sister. There's two words there for wrestlings. The first one means that with great contention, with a great battle, actually has the idea in it that I've wrestled with God, that I have, I've convinced God that I'm the one. And then where it says that she's wrestled with her sister, literally means she's twisted with her sister. You know, and you think of like two people wrestling and she's trying to like, keep that arm down. And this one comes up and she's keeping that one down. And they are just in this twisting and turning.

[31 : 55] And she has prevailed or literally been made able, that I have been made able to get a leg up on my sister again. And when Leah saw in verse nine, that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah, her maid, and gave her to Jacob to wife. This is why I think there could be overlap between when the ladies are pregnant. Because it just says when Leah saw that she had left bearing. It doesn't say when she saw that Rachel was giving kids to Bilhah. It's just Leah's realizing, I'm not getting pregnant any longer. I'm not currently having children. And she probably did look and go, you know, that work that time for Rachel's maid? Well, I'm going to get Zilpah in on this as well. And so then she's also in this mix. And so she takes Zilpah, her maid, which remember means like trickling or dripping, like that dripping of water. And she gave her to Jacob to wife. And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bear Jacob a son. And Leah said, a troop comes. She calls his name Gad. And yeah, it's like a troop.

I mean, Leah's currently, the score is five to two. There's five kids to Leah's name and two to Rachel's. So she's like, whoa, I got like an army here. But Gad means it's more like the idea that a whole bunch of good fortune has come my way. Yes, a troop, but a troop of good fortune has come my way.

Look at all my good fortune. Look at all these children to my name. And it's just so sad because there's Bilhah and Zilpah just being used in this relationship, just as Laban had used Rachel and Leah. What appeared to work for Rachel? Well, surely that's going to work for me as well, won't it?

Rachel and Leah's relationship, it was competition, contention, and conflict. And in that order, competition, as they began to compete with one another, as the things in their lives, instead of, hey, I rejoice with you over what God's doing in your life. No, what God's doing in your life was the reason for me to go, oh, hmm, I need to kind of like match that. I need to compete with that.

And that competition then led to contention. Contention just means like a harsh disagreement, disagreement with emotion. And so their competition, and now there's like this, this strife, this disagreement, which led to straight up open conflict, where they are no longer hiding this. They're not out for each other. Like each other's good. It's just straight up evident that they are out to get one another. Competition, contention, and conflict filled their relationship.

[34 : 22] And the score was now five to two. And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a second son. Whoa.

And Leah said, happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed. And she called his name Asher. And so now she gets to add another one to her score. And Asher means happiness. You know, happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed. And she called his name Asher. Leah, who had historically been the marginalized one, the one that everybody looked at, like she's got nothing going for her.

Marginalized and rejected and compared to her sister, she had now gained notoriety in her own right. She now was known for something. Look at all these children. Leah, oh, Jacob is truly blessed to have you as a wife. Look at all of these children. And Leah says, yeah, I wish he would realize that, how blessed he was to have me. But she's realizing now, hey, I have gained notoriety all on my own.

And now we have this interesting section here in 14 through 16, which I think is a window into the family life, into this relationship. We've been reading about Leah had a bunch of kids. And then Rachel's servant had a bunch of kids. And then Leah's servant had a bunch of kids. And it's like, okay, this is a weird way to do this. But as we go into chapter, or verse 14, it tells us that there was this event that happened. And Reuben, the oldest son, he went out into the days of the, went out in the days of the wheat harvest. And he found mandrakes in the field. He would have been a little boy, five years old, maybe six years old. If he's born seven years in, and then 13 years later, they leave, then he's 13 when they leave Haran. So he's not that old, just this little guy.

