

A Line In The Sand - Genesis 31:44-55

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[0 : 0 0] Today's message, the title is A Line in the Sand. We will see Laban and Jacob and the Lord drawing those lines. You know, I was looking back, we've been eight weeks with Jacob since we really got into the life of Jacob.

And we will be with him through the rest of Genesis. It's Jacob's family or his sons or him, some iteration of that. And then Laban has been six weeks. Now, one of those weeks was, we covered half the chapter, I think it was 30, where the girls were all having their children.

And Laban wasn't really involved, but he was there, kind of. So we've been, this will be the fifth week of Laban. And last week we ended, we talked about with Laban, how to identify a Laban, you know, previous weeks, and then how to live with a Laban.

Jacob lives 20 years with a Laban. And then last week, how to leave a Laban. And I remember thinking afterwards, it was either right afterwards or it was Monday, because I've already studied, I'd already studied thinking I was going to do the whole chapter, and I didn't.

So I had a bunch studied. And I was thinking ahead about, you know, what was there. And the Lord just kind of puts this thought sometimes in your head, you know, I was thinking, oh, it'd be so good to leave Laban. I wonder what next week will be. And it was like, the Lord said, how to love Laban.

[1 : 1 3] It's like, oh, man. And that was really my thought, was like, my wicked heart. It was just like, oh, man, Lord, I don't want to love Laban. I just want to leave him. So today, we're going to see how to love Laban.

And it's a huge blessing, amazing, because the pictures and types that are in here, it was blowing my mind just looking at it this week. So I hope it's a big, big blessing to you guys as well.

So if you remember, Laban has gone, or I'm sorry, Jacob has gone to Haran, having been advised by his mother in many ventures of his, I would say, young life, but it wasn't.

He was in his 70s. He's left the land of promise. He's left Isaac and Esau and Rebecca, and he's gone to Haran. He's been there 20 years, 16 years, I'm sorry, 14 years into that.

He wants to go home. He's served where he needs to, to acquire his wives and children, but he doesn't have anything else. And Laban says, hey, stay with me. Stay with me. And I see that God's with you, and I'm blessed because of that.

[2 : 1 3] And if you stay here, we'll cut a deal. And Jacob's like, look, I don't got anything for my family. So we're going to cut this deal in a way that you can't mess with it. But we find out that Laban did mess with it.

Ten times he tried to change Jacob's wages. Ten times he essentially said to Jacob, man, God is blessing you too much in that area. We got to do something about that so I can receive that blessing.

So he changes his wages. Jacob then gets to this point six years into that where the Lord says to him, it's time to go. It's time to go home. It's time for you to leave and go back to your father's house, back to the land of promise, back to Bethel, the house of God, where Jacob first erected that pillar.

So he travels 300 miles and he gets back down. That's kind of zoomed in. But he gets back down to the land called Gilead. We're going to see, or Gilead, G-I-L-E-A-D. You'll most likely see it in your Bible.

And if you look there, it's kind of fuzzy, but just above there, that little blue blur, is the Sea of Galilee. So he was probably, there's Mount Gilead, and he was probably a little bit further north.

[3 : 14] He was in the region of that area. So he was up northern Israel is where he is. And Laban, who he has left, he just can't get rid of a Laban, chases him down and catches him. And we saw last week as they kind of went through their back and forth discussions, and we saw how Laban was still trying to manipulate the situation.

And we kind of left off where Laban kind of loses it, shall we say, in verse 43. And so we're going to look at the rest of the chapter. It's only 12 verses. And then at the end, it just dovetails so perfectly.

We'll look at a little bit of Jesus's preparation for the cross of Palm Sunday. It's just a great, great picture. But the outline for today, if you want to jot it down, verses 44 through 48 is a covenant where Jacob and Laban will make this covenant.

49 through 50 is a line. There's this line drawn in the midst of this covenant. 51 to 53 is a witness. They set up, Jacob will erect another pillar to be a witness.

And then 54 and 55 is, we see a blessing. This ends in a blessing. So if you remember, as we look at Laban, we want to remember a few things about him because we're going to learn that we have to love Laban.

[4 : 30] But Laban's still Laban. You know, it's not like Paul on the road to Damascus, Saul, where he was killing the Christians and nobody liked that guy, right? And then he has this transformation and now he's Paul. You're like, oh, Paul's my BFF, right?

Well, Laban's still Laban. On the other side of this, Laban is still Laban. And the two characteristics we said about Laban, the main ones, he was manipulative and he took advantage of people.

That's what he would do. He would manipulate a situation and he would take advantage of people. Laban manipulated the people and relationships around him for the maximum advantage of self. And that's one of the ways you can identify a Laban.

