

An Agreement Is An Agreement - Genesis 30:25-31:17

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[0 : 00] Genesis chapter 30, the title for today's message. I don't know if any of you have seen Fiddler on the Roof, movie from the 60s. It takes place at the turn of the century, the 1900s in Russia, and the Jewish community there, and the main character, Tevye, he makes an agreement with this older guy who's a butcher to marry his young daughter.

And then she says, no, Dad, I want to marry for love. And it's just the whole story around that. But the famous line in it, he says, with us, an agreement is an agreement. And that will fit in very aptly to the text today, that an agreement is an agreement.

We'll be in chapter 30. We're going to make our way through the end of 30. This is a lot today. We're going to get all the way into verse 16 of 31. But there's a lot of narrative and chunks that we'll just kind of take at once.

It's a very interesting section of scripture. It's where Jacob and Rachel and Leah and the fam have, Joseph's just been born. Jacob comes to the end of his 14 years of service, and he's going to want to go home.

And then Laban's going to be like, hey, no. So chapter 30, verses 25 to 27, is don't leave. Jacob wants to go. And Laban says, no, stay here. He says, let's make a deal.

[1 : 14] And verses 28 through 31, verses 32 through 36 are the terms of that deal. Verses 37 through 43 is a very strange result of that arrangement.

And then as we get into verse, I mean, chapter 31, verses 1 through 9 is nobody's happy. Nobody's happy in this arrangement. And then verses 10 through 13, but God is still faithful.

And then verses 14 through 16 is they choose to follow. We will see what that is when we get there. So our theme, kind of a theme scripture almost, we keep bouncing through some of these scriptures.

Paul says in Philippians 3, verse 1, this isn't the theme, but he says, finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. So that just gives me license to repeat myself a lot.

So if you hear me say something that I've already said, hey, to write the same thing unto you, to teach the same thing is not grievous, but for you it's safe. It's safe for us to ingest the word and to kind of repeat these things to ourselves.

[2 : 19] So our theme kind of, that I look at, this section with Jacob, with Laban, we're gonna have another week at least with Laban after this week. But this stage of Jacob's life, back when he's with his family, back with Esau, that whole mess, and now with Laban, Galatians 6, verses 7 through 9, be not deceived.

God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. That's very much our situation, as we see people reaping what they've sowed.

But for Jacob, and especially as we look at him today, we're gonna see that last part. Verse 9 is the very applicable part of walking in the Spirit, of sowing to the Spirit. Do not grow weary, you shall reap in due season.

And then another kind of verse that encapsulates this whole narrative with Jacob and Laban, we always have to jump forward to Genesis 31, verse 41, where Jacob gives his own synopsis of these 20 years.

[3 : 38] We're only up to year 14 in our text today, where he says, thus have I been 20 years in your house, I've served these 14 years for your two daughters, and six years for your cattle.

That's what we're gonna enter into and see today. And you've changed my wages 10 times. So we need to know that to know the type of person that we're dealing with here. Because we're gonna read this section, if we just read the end of chapter 30, we'd all be scratching our heads like, this is kind of kooky.

But it does make sense. If you remember, Jacob is our man of the covenant, right? Isaac was the son of promise. Jacob, the man of the covenant. And that's the lens we're looking at on this side of the cross, as we look back and we see Jesus, because that's what we wanna see.

Last time we looked at how to identify a Laban. A Laban, we said, do not judge a Laban by appearances. A Laban uses relationships for his advantage. And do not judge a Laban by how he treats you, but by how he treats others, especially those of his family or those that are closest to him.

Because it could look like a real good thing, and then you see how he treats other people. But let's jump into the text in verse 25. So verse 24, Rachel has finally had a son.

[4 : 49] She just had Joseph. If you remember, she names him Joseph, meaning that God shall add. In faith, she says, God is gonna add to my family. I believe that. And this is after she had pretty much demanded of Jacob to give her children and then declared for God that he had given her children.

God brings her to this point now where she, in faith, receives a child and says, hey, I'm gonna leave this in the Lord's hands. In faith, I'm gonna say that God's gonna give me more children. In verse 25, And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, send me away, literally dismiss me, let me go, that I may go into my own place and to my country.

He's given his two weeks. Give me my wives and my children for whom I've served thee, and let me go, for thou knowest my service, which I've done to you, or I've done thee.

And so Jacob uses three words here. He says, send, give, and let. Send me away. Give me what's mine, and let me go. Jacob had showed humility and deference here when he's dealing with Laban. He did not demand, but he deferred. He didn't say to Laban, I'm out of here. It's kind of like when Moses, remember when the Lord at the burning bush says to Moses, time to go back to Egypt, Mo.

[6 : 05] And he's like, okay. Well, he goes home to his father-in-law. He doesn't just say to Jethro, I'm going to take the family and I'm out of here. You know, this is what's going on. He phrases it in a way that's very gracious and very deferring to him.