And he goes and he finds mandrakes. Well, what are mandrakes? Mandrakes were believed to have special properties to them. They're literally, when you look in like the Hebrew, they are called love apples. That's what they're called, love apples. And so that's what they look like in the field. This is what they look like when they're ripe. They're actually extremely poisonous. I read every part of the plant is poisonous, even the fruit. You have to scoop out the seeds, and you're supposed to eat the fruit in moderation. But it's been used in, for, you know, like homeopathic, many medicines. And it's supposed to greatly enhance people's marriage. But with a name like love apples, and then Reuben goes out, and he brings these mandrakes back. I just, I was looking at that and just thinking like, children are extremely perceptive. They know, you know, Lee is in a loveless marriage. He sees the strife between mom and dad. And he goes in the field, and he's like, oh, there's some love apples. Maybe it'll help mom. Maybe dad will treat mom well. And kids are extremely perceptive. They know. They know when mom's having a rough day. And sometimes when dad doesn't know, it's like, hey, dad, mom's upset. Really? Why? And here comes little Reuben. And he comes back with these mandrakes. And he brought them to his mother, Leah. And then Rachel said to Leah, um, pretty please, would you give me of your son's mandrakes? Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. Oh, now she's all really friendly. And Leah responds and says, and this is just a weird exchange. Is it a small thing? Or literally, is it a light thing? A light matter that you've taken my husband? And would you take my son's mandrakes also? What is that supposed to mean? You know, you make this out to be such a light thing. You've taken my husband. No, you want to take the little boy's fruit? What kind of person are you? But you see, it's just, I think this is just how the relationship was. Everything was a reason for contention. Everything was also a reason to, like, gain the upper hand. Okay? You want those? All right, let's make a deal. And Rachel said, because Rachel's response is like, right away, she's not like, well, yeah, I want his love apples.

[38 : 24] I'll give you a bunch of bananas. You know, she right away goes to, okay, fine. Therefore, he shall lie with you tonight for thy son's mandrakes. Fine, you get Jacob tonight, because he's usually mine. And so here you see this really weird family dynamic. All those times Leah was having children, she's having to bargain with her sister. She's having to hire Jacob. That's the extent of the relationship with her husband. And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him and said, you must come into me, for surely I've hired you with my son's mandrakes.

And he lay with her that night. Not a pretty picture in a marriage. Again, in Genesis, if you remember, a man, singular, shall leave his father and mother and cleave. Jesus says it this way in Matthew 19, verses 4 through 6. Jesus answered and said unto them, have you not read that he which made them at the beginning made them one male, one female? Excuse me. And said, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they too shall be one flesh.

Therefore, there are no more two but one flesh. But therefore, God is joined together. Let not man put this under. Look at God's view of marriage. That it's a cleaving. It's a union. It's a oneness.

They shall be one flesh. God says, you're together in this. This is a wonderful thing and a beautiful thing. Right? Jacob's relationship with his wives, the sacredness of his marriage had simply become a means to an end. Right? I think you know, those of you who I know, I'm talking about the sacredness of marriage. They're simply using it as a means to an end. And intimacy in marriage is never to be used as leverage. It's not. According to what Jesus says here, man, it's a celebration of the oneness.

We are one. And intimacy in marriage is to celebrate that oneness. And then out of that oneness, that union comes children. And children are never supposed to be a detraction from the oneness. They enhance the oneness and bring greater fulfillment to the family. But for Jacob, who had stepped outside, like we said, God's order, he's just in confusion. This whole family and his relationship with his wives. Look at him. He's passive. He does nothing. Oh, okay. You want me to take Bilhah? Oh, okay. Zilpah? Sure. Whatever. Oh, you bought me? No, I don't. Okay. He's not leading.

[40 : 54] He's reactionary. Everything he does is just responding. He's not responding. A response is a thought ahead of time of how we are going to respond in a situation. Reacting to it is without any thought, just reacting in the moment. He's self-serving. Well, hey, you know what? Just make my life comfortable. Give me a place to sleep, some food to eat. You deal with the children. He's extremely unfeeling. The way he responded to Rachel. No heart in this. The way Leah comes and speaks to him.

And he's just okay with that. But this is what his home is like. Men, we are responsible for the direction of our home. Just how it is. We are responsible for that. And God now hearkened unto Leah. Verse 17 tells us, wait a minute. What did Leah do? We didn't hear her cry out to the Lord. Well, obviously it's implying that. She's calling out to the Lord.

God hearkened to Leah and she conceived and she bore Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, God has given me my hire because he's given me, because I have given my maiden to my husband. And she called his name Issachar. Issachar meaning hire or reward. They say, hey, I have gained a reward because God has, Leah is wrongly attributing her actions as the reason for God's blessing.