We're not going to go deeply into them. We looked originally at how to identify a Laban. But in remembering who Laban is, we can't judge by his appearance. In other words, Laban's a hypocrite. He looks good on the outside.

He'll come to you. He'll use relationships for his advantage. It seems like he's your friend. It seems like, man, what a generous guy. And then you find out, well, he's not the same from what he's presenting.

[5 : 30] And lastly, we can't judge by how he treats us. You know, like, man, he's such a nice guy. Hi, brother. How are you doing? God bless you. And then you see as people that are close to him, that they kind of react towards him a little, or they draw away from him, or he treats someone inappropriately.

And you're like, well, he's never treated me that way. Well, this is Laban. This is who he is. And this is the man Jacob has just left. And as we saw in verse 43, if we want to back up briefly, Genesis 31, verse 43, Laban here is kind of losing it.

He's come to the end of his days, and he's come to this day of reckoning, and he now realizes too late he's lost everything. And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, these daughters are my daughters. These children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle.

And all that you see, it's mine. And then he just kind of in defeat. And it's so sad. He just says, and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which were born them?

He's just kind of come to the end of himself. The most important thing Laban had lost was the love and respect of his family. He doesn't have that. And he hasn't had that for years, but he didn't know it. You see, Laban had replaced a true relationship.

[6 : 41] And what is true relationship? Respect and sacrifice. Every relationship that's a true relationship will have at its core respect and sacrifice. That's respect you and be willing to sacrifice in the relationship.

Without that, it's not a relationship. It's usually manipulation or worst abuse. But he had replaced that, the truth of what a relationship is, when we said with proximity and family ties.

So he said, well, they're close. They live close. And they're family. So we must have a relationship. Right? But if you remove that, if you remove the proximity, and if you remove the fact that, well, we're related by blood, what do we have left?

Well, Laban, you don't have anything left. You've kind of squandered what you had. And you know, I was thinking about that in light of the church. That can happen in the church.

And in one part, it's okay. We have a tie that's so much deeper than blood. We have a tie that's the spirit. That you can meet a believer. And I like to say, you know, when you meet him in the wild, here we're in captivity.

[7 : 41] You meet a believer in captivity. But when you meet him out in the wild, you know, and it's like, whoa, you're at work or somewhere, and you meet someone, you realize you're a believer. I remember I was on a job site, and this one guy I was talking with, and he said something.

He's like, well, I don't say that anymore. He's like, you know, I'm a Christian. He's like, are you a Christian? And because that phrase is like, in the South, everybody's a Christian. I said, well, I'm a believer. And he kind of looked at me, and he was like, and then we started talking.

We realized, well, here's a genuine believer. And you meet one in the wild. It's exciting. But when you go to church somewhere, you connect with people so fast because of the spirit. And you continue to go there, and you're like, man, we are so tight.

But then if you leave and go to another church, sometimes you don't hear from those people ever again. You think, man, I thought we were good friends. Well, it's not that you weren't. It's just that proximity and our family ties, one in the spirit, and the fact that we were in the same place, allowed a relationship to exist for that time.

And it's not bad, necessarily, if you go somewhere else. And the closeness that was there is just not the same because the relationship was built on our family ties and the fact we were together.

[8 : 49] Now, at the same time, that should be there just as quickly when you're back together with that person. And there will be relationships that will build out of your oneness in Christ, which will be longer lasting than just your proximity and family ties.

But I guess it's just don't be surprised if that happens. It doesn't mean that the person's written you off or they hate your guts. It's just you're no longer in that situation. Anyway, so Laban has just thrown this little kind of hissy fit here.

And God has completely broken Laban's power over Jacob, completely. And Laban knows this now. And in verse 44, Laban now comes up with this idea. He says, Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and you, and let it be for a witness between me and you.

The Lord had brought Laban to the end of his own resources, and he's now forced to acknowledge Jacob as an equal. That's essentially what he's doing. He's like, all right, I don't have anything over you. Well, let's make a covenant.

Man, you know, let's, I need to try and get a hold of this situation somehow. I believe we looked at this verse before, because I talked about picturing the wicked without arms, trying to do anything.

[9 : 55] But in Psalm 37, verse 16, it says, A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. Jacob had lived 20 years that way. He had lived 20 years with Laban, where he had little, but he was actually of greater gain than Laban ever was.

For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous. And Laban's arms right now are being broken as God is upholding Jacob in this situation.

And Jacob now he's going to take a stone. This is his thing. He likes stones. And he set up for to set up a pillar. Remember what Abraham's thing was? What did Abraham do a lot of?

Altars. Abraham built altars. Isaac dug wells. And Jacob set up pillars. They all did four of them.

Abraham had four altars. Isaac had four wells. Jacob will have four pillars. This is only number two. The other ones come, I think, in 35. He will have two other pillars he'll set up.