He just says, you know, I want to go back and visit my family. And here you see with Jacob showing this deference. He's not demanding of Laban. And he says to Laban, you know how I've been with you.

And Jacob, we will look at that eventually, but we'll have to jump forward again as well to see how Jacob had served Laban. But what I want to point out here, he's been 14 years with him, right?

Those first seven years, if you remember, it says in Genesis 29, verse 20, and Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed unto him but a few years for the love he had to her.

Seven years like that because he couldn't wait to get his wife. And then he gets Leah. Then he waits seven days. Then he gets Rachel. I think those first seven years went by like that.

[7 : 06] And I think the second seven years went by at a snail's pace. You know, he's got two wives. We looked at that last week, trying to deal with that. And he's got Laban breathing down his neck.

We know from that one passage that Laban's changed his wages already multiple times. Jacob has worked 14 years for Laban and he's pretty much got nothing to show for it.

Yes, he's got his wife, his wives and children, but he doesn't have anything else. He hasn't gained any material goods. He hasn't been paid otherwise. And Laban has definitely taken advantage of him.

So Jacob's worked 14 years for Laban. He has nothing to show for it except his relationships, which in reality is more than Laban ever had. Laban has no relationships, but he's got everything he thinks.

1 Timothy 5.18, Paul says, for the scripture says, thou shall not muzzle the ox that trez out the corn and the laborer is worthy of his reward. Jacob was worthy of his reward.

[8 : 06] He put in a lot of hard work for Laban. We're going to find out everything Laban has because of Jacob's work. Verse 27, And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I've found favor in your eyes.

Dude, you haven't. You're so not aware. Terry, for I've learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me for your sake. Oh, no, no, don't go. My life is awesome because of you.

Right? This is great. Laban Laban had no real interest in what was best or what was a blessing for Jacob, did he?

For Laban, his only interest was in how he could use that someone else to be a blessing to himself. Laban loves Jacob because of what Jacob did for him. But what's interesting here is, remember, Jacob is our man of the covenant, right?

Jacob, the man of the covenant, he labored for another's benefit. He wasn't laboring for his own benefit. He labored for, labored for Laban's benefit, didn't he?

[9 : 10] And our man of the covenant, who's our man of the covenant? Jesus is our man of the covenant, right? And Jesus, our man of the covenant, he labored for us. He labored for another's benefit.

And 2 Corinthians 5.21 says, for he has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And so here we see our man of the covenant, Jacob, has just spent all of this time and what does he have to show for it?

The benefits all for someone else. Jesus, he has nothing to show for it, guys. He can't be like, yeah, look at these cool scars. Now I sometimes wish I had some cool scars. You see someone, maybe in the movies, they got a cool scar on their face, like that is so cool.

I don't know why, it just seems cool. Guys think scars are cool, right? But Jesus labored for our benefit. He labored so that we could be the ones to be benefited.

And then we see here that Laban had no interest in having his own relationship with God. He only wanted the benefit he derived from being around those who actually had a relationship with God.

[10 : 13] Laban didn't want a relationship, but he liked the benefit that came from those that had a relationship. And so Laban says in verse 28, appoint me your wages and I will give it.

Remember in Genesis 29, 15, Laban said unto Jacob, because you're my brother, should you stay here and serve with me for nothing? Tell me what shall your wages be? And that was after living with Laban for a month.

Fourteen years later, Jacob's like, yeah, I know how this goes. No, no, no, no. There's a principle here that the appearance of choice without true choice is no choice at all, right?

It looks like a choice, but it's not. It's not. Romans chapter 6, verses 16 through 18. Paul writes, Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey?

Whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness, but God be thanked that you were the servants of sin, but you've obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

[11 : 18] Being then made free from sin, you have become the servants of righteousness. And so the world is a servant to sin. They're a slave to sin, the people out there. It looks like they have a choice, right?

My body, my choice. My life, my choice. They think they're making a choice. They're not. They're slaves to sin. They can't choose righteousness. And if you watch, they don't choose righteousness. And it's not about the system or the culture or the politics.

It's about that they are slaves to sin. And until where it says here that they will obeyed from the heart, until we put our trust in Jesus, until we're given a true choice by giving a new heart, we don't actually have a choice.

And so the appearance of choice without true choice is no choice at all. And when my oldest was younger, she'd come and ask me, you know, she's probably like four or five years old, right?

Okay. She's married and 20 now. But she would come and be like, Dad, can we do this? And it wasn't a question because I would give her the answer and it wasn't the answer she liked. And she'd be like, oh, she'd be mad.

[12 : 22] And I'd tell her, I said, that's not a question. You're giving me an ultimatum. You're trying to give me a direction. I said, a question allows the person that you're giving the question to, it allows them to give an answer, right?

You don't want an answer. You want your way. So it's not really a question. It's not actually a choice you're giving me. And that's Laban here. Laban's like, sure, hey, I'll let you decide.

