

Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

Genesis 29:31 – 30:43

“Envy and Rivalry”– June 11, 2023



Introduction

We all want to experience joy and know contentment. When we realize that we have one shot at life, we can be nervous about leaving our future in someone else's hands. It is natural for us to want control over our future. The challenge however, is that when we come to the God of the Bible, the path to contentment **IS** leaving our future in the hands of God. If we are honest with ourselves, there are times that we struggle with that very thing. In this text, Jacob is going to show us what happens when we grab the steering wheel.

Sermon Outline

1. Find contentment in God's presence. 29:31-30:24
2. Find contentment in God's protection. 30:25-43

Read & Discuss

1. Read chapter 29:31-30:24

Leah thought that if she could have children, Jacob would love her. Her hope and despair are reflected in the names of her children. Yet even after having borne 3 sons, Jacob didn't notice or love her.

We will not find complete contentment in having the love of another person. Relationships are good, but they will not bring happiness, contentment, or fulfillment. Do you know that pain that Leah experienced? Have you been ignored, unloved, or not accepted? Expecting the imperfect love of a friend or spouse to bring contentment puts a heavy burden on that relationship. Leah came to the realization that it was God who she needed to look to for contentment when she bore Judah. How about you, are you looking for contentment in having the love and acceptance of another person?

When we look at Rachel, we see that she was barren which caused her pain and grief. Her hopes and dreams of having children were not met. ([Proverbs 13:12](#)) Rachel had the love of Jacob but that wasn't enough for her. She envied Leah who had children. Having children brought status and significance. Significance, recognition and contentment **was** what Rachel sought. ([Proverbs 14:30](#))

Envy causes us to weep when others rejoice. The praise of man feels good for a moment, but it is a dead end that fails to bring the contentment that we long for and were made for. What causes you to envy? What makes you weep when others are rejoicing? What makes you rejoice when others are weeping?

Then, Jacob shows us that contentment is not found in sinful shortcuts. Instead of remembering God's promise, Jacob agreed to take another wife. His passivity made things worse by creating more rivalry and bitterness. This backbiting dysfunctional family was anything but happy. Sinful shortcuts made them more miserable. What sinful shortcuts are you tempted to take in your discontentment? Moses is showing us that going outside of God's plan leads to twisted, messy, man-made solutions. After 14 years of barrenness, Rachel finally cried out to the Lord in humility and brokenness, and God graciously gave her a son.

Jacob, Leah, and Rachel were struggling to leave their future in God's hands. They had forgotten what God had promised them even though God had reminded Jacob that He would keep the promise and be with Jacob. ([Genesis 28:15](#)) The author of Hebrews reminds us to be content with what you have. God will not leave us or forsake us. ([Hebrews 13:5](#))

All of the conflict, envy, rivalry, and discontentment may have left them wondering if God cared and was with them. God **was** present and He cared. ([29:31-32](#), [30:6](#); [17: 22](#)) There is not a tear that you have shed that God doesn't know or care about. ([Psalm 56:8](#)) We can find contentment in knowing God.

Jacob's sons became the twelve tribes of Israel, but this text isn't about how great Jacob's family was. It is about how great God is. Out of a dysfunctional family, God would raise up Jesus. Though sin has made a mess of our lives, Jesus is the One Who lived a perfect life to pay the penalty of our sin. Jesus was forsaken by God the Father so that we would be forgiven and never forsaken. He was raised on the third day so that we might

know contentment in the God Who satisfies. Do you know this kind of contentment or are you chasing the dead ends that this life has to offer?

Can you identify with this dysfunctional family? Do you think that God can't use you? Do you think that God only uses others who you think "have it all together?" None of us have it all together. God uses broken, dysfunctional people because it brings Him glory.

2. Read chapter 30:25-43

Jacob had served Laban for 14 year, and he was finally ready to go back home. God had prospered Laban because of Jacob, so Laban wanted to keep Jacob around. Jacob had learned that Laban was a liar and cheat, so they made a contract over who got a portion of the flock. Laban schemed to get the upper hand, but God blessed Jacob because He is faithful to His promise.

We are on a roller coaster with Jacob and his faith in God. Sometimes he trusted in God; sometimes he tried to fix things himself. Do you see yourself in Jacob? Contentment is something that we learn over time. What causes you discontentment? You cannot look inside yourself for contentment. You cannot look outside of yourself to the world for it either. You must look up.

God does grow us in contentment over time. He uses the normal means of grace – bible reading, prayer, coming to church, and being with God's people. Don't just go through the motions. God will use these things to get us to contentment as we get to know Him.

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at fbcum.org

Next week's sermon text: we turn to Genesis 31:1-55 "When God is on Your Side"