[10 : 56] Abraham is the father of faith. Isaac is the son of promise. And Jacob is the man of the covenant. As you go through those. We're eventually going to get to who's our next guy? Our main guy. Joseph.

The narrative is going to shift to Joseph. Joseph will have four of something as well. You know what it is? I teased you a few. And he got pretty close. He said four occupations. He does have four occupations. But what he has is he has four garments.

Joseph will be given four garments. And you can go and dig those out yourself if you want to see what those are. But where Abraham's the father of faith, Isaac the son of promise, Jacob the man of the covenant, Joseph will be the son of blessing.

And that's going to be so fun to go through that. So stay tuned. But here Jacob sets up a pillar. If you remember, the first one he set up was when he had seen the angels ascending and descending.

He was running. He was leaving home, heading to Haran. He sleeps on a pillow. He slept on a rock. And it says in chapter 28, verse 18, Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone that he'd put for his pillows and set it up for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it.

[12 : 01] So here's Jacob's first pillar. Right? That first pillar, remember then what he said after God gives him that vision and says, I'm going to be with you, Jacob. Everything I promised to you, I will accomplish.

Jacob wakes up and goes, let's make a deal, God. And he wants to have some self-effort in this. He wants to have part of it. This second pillar, Jacob now knows all too well that he can't do it himself.

This is a pillar of surrender. He is now at a point of knowing that what needs to be done must be done by God. So he's going to set up this second pillar. In Philippians chapter 3, verse 3, it says, For we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus.

It just means that it's not an outward act. It's what's done in the heart. And we have no confidence in the flesh. No confidence in the flesh. We recognize that it's in the Spirit. It's not in our self-effort in flesh.

As we go through, and we'll see that with Jacob with his four pillars as we hit each one. The first one is, you know, it's his own effort. And this one is now surrender. And then we're going to see those next two when we get to him, how it's just he continues to further walk with God in this.

[13:10] And so Laban wants to make a covenant. And Jacob said in verse 46, Unto his brethren gather stones. And they took stones and made a heap.

And they did eat thereupon the heap. So Laban says, I want to make a covenant. Jacob says, I gotcha. Sets up this pillar. In addition to that, he says to all the guys that are there, grab a bunch of stones.

Right? This is not just me setting up this pillar. Right? Who sets up the big pillar? Jacob, our man of the covenant. But each one of the brethren brings a stone. Each one of them has their own part to play in this covenant.

He's like, hey, all of you, bring it to the heap. Bring your own stone. And there, what did they do? They ate. They ate a meal thereon. Interesting. Do you remember back when we were in the beginning of Genesis?

When we were looking at creation. What we discovered there in Genesis chapter 2? We discovered that food is much more than sustenance. Remember that? I remember that. Because it was like a mind-blowing thing for me I hadn't seen before.

[14:09] In Genesis chapter 2, verse 7, it says, And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden.

And there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord to grow, made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life also in the midst of the garden.

And the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So there's these trees for food. You say, well, maybe it's just describing their food. Right? Did they eat of them? Well, verse 16. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat.

But the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For the day that thou eats thereof, thou shalt surely die. So God says to Adam, It's all yours. It looks good and it tastes good.

Except for that one. But the rest is yours. If Adam didn't eat, would he die? No. Death hadn't entered the world because sin hadn't entered. So food, God originally designed food to be so much more than just to keep us alive.

[15:12] Right? In Acts chapter 2, verse 42. I mean, if you want to like tattoo this in the back of your Bibles, this is like the theme verse, I guess, for our church. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.

And if you go further down into verse 46. And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat or their food with gladness and singleness of heart.

You see this, like, this koinonia, this fellowship, where they were together and there was food involved. And more than just like, you know, well, we got together for a Bible study. Well, we got together and we prayed.

They had this food involved as well. It was a big part of it. But that God has created food to be so much more than just sustenance.

We're going to take communion today. And Jesus will eventually say to his disciples, hey, you know, a bunch of them will leave because they'll say, if you don't eat of this, my body, and drink of this, my blood, you have no part in me.

[16:17] What's he talking about? Well, he's talking about exactly this. He's like, the food has so much more meaning than just what you consume to stay alive. It has to do with the oneness. And that's why I love that we have been so intentional about fellowship meals here.

Now, we had a long stretch between transitioning from Mount Holly to here, and we just had our last one here, and it was great, and we pray about it, but potentially the next one we'll do like a church picnic. But to just keep that cycle going.

Because what you see, Sue and I were talking about this, you don't see at a fellowship meal a lot of like heavy, like talking and praying. There's some. It's not like we're counseling one another as much there.

But there's such a joy and a oneness there. And then you see that happening usually around the word, as God's word penetrates our heart, and it speaks to us. Then we go and find a brother or sister to pray with. But without the fellowship meal, it's almost like when we get together in those, it's an opportunity to look around and go, hey, you're here, and I'm here.