And Jacob knows, Laban, you're just going to change my wages again and again. In verse 29, Now we have to jump forward to Genesis 31 to find out how did Jacob serve him.

In Genesis 31, verses 38 through 39, Jacob will say to Laban when Laban tracks him down, he says, Jacob says, you know how I served you.

Man, I took it all on myself. You got all the benefit and I got all the harm. And here we see that the man of the covenant pays the price and takes the loss upon himself, doesn't he? Just like Jesus, our man of the covenant.

[13:43] Verse 30, For it was little which you had before I came and it is now increased unto a multitude and the Lord has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I provide for my own house?

Jacob is saying, all the blessing that you have is because of my coming. But dude, I got to provide for my home. I can't spend the rest of my life just working to bless you and to serve you in this.

But what do we see here? That the Lord's blessing, where is it found? It's found in the presence of the man of the covenant. Jacob and Laban are recognizing, yeah, there's a blessing, Jacob, because you're here, because of your presence here.

But Jacob also knows he needs to provide for his house. Proverbs 19, 14 says, houses and riches are the inheritance of fathers and a prudent wife is from the Lord. How sad that Laban, we're going to find out, has scarfed up all of his kids' inheritance.

He's got nothing to give him because he's consumed it on himself. The scripture says that it is for fathers to provide. It is for fathers to leave a legacy. Now, it doesn't mean that it's like, man, I got to have some big nest egg for my kids after I go.

[14:51] No, that's not what it's talking about. It's saying that there's things that you as a father are to provide and there's things that your heavenly father is supposed to provide. And the two, you know, you're not responsible to provide what God's supposed to provide, but you should be about what God has given us to provide.

And so Jacob here is focused now on his house. In verse 31, he said, Laban responds to Jacob, this back and forth they're having here. Let's see, Jacob would be, if he was like 72 when he got there, 14 years later, so he's 86 having this conversation now with Laban who is that much more older than him.

And he said, well, what shall I give you? Laban says. And Jacob said, you shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me though, I will again feed and keep your flock.

All that Laban has is because of the work done on his behalf by another. And Jacob recognizes that no matter what agreement they make, Laban will keep Jacob under his thumb.

He's changed his wages how many times? Jacob's like, I can't outsmart you. Jacob, who was able to outsmart Isaac and Esau, and he's done a pretty good job for himself.

[16:08] But God's brought him to a point where he's like, I can't outsmart you. So Jacob's going to throw himself upon the Lord here. Jacob says then, and I will pass through all your flock today, removing from fence all the speckled and spotted cattle.

He's not talking about cows. This would be the, just livestock, essentially. It's the sheep and the goats. He says, I'm going to pass through your flock today and I'm going to take out all of them that have any type of spots or speckles or they're off-colored, all the brown cattle from among the sheep and the spotted and speckled from among the goats.

And of such shall be my hire. So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come when it shall come from my hire before thy face. Everyone that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me.

And so Jacob says, listen, this is what we're going to do. We're going to take out all of the sheep and all of the goats that are not white. Okay? We're going to take out all the speckled ones, all the spotted and all the brown ones and we're going to set them over here.

We're going to get them out. Now Jacob's not taking those to himself. He's actually making this harder for himself. He says, Laban, take them all out so that I'm only going to keep your flock. I'm only going to keep the white ones.

[17:21] Okay? You know you have all the speckled ones. You've got all the brown ones. They're all yours and they're not with me right now. And I'm going to keep all of these, the white ones. If then you see any speckled or brown or striped that I have, you know that I didn't take them from

you.

They came from the flock that I'm keeping of yours. Those shall be my hire. Those shall be mine. Okay? Now if you see among my own sheep the white ones, well, you know, I've stolen them from you because we've agreed I'm only going to take these brown ones.

Jacob is throwing himself on the Lord. Jacob, who has tried to connive and all this, he essentially says now to Laban, I'm not taking anything from you. I'm going to put myself in the Lord's hands. We're going to set up this system that either God's going to bless it or God's not going to bless it. In Genesis 28, 15, you remember when the Lord came to Jacob on his way to Haran and he said, behold, I'm with you and I will keep you in all places whither you go and I'll bring you again into this land for I will not leave you until I've done that which I've spoken of to thee.

Fourteen years, Jacob, has sat on this promise and God has said, I'm not going to leave you and I will do for you everything I promised. Where's God's word been? Just like we saw there with our theme verse in Galatians that, and let us not be weary and well-doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

[18:46] Jacob's faith was not blind. It was in God's word, right? God said this to him. It was in God's presence. He said, I will be with you and it was in God's promise. God's promise that he said, I'm going to do everything that I've spoken to you of.

James chapter 5, verses 7 to 8. Be patient, therefore, brethren, under the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruits of the earth and has long patience for it, right? If you're a farmer, you plant the crop, you don't go out next week to harvest the crop. I don't like taking care of my yard, but I do like taking care of my yard if it did a better job of working with me, but it doesn't and so it's just a chore.

