

Genesis 29:31-30:24

God's Faithfulness is Greater

Section 1: 29:31-35: 4 Sons for Jacob

³¹ When the Lord saw that Leah was neglected, he opened her womb; but Rachel was unable to conceive. ³² Leah conceived, gave birth to a son, and named him Reuben, for she said, "The Lord has seen my affliction; surely my husband will love me now." ³³ She conceived again, gave birth to a son, and said, "The Lord heard that I am neglected and has given me this son also." So she named him Simeon. ³⁴ She conceived again, gave birth to a son, and said, "At last, my husband will become attached to me because I have borne three sons for him." Therefore he was named Levi. ³⁵ And she conceived again, gave birth to a son, and said, "This time I will praise the Lord." Therefore she named him Judah. Then Leah stopped having children.

God was showing His faithfulness to Leah by providing her four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Did Leah deserve God's faithfulness? No. If you remember from Genesis 29:13-30, she had conspired with her father to deceive and lie to Jacob. Therefore, she found herself unhappy, unfulfilled and neglected in an unbiblical marriage. Just as we discovered that God's grace is greater than our sin...we now see that God's faithfulness is greater than our sin as well.

In this story of Leah having children, we clearly see God's faithfulness on display. God is faithfully establishing the 12 tribes of Israel as promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and He is establishing the line of Judah in which will be the lineage of the Messiah. Again, God's faithfulness is not depended upon man's ability to perfectly serve Him. God is faithful despite man's actions. Despite Leah's lies and betrayal...God is faithful. Despite Jacob's unbiblical act of multiplying wives...God is faithful.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 (CSB) - *¹¹ This saying is trustworthy: For if we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.*

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Why is it important to remember that God is faithful?
- ❖ How does it encourage you to know that God is faithful even when you are not?
- ❖ Why can sin never stop God's faithfulness?

Section 2: 30:1-13 – 4 More Sons for Jacob

⁵ Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. ⁶ Rachel said, "God has vindicated me; yes, he has heard me and given me a son," so she named him Dan. ⁷ Rachel's slave Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸ Rachel said, "In my wrestlings with God, I have wrestled with my sister and won," and she named him Naphtali. ⁹ When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her slave Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰ Leah's slave Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹ Then Leah said, "What good fortune!" and she named him Gad. ¹² When Leah's slave Zilpah bore Jacob a second son, ¹³ Leah said, "I am happy that the women call me happy," so she named him Asher.

Rachel becomes desperate to "keep up" with Leah...she gets her handmaiden involved. Through Bilhah Jacob has two sons named Dan and Naphtali. Rachel specifically says, "I have wrestled with my sister and won."

Not to be outdone...Leah gets her handmaiden, Zilpah, involved. Zilpah has two sons by Jacob as well, Gad and Asher.

Too often we confuse God's approval and God's faithfulness. God's faithfulness and God's displeasure with your actions can go hand and hand. God is faithfully fulfilling His promise to establish the nation of Israel and the lineage of the Messiah, not because of Jacob, but despite Jacob. And just because God is displaying His faithfulness through Jacob's life...doesn't mean He is pleased with or condoning Jacob's decisions.

God never encourages, calls for or celebrates men multiplying wives in Scripture. God actually condemns it multiple times. God defines marriage as one man and one woman. Just as Jacob cannot confuse God's faithfulness with God's approval...we shouldn't either. Too often we live and act contrary to Scripture and because we don't have some immediate judgment from God, we think we are ok. God is more concerned with your holiness than your temporary earthly happiness. Romans 6:1-2.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Why is it important to remember there is a difference between God's faithfulness and God's approval?
- ❖ Is there ever a justification to ignore God's Word to make your own way? Why or why not?

Section 3: 30:14-24 – 3 More Sons and a Daughter for Jacob

¹⁷ God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸ Leah said, "God has rewarded me for giving my slave to my husband," and she named him Issachar. ¹⁹ Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. ²⁰ "God has given me a good gift," Leah said. "This time my husband will honor me because I have borne six sons for him," and she named him Zebulun. ²¹ Later, Leah bore a daughter and named her Dinah. ²² Then God remembered Rachel. He listened to her and opened her womb. ²³ She conceived and bore a son, and she said, "God has taken away my disgrace." ²⁴ She named him Joseph and said, "May the Lord add another son to me."

Leah has two more sons, Issachar and Zebulun, and Rachel finally has a son named Joseph. Leah and Rachel are still battling. This is one of the many problems with multiplying wives.

Over and over again we are reminded of the truth found in Isaiah 55:8-9.

How this story should have read...Rachel bore Jacob twelve sons. Why don't we read the story that way? Because man is sinful. Did God abandon Jacob because the story didn't read that way? No. Why? Did Jacob deserve God's unwavering faithfulness? No. Did God somehow owe Jacob despite Jacob's actions? No.

God's faithfulness is rooted in God Himself. God's faithfulness is depended upon the fact that God is faithful. Therefore, God's faithfulness transcends man's actions. Our actions have no impact on God's faithfulness to fulfill His Word. What God has established will come to pass.

So, what is our role? We have been given the privilege to participate in the works of God. We have the privilege to come alongside Christ as He reveals His glory to the world. God's glory will be proclaimed...with or without you.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Does God require us to be perfect in order to experience His faithfulness?
- ❖ Why is God faithful?
- ❖ How are you taking advantage of the opportunity to come along side Christ to reveal His glory to the world?