God's brought us this much further. This is amazing. We set up a pillar. That's great. And then we go on and then we do the next one. There's so much unity that God has designed in the body specifically around the table.

[17:28] And where Jesus will say, this is my, you know, eat of my bread and drink of this cup. Eat of my body. That truly food is much more than just sustenance. And so here, Jacob, our man of the covenant, right?

A perfect picture in this instance of Jesus, the man of the covenant. He is now the one leading. It's no longer Laban. Jacob, the man of the covenant says, look at, this is what we're going to do. Bring your stones. We're going to get together and we're going to eat here.

And Laban names this place in verse 47. And Laban called it Jagar Sahaduthah. But Jacob called it Galid or Gilead.

And Jagar Sahaduthah, it's Chaldean, right? He's from originally Ur of the Chaldees, went up into Haran. And so he's calling it that. Jacob gives it the Hebrew name. And it means in both languages, the hill of witness is what he's saying.

This is a hill of witness that we've created. But it's interesting as Jacob and Laban look at this thing, the exact same thing they're looking at. They both see it. Same thing, same situation. But Jacob is looking at it from a totally different perspective.

[18:31] Jacob sees this from God's perspective. Laban just says, Jirgahahathahduthah or whatever. Jacob says, no, no, Gilead, the hill of witness. And Laban said, this heap is a witness between me and you this day.

Therefore was the name of it called Gilead. And now Laban's going to do something else here in verse 49. This is not, Laban said, I want to make a covenant. Jacob says, okay, we'll do that. He kind of sets up the parameters of the covenant.

He's got the stones and he's got all of that. But Laban is the one who's going to interject now here what he wants the covenant to be. So this is a witness. And here's the covenant. And therefore was the name of it called Gilead, because that means hill of witness.

And Mizpah. For he said, the Lord watched between me and thee when we are absent from one another. And Mizpah literally means like watchtower. Like to watch out. Think that is so sweet, Laban.

I thought you were a big dumb jerk. And now you're saying, the Lord watched between me and thee when we are absent from one another. Maybe you've seen one of these. A Mizpah coin in like a necklace. And it says on it, the Lord watched between me and thee while we are absent one from another.

[19 : 41] It's like, oh man, that's cool. Genesis 31 verse 49. But if someone wants to give you one of those, if they really know what it means, that's not a good thing.

What it really means is, don't step over this line. The Lord watched between you and me for harm. Don't you dare cross this line or God's going to get you.

That's what it is. It's a line in the sand. Laban is essentially saying, yeah, let's make a covenant, Jacob. I can't control you any longer. So I'm going to make this boundary that we're not going to pass over.

You see, for Laban, God was nothing more than a divine watchdog. He'd never meant anything to him. Laban, God, can you bless me? Through Jacob. And now as Jacob leaves, Laban's like, all right, God will watch over you as a divine watchdog, essentially.

In verse 50, If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives besides my daughters, no man is with us. See, God is witness between me and you.

[20 : 48] And that's why we know it's not a good thing. This is kind of cringy. Because it's like, Laban, has Jacob ever mistreated your daughters? Laban, who is the one who mistreated Laban's daughters? Laban.

Laban, did Jacob want all these wives? How many wives did he want? What? No, Laban, it was you. You see, Laban was now willing to accept Jacob as an equal. He's like, all right, all right.

And my daughters are going with you. I can't control the situation any longer. But Laban could not imagine that given the chance, Jacob wouldn't also treat his family as Laban had. Laban couldn't imagine that Jacob wouldn't also try to take advantage of this situation.

Because that's who Laban is. And so he expects other people to act in the same way. And in verse 41, And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar.

And what's the next part? Which I have cast betwixt me and thee. I'm sorry. Didn't we just read that Jacob set up the pillar? That Jacob said to go and get the stones? Laban tries to take credit for everything.

[21 : 51] What? Laban, what are you doing? Well, I think Laban is trying to maintain control at all times of this situation. As God is removing control from his hand, Laban can't just let it go. You know, we're going to look at, as we close out this passage today, and look at the application towards the end, there's two Labans we're going to see.

There's the Laban of relationship. We all have Labans in our lives. Maybe presently, maybe in the past. That person that's a Laban, that represents those characteristics. They're manipulative. They take advantage of relationships.

And no matter how much you try to get along with them, they're always kind of twisting and changing it and changing your wages ten times. And then there's the Laban that's in here.

There's the Laban characteristics that I have. There's the Laban of the flesh. There's the Laban of self. And those two different Labans, God can deal with.

The one in the relationship, we're going to see we need to love that Laban. And that through that, God will deal with that. The other Laban, we're going to see that God's going to draw a line in the sand. He's going to draw a mizpah.