I throw the grass seed out, though, and some fertilizer and two weeks later, I'm like, man, it's not very green. What's going on? I want it to be like, yes, let's go. How quick can this stuff grow and look good? But that's not how it works.

It takes long. And Laban said, behold, I would it might be according to your word. Laban's like, dude, the odds are in my favor. This is a fantastic deal.

[19:50] This guy, he worked 14 years to marry my daughters, who I was happy to give him, you know, and now he's going to work these six more years or seven more years or whatever for me for spotted sheep that are going to come out of these white ones.

Man, Laban's like, Jacob, the odds are in my favor. But you know what? Laban was not in the Lord's favor, was he? Laban was in no means, by no means, in the Lord's favor.

And no matter how much Laban connived, God had already determined that he was going to bless Jacob. So we had said, how do I identify a Laban, right? Don't judge a Laban by his appearance. A Laban uses relationships to his advantage.

We said all that. So Jacob now, he knows he's with a Laban. He's been 14 years with him. How do you live with a Laban? How has Jacob lived with a Laban? So how do we live with a Laban?

You've identified a Laban. You realize, I can't get rid of this Laban. He's here. How do I live with him? Whether it's your boss, whether it's a family member, whether it's a friend, whether it's a neighbor, something. Well, first, we interact with a Laban with humility, honesty, and integrity.

[20:56] That's what Jacob did. Jacob didn't come in pride. Jacob didn't demand. And Jacob came honest. He says, hey, and I'm going to stand in my integrity. If I'm going to go down, I'm going to go down in integrity.

And then never trust a Laban. Instead, trust the Lord. Jacob said, I'm not making a deal with you. No way. I'm going to throw myself on the Lord. Let God defend you.

Proverbs 20, verse 1 says, the Lord hear you in the day of trouble. The name of the God of Jacob defend thee. Isn't that an awesome verse that we're going through Jacob? The name of the God of Jacob defend you.

Let God defend you. Then lastly, and this is the hard one, put Laban first. Put Laban before yourself. Put Laban's needs before yours. Jacob labored for Laban and he put his needs first. Jacob took the hit for Laban. Romans 12, 19 through 21 backs this up. In my flesh, I say, unfortunately.

[21:53] It says, dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written, vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him.

If he thirst, give him to drink. For in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. What does that mean? He was 100% sure. It could mean that you bring conviction on him. He feels shame. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. If your enemy hunger, feed him. If he thirst, give him drink. You know there's a principle in there? And it's this. God wants us to destroy our enemies. He does.

He wants us to eradicate our enemies by treating them as friends. What's the best way to get rid of an enemy? Not to kill him. You think that, I know how to get rid of him.

No, you turn him into a friend and he's no longer an enemy. For our part, we can choose to never have enemies. We cannot choose for our enemies to not have enemies. I can't choose for Laban to be nice to me, but I can choose that Laban's never going to be my enemy.

[22 : 51] And I can choose that he's only going to be an object of blessing. That's the principle laid down. It's the one Jesus talks about in the Beatitudes. You know, bless those who bless you. Bless and curse not.

What he's saying is your attitude and response should always be the same. It shouldn't matter. Like when he says, hey, what good does it do if you're nice to those who are nice to you? If you give a party to those who give a party for you, but not to others.

What he's saying is that the new nature you have in Christ, it shouldn't matter. The situation or circumstances or people. And so yes, God wants us to destroy our enemies, but by treating them as friends.

And here we see Jacob did just that as he's learned to live with a Laban. And verse 35. And so now Laban does this. Laban then removes that day the goats that were ring-straked and spotted and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted and everyone that had some white in it and all the brown among the sheep and gave them into the hands of his sons.

So Laban took every single livestock, every one of the livestock that was not like pure white and said, here you go boys and gave it to Rachel and Leah's brothers.

[24 : 00] And he set three days, three days journey betwixt himself and Jacob and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks. Laban thought he could ensure the blessing for himself. He's like, it's locked up.

This blessing is going to be mine. It doesn't matter what Jacob thinks. I'm going to take all of these and what am I going to do? I'm going to ensure the maximum advantage to myself. He removes them three days away. He's like, all right boys, keep the flock separate.

In fact, why don't you head off that way for three days and after three days stop and feed the flock there just to make sure that none of these ever commingle. Remember our verse in Galatians there, be not deceived, God is not mocked.

For whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. Laban's not going to mock God. He's not going to twist God's arm, right? He thinks he's got this locked up. So Jacob then does this really funny thing in verse 37.

It doesn't make a lot of sense at first. And Jacob took him rods of green poplar and of the hazel and chestnut tree, okay, and peeled him white strakes in them and made the white appear which was in the rods.

[25 : 09] And he set the rods which he had peeled before the flocks and the gutters and the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink that they should conceive when they came to drink and the flocks conceived before the rods and they brought forth cattle ring-straked, speckled, and spotted.