She said, God's blessed me. Well, no, it told us right there, Leah. It told us right there in verse 17 that God heard you. He hearkened unto you. It wasn't because of something you did. It wasn't because you gave your maid. And Leah conceived again and bore Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God has endowed me with a good dowry or literally an honor or a place to dwell. Now will my husband dwell with me because I've borne him six sons. And she called his name Zebulun. Zebulun meaning dwelling like the dowry. I mean, honor like the dowry or dwelling that she's dwelling there that been purchased. And so Leah thinks, well, now my husband will dwell with me. Surely he's going to now. No amount of children can make up for the lack of relationship in a marriage, right? We can't put that on our children either. I can't put that weight on them, that expectation that, well, I don't have a great relationship with my spouse. So I'm going to make it up with my relationship with my children, right? Well, those children are going to leave home someday. Or even worse, you don't let them leave home. Or even worse than that, they leave home, but you never leave them, right? Because you're still expecting, you're trying to gain something from that relationship that God had designed to either be made up in relationship with him or with your spouse. But no amount of children will ever make up for lack of relationship in a marriage, will it? And then I like this, afterwards she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah. So six sons, number seven, perfection, Dinah. And her name means judged or vindicated. It's like a mic drop. She's like, vindicated. Seven kids, Rachel. Six boys, six sons, and then one girl. See if you can top that, honey. And God, he remembered Rachel. And he hearkened to her. Rachel is calling on the Lord now?

Whoa. Remember Rachel had purchased or allowed Leah to purchase time with Jacob with those mandrakes. Those mandrakes were supposed to help her out. She thought, I'm going to have some of these apples.

[44 : 15] I'm going to have kids. An apple a day gets you a child, right? And look at all the kids that Leah's been having since then. She's had like, what, three more kids and Rachel, nothing. I think the Lord used this for her. Used this for Rachel to eventually come to the end of her own scheming and go, okay, Lord, I need you. I need your help. Instead of, instead of me trying to declare what I want you to do, I'm going to ask you in faith. Instead of trying to get God to perform through my effort and flesh, I'm going to now in faith ask of the Lord. And I like where it says that, it says that God hearkened to her and opened her womb and she conceived and bear a son and said, God has taken away. And she said, God has taken away my reproach. God has removed her reproach. Reproach means scorn or contempt. And it literally means that God gathered up, gathered up and carried away all of the scorn and all of the contempt that Rachel had. And how did he do that? By giving her a son, right? Hebrews 9, 28 says, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. Jesus, he lifted our scorn.

He gathered it all up and he carried away all of our sin and all of our scorns. And God did that through his son, by giving us a son. And here you see these two ladies, they thought they wanted a certain type of fulfillment. They didn't get it, did they? Rachel's still not having kids like her sister. Leah still doesn't have the relationship she wants with her husband. And yet God has worked through these problems to bring them to a place where they can say, Leah can say, I'm just going to praise the Lord because of how good he is. And Rachel can be brought to this place where she recognizes, man, God has gathered up all of my scorn and all of my contempt. Now they're by no means perfect, but you see how God is working in their hearts and in this relationship. Joseph meaning he will add or add to my family. But it means literally that she is now speaking in faith and trusting God to do what she's never been able to do on her own. She's trusting God, you will continue to add to my family. So as we recap this, both Rachel and Leah, what have they been looking for?

They've been looking for something that by their own efforts, they failed at. They failed to secure what they were ultimately after, didn't they? They were unable to do it. And they found that coming to the end of themselves, guess who was still there? God was still faithful. God was still good.

We learned that men are responsible for the direction of their home. Men, we are responsible. First Corinthians 11.3 says, Paul says, but I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man and the head of Christ is God. Men, when we move out of the way, who did Satan attack on the garden? Attack the woman. Because like we said before, if he got to her, he'd get everything. He'd get the man, he'd get the children, he gets creation, he knows. And so he went to her, he attacked her. And God has put us in a place where we're supposed to be the ones who are leading, who are bringing protection to our homes. And we are responsible for the direction of our home. And I think, well, where are you leading your home, right? If you were to move out of the way, like if I was to step out of the way and my family continued in a straight line in the path I've been leading them, where are they going to end up? Are they going to end up with great careers? You know, are they going to end up really good at something, but have no maturity in their spiritual walk? No relationship with the Lord? So if you were to step out of the way, think about that. Where would your wife, where would your children, where would they end up if they continue in a straight line, the direction you're currently leading them? And women, you're responsible for the atmosphere of your home. Proverbs 25, 24 says, it's better to dwell in the corner of a housetop than with a brawling woman and in a wide house. That's the same word for contention, contentiousness there. It's better to dwell in the corner of a housetop. That doesn't mean you're trying to like, a lot of times like, I'm hiding up here because she's crazy. No, it means it's better to rent this little know-nothing place than have this tiny little place on the corner of a rooftop. This is where I'm living, but I have peace than be with a woman who is contentious and you're in a huge house. It doesn't matter how much you have because the atmosphere of that home is going to be one of contention. Proverbs 21, 19, it's better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman, right? Better to be in a place where there are no creature comforts than in a place where you have supposedly a lot of comfort, right? And this is not in any way to say, you know, women are argumentative. None of that. That's not what I'm saying. Paul writes in

Titus, he says, the aged women, likewise, that they be in behaviors becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, but the word of God be not blasphemed.