[22 : 54] And he's going to say, it's time to leave that Laban behind as you move forward with the man of the covenant. And so Laban now, he takes credit for this. And in verse 52, he said, So he's saying, look, we're going to draw this line here.

You stay on your side. I'm going to stay on my side. Don't cross over. Don't be coming to get me. And I won't come to get you. Man, there's some relationships that you just can't resolve. There's some people that are always going to look at everything as harm to them.

There's some people that it doesn't matter no matter how good you are to them, no matter how much you try and love them, they're going to look at it like you're harming them, like you're attacking them. And for some relationships, there's just no resolution.

And that's just kind of how it is. Some relationships do require a mizpah, a line in the sand. However, before I say that, first of all, husbands and wives, that does not mean us.

In Matthew chapter 19, so if you're sitting there and you're elbowing your Laban next to you, you can stop now. In verse 5, it says, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they too shall be one flesh.

[24 : 18] Therefore, there are no more two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder. The best solution for Jacob and Laban's relationship was separation.

But note that it was Laban who chose to make that separation permanent. Note that it was Laban who decided to make Jacob's leaving a point of no return. Jacob did not initiate this.

And Jacob did also not initiate his leaving, did he? Jacob responded to God's leaving. And God will never lead you out of your marriage, except as a last resort.

We know only because of infidelity. And Paul will tell us in the New Testament, he'll say, Hey, look it. Are you a believing spouse? And you have an unbelieving spouse? If they're willing to stay, don't leave.

Don't leave. You never know what God's going to do. But if they want to leave, let them go. You are not under bondage in that situation. And it's kind of like Jacob. God had called him to walk forward. And Laban decided to make Jacob's following obedience to God, Laban decided to make that a point of no return.

[25 : 22] Laban decided to make that permanent. Not Jacob. For Jacob, the door needed to be open. For us, in that other part, the inward Laban, right?

This Laban. Move aside and set aside that person, Laban, in your relationship. The Laban that's in here. That Laban represents the world and the flesh to us. Things that we can never live with.

We're not going to cohabit with that. You're never going to make an agreement with the flesh. No matter how many years you try, it's never going to work. That Laban's always stirring up trouble. And will ultimately lead to harm.

And in that case, the only solution is separation. Romans 8, 13. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die.

Now, who's he talking to? He's not talking to the unbeliever here. This is the book of Romans to the believers in Rome. He says, if you live after the flesh, you shall die. He's not talking about losing your salvation or not being saved.

[26 : 23] He's saying that the flesh produces corruption and death in your life. But if you through the Spirit, so he's obviously talking to believers. If you through the Spirit, not your own effort, not your own good works, not because you're trying hard, but through the Spirit, do mortify, literally put to death or render extinct.

The deeds of the body, you shall live. You shall live. We have a promise in Christ that we can live free from the Laban of the flesh. But it's through the Spirit. It's not through our own effort.

And here you see Jacob at one time had set up his pillar of self-effort. Now he's at this point where he's seen that God can take care of him. He's like, you know what, Laban? Laban, God's got this situation.

Jacob has said pretty much nothing here at this point. Laban says, I want to make a covenant. Jacob says, okay. And Laban lays out all these terms. Jacob's not having to do anything here. And now Laban does another cringy thing.

Laban says, the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, Abraham's brother, and the God of their father, Terah, judge between us. And Jacob swear by the fear of Isaac, his father.

[27 : 27] Was Abraham's God also the God of Nahor and Terah? Did Abraham lead his father or his brother to faith?

There's nowhere else in Scripture I can find this. In the New Testament, when Stephen talks about Abraham leaving Haran after his brother and father died, he talks about how God calls him out and he continues to follow the Lord.

Joshua, at the end of his life, in chapter 24, he will say this to the people, reminding them of God's goodness. He says, And Joshua said to all the people, thus says the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers, plural, dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time.

Even Terah, excuse me, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, and they, plural, served other gods. So they all served other gods. Joshua will then go on to talk about how God called Abraham out and Abraham followed the Lord.

And if you look back in our text in verse 53, I think this is just Laban attempting to gain some type of false spiritual credibility. He's trying to promote himself as some kind of credibility.

[28 : 33] Look it, you think you're from that line? Well, I'm from the same line, buddy. You know, your grandfather was Abraham? Well, that was my uncle. You know, so I'm from the same line.

But who does Jacob swear by? Jacob doesn't swear by Nahor or Terah. I love it. Jacob's swear by the fear of his father Isaac. He's like, whatever, Laban. You're not going to bring me back into this web you're trying to weave.