Well, that's interesting. Let's move on. What does that mean? Again, we're going to have to, we'll have to jump forward kind of to see what this means.

If we jump forward to Genesis 31 in verse 10 there, Jacob will kind of give us a picture of what's going on. He's speaking this to Rachel and Leo.

We'll get to this in a few minutes. But it tells us that it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, Jacob is saying, I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream and behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ring-straked, speckled, and grizzled.

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 thine eyes and see all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ring-straked, speckled, and grizzled, for I have seen all that Laban does unto thee.

[26 : 14] So the Lord is intervening here and giving Jacob some direction. Jacob knows Laban's flock and family better than Laban. Laban thinks he's got this all locked up. He doesn't. So I actually

read about this a little bit where you have these dominant and recessive genes.

And so they could be all white cattle, but they could have recessive genes that are brown and speckled and spotted. And they've actually done with mice experiments where they've given like these mice that were like orange in color.

And depending on what they fed them specifically, it actually shut off some of their dominant genes and allowed the recessive genes to come forward. And the mother mouse, because of what she was eating and the baby mouse feeding off of her, it had brown fur and she had orange fur.

Or when it was born, it had brown fur and she had orange fur because of what she was eating while she was carrying the baby mouse. So where God is giving Jacob direction here, he's giving him insight that Jacob wouldn't have otherwise.

So as he strips these branches and puts them in the watering trough, the female sheep is coming to drink at that time. And then as the male sheep is impregnated, then depending on what it is eating and drinking totally affects these recessive genes and allows them to express themselves into spotted and brown and reconstructed.

[27 : 40] Science has proven this, but Jacob didn't need that because Jacob had the Lord, right? Psalm 119, verse 98 says, through your commandments, you have made me wiser than my enemies for they're ever with me.

Meaning his commandments, not his enemies. But through his commandments, he's made him wiser than his enemies. The Lord knows how to handle a Laban and he knows the wisdom and information that Jacob needs.

And so Jacob, now he's doing this. He's brought in these, again, these rods, the hazel, the chestnut, and he has placed them, the poplar, and he puts them in the water. And as the cattle drink from that, then they are bearing offspring that are ring-straked and spotted and speckled.

I like this verse in Proverbs. I thought it spoke very much to this situation. Proverbs 27, verse 23. Be thou diligent to know the state of your flocks and look well to your herds.

For riches are not forever and does the crown endure to every generation. The hay appears and the tender grass shows itself and herbs of the mountains are gathered. The lambs are for your clothing and the goats are for the price of the field.

[28 : 53] And thou shalt have goat's milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, for the maintenance of thy maidens. You know, here the Lord is saying in Proverbs that riches don't last forever. They're like the hay and the grass.

They're there and then they fade. But hey, I'm going to give you enough. You're going to have enough. Look well to the state of your flocks and herds. I will provide enough for your household.

And Jacob is looking well to the state here of his flocks and of his herds.

Proverbs 9, 10 says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. And Jacob, as he's thrown himself on the Lord and put his trust in the Lord, has gained wisdom and knowledge beyond what he could have imagined.

And Jacob, in verse 40, he did separate the lambs and set the faces of the flock toward the ring straight and all the brown in the flock of Laban. And he put his own flocks by themselves and put them not unto Laban's flock.

So obviously, as the lambs come out and you have some that are spotted and ring straight, he's saying, this one's mine now. And it came to pass whenever the stronger cattle did conceive that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters that they might conceive among the rods.

[30 : 00] So he's very selective. When he had the more dominant animals, the stronger ones, and they were conceiving, he's like, okay, and he put that in the water so that it would influence their offspring.

But when the cattle were feeble, he didn't put those in. So the feeble were Laban's and the stronger is Jacob's. And the man increased exceedingly and had much cattle and maidservants and men servants and camels and donkeys.

And so now his wealth is just growing. Jacob never set out to be rich, did he? He didn't go to Laban and say, Laban, we need to work out of deals. I need to make, I need to get rich here.

I need to get rich quick scheme. He wanted to go home. He just wanted to go home, right? Now as we go into chapter 31, so this is the situation as Jacob is tending the cattle, as he has the sheep and the goats of Laban, and he's slowly peeling off from the flock, his own flock, and it's growing

and they're strong and Laban's is kind of getting shrivelier and shrivelier and shrivelier. And here we see Laban's sons. They hurt and Jacob now in verse 1 of chapter 31, he hears the words of Laban's sons and they said, Jacob has taken away all that was our fathers. [31 : 19] Is that true? No, that's false. And of that which was our fathers has he gotten all this glory. Is that true? That is true. It's false.

Jacob has not taken it away. True. All that was Laban's is now Jacob's. That is true. But it is not Jacob who did it. Whose fault is it that Jacob is still in Haran? Whose idea was it that Jacob stay here?

Not Jacob's. He wanted to go home. Jacob is still here and he's still working for this man who is actively trying to take advantage of him. Constantly shifting it around.