[49 : 24] So, if you and your home have an atmosphere where you are loving your husband, loving your children, discreet, chaste, keeping your home, obedient, that's a good atmosphere. That's a good atmosphere to your home. And where it says keepers at home, it doesn't mean you can never go out and have a job, you can never leave your house. The point is, if you're out keeping some other man's home, you're out working and you've given your whole life to his career, to your career, and you're essentially keeping home for someone else, and you haven't kept yours, God is not going to reward you and say, good job for how well you did in someone else's home. He's going to look and say, hey, but have you kept your home? Same for us guys, right? Man, we can put all our time and effort into this, but God's not going to hold me responsible for that. You say, well, I didn't call you to do that.

What about being a husband? What about being a father? What about that? Unfortunately, the atmosphere of Rachel and Leah's home, it just mirrors their relationship with each other. Competitive, contentious, self-serving. We saw that in how they named all their children by how they felt, by what was going on in their lives, and it was unstable because they stepped outside God's order. And yet, despite all of their problems, Jacob's home was still under God's promise and blessing. Crazy, crazy. So we said it when we first started in Genesis. We're on this side of the cross. When we look at the Old Testament, we study the Old Testament, we have the blessing of looking back through that filter. We look back through Jesus. Like, Jesus, where are you in this text today? Where are you? Well, Ephesians chapter 2, you can turn there and read along with me on the screen if you want. In Ephesians, it tells us what God has done for us. It says, but God, in chapter 2, I'm sorry, but God who was rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ. By grace, you are saved. Let's raise us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. We are under God's promise and we are under God's blessing that with the great love wherewith he loved us. We were dead in sins and he came and he made a promise to us. He came and saved us by grace, through faith. That not of ourselves, verse 8, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

And so God has saved us. He's given us promise and blessing. It's not our works. It's his. But he said that the work he did was for a purpose too. Oh, we're supposed to do these good works that God has before ordained. I should walk in them. I wonder what those good works are. It must be like some amazing ministry or like, what are these good works? Well, if we turn over to Ephesians 5, Ephesians 5, verse 9 will tell us, for the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. And I'm not meaning to cherry pick a bunch of scriptures, but Ephesians 2 tells us what God has done for us. And then we get into Ephesians 5 and we see how that plays out, right?

That for the fruit of the spirit is all goodness, righteousness, and truth. All right, God's got good works for me. He's given me promise. He's given me blessing. Where am I to do these good works? At the end of Ephesians 5 and into Ephesians 6, it says this. It says, wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. It says, husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. It says, children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh. In other words, your earthly master, okay, that was literally a slave to a master in Rome. We have employers. Your boss may treat you like a slave, but you're really not his slave. But it says, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling and singleness of your heart as unto Christ.

And you masters do the same things unto them, forbearing, threatening, knowing that your master also is in heaven, neither is the respect of persons with him. Hey, look, treat your employees well.

[53 : 33] Treat the people you work with well. Don't show favoritism. But here we see these good works. God, what do you want me to do? I want you to live them out in everyday life. They should be in your marriage. They should be in your home. You know, wives, we saw there that we are supposed to have the fruit of the Spirit in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Is there goodness, righteousness, and truth in your marriage, in your relationship with your husband? Are you putting unrealistic expectations on him? Husbands, are you loving your wife sacrificially?

Right? In goodness, righteousness, and truth? How are you leading your family? You know what? We were going to go watch that. We were going to go do that activity. We were going to spend our time and money on this. I don't see a lot of goodness, righteousness, and truth in it. Maybe that isn't the way I should go. Children, how are you with your siblings? Is there goodness and righteousness and truth in your interaction with one another? Are you honoring your parents? Man, the Lord wants Jesus to be seen in our everyday life. And you think, okay, well, I haven't been doing that very well.