Psalms 19, verse 9 says, The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous all together. And so that when we put our trust in the Lord, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Man, there's going to be, you're going to see the fruit of that. The fruit is, it's clean. It endures forever. It's righteous all together. And here Laban is trying to cop some type of false spirituality.

Knowing his character, one of manipulation and advantage, it's not too far of a stretch to see him doing this.

[29 : 37] And then what does Jacob do? So here's Laban, still trying posture and position. Jacob hasn't really said anything. It tells us he swore by the fear of his father Isaac. We saw last week that whole back and forth argument they've had.

And then Jacob does something here in verse 54. Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount. And he called his brethren to eat bread. And they did eat bread and tarried all night in the mountain.

Jacob throws a feast for them. Jacob says, let me bless you. Let's have this feast. You know what? Stay the night. It's all good. And you think, Jacob, where do you get this from?

Remember when Isaac made that boneheaded decision to take his family? Jacob and Esau were alive at this time. And he takes Rebecca and the boys and they go down into Gerar. And they tell Abimelech.

He tells Abimelech, Rebecca's my sister. That whole mess, right? Abimelech finds out. Abimelech gets mad. And he kind of throws him out. And that's when he goes on his well hunting journey. And he finds all his wells.

[30 : 40] Well, eventually he becomes prosperous and very great in the land. And Abimelech kind of goes, uh-oh. I don't want him mad at me. I don't want him coming back and getting me. So Abimelech and Phicol, the captain of his guard, they go and they meet with Isaac.

And they say, hey, let's make a covenant together. And Isaac says, okay. Because the covenant they were making was everything Isaac would have done anyway. He says, hey. Abimelech says to Isaac, don't you do anything to harm me.

Okay. Make sure you're a blessing to my people. Okay. Well, that's essentially what Laban has done with Jacob. Well, let's make a covenant that you'll never come back here to harm me. Deal, Laban. I promise.

Right? But at the end of that, it says that Isaac, in chapter 26, in verse 30, he made them a feast and they did eat and drink.

And they rose up betimes in the morning and swear one to another. And Isaac sent them away and they departed from him in peace. What did Isaac not do? You know what? You threw me out. You didn't treat me right.

[31 : 41] Get out of here. No. He said, hey. And we looked at that. Whenever we have opportunity to show God's grace to someone, we do it. It doesn't matter the situation. Jacob would have been there. He would have seen his dad do this.

He was like, you know what? Well, I saw how dad treated Abimelech. I saw that he sent him away in peace and with a blessing. And so here we see Jacob doing the same thing with Laban and the brethren.

And Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount and he called his brethren. Come. This is mine. These are my cattle. I'm offering them. But I want you to partake in this. And they did eat bread and they stayed there all night in the mountain.

And so we asked in the beginning, how do we love Laban? You know, we saw how to identify him, how to live with him, how to leave him. How do we love him?

And I think this is where we see it. Follow me with this. Jacob. Who's Jacob to us? What does he represent the picture of? Remember we've called him the man of the covenant.

[32 : 41] Jacob, the man of the covenant, is communing with his brethren upon the mount of sacrifice and at the hill of witness. Right? For me, that's what it was.

Like, wow. Whether called to live with a Laban or leave a Laban, we must still love a Laban. But the only way to do that is through the man of the covenant offering a sacrifice at the hill of witness.

How do we love a Laban? I think Jacob showed us how to love a Laban. And I think in that picture, we see the love that Jesus has for this Laban.

Because this Laban, Jesus chose to love. First, we love in truth. Man, last week we saw a lot of that. We didn't see a lot of that this week. But last week we saw Jacob giving it to Laban in truth.

And Laban had to just take it. First John 3.18 says, My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Don't just speak it. Live it.

[33 : 44] How do we love a Laban? We love unshakably. Jacob was 20 years with Laban. He changed his wages 10 times. First Corinthians 13.7 and 8. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

Jacob's love for Laban is unshakable. Love never fails. How do we love a Laban? We do it sacrificially. Just as Jacob just offered sacrifice here on the mountain.

John 15, starting in verse 12. This is my commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.

How do we love Laban? We do it sacrificially. And then lastly, I love this, because like, you know, next week's Resurrection Sunday. This week, as Jesus enters into Jerusalem, and they cry, Hosanna!

And a few days later, four days later, they crucify him. Right? So this week is the sacrifice so that next week we can rejoice in resurrection. And he took the bread, Luke 22, 19.

[34 : 50] And he gave thanks, and he break it, and he gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me. How do we love Laban? Man, we only love him through the broken body of Jesus.

You can't do it on your own. Listen, love for Laban is not dependent upon who Laban is, but who we are. Love for Laban is not dependent on who Laban is, but who we are.

I wish I didn't have to say that. Matthew 5, 44. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

For he makes his Son to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. God is the same. God's love and character and blessing is the same.