We're going to find that out that Jacob every time he's like, okay, I'll take the brown ones. And Laban's like, okay, no, I'll take the brown ones. He's like, fine, I'll take the white ones and then it swings the other way. Well, now I'll take the white ones. I'll take the brown ones. I'll take the ones with five feet and you have the ones with four feet.

Deal. But he's constantly changing this up on him. In verse 2, and Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban and behold, it was not toward him as before.

[32 : 16] No longer is Laban thinking Jacob is a blessing to him. And how quickly the tide has turned. Proverbs 26, I'm sorry, 23 verse 6 says, eat thou not the bread of him that has an evil eye, neither be thou desirous of his dainty meat.

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink, says he, but his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten thou shalt vomit up and lose thy sweet words.

So it's like, yeah, his heart is not with you as he thinks in his heart. Laban's countenance now has changed because his heart has changed. And where at one time he said to Jacob, hey, I want you to be here, bro. I want you to stay with me.

We're going to do this together. Well, now in verse 8 where it says, the morsel which you have eaten thou shalt vomit up. Well, that's very graphic, but it just means that it's not going to be something you can stomach after a while.

The Lord said unto Jacob, return unto the land of your fathers and to thy kindred and I will be with you. So the Lord has determined when it was time for Jacob to go home. The Lord has given Jacob that which was Laban's.

[33 : 23] Jacob is not the instigator of any of this. And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock. And he said unto them, I see your father's countenance that it's not toward me as before, but the God of my father has been with me.

Jacob is looking. He's like, do you see this flock? Look at them. This is my flock. It was your father's. There was that which was without speckles and now they're all speckled. So he calls them to him.

He said, I see your father's countenance. It's not toward me as before, but the God of my father has been with me. Jacob realizes that though Laban has tried to finagle him out of everything he's had and we're going to find out Laban will eventually say to Jacob, not this week, you've taken my children and my grandchildren.

He's even trying to take his family from him. That Jacob says, no, the God of my father has been with me. You see, Jacob's trials, they've deepened his relationship with God and they've given him a discernment that he'd previously not possessed.

Jacob didn't have this discernment before. Hebrews 5.14 tells us, but strong meat belongs to them that are full age. It's just an analogy, meaning that you can't eat, chew meat until you've got the ability to do it, the physical ability.

[34 : 39] And same with our spiritual maturity. There's certain things that are outside our ability to comprehend spiritually until we grow. Even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised, to discern both good and evil.

What does that mean? It means God's going to put us in situations that are good and evil so that we can begin to discern and understand the Lord's hand in those. Trials are not sent to destroy us, but they're sent to deepen our relationship with God.

God desires our relationship to be deep. He wants us to be discerning. He wants us to know how to deal with Labans. One, to identify them. And two, how to live with them. And the way he does that is he sends these trials.

Jacob, 14 years ago, 14 years ago had God's promise that he'd be with him, that he'd be blessed him, that he'd bless him, that he wouldn't leave him. And for Jacob, he could look back and go, this has been horrible.

I wanted Rachel, I got Leah. Then I got Bilhah. Then I got Zilpah. I've been stuck with Laban. I've got nothing to show for this. And now he's trying to take away what little I have.

[35 : 43] Lord, have you been with me? And yet he's been faithful to trust in the Lord. And now we see as God is beginning to speak into his life and direct his life. He said, Jacob, it's time to bear fruit. Not as you thought, Jacob.

And he says, I want you to go home. Verse six. And now you know that, and you know, he's saying to his wives, you know that with all my power, I have served your father and your father has deceived me and changed my wages 10 times.

But God suffered him not to hurt me. Jacob, the deceiver, is realizing realizing that God is the one who keeps us from deception and from the effects of deception. Proverbs chapter three, verses five and six.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not unto your own understanding and all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your steps. And here Jacob is acknowledging God has not suffered him to hurt me. God is the one now directing my path.

Psalms 91, verses nine through 11. Because thou has made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most high thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee. Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

[36 : 51] For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. Remember Jacob when he was asleep there laying on that pillow, that rock pillow, and he saw the angels ascending and descending.

They haven't gone anywhere and the Lord hasn't gone anywhere. The angels are still there being used by the Lord to keep Jacob in all his ways. And he said thus, in verse eight, the speckled, I'm sorry, and if he said thus, if Laban said thus, the speckled shall be your wages, then all the cattle bear speckled.

And if he said thus, the ring straked shall be your hire, then bear all the cattle ring straked. So look, even in this, we're seeing that it wasn't straight up Jacob's animal husbandry with the rods and everything affecting the animals.

He's saying, Laban said, I'll give you all the brown ones and all the speckled ones. He's like, then all the cattle would bear brown and speckled. And then Laban would come back and go, you know what, this month, let's do all the white ones are yours.