Maybe I haven't been leading my family too good. Or maybe, man, there hasn't been a lot of goodness and righteousness and truth. Oh, the atmosphere of my home, you can walk in and cut it with a knife. You know, it's like the kids know. Oh, mom's upset. Well, look at Jacob's family. So I don't see a lot of Jesus and Jacob's family. That was a hot mess. Remember, we looked at the names, and I love name meanings. You should have been sitting there thinking, why didn't he go through all those names more? Or gonna? I love looking in scripture at what people's names mean or what a location means because it's just, it's like a key. You open it up and see what it was in the Greek or the Hebrew, and it just speaks so much more. So we have Reuben, behold, the son is born to us. Simeon, one who hears. Levi, attached. Judah, praise the Lord. Dan, he judged. Naphtali, my struggle.

Gad, good fortune. Asher, happiness. Issachar, reward. Zebulun, honor. Joseph, add to my family. Like we said, a Benjamin, Benjamin, son of my right hand, son of my right, son of my righteousness.

Behold, a son is born unto us, one who hears us and became attached unto us. Praise the Lord. He judged our struggle and brought us good fortune, happiness, reward, honor. He added us to his family.

[55 : 53] He is called the son of righteousness. And so in the middle of the messiest, God-blessed family, Jesus is seen. There is Jesus still there. So no matter how dysfunctional our families, no matter how your relationships, right, look at the moment with some people where you're like, there's no resolution here. And I've tried. You know what? Just wait. The goodness of God leads a man to repentance. And Jesus is in the middle of this home. And if you are in Christ, Jesus is in the middle of your home. And I believe all of you are here. And Jesus is in the middle of all your relationships. It will also tell us in Ephesians, we didn't look at the verse, but in chapter five, it will say, put off the unfruitful works of darkness and walk as children of the light.

God has done everything for us. By grace, we're saved, right? But just like Jacob and just like Rachel and Leah, we have to decide if we're going to live within God's order. Are we going to walk within that? We have all of God's blessing freely given to us. And by faith, we can receive it. We trust in him. And we get to walk in that. And we have this wonderful, easy litmus test. In your family relationships, your friend relationships, in your work relationships, is there goodness, righteousness, and truth coming forth from your life? Is Jesus being seen? Father, we thank you for your word. I thank you that, behold, a son was born unto us. Lord, you have heard us. You became attached to us.

You became like us, Lord. You laid aside your glory and you took upon you the form of a servant. You became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. We praise you for that, Lord. You have judged our struggle. You saw our sin, just like you saw the children of Israel in Egypt. You heard them, you saw them, and you came to deliver. But Lord, I want you to deliver now. And Lord, I think of within Egypt, you said, I heard them, I saw them, and I've come down to deliver. And then it was like this long period of time with all of these struggles. Their situation got worse. And then all of the plagues, but you did ultimately deliver, Lord. Lord, I want to experience that right now. But Lord, maybe the long suffering of God is to show the kindness to someone, to show your kindness, Lord, to show your grace, to bring me or someone else to repentance, Lord. But you've judged our struggle.

You brought us good fortune, happiness, reward, and honor in your family, Lord. You've added us to your family. We have an inheritance now. It's incorruptible, undefiled, and it fades not away.

It's reserved in heaven for us. Nothing can touch that. But Lord, I don't want to live a life that looks like Jacob's in this chapter. I don't want to live a life outside of your order. I don't want my life to be confusion and stress and sin and lack of fulfillment. I want my life to reflect goodness and righteousness and peace and truth, Lord. I want my life to reflect that I am in your family, that I've been saved by grace. And we don't have to live a life of confusion. Lord, I pray that you would, through the teaching this morning and through this week, as we are in your word, that you would shine that light, Lord. Your word would be a lamp unto our feet. Show us, Lord, right now what's going on around us, Lord. Is this of you or do you want me to walk a different way? And then, Lord, that your word, Lord, would be a lamp or a light into my path, a lamp unto my feet, a light into my path.

[59 : 25] It would shine forward and show me that's the direction to go. Okay, I'm going to go that way. And it's not something crazy. It's not like I have to go out and find some great big ministry. I have to do something extracurricular. It's just in our everyday lives with our wives, our husbands, our siblings, our friends, our children, our co-workers, our bosses. That's all it is. Would you please show yourself in those areas? And Lord, I thank you so much. Father, I thank you that you've called forth your son of righteousness, the son of your right hand. And you said, go get him. And that you came and you gave your life for us. And Jesus, we know you're going to come again soon. The father is going to say again, hey, son, go get him. And we're going to come home, Lord. We're going to be raptured.

The time's short, Lord. I pray that between now and then, we would be found as those who are walking in the light, children of the light. Thank you for your grace. In Jesus' name, amen.