It doesn't matter who you are, just or unjust, you're not going to change God. No matter how wicked the world is out there, no matter how wicked the men who call themselves leaders in this world are, it will not change God's character.

[35 : 54] God makes the rain still to fall on the just and the unjust. And so when it says love your enemy, you say, how do I do that? Because you're the same person all the time in Christ. I can't respond differently, well, because this person's nice to me.

This one's not. No way. Right? How do we love Laban? Because it's not dependent upon us. It's dependent upon our man of the covenant and the sacrifice he made on the hill of witness.

Now look at verse 55. Guys, there is hope for Laban yet. This is what blew my mind reading this. I'm like, Lord, there is hope for Laban. This verse stands out, at least to me, different from all the rest.

Just look at the way it goes. Think of who Laban's been. His character, his abrasiveness, the way he communicates, the way he just kind of like is so cutting. And then it says this in verse 55.

And early in the morning, Laban rose up, kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them. And Laban departed without a word and returned into his place.

[36 : 54] What has happened to Laban? What is going on? Before we look at that, there's one other thing I want to point out. Laban was Leah and Rachel's father.

He did deserve their honor. He had lost their respect, but he deserved their honor. But the thing for Laban that was hard for him, it was no longer for him to direct or determine the future in their lives.

At one point it was. For those of us who have small children or have had small children, it was the place at that time to direct their life and their future. Hey, we're going to go here. We're going to do this.

No, don't eat that. Put that down. That's not good for you, right? There was a part where that was appropriate. For Laban, that's not the place for him. It was no longer for him to direct their lives or to determine their future.

But Laban still had an opportunity to do what? To be a blessing. He had an opportunity. As parents, we are not to be the ones who determine the path for our children. Sometimes that path, following the man of the covenant, is not the way I would go.

[37 : 56] Right now, I have a daughter in Bible college in California. She keeps going to Mexico on these missions trips to border towns. But God's in it. And the only reason to deny her going would be to try and take control of the direction God is leading her.

And it's not for me to do that. For us, for parents, it's not for us to determine the path of our children. There is a place where it's to determine their future and their lives.

But it is not ever for us to determine their path. They must follow the man of the covenant. However, we will always have the opportunity to be a blessing.

Even if they're not following the man of the covenant. Even if they go off the deep end. We still can be a blessing in our children's lives. It's not for us to take a hold of them and go, I'm going to straighten you out. No.

There's a point where we have to turn them over to the Lord. But here we see Laban kissing his children, blessing them. The man of the covenant, listen, had to first offer sacrifice upon the hill of witness.

[39 : 00] Before Laban could become a blessing. And what does it say? And then only after the sun had risen upon a new day. Isn't that crazy? See the pictures that God puts in scripture.

Jacob, the man of the covenant, offering sacrifice upon the hill of witness. A brand new day. A new sun rising. And Laban is able to be a blessing for the first time in his life. There is hope for Laban yet.

When I was studying this, I just wanted to cheer. Like, yes! I don't know. We never will hear from Laban again. He's going to go back home. But I'd like to think he goes home and he sits there. He doesn't have his gods. He doesn't have his flocks.

He doesn't have his family. And I'd like to think he sits there and goes, You know what? I want what Jacob had. I want to be blessed on my own.

And it wasn't all this stuff. Jacob had blessing. When I had all the stuff, Jacob was still blessed. And I hope he went home. And I hope he did become a blessing.

[40 : 02] Because of that sacrifice. For you and I, as we approach Resurrection Sunday, every day is Resurrection Day for us, right?

Well, in Luke 24, verse 1, I don't know if you can read that. It's pretty small. You can turn there if you'd like. It says, Now, if you want to take another little rabbit trail sometime, it doesn't say angels there.

In another account, there are angels, ones that will sit at the head and the feet. This is two men in shining garments. When was the last time in the Gospels you saw two men in shining garments? At the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah.

So do a little research on that. It's pretty cool. But they were two men. Stood by them in shining garments. And as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why do you seek the living among the dead?

He is not here, but he has risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet with you in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified.

[41 : 23] And the third day, rise again. And they remembered his word. Romans chapter 4, starting in verse 21. And Abraham, being fully persuaded that what he, God, had promised, he was able to perform.

And therefore it was imputed to him, to Abraham, for righteousness. And now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, or literally that it was credited to his account.

But for us also, to whom it shall be credited, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

Verse Peter 3.18. For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, for this Laban, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

Jesus, our man of the covenant, offered up himself a sacrifice. When Abraham was taking Isaac up to Mount Moriah, and Isaac says, Dad, I see the wood and I see the fire, but where's the sacrifice?