And Jacob's like, okay, whatever. And then all the cattle are bearing white cattle. And he kept switching it back and forth. And verse nine, Jacob recognizes, thus has God taken away the cattle of your father and he's given them to me.

[37 : 59] I didn't do this. It wasn't me. This is what God has done. James one, verse eight is a perfect example or a description of Laban. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

That's Laban, right? This man is so unstable. He's also so not self-aware of anything except himself. But Jacob is experiencing Romans 8, 28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.

And Laban, who should be leaving an inheritance for his children, he's leaving it for someone else, isn't he? Ultimately, it's his children, but a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

And so God is removing Laban's wealth and he's giving it to Jacob. In verse 10, it came to pass at that time that the cattle conceived or came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived that I lifted up mine eyes and we read this already and I saw in a dream and behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ring straight, speckled, and grizzled.

And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream saying, Jacob, and I said, here am I. He said, lift up now thine eyes and see all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ring straight, speckled, and grizzled for I've seen all that Laban has done unto you.

[39 : 18] And so the Lord is the one who's actually directing these cattle so that only the male cattle that meet the criteria for Jacob's pay are the ones that are impregnating the females.

You know, God's ideas, sometimes they seem kind of foolish, don't they? They kind of seem a little silly sometimes. Maybe you're in a situation and you just hear that still small voice and the Lord's

like, go tell that person that Jesus loves them.

Okay. You know, go pray for that person. Go get the cattle and put these rods in the water and then, okay. Peter, go down to the lake and the first fish you catch is going to have money in its mouth.

Say what? I've fished my whole life, Lord. I've been waiting for that fish and I never found him and now he's going to be there? God's ideas, they appear foolish but they never fail.

In 1 Corinthians 1, verses 21 and 27, Paul says, God has specifically taken the foolish things of this world and said, hey, this is how I'm going to show my wisdom because nobody's going to look at you and think, wow, it must be you.

[40 : 48] It must be your wisdom. It must be because you're so amazing. No, they're going to look past you and go, there's got to be something else. It can't just be Jacob. He's not that smart, right? You know, it's got to be the Lord.

Look, guys, I love you all but I can't edify you even if I tried. Right? It's not going to happen. Like, if I gave my greatest effort to be edifying to my family and my own strength, I might get there but forget trying to satisfy all of you.

No way, right? That's not what we're about here. We recognize that the only thing that satisfies is Jesus and his word. Seems foolish to preach God's word, right?

Why don't we try something else? There's so many other things out there in the world that studies and wisdom and people and organizations have said. It's like, nah, I'll stick with the foolish things. You see, God will eventually right all wrongs, won't he? Proverbs 11, verse 1. It's very interesting. It says, a false balance is an abomination to the Lord but a just weight is his delight.

[41 : 50] Go through scripture and find out what's an abomination to the Lord. There's a lot of abominations today. A man with a man, a woman with a woman is specifically spoken of in the word over and over as an abomination.

But a false balance is an abomination? God, when God sees someone who's been taken advantage of unjustly, when he sees someone who they haven't been paid fairly, God said, that's an abomination to me.

Verse 13, the Lord says, I am the God of Bethel. This is Jacob relaying this still to his wives, that God said to him, I am the God of Bethel where you anointed the pillar and where you vowed a vow unto me.

God doesn't forget our words to him. Now arise, get thee out of this land and return unto the land of your kindred. Remember, that was back in verse 13 of chapter 28.

And behold, the Lord stood above it, the ladder, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac, the land wherein you lie, to thee will I give it and to your seed.

[42 : 53] Fourteen years later, Jacob doesn't have that land yet, but God hasn't forgotten his promise to him. No matter how slow God's word may be in its fulfillment, it will be fulfilled.

No matter how slow, God will fulfill his word. Isaiah chapter 30, verse 18. And therefore, will the Lord wait, wait, that he may be gracious unto you.

And therefore, will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you, for the Lord is a God of judgment. Blessed are all they that wait for him. Therefore, will the Lord wait.

It doesn't mean he's holding back his graciousness. It means he's waiting for you. He wants to be gracious to you and he's going to wait long for that opportunity to do that. And then it says, blessed are all they that wait for him.

And we've looked at this one. This is one of those verses that I do not, that I consider it safe to put you in remembrance of over and over and over like we looked at in Philipians. Second Peter chapter 3, verse 9.

[43 : 49] The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. God is not slack.

God's long suffering is never because he's delaying or that he's got another plan or that his word didn't come about. God's long suffering is because God desires to show his grace.

And so the Lord says to Jacob, get the up, get out of this land to go into the land of promise. You know, it's a principle.

You can't go somewhere until you leave where you are. I know, mind-blowing, right? You can't go there until you get up and leave, right? The only way to enter the promised land is to leave this land,

right?

You have to go. You have to get up and go and get out of here. It's like when Paul, we've looked at it in Acts where it says that Paul, he got up and he went. You think, okay.

[44 : 47] But then you think of what that means, the implications of that, to actually get up, to leave and to go. That's not as easy as it seems. Jesus, when he was calling his disciples, the one man came to him.

He's like, well, I'll follow you anywhere. But first, let me go home and say goodbye to the family. Jesus is like, no, it's time to go. You can't because his priorities were wrong.

And Rachel and Leah, in verse 14, they answered and said unto him, and this is very sad, he said to Jacob, look, is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers?

For he has sold us and has quite devoured also our money. You know, like I said, we're going to see that eventually Laban's going to say, aren't these my daughters?

Aren't these grandchildren my children? He doesn't know he has no relationship with them. They do, but he's so unaware of this. Rachel and Leah's relationship with their father was very sad.

[45 : 48] Laban, he had nothing for them, he did not know them, and he saw no value in them. That was his relationship with his daughters. Instead of being the one like we saw that should be looking out for them, looking for a way to bless them and support them, they turn around and they say, Jacob, Laban has nothing for us.

He doesn't even know us. I mean, he doesn't even see value in us. He sold us, and then even the value he thought we had, he devoured that money. So we're nothing to him anymore.

Psalms 103, verse 13. says that like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him. Pity, what does that mean? We think of that as like, oh, I pity you, right?

That word pities or pitieth in King James means love, love that is cherishing, soothing, or of a gentle mind. That like as a father loves and cherishes his children as he soothes them, as he treats them gently.

That's how a father is supposed to be with the children, right? In the same way, so is the Lord towards us who fear him. And they say in verse 16, for all the riches which God has taken from our father, that is ours and our children's.

[47 : 04] Now then, whatsoever God has said unto thee, do. They recognize what Laban didn't. They recognize justice. They said that God has taken all of this and given it to our children.

But look what's really cool here. This is Rachel and Leah. They were always like cats in a bag, right? Well, after Joseph's born and Rachel has that moment where she says, the Lord shall add to me another son.

We never see Rachel and Leah fight again. They don't. They don't have a lot of interaction again, but we just don't see that kind of animosity happening again. Now, is their walk with the Lord perfect? No. Is Jacob's faith perfect?

No, but they're growing. And we see here where in the last chapter, Jacob had like no interest in conversing with his wives, right? No input. As they're having children, they're naming them and he's just along for the ride and passive.

Now he calls to them and says, hey, hey girls, come on, I want to talk to you about what's going on. I want to get your input in this. And here, look at their response at the end of 16. Whatsoever God has said unto you, do.

[48 : 06] Here we see a God-blessed marriage. Jacob finally leading. And how does a man lead his house? He leads by following. Jacob finally leading his wives by following the Lord and Rachel and Leah following by trusting the Lord.

And that goes to Ephesians where Paul says that wives submit yourselves unto the Lord. I mean, unto your husbands as unto the Lord. Husbands love your wives because why? Husbands the head of the wife as God is the head of Christ and Christ is the head of man and man is the head of woman.

And Jacob is finally leading, but he can only do that by following the Lord. And Jacob and Rachel, I mean, Jacob, Rachel and Leah are finally following. But they can only do that by first trusting the Lord.

And you can just see how God is just bringing this all around. Years it's taken. Years. The flock that at one time justly belonged to Laban, it did. It was Laban's, wasn't it?

Is now legally under the care and ownership of the man of the covenant. That God has taken this flock that was once a Laban's. Laban, a man of sin and of the flesh and of the world.

[49 : 12] And he's moved this flock now so that it exists under the man of the covenant. Jesus, our man of the covenant, the good shepherd, has dealt with our Laban of sin, death, and the flesh and has secured his right to the flock.

Jesus has removed the flock from Laban and taken it unto himself. 1 John 3, verse 8. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Why did Christ come into the world? To destroy the works of the devil. John chapter 10. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd and I know my sheep and am known of mine.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them to me, a good father who leaves an inheritance for his children, my father, which gave them to me, is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand.

I and my father are one. With the Lord, unlike Laban, an agreement is an agreement. He will not go back on it. Laban who changed Jacob's wages seven times, God will not go back on his agreement.

[50 : 29] As we saw our first verse there in the beginning, that God is not mocked. And here we see it took a long time to come to fruition. Laban thought he was set for life, but he was sowing to the flesh and then he of the flesh reaped corruption and emptiness.

Jacob, who just continued to be faithful in the duty he was given. Was his home perfect? No way, we saw that. But now we see how he existed and how he lived with Laban, that he continued to be faithful and to live in his integrity.

So for us, what is our part of the agreement? God's going to keep his part. With God, an agreement is an agreement. Well, like we saw in John 10, whatsoever God has said, I mean, I'm not John 10, what the lady said, Rachel and Leah, at the end of verse 16, whatsoever God has said unto you, do.

What has God said unto you? That's what we see in John 10. What has God said unto you? Have you heard his voice? Are you one of his sheep? Do you have a relationship with him?

If so, then will you do your part of the agreement? Will you keep it? Will you follow?