[42 : 30] And Abraham said, My son, God, will offer himself a sacrifice. As we just read there in 1 Peter, that's what Jesus did. Jesus, our man of the covenant, offered up himself a sacrifice upon the hill of witness, and then three days later, the son, S-O-N, arose upon a new day, so that any and all Labans might be made new, and might be made a blessing.

I'm able to be a blessing today. I'm able to be made new. I'm Laban. I'm a manipulative, sneaky jerk, apart from Christ.

And my wife can tell you that still comes out sometimes. But because Jesus went to the hill of sacrifice for us, we can be made new, and we can be a blessing. Jesus enacted Mizpah on our Laban of sin and death.

He drew that line in the sand. Those who choose to follow the man of the covenant, we pass over that line, the line of Mizpah, that no Laban will ever cross again. Your sin and your flesh, that line that Jesus drew in the sand, it cannot cross back over.

You will never see them again. There's a verse in Romans chapter 6. It says, Sin shall not have dominion over you. I read that this week, and it just, sometimes you read things, and they just sit you back in your seat.

[43 : 46] Sin shall not have dominion over you. You may be struggling today. You may be struggling with sin in the flesh. Laban just doesn't leave you. He hounds you, and he's back, and here he is again, and he's always trying to manipulate and take control of your life.

Well, by the authority of the word of God, sin shall not have dominion over you. No matter how long, it might take 20 years. I hope not. But God will not let sin have dominion over you. We will all arrive because of the man of the covenant.

We will arrive together, standing before the Lord, and sin will be no more. It will not be remembered. Matthew chapter 21.

Jesus is just coming into Jerusalem, right? A week before the crucifixion, it's Passover week, and Jesus comes in his triumphal entry, riding upon a donkey, the colt of a donkey, the colt of a donkey, I'm sorry.

And they're throwing down their garments and throwing down the palm branches, and they're shouting, Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. And when he was coming to Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, who is this?

[44 : 50] Surely revival's gonna break out. And the multitude said, this is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee. Four days later, Luke 23.

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, or the skull, there they crucified him. And the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, then said, Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, rallied on him, saying, if you be Christ, save yourself and us. And at one point, we know from the other gospels that both of those thieves rallied on him and accused him and said, hey, save us.

And now, one of them, after watching Jesus, but the other answering rebuked him, saying, do you not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, this guy knows that he needs to die for his sins.

[46 : 02] He knows he's receiving the punishment. And yet he looks to Jesus and knows, you can take this. He said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, truly I say unto you, today you will be with me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth unto the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. And having said thus, he gave up the ghost. And one Laban, that day, had been redeemed.

Right at the end, that guy was a Laban. That guy says, I deserve what I get. You deserve what you get over there on the other cross. But he looked to Jesus, and he's in paradise. How do we love a Laban?

We love a Laban by loving God. By loving God first. We love him because he first loved us. We love in truth. We love unshakably.

[47 : 01] We love sacrificially. And we love through the breaking of bread. That's how we love the Labans in our lives. We do that only because Jesus has first drawn that line of the sand in our hearts and said, hey, that Laban in here, he's got to go first.

Cast out first the beam that's in your own eye before you go and try and cast the speck out of your brother's eye. He says, hey, you got to get rid of that first. We got to deal with Laban so that you can be a blessing. I want you to be a blessing in your life.

Today, Lord, we leave Laban behind. We're not going to see him again as we go through your word. We're going to leave him behind. Lord, we want to leave all Labans behind. Whatever bitterness, frustration, or anger, Lord, we have against a Laban in our lives, we leave it at the cross.

We just washed it away in the blood. That new covenant. So that we can be a blessing. We can bless those and pray for those and do good to those who would treat us the opposite because of who we are in Christ.

And Lord, we leave behind Laban for good and forever at the cross. The Laban of sin and death and the world and the flesh and self-effort. Lord, what glorious liberty there is for the children of God.

[48 : 14] So Lord, this week, as we come back together next week for Resurrection Sunday, Lord, I pray that this week, Lord, you would work in each of our lives, Lord, that we would begin to just see the manifestation of that, the outworking of God's Holy Spirit working in us.

We just say, yes, not by might nor by power, it's by your Spirit. You take no pleasure in the deeds of the flesh, but we are to mortify them, render them dead and extinct by the Spirit.

It's not our effort. It's not our work. It's all been done at the cross. And Lord, it's all been done again today. For any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away.

Behold, all things can become new. Thank you that we will be with you in your kingdom. Thank you, Lord, there is hope for Laban. And thank you, Lord, that we are going to sit down at the banqueting table and we're going to eat with you.

Thank you, Jesus, for the blood. And it's your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Obviously, you know, if you need prayer, let me rephrase that.

[49 : 21] I always say that. We need prayer. Find someone. Pray with them. Be a blessing and let God continue his work and the Holy Spirit to continue to work among us. God bless